

Interfaith EarthKeepers Meeting
February 25, 2026

Location: First Congregational Church of Eugene

Moderator: Mark Lindberg **Notetaker:** Tom Boyd

In attendance: Trudi Atkinson, Cynthia Black (Zoom), Tom Boyd, Mona Brunson, Carl Bybee, Sue Craig, KC Hancock, Betsy Halpern, Ron Hess (Zoom), Katharine Hunt, Mark Lindberg, Penny Palmer, Barb Reuter, Kenny Watkins.

Invocation/Check-in: Mark read “Prayer for the World Being Born” by Rev. Cameron Trimble. He recommended her website: <convergenceus.org>.

Guest Speakers: Sue Pileggi and Rob Dickinson presented on local Measure 20-373, Help Protect Lane County Watersheds. The presenters provided written materials including the text of the measure, a FAQ sheet, and an endorsement form. Rob explained that the initiative is grounded in the Rights of Nature legal concept. It aims to protect watersheds from corporate harms and ensure clean, safe drinking water. He gave some background on the Oregon Forest Practice Act, dating from the 1970s, that greatly limits restrictions to environmentally harmful practices (e.g., aerial pesticide spraying). Rob noted the measure does not directly regulate pesticides or aerial spraying, but rather establishes rights for watersheds and enforcement mechanisms for residents.

There was extended discussion, including Cynthia’s allusion to concerns expressed by small farmers. Rob noted the proposed legislation for practical reasons (e.g., legal expense) will concentrate on major sources of harm to watersheds. Ron noted that, despite the current presidential administration’s anti-environment policies, legal authority for corporate regulation lies with the states. Carl asked about the measure’s intersection with OCERA (Oregon Coalition for an Environmental Rights Amendment), Rob noting that the two are complementary. Kenny mentioned another overlap with Beyond Toxics, and referred attendees to that organization’s use of the state’s FERNS (Forest Activity Electronic Reporting and Notification System) database to generate a 10-year map documenting application of toxins on public lands.

KC asked what we as an organization might do in support. Sue expressed several “asks” from measure supporters. At present there is need for financial support in publicizing the measure. Rob noted that with a grassroots effort like this that lacks deep-pocket funding, Ballot Arguments are an effective and relatively inexpensive (\$300 per statement) means of reaching the electorate. The deadline for filing these is March 12. Sue asked if Interfaith EarthKeepers would consider signing on as in support of Measure 20-373, which was supported in a unanimous vote.

Strategic Planning: KC led a discussion of 7 areas of greatest interest following last meeting’s ranking exercise. Areas identified, in order of interest, were as follows:

1. Hands-on habitat restoration projects
2. Strengthen our connection through ongoing projects
3. State and local legislative initiative participation
4. Social/climate justice project support
5. Outreach-initial contact
6. Publicize our accomplishments and plans
7. Technology

KC asked that members review these domains as a starting point in identifying individuals’ areas of primary responsibility and requested that each attendee email her regarding areas of interest. We discussed this strategic

process and the domains. Sue suggested that we approach our various faith communities regarding what each is willing to offer. Tom expressed some confusion as to whether these areas identified were more about specific climate goals/endeavors [e.g., habitat restoration] as opposed to the tools and processes for addressing them [e.g., technology]. There was some discussion of whether it would be of value to revisit our identified areas of mission, Cynthia briefly citing the main areas addressed in our Mission Statement. In response to the idea raised of focusing in on a few critical mission areas, Ron stated that he sees value in not limiting areas of focus in order to keep abreast of the spectrum of efforts relevant to our overall earth justice mission. Shifting gears, Ron stated that in the current political climate he is moving from climate-focused efforts to more politically focused engagement. In that regard, he would welcome handing over website responsibilities to another individual.

Continuing Issues / Upcoming Events/Actions

- The U of O's Native American and Indigenous Studies will present *Coyote Steals the Salmon*, a book signing by Julian Brave Noise Cat on March 5, at 7:00 pm at William W. Knight Law Center, Room 175, 1515 Agate St.
- Sue Craig mentioned a Eugene measure, the Eugene Clean Energy Fund, which would direct a portion of profits of corporations with a Eugene presence to funds for clean energy.
- Barb announced that the Plug-In Solar initiative was defeated in committee, languishing in argument over how code standards would be addressed. That measure is currently in a holding pattern.
- Mark reported on a successful habitat restoration day at nearby Turtle Flats, with a good turnout of local groups such as First Congregational Church and Obsidians Trail Club. He also mentioned Robin Wall Kimmerer's newest initiative, Plant Baby Plant <<https://plantbabyplant.com>> that endeavors at the grassroots level (literally) to get more folks involved in planting, gardening, and related activity.
- Cynthia reported on the Make Polluters Pay Lobby Day at the Capitol in Salem. Ten people from the Eugene group attended. The measure currently is in Ways and Means Committee, and letters of support are requested. This measure would secure ameliorative funding from corporations that have polluted Oregon for a 20-year period or more.
- Carl reminded attendees of the upcoming No Kings Day rally on March 28, asking how we might encourage various faith groups to participate.
- Mark briefly reported on the February Stronger Together Potluck, held at Temple Beth Israel, with an intergenerational focus and many youth in attendance.
- Cynthia reported on Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's Oregon Interfaith Earth Summit on May 17: <https://emoregon.org/event/2026-earth-summit/>
- Sue made reference to efforts of the state's consideration of pursuit of nuclear power, and again advocated for the critical importance of protecting the old growth of the greater Pacific Northwest's temperate rain forests.
- Carl submitted a post-meeting email which he asked to be included in the notes. He forwarded an appeal from OregonWild entitled "Stop Trump's Plan to Clearcut Western Oregon Forests" <<https://oregonwild.org/action/stop-trumps-plan-to-clearcut-western-oregon-forests/>>

Education: We discussed Chapters 1-4 of Bill McKibbens' *Here Comes the Sun*. Next meeting will address Chapters 5-6.

Next Meeting: March 25, 2026, Unitarian Universalist Church