

Report to Continuing Committee from Quaker Earthcare Witness
by Roy Treadway and John Hackman ,ILYM representatives
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Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW) Steering Committee has had an exiting year. Anne Mitchell, in her second year as General Secretary, steered us towards refocusing our QEW priorities. Among the priorities for QEW which grew out of our statement of VISION AND WITNESS: "... WE WORK to integrate into the beliefs and practices of the Religious Society of Friends the Truth that God's Creation is to be respected, protected, and held in reverence in its own right, and the Truth that human aspirations for peace and justice depend upon restoring the earth's ecological integrity. ... WE PROMOTE these truths by being patterns and examples, by communicating our message, and by providing spiritual and material support to those engaged in the compelling task of transforming our relationship to the earth."

Traditionally, over the past almost 25 years of our existence the fall meeting had taken place in various parts of the country to provide diversity in topic, travel convenience to Friends on the Steering Committee, and geographical and environmental interest. In 2011, the fall meeting, which met at the Cenacle in Chicago October 20-23, studied the topic of Food and Biodiversity. There were excellent speakers who focused our thoughts on the following topics:

Marcia Cleveland – FCNL’s Legislative Representative for the Environment “Lobbying Works: Thoughts on Lobbying in the Tea Party Era.”

Laurel M. Ross – Urban Conservation Director, Environment, Culture and Conservation, The Field Museum “The Chicago Wilderness: Expressing an Urban Land Ethic.”

Molly Anderson – Partridge Chair in Food and Sustainable Agriculture Systems, College of the Atlantic “Food: Security, Politics, Rights, Sovereignty, and Sustainability Metrics.”

Discussion covered the history of the problem of food and biodiversity and different responses from various Quaker communities who have contributed to the topics of health, nutrition, production, and distribution of food to our communities. In our free time Friends visited and shopped local Farmers Markets in Lincoln Park. Many Chicago-area Friends of ILYM participated.

Individuals on the Steering Committee have also become involved in national and international political issues this year, including The Keystone XL Pipeline, the Occupy Wall Street Movement, and The Doctrine of Discovery. A few members of QEW protested the pipeline and got arrested both in Ottawa, Canada, as well as in Washington D.C. On January 9, 2012, QEW approved a Statement on the Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery, part of which says:

In the days of European exploration and colonization, governments relied on what we now call the Doctrine of Discovery to extinguish all rights of indigenous peoples. The doctrine has not disappeared or been revoked. Instead it has evolved into common property law, providing the underpinning of US and Canadian chains of title. In 2012 the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) will focus on encouraging global repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery. The Indigenous Peoples are our allies in protecting the Earth, and we need to be theirs. There is much to be learned from indigenous earth-connected wisdom and spirituality. We renounce what amounts to a policy of domination and instead join with indigenous people to protect and restore the health of our planet. Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW) joins other Friends, and Unitarian and Episcopal churches in repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery. We encourage Friends' Monthly Meetings and Churches, and Yearly Meetings, to renounce the Doctrine of Discovery.

In June 2012, the Steering Committee meeting of QEW will be held at the Friends Meetinghouse in Cambridge, MA, prior to Friends General Conference Gathering in Kingston, RI in July 2012. While in some of the early years, QEW held its Spring/Summer Steering Committee meeting in connection with the Gathering, we also want to attract Friends from all branches of Quakers by meeting in various locations.