

*Community Climate Change Dialogue*  
*March 18, 2015*  
*Reversing Falls Sanctuary*

*The EXTREME-ly COLD WEATHER on the day of the discussion about EXTREME WEATHER (aka, climate change) almost led to its cancellation. However, betting on the hardiness of our community, it went forward and was well attended. Below is a somewhat selective and editorialized summary of the discussion which accentuates the positive. Any corrections by attendees or comments from those reading this are greatly appreciated.*

- From changes in marine life to grieving for the condition of Earth (fragile and in pain)...
- From concerns about solutions to the difficulty of enlightening skeptics and those in denial...
- From the optimism of human adaptability to compassion for the poor and voiceless (including all the beings) who will suffer most...
- From skeptics and deniers to the Pentagon's contingency plans to deal with the perceived reality of future large scale refugee movements and resource scarcity...

The discussion seemed to be a balance of describing the planetary predicament we find ourselves in and the offering of solutions to the predicament. It also allowed us to share our pain in response to the environmental degradation and its concomitant species loss. It allowed us to consider the human as a destructive virus to the planet.

Naomi Klein's belief that an opportunity for correcting our current destructive planetary course was expressed. Klein says that what is required is a radical change in both worldview and personal identity which would move us away from a sense of powerlessness, selfishness and materialism to empowerment, concern for the common good and simple living.

Unaddressed were the causes of the current problems except for noting that our economic system emphasizes extractivism of Earth's resources for profit.

The inability to “convert” skeptics to more fully acknowledge the problem was not seen as a major obstacle to social change. We can remove the “futility” of preaching to the choir as long as the choirs grow strong, communicate with each other and work diligently to engage in positive local action (for example, fabricating insulated window panels and, thereby, forming a new community). The prevailing view was that if we were to do something here to create an active community as part of the solution, that model could spark other communities and, together, we could articulate our goals and objectives for this bio-region. This clearly is in the tradition of the Transition Town Movement which builds local support systems to increase community resilience. Aspects of what this model would engage in included growing the majority of our food locally (which is well underway on the peninsula), creation of transportation co-ops, development of renewable sources of energy, and the creation of “land banks” to provide livelihood and shelter for young farmers wanting to live here.

The value of the CCC orientation (Conserve, Combine, Create) was introduced and explained. Jim Gower's (one of the founders of College of the Atlantic) world view was also offered – Vision/Community/Celebration. The latter theme of celebration was seen as a factor central to

community building and for giving strength to folks as they deal with the effects of the changing climate and world. It was suggested that the Summer Solstice would be a good occasion to hold a festival of music, dance and Earth education and celebration.

The question was posed, “Does our community have the resources and creativity to build a local model for a response to Climate Change?” The response was a low key, matter of fact, “Of course, we do.”

The evening ended with quotes from the Berry boys (Wendell and Thomas). When Bill Moyers asked Wendell Berry (philosopher/poet/farmer) if we had time to change the trajectory of our planet, Berry replied that that was not a legitimate question. The question must be, “What is the next right thing to do?” And Thomas Berry says that the Great Work of our time is for the human to enter into a mutually enhancing relationship (reciprocity) with the Earth.

Several participants appeared willing to be involved in the planning and directing of a Climate Change Community Initiative, including planning a Climate Change Conference (or as one participant suggested, a conference about “A Climate of Change”).

Several inspirational readings were offered, including one from Terry Tempest Williams which can be found on Yes! Magazine's website in the Spring 2015 edition. Also quoted was Naomi Klein who wrote: “I believe the movement we need is already in the streets; in the courts; in the classrooms; even in the halls of power – we just need to find each other. One way or another, everything is going to change. And for a brief time, the nature of that change, is still up to us.”

And from a poem by Drew Dellinger...

*It's 3:23 in the morning, and I'm awake  
because my great, great grandchildren won't let me sleep.  
My great, great grandchildren ask me in dreams  
what did you do while the planet was plundered?  
What did you do when the earth was unraveling?  
Surely you did something when the seasons started failing,  
as the mammals, reptiles, and birds were all dying?  
Did you fill the streets with protest when democracy was stolen?  
What did you do once you knew...*