

Interfaith Earthkeepers Meeting, August 20, 2025, First Congregational Church

Guest: Anne Marie, Lookout Eugene/Springfield

Attendees: Carl Bybee, Susan Guthrie, Dennis Reynolds, Tom Boyd, Sue Craig, Cynthia Black, Ron Hess, Theresa O'Brien, Kenny Watkins, Geoffrey Kerner, Johan Hall, Barb Reuter, KC Hancock, Gwen Gwilym, Kimberley Parzuchowski, Ron Coffman, Penny Palmer, Mari B., Mark Lindberg

Summary

Recycling Practices: The group discussed recycling practices and challenges, including glass recycling being uneconomical for towns and new plastic recycling initiatives.

Environmental Reporting and Baxter Suit: Ann Marie from Lookout provided an update and shared the name of Ashli Glow, environmental reporter, who is interested in covering stories related to the Baxter suit. The group discussed other potential story angles, including church involvement in environmental activism, habitat restoration projects, and the impact of the roadless rule recision on Northwest forests.

Community Check-in and Poetry Reading: KC Hancock shared a reading of Joy Harjo's "Eagle Poem," after which the group conducted a brief check-in, each participant shared name, faith community, and a single word describing what they bring into the space.

Minute Taker: With Britni stepping back from her long tenure as note taker, a replacement is needed. Tom Boyd volunteered to serve as minute taker for at least the next 12 months. Appreciation was widely expressed for Britni's most capable work in that role.

Cooling Centers at Churches: Barb shared a proposal for creating cooling centers at churches, based on her experience residing in Arizona. She plans to present at a meeting at her Methodist church in early October. The group suggested contacting Egan warming centers and Saint Vincent de Pau's to work in coordination with their ongoing services addressing needs of unhoused persons during weather extremes.

Film events: First United Methodist Church (FUMC) will screen "A Force More Powerful" on nonviolent actions on Sundays 8/24 and 8/31, starting at

3:00 pm. Details at FUMC's website calendar <<https://www.eugenefumc.org/calendar>>. Cynthia shared that Quaker activist Eileen Flanagan will speak on Saturday 8/23 at Eugene Friends Meeting House from 2-5pm on cultivating solidarity with the earth and each other, and four roles essential in effecting change: Helper, Advocate, Organizer, and Rebel. <<https://eugenefriendsmeeting.org/calendars/>>

McKenzie River Trust: The group discussed last meeting's visit from Sarah and Charlie of the McKenzie River Trust. The Trust has expanded its scope beyond the McKenzie to include restoration projects in other watersheds (e.g., Willamette; Siuslaw). The Trust is developing partnership with tribes to reintroduce native species like sea otters. Mark mentioned the Earthcare Interfaith Fund, which supports the McKenzie River Trust and Long Tom Watershed Council. This fund has been used as a means of directing carbon offsets for air travel to local environmental causes (Dennis). Sue noted that the fund also makes a nice gifting alternative to consumer goods during the holiday season.

Turtle Flats Bridge Repair and Restoration: Mark discussed plans for bridge repair at with Sha, Turtle Flats Volunteer Coordinator, scheduled for September 6th at 9 AM. Tom [and Kenny?] are unable to meet on September 6th. Mark and Dennis hope to arrange a pre-event meeting with Sha to assess the project and tools needed. The team confirmed that three people are available for the September 6th repair work, with Mark planning to email interested volunteers to confirm the date. A habitat restoration event is planned for Saturday morning, September 27th, from 9:00-12:00, work details to be finalized a week before the event.

Interfaith Events and Publicity Planning: The group discussed several upcoming events. The Stronger Together Interfaith Potluck on September 14th features guest speaker Jay Breslow from the Western States Center. KC shared updates about forest bathing sessions being held on the second and fourth Saturdays, with the next session scheduled for Armitage Park. The group discussed the need to better publicize events through our website (Ron H) and social media, with Cynthia managing the calendar.

Interfaith Activism and Community Collaboration: Sue shared an example of a successful interfaith campaign in North Carolina that involved coordinated calls to a senator. Mark highlighted the significance of ongoing activism, even when progress seems slow. He referenced a recent presentation by Sami Awad about how human rights protests even as

distant as Eugene reach Palestine and bolster morale. Conversation touched on the Interfaith Alliance on Migrants and the role of various groups in supporting migrants. Mark encouraged attendees to network at the upcoming Stronger Together potluck to create more effective advocacy efforts. Ron C. suggested having a follow-up meeting as soon as possible after documentary screenings to maintain interest and facilitate networking and collaborative efforts.

Clean Energy Event: September 21st is set as Third Act's Sun Day: A national day of action for clean energy. Dennis mentioned that Bill McKibben of Third Act had requested we hold that date. Dennis expressed interest in tabling at the event. The group discussed logistics for the event, including the use of a banner and making brochures available.

Brief Items and Closing: The group discussed Chapters 8-14 of Rebecca Solnit's "Dark Hope," sharing personal reflections on activism and faith. Susan, a speech therapist, described her work with children in McKenzie school district, and emphasized the importance of being a positive role model. Looking ahead, at Mark's suggestion the group agreed to take December off and return in January, with meetings alternating between UU and 1st Congregational. Ron H clarified the process for submitting Earthkeeper event information to Cynthia Black and himself. The meeting ended with Mark sharing a poem called "Inspiration" from Rosemary Wahtola Trommer.

Next steps

- Carl: Send out the email with information about submitting letters to Lookout Eugene to the group
- Mark: Share information about the Turtle Flats habitat restoration events
- Barb: Reach out to Egan Warming Centers about cooling center coordination and report back at the next meeting
- Dennis and Mark: Meet with Sha prior to September 6th to assess the bridge repair project and determine tools and lumber needed
- Mark: Write a blurb about the Stronger Together Interfaith potluck's connection to Earth care and send to Cynthia for posting
- Mark: Inform Stronger Together organizers that Johan can help with administrative tasks for future interfaith potlucks

- Mark: Discuss with Jason potential use of Turtle Flats for a vespers-style worship/forest bathing experience
- Dennis: Table at Third Act's Sun Day: A national day of action for clean energy
- event on September 21st at Campbell Community Center
- Mark: Get Interfaith Earthkeepers banner to Dennis for the September 21st tabling event
- Dennis: Prepare copies of brochures for the September 21st tabling event
- All members: Read chapters 15-17 of "Hope in the Dark" by Rebecca Solnit for the next meeting
- All members: Attend the next meeting on September 24th