

Environmental Concerns Committee - Annual Report 2007 (Preliminary)  
2007 May 23

During 2006-2007, the Environmental Concerns Committee moved forward to enhance the appreciation of nature for Illinois Yearly Meeting and to raise awareness of the many environmental issues challenging all of us. We met together in late October 2006 at a retreat at the yearly meeting grounds, at the Quaker Earthcare Witness meetings in Chicago in April, and during the Memorial Day Work Weekend (2007) at McNabb. In addition, we held a productive conference call in March 2007.

As part of the Environmental Concerns Committee objective to enhance the natural landscape of the yearly meeting site, in October we removed rocks and roots from the site of the former dormitory and junior yearly meetinghouse, smoothed the area, and planted hardy grass seed.

We also walked the periphery of the yearly meeting site on both sides of the road, noting natural features of soil, vegetation, and bird and animal habitat with the intent of developing a nature trail, at first simply identifying these features on a nature guide for the enjoyment and knowledge of all. Under the capable hands of Noel and Sarah Pavlovic, the guide for the meetinghouse side of the site was developed during the year with the expectation that it would be available for use at the yearly meeting sessions. From this experience, we plan to expand the nature guide for the campground side in 2008, and a more elaborate trail may come later.

As a result of our review of the yearly meeting site, we worked on improving the natural features of the yearly meeting site during the Memorial Day Work weekend, cleaning up areas that have been neglected. We will recommend further changes in the natural setting of the site, coordinating with the Maintenance and Planning and Site Envisioning and Building Committees, Clear Creek Meeting, and the Yearly Meeting.

We continued to plan for the canoe and kayak outing at the annual sessions, Friday, July 27, 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on the Hennepin and Hopper Lakes near the Illinois River. About 30 persons expressed early interest in either renting or bringing canoes and kayaks. A local naturalist will help us explore the wetlands natural life. Nancy Halliday has made the arrangements for this outing and has prepared an article about the outing in *Among Friends*. This outing will give Friends an opportunity to enjoy the natural habitat and birds of wetlands near the yearly meeting site.

We are slowly moving forward on our concern about helping the yearly meeting obtain information to make wise choices about incorporating environmental sustainability into the new buildings at the Illinois Yearly Meeting grounds. We are identifying aspects of green building and locating examples of green buildings in the Chicago area and elsewhere. We plan to present a workshop on green buildings at the yearly meeting sessions.

We are exploring ways to support Carolyn W. Treadway's outreach about the climate crisis. In January 2007, Carolyn was trained about the climate crisis by Al Gore in Nashville, TN. She will present a workshop at the annual sessions and is available to present to monthly meetings.

We are considering preparing a flyer about Environmental Concerns Committee to inform monthly meetings about the issues and concerns of Environmental Concerns Committee regarding the environment and offer ways in which our committee could be a resource to monthly meetings.

During 2007-08, we will continue these activities and explore others as the opportunity arises.

Roy C. Treadway, Clerk