

Mennonite Creation Care Network Annual Report 2010

In 2005, MC Canada and MC USA appointed representatives to the Mennonite Creation Care Network. The vision statement of MCCN is as follows: Christ, who created the world in peace and sustains all things, calls us to be stewards of the earth and to bring rest and renewal to the land and everything that lives on it. In response to this call, we will equip lay people and leaders with tools, resources and models that will educate, encourage, and inspire the church to care for creation, which is an expression of God's love.

MCCN is a network for Mennonite people and agencies actively engaged in the care and restoration of God's creation. Its goals are to encourage the Church to:

- Claim our biblical and theological foundation regarding the care of God's Creation.
- Discover the ties that link all created beings to each other and to God.
- Confess the harm we have caused the natural world and our neighbors.
- Act faithfully to restore the earth.

This bi-national volunteer council meets several times per year (once in person and once or twice via computer and phone conference). Staff from the Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center of Goshen College and from Everence (formerly Mennonite Mutual Aid) provide continuity between meetings and manage a web-site for MCCN. With its stewardship emphasis, Everence is a natural partner and our major financial supporter. Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Central Committee Canada help defray partial travel costs of the two Canadian members.

The Mennonite Creation Care Network promotes environmental stewardship activities with regional grassroots groups and institutional agencies to inspire people to be agents of change at home and in the global context. Current activities include: developing communications materials, collecting stories of Mennonites caring for the environment, and building a network within our constituency of those for whom the environment is an ongoing concern. We serve our national and regional conferences in an educational role by assisting with the greening of our gatherings in many practical ways, and presenting and coordinating creation-care themed workshops and activities at these gatherings, as well as to churches and conferences on invitation.

Sustainability Plan: MCCN council members developed a sustainability plan for 2010-2011. The plan reviewed MCCN's historical background, assessed the current condition of organizational operations, defined issues confronting the organization, developed a list of desired outcomes for effective mission, and developed an action plan. Long-term action points included development in the following areas: congregational liaisons, contacts with denominational agencies, strategies for communications, a promotional campaign entitled "100 Shades of Green", and support for the development of MCCN Canada. The planning also focused on exploratory actions for a publishing project, MCCN staffing support needs, and the promotion of the "Green Congregation Scorecard" usage. The implementation calls for ongoing contact with denominational leaders, the development of measures to track MCCN's successes, and decisions about new resources and finances for longer term ministry.

Fundraising: At present there is no mechanism to receive Canadian donations to support the work of Mennonite Creation Care Network. David Neufeld and Joanne Moyer met with representatives from Mennonite Foundation Canada and Mennonite Church Canada to discuss options for fund raising in Canada. There may be a future possibility of framing specific projects as a “partner project” within the MC Canada system.

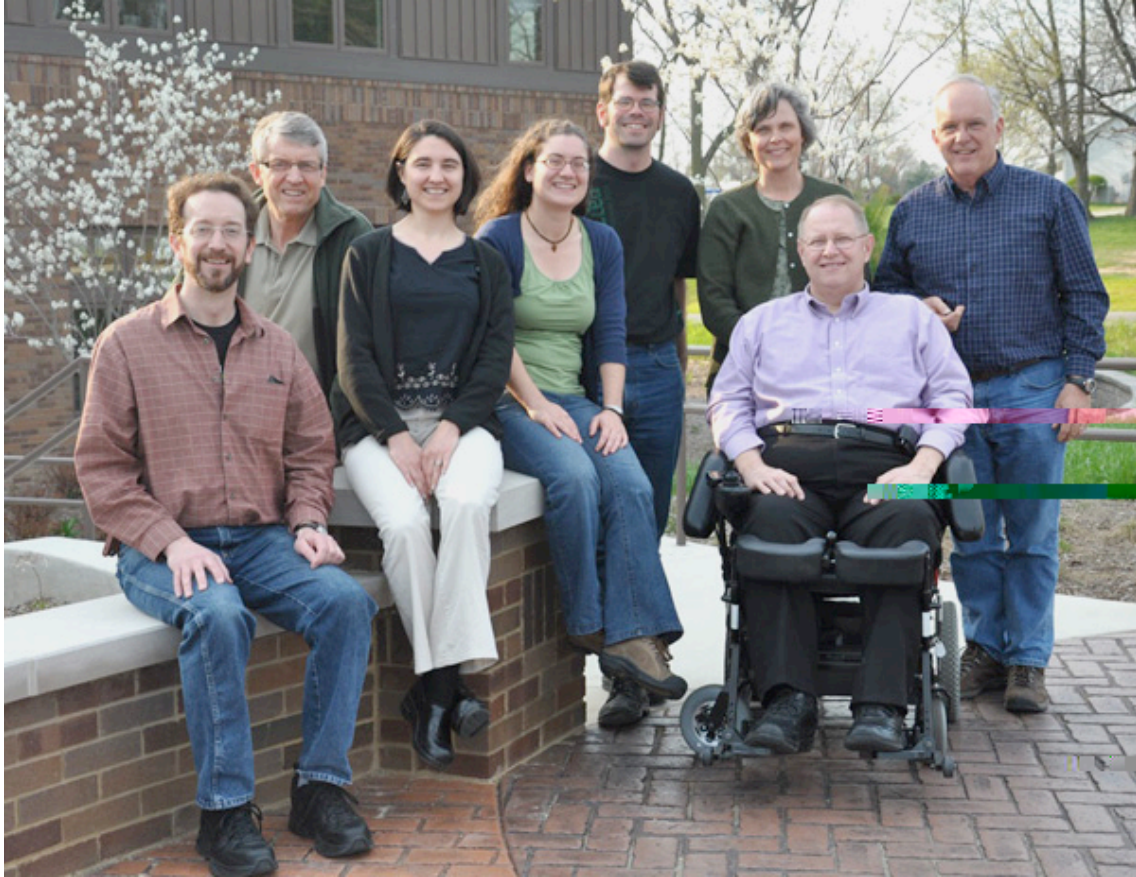
Website: The web-site continues to grow, including advice to congregations, travel suggestions for people attending summer conventions, and links to many resources. MCCN revised its Congregational Score Sheet to make it more user-friendly and added a one-page discussion guide for each category covered. These are available on our congregations page.

100 Shades of Green: The 100 Shades of Green initiative was launched in the fall of 2009 with ads in *The Mennonite*, *Mennonite Weekly Review* and *The Canadian Mennonite* online. The goal is to find 100 churches that register their creation care story with MCCN. Approximately 350 copies of a promotional poster, along with a letter of invitation, were distributed to member congregations of Mennonite Church Canada in the Fall, 2010. Mennonite Central Committee Canada contributed to the printing of the poster and also ordered some to distribute within their networks. As of January, 2011, 46 congregations had registered with the Shades of Green Campaign. Database membership recently passed 500.

Mennonite Church Assemblies: MCCN keeps an active and visible presence at Canadian and USA Assemblies, with workshops at the youth and main assemblies, as well as a booth, and other activities, such as a travel survey at the Calgary Assembly in 2010. This allowed MCCN estimate the energy impact of travel to these gatherings. A green audit report was produced with Mennonite Church Canada staff. More recently, travel suggestions were posted on the website and linked to the MC USA sustainability page. Ways to improve event sustainability continue.

Music Project: MCCN continues to be in conversation with Bryan Moyer-Suderman (Small Tall Music) about the possibility of collaborating on a CD project that would promote creation care through music. The vision is to produce a compilation album with songs submitted by artists within the Mennonite community.

Council Transitions: David Neufeld is leaving his position on Council in 2011 He began in 1991 as a member of the bi-national “Environmental Task Force”. Since then, David served six consecutive terms through the present. Joanne Moyer, who began her role in 2006-2009 (1st term), has begun her second term 2010-2013. Joanne is a joint appointee with MCC Canada. Dave Hockman-Wert renewed his term in June 2010. The Council said farewell to Nekeisha Alexis-Baker of Elkhart, IN, in April 2010. Two council member positions remain vacant. Recommendations for US members can be sent to Luke Gascho (lukeag@goshen.edu). Recommendations for Canadian members can be sent to Dave Bergen of Christian Formation Council (dbergen@mennonitechurch.ca)



Mennonite Creation Care Council (from left to right):

David Neufeld (Winnipeg, MB), Greg Bowman (Salem, OH), Karla Detweiler (Iowa City, IA), Joanne Moyer (Winnipeg, MB), Dave Hockman-Wert (Corvallis, OR), Jennifer Halteman Schrock (Goshen, IN), Jim Smith (Goshen, IN), Luke Gascho (Goshen, IN)