

AEC EARTH CARE COMMISSION REPORT
Sept. 21, 2011
SARAH KING

Current active members of the Earth Care Commission include: Sarah King, Doug Bland, David Sholin; Sally Rings; Sr. Mary Elizabeth Lawrence; Pat Kurtz; Paul Khera. Also contributing to the Commission's work on two upcoming events are Bonnie Wasniewski and Patty Sills-Trausch of the Franciscan Renewal Center.

The Commission's main efforts at present are focused on a hike into the Eagletail Wilderness on Saturday, October 29th and a joint event with the Franciscan Renewal Center on Nov. 12th called "Garden Tour Extraordinaire." The hike will highlight an area within the Desert Sonoran Heritage Campaign lands, an effort that the Earth Care Commission has been involved with for the last two years. The Garden Tour will include a visit to the Urban Farm in Phoenix, a community garden in Tempe and a possible third stop at a garden at a church. The Tour is intended to highlight the idea of urban gardening as a path to sustainability. Details for both events are available on the AEC website.

The Earth Care Commission has also begun planning for its annual conference. The date has been set for Saturday, April 28th from 9 AM to 2 PM at the Franciscan Renewal Center. The topic this year is "Desert Wisdom." Presentations will include meditations on desert spirituality and ways to live sustainably in a desert environment. More information will be available on the AEC website in the coming months.

As mentioned earlier in this report, the Commission has been actively involved with the Sonoran Desert Heritage Campaign. We have made more than 350 contacts with clergy, area congregations, ministerial associations and denominational offices seeking their support for the Sonoran Desert Heritage Campaign. We participated in the official launch of the Campaign this past spring. Reverend Marc McDonald of Dove of the Desert United Methodist Church in Glendale gave the invocation at the event which was attended by community leaders, outdoor recreationists, officials from Luke Air Force Base and leaders of several environmental organizations. We continue our efforts to urge clergy from western Maricopa County faith communities to sign a letter in support of the Campaign. So far, 17 clergy have signed on. They represent UMC, Catholic, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Episcopal and Disciples of Christ denominations.

We continue to build our email list of "Voices for the Earth,"—250 people of faith who are willing to receive occasional legislative updates and action alerts on various environmental concerns such as land protection, wilderness, energy conservation, pollution, water issues, etc., and write to congressional representatives to express their point of view. Currently we have about 100 signed on to do this important work.

We continue to seek new members to help us promote a faith-based approach to environmental justice. Interested parties are urged to call Sarah King 602 576 6054 or garbageldy@hotmail.com for further information.

Submitted by Sarah King, Earth Care Commission