



Earth Day 2013: Working Towards Sustainable Communities

Cindy Davidson, UU Ministry for Earth Board

Sustainability ... resilience green ... all hot buzzwords these days, often cleverly co-opted for false advertising claims. The concepts, of course, are not so new, yet much of our world has strayed from the principles and practices of sustainable living, individually and in community. We see this at the root of some of the very real and sobering challenges we face in our broken world – climate change impacts, environmental degradation, social injustices and inequities, economic challenges, health challenges, and social isolation, to name a few.

As Unitarian Universalists, we affirm and promote a respect for the interdependent web of life that compels us to use an integrative lens to understand and respond to such increasingly complex issues. As UUs, we find unity and strength in our shared values and our dreams and longings for a more just, sustainable and resilient world. UU Ministry for Earth, too, shares those dreams, and remains hopeful that, collectively, we can work together to bring truly just sustainability to the communities of the world. We hope to inspire each and every UU congregation and group to engage in meaningful, transformative and spiritually grounded work towards that end and connect you to one another. So, whether your portal of entry is through a deep love of nature, a dedication to social or ecological justice, pastoral care for one

another, deep reflection, or another doorway, we invite you to join us on a journey of hope and justice making. Let us join forces with others in our faith communities and denomination, in our local communities and beyond, and get our hands dirty!

For Earth Day 2013, UU Ministry for Earth (UUMFE) has assembled materials on the topics of sustainability and sustainable communities. Because this is such a broad topic area, we are focusing this year on four of the many topic areas relevant to working towards sustainable communities in a climate-changing world; others will follow over the next two years. This year's Call to Action focuses on Building Sustainable and Resilient Communities; Climate Action Plans;

Ecosystems; and Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems. Each section contains three parts – framing the issues,

web links and resources for more information, and suggested actions to consider. We'll also include additional resource listings of books and films we find important and inspiring. As always, our Earth Day materials will include resources to help you engage your community through press and publicity.

To start your Earth Day planning, go to www.uuministryforearth.org and click on "Take Action" then "Earth Day 2013." Be sure to register your events before Earth Day *cont'd on page 3*



Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth
Earth Day 2013: Working Towards Sustainable Communities

Photos (left to right): Flickr/CC: Lvidmar, Powershif/ West 2009. Miami-Dade County, FL. Flickr/CC: Corey Templeton, Maine Farmers Market, kinikkim reims, Salmon Habitat, Whirekid, Where's the Dressin?

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ABOUT UUMFE

Unitarian Universalist
Ministry for Earth is a non-
profit organization whose
supporters envision a world
in which reverence, grati-
tude, and care for the living
Earth is central to the lives
of all people. As a 501(c)3
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are tax deductible to the full
extent of the law.

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From the Board

Six Americas

Andrew Leiserowitz's* research indicates that we are communicating with six different Americas when we mention climate change. Six Americas? No wonder we have a difficult time building consensus and group action plans when we begin to work on one facet or another of this moral imperative of national and global proportions.

The research team has labeled the Six Americas: Alarmed, Concerned, Cautious, Disengaged, Doubtful, and Dismissive. Each group responds to this issue in very different ways and needs different kinds of information about climate change to become more engaged with it. Knowing these audiences would be very helpful when developing a climate action project and the supporting communications. Once you know your audience, the following are some timely resources that UUMFE is developing to assist you and your congregations; check out the related articles in this edition of the Newsletter.

Earth Day Resources on UUMFE website

The UUMFE Earth Day Resources for this year can also help in your project planning. The focus for 2013 is Sustainable Communities. Cindy Davidson and Ellen McClaran from the UUMFE Board have brought together information, actions, inspiring stories, and worship materials for this topic. This will be the first of three annual Earth Day packets delving into this topic.

Young Adult Network is growing

Last year, with funding from a Cedar Tree Foundation grant, UUMFE engaged Jennifer Nordstrom, an experienced community organizer and student at Starr King School for the Ministry, to spend the summer laying the groundwork for a Young Adult Environmental Justice Network. She was very successful, signing up fifty enthusiastic YAs at General Assembly alone and the list has since grown. To continue Jennifer's work, UUMFE applied for and received a grant from the UU Funding Program, which will cover part of the budget planned for 2013. Your contribution to provide the remaining funding for this year will be gratefully accepted by mail or on the UUMFE website – www.uuministryforearth.org. Just click on the blue DONATE button.

Environmental Justice Curriculum goes on the road

The UUMFE Environmental Justice Curriculum may be just the tool to help you develop a focused and meaningful project for your group or congregation. You can download it from the UUMFE website and look for UUMFE members who will be showcasing the Curriculum at UUA District and Regional meetings.

We are so grateful for all that you accomplished in 2012 and look forward to connecting and sharing in the work of Earth ministry in 2013.

– Irene Keim, Chair, UU Ministry for Earth Board ♦

* You can see an interview with Andrew Leiserowitz by Bill Moyers at <http://environment.yale.edu/profile/leiserowitz/>. Mr. Leiserowitz is director of the Yale Project on Climate Change Communication and a research scientist at Yale University's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

News From UU Ministry For Earth

Earth Day, cont'd

(April 22) – your ideas may inspire others and your congregation will be entered in a drawing to win a \$50 gift certificate from the UUA Bookstore! On the website, we will also maintain an updated table of Earth Day events as congregations register so you can see what others are doing.

After Earth Day, please share your stories, using the same registration form, and send your photos to office@uuministryforearth.org. We would love to post them on our Facebook page, share highlights with the UUA, and include stories in upcoming newsletters.

Each year, UUMFE invites congregations to honor an Eco-Hero with our special certificate to show appreciation of his or her accomplishments and dedication to your congregation's Earth Ministry. We will list your Eco-Hero's name, along with a one-sentence description of the work, on the UUMFE website.

And, we hope you will nominate your Eco-Hero to be recognized as a UUMFE Guardian of the Future. Full details online!



As always, you will also find materials to use in planning for worship services near Earth Day including an order of service cover, an insert about UUMFE, and links to many UUA resources. We are always grateful to those congregations who use their Earth Day services as an opportunity to support the work of UU Ministry for Earth through a special collection.

Best wishes for a just and moving 2013 Earth Day! ♦

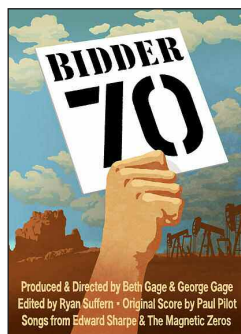
Screening "Bidder 70"

Nancy King Smith, UUMFE Board

"In an excellent field of non-fiction (documentary) and feature length fiction films, 'Bidder 70' distinguished itself as a beautifully told story of a hero's journey filled with passion and sacrifice that tugs at the head and heart to the final scene." – *Jury, Traverse City Film Festival, 2012 Best American Film*

UU Ministry for Earth has contracted with the producers of "Bidder 70" for the license to allow UU congregations to show the film at a significantly reduced fee. Tim DeChristopher has

inspired us all with acting upon the courage of his convictions by derailing a widely protested federal oil and gas land sale, bidding millions to save thousands of pristine acres surrounding U.S. National



Parks—with no intention of paying. He has served 1 1/2 years in prison and is now on restricted parole, including being denied taking a job as Social Justice Director at First Unitarian Church of Salt Lake City. Tim is intending to study for UU ministry.

In "Bidder 70," Gage and Gage Productions have

chronicled his story in a 72-minute documentary. The film has received accolades at several film festivals. Through UUMFE's licensing arrangement with the filmmakers, Gage and Gage Productions, UU congregations may contract with UUMFE to show the film. UUMFE will make a copy of the film available for \$75 for congregations under 150 members and \$100 for those over 150 members.

If you are interesting in screening "Bidder 70" in your congregation, please contact UUMFE Office Manager Sabrina Louise Harle, sabrinauumfe@gmail.com, 503-595-9392. She can answer any questions and will e-mail you a copy of the contract and a press kit giving more information about the film. Congregations are reminded that any public (non-individual) showing of the film requires a license. ♦

Our Place in the Web of Life

Want to take a next step in your racial/ethnic justice or AR/AO work but not sure what to do? Interested in economic justice but a bit overwhelmed? Too few volunteers attending too many meetings?

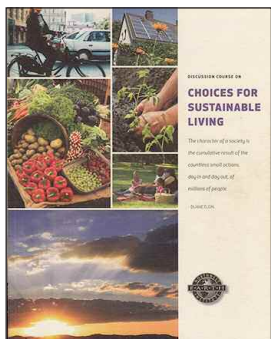
UUMFE's new curriculum, Our Place in the Web of Life, provides a way to meaningfully engage and collaborate with diverse communities. The five-week curriculum is available on the UU Ministry for Earth website: <http://uuministryforearth.org/EJ-Curriculum>

News From UU Ministry For Earth

Northwest Earth Institute Courses Popular With Congregations

Nancy King Smith, UUMFE Board

Many congregations have used the excellent Northwest Earth Institute (NWEI) courses. An updated seven-session *Choices in Sustainable Living* course is now available, along with



a two-session *Powering a Bright Future. Hungry for Change: Food, Ethics and Sustainability*, the action-oriented follow-up to the very popular *Menu for the Future*, is a good choice to use in conjunction with this year's Earth Day materials.

Information about all eleven NWEI courses can

be found at <http://www.nwei.org>. As a partner with NWEI, UU Ministry for Earth receives a percentage of the sales when you choose UU Ministry for Earth in the "affiliation" section of the order form. ♦

Uniting YAs in the EJ Struggle

Sarah Caine, Young Adult, UUMFE Board

Young Adults care about what is happening to our planet. We want to talk to and work with each other for the sake of the planet. We love Facebook and Instagram. Why not bring these things together? The recent work of the UU Ministry for Earth Board to support the connections between UU Young Adults working to improve our planet has been uplifting to me and cleared away some skepticism of our faith.

Working away from the too common tokenism model (whether it be tokenism of Young Adults, People of Color, or interfaith action partners) is difficult, but the Ministry for Earth is taking great strides in the effort of not just asking, "How do we get more of _____ to work for the cause?" but asking instead, "How can we support the _____ working for this cause?" It's an honor to be part of this process. The work of the superstar consultant, Jennifer, collecting the information of the Young Adults crying for a network is inspirational. Connections are already being made and summits being planned.

I'm excited to be a Planeteer (thanks, Captain Planet!) and you can be one too, 'cause saving our planet is the thing to do. Supporting the Ministry for Earth is supporting Young Adults and the planet. It looks like 2013 is going to be a great year for Eco Justice! ♦

Help Build the New Young Adult Environmental Justice Network

Nancy King Smith, UUMFE Board

In 2012, UUMFE began building a Young Adult Environmental Justice Network with the able assistance of Starr King student Jennifer Nordstrom. It was very well received and the UU Funding Program has made available additional funds to continue building the network with a grant of \$6,200 that will cover part of the 2013 budget. We envision a new generation of committed people to carry on the Unitarian Universalist tradition and prophetic voice of justice in the world.

We are seeking additional donors for the remaining \$5,200 needed to fully fund our plan, which includes communications support, environmental justice leadership training, and promotion of local, regional and national environmental justice action. If are able to support our Young Adults as they connect environmental justice work to their faith tradition, connect to each other and, as grounded UUs, engage in justice work in their communities, go to <https://www.z2systems.com/np/clients/uuministry4earth/product.jsp?product=32> and fill in the amount of your donation along with the notation, "Young Adult Network." Thank you! ♦



UU Young Adults at the National Youth Justice Summit 2012 (photo from UUSC Website)

News From UU Ministry For Earth

Protecting Utah Wilderness

Nancy King Smith, UUMFE Board

Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth asks you to protect Greater Canyonlands, the 1.4 million-acre region of publicly-owned wildlands surrounding Canyonlands National Park in southern Utah, by proclaiming it a national monument.

In 2009, the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association resolved to call for passage of the legislation that will protect Utah's spectacular and irreplaceable wild lands and to call for the Department of the Interior to establish administrative protections for Utah's wild lands from off-road vehicle abuse, road development, oil, gas, oil shale and tar sands development. UUMFE has sent a letter supporting this protection to President Obama.

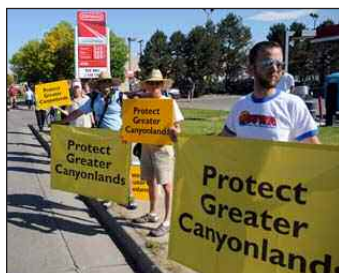


Photo: Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance

Congregations wishing to learn more may arrange for a presentation about the issue by contacting Clayton Daughenbaugh, conservation organizer with the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance and Chair of the Sierra Club's National Wildlands and Wilderness Committee, at claytonhd@xmission.com. Akron UU Church and the First Unitarian Church of Cleveland have presented the program that includes a multi-media slideshow narrated by Robert Redford documenting citizen efforts to designate public lands in southern Utah's spectacular canyon country as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. You may also read an article by Joan Gregory, First Unitarian of Salt Lake City, in the UUMFE Fall 2009 newsletter (see the archive at <http://uuministryforearth.org/newsletters>). ♦

Honor Congregations – Thanks!

Ellen McClaran, UUMFE Board Treasurer

U Ministry for Earth gratefully acknowledges our Honor Congregations. These congregations have given generously to support the

work of UUs caring for Earth through budgeted gifts, split-the-plate offerings, and donations beyond the requested congregational level of \$100. The following congregations gave these special donations between January and December 2012. Thank you!



Honor Congregations:

All Souls Church Unitarian, Washington, DC
Bull Run UUs, Manassas, VA
Emerson Unitarian Church, Houston, TX
First Parish of Lexington, MA
First Unitarian Church of Cleveland, Shaker Heights, OH
First Unitarian Church of Louisville, KY
Live Oak UU Fellowship, Alameda, CA
Mt. Diablo UU Church, Walnut Creek, CA
Olympia Brown UU Church, Racine, WI
UU Church in Reston, VA
UU Church of Davis, CA
UU Church of Kent, OH
UU Church of Minnetonka, Wayzata, MN
UU Church of Palo Alto, CA
UU Church of Tarpon Springs, FL
UU Congregation of Milford, NH
UU Society of Amherst, MA ♦



Save the Date for Louisville GA

The theme of General Assembly 2013 is "From Promise to Commitment." UUs will gather in Louisville to examine and renew our covenant to our faith, one another, our congregations, and the larger world. We will worship, witness, learn, and work together – and leave GA grounded in our faith, energized for justice, and with resources to bring the work home to our congregations. UU Ministry for Earth will be there – join us!

News & Commentary From Members and Congregations



Congratulations are in order! Representatives from the Unitarian Universalist Church of Oakland's Earth Justice Associates accept the 2012 Energy Oscar for Advocacy from California Interfaith Power & Light. (From l to r) Francesca Aubrey, Jack Macy, Bret Andrews, Tom Smith, Anne Blackstone along with CIPL's Rev. Sally Bingham and emcee Greg Dalton.

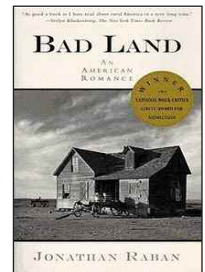
An Environmental/Social History: Bad Land, by Jonathan Raban

Bob Keim, former UUMFE Board

In the very early 20th century, railroad companies, pushing across the northern regions of the United States, sought to settle lands they were opening for small cities, primarily so that the masses of people needed to sustain railroad advances would be there. Jonathan Raban's Bad Land takes up this history, focusing on what was then called the Great American Desert – largely the western Dakotas and eastern Montana – "...an imaginary vacancy, either without any flora and fauna, or with all the wrong flora and fauna." And when an individual could buy 640 acres of land for \$16 and the cost of transporting family goods, many fed their desire for self-sufficiency and privacy. After an initial spell of mild winters, weather patterns returned to normal: true Montana winters, which "...had a shocking and insulting quality, like a boot in the face," followed by extended drought, more bitterly cold winters, and summers full of wind, fire lightning and occasionally ferocious rains. "*Montana's violent weather came with the territory.*" And the truly demonic Dust Bowl years lay ahead.

Raban writes eloquently of such times of hardship, and the few who have survived into current times. In doing so, he reveals survival tactics and psychological adjustments that live on to this day – some curious:

- Many a farm was soon in financial straits such that they owed far more than their farm was worth – and knew not what the next year would bring. Escalating debt led eventually to very large industrial farms, as landowners simply fled in Depression times.
- "*Ranchers and farmers, with their wheat subsidies and grazing rights, had more tax dollars in their pockets than any other single group of Americans, not excluding, say, single teenage black mothers on welfare; but if they were grateful for such largesse, they kept their feelings well concealed. The agencies – the BLM, the EPA, OSHA, the Forest Service, and the rest – were hated as nests of big-city liberal types with college degrees and no understanding of the land. The federal agents were seen as a bunch of officious snoops, full of misbegotten ideas, whose mission it was to destroy the farmers' and ranchers' traditional ways of life.*" Yet, without subsidies, few would have survived.
- Deeply-ingrained grudges remain to this day; most youth coming off these farms who do go to college, choose small, typically religious schools near their hometowns – they want nothing to do with "big-city liberals." And don't even mention climate change!
- Yet, most who went to this territory did not do so for religious reasons: "...in 1911 in the new West, it was bracing to live without benefit of clergy. For everyday inspiration and enlightenment, for a code of practical morality...one could look to the schoolhouse on the hill. The building and its books stood for a creed that everyone believed in: progress; self-improvement; a faith in the great metaphysical abstraction of America."



Bad Land is an extraordinary portrait of a small piece of American history, at times revealing the contradictions in terms that many Americans live, at other times a sympathetic retelling of courage, willingness to take risk, and the nature of faith in the future – all parts of the American psyche still alive to this day. In a time when we often focus on events, principles and ideas, it is a reminder that human history is written by those who live it, and that every place has its own unique story. ♦

Reproductive & Environmental Justice: Connecting the Dots

Rev. Earl W. Koteen, Consulting Minister for Climate Justice, UU Legislative Ministry California, and UUMFE Board Member; Jessica Halperin, Women's Issues Program Associate, UUA

We need to work for justice together. In all the ways that people, communities, and environments are interdependent and affect each other, we face overlapping opportunities for love and also threats to our well-being. To work for justice – sustainable, holistic change – we must see that opportunities for advocacy such as like raising healthy children or ending fossil fuel dependence are intricately inter-linked. Many people and many resources are required to build the Beloved Community, and working together in community and solidarity is the most effective and the most virtuous. It's also the most fun!

Ever worked in an organization where everyone was in stovepipes? You know, finance doesn't talk to human resources, human resources doesn't talk to logistics, and upper management doesn't talk to anyone. Work is "thrown over the transom" (or over the top of cubicle walls). Synergies and opportunities for creativity and community are missed.

Sad to say, some UU congregations function this way. However, it is committees, not offices, that live in stovepipes.

Sometimes it seems as if our justice work is the same. We fail to recognize the connections and the opportunities that come from working together.

Luckily for us, the movements for reproductive justice and environmental justice call us to our better, more collaborative and interdependent selves. Both founded by coalitions of people of color, these movements recognize that unless we specifically acknowledge the overlapping oppressions that are faced by people and environments on the margins of society, we miss seeing opportunities for advocacy and partnership that could improve the lives of everyone. For

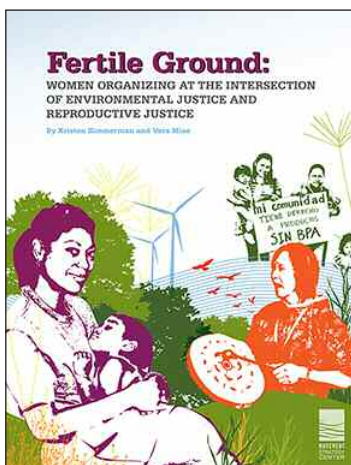
example, some communities may experience high rates of abortion because a lack of sexuality education in schools creates a high rate of unintended pregnancy. Advocating for comprehensive sexuality education is an issue of reproductive justice, because we believe that people have the right to make well-informed decisions about their reproductive lives. Likewise, women who work in nail salons and are exposed to toxic, mislabeled materials often experience miscarriage or fetal abnormality at higher rates than other women. Environmental justice for these women becomes a reproductive justice issue, also.

Reproductive justice and environmental justice go hand-in-hand, but not everyone knows it. Where there is reproductive justice, birth rates fall as women regain control of their bodies. Where there is environmental justice, birth rates fall because infant mortality falls. Both justice movements work to improve the lives and health of families and communities.

We are in the midst of a global climate and environmental crisis. The main cause of this crisis is production and use of energy that adds greenhouse gases (GHGs) to the atmosphere. Our dependence on fossil fuels is used as a rationalization for globalization, oppression, and war. Our 2006 Statement of Conscience on The Threat of Global Warming/ Climate Change

expressed our commitment on this issue.

Many UUs have been taking steps to reduce their carbon footprints, which is both admirable and virtuous. Many UUs have been working for reproductive justice, which was selected as our Congregational Study Action Issue at the 2012 Justice General Assembly. Reproductive justice is not just about abortion – it is a human rights-based framework with four broad goals: people have the right to (1) have the children that they want to have; (2) not have the children they don't want to have; (3) raise their children in safe and healthy environments; and (4) express their sexuality without oppression.



Download "Fertile Ground: Women Organizing at the Intersection of Environmental Justice and Reproductive Justice" at

<http://movementbuilding.movementstrategy.org/resources>



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Reproductive Justice . . . cont'd from previous page

Find out more about reproductive justice at <http://www.uua.org/reproductive/index.shtml>. It is now critical for us to connect the dots between these two issues – and there are many, many lines to draw – and between these and immigration reform, economic justice, and other issues. In our lives, these oppressions and injustices are interlinked and synergistic. All of them will be exacerbated by the continuing degradation of the environment.

Working for justice means that we leave nobody behind; that progress comes at the expense of no one else's marginalization. So whether you are passionate about reproductive justice or environmental justice or both, have the dialogue, look for the synergies, build alliances, and show up in solidarity. You, your loved ones, and your communities will be glad you did. ♦

Join the #ForwardOnClimate Rally on Feb. 17 in Washington, D.C.

Ellen McClaran, UUMFE Board

On February 17 – Presidents Day Weekend – 350.org, The Sierra Club, and the Hip Hop

Caucus are leading a massive action in Washington D.C. calling on President Obama to take leadership to stop climate change and reject the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline.

Barack Obama's legacy as president will rest squarely on his response, resolve, and leadership in solving



the climate crisis. That's why the Forward On Climate Rally will start in downtown Washington at midday and conclude with a march to the White House. We'll hear from inspiring speakers and stand at

the president's doorstep to show him that we can't afford to wait any longer. Join this historic event to make your voice heard and help the president start his second term with strong climate action.

Go to <http://act.350.org/signup/presidentsday> for details and to sign-up. All Souls, Unitarian in downtown Washington will be taking the lead in organizing the UU contingency. Check their website or UUMFE's in early February for updates. ♦