

Progress Through Partnership

None of the work on black ash could have been done without the support of the Akwesasne Task Force on the Environment in partnership with the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). The ATFE has been the vehicle for the project, provided direction, funding, guidance and encouragement. The AFSC has provided funding, guidance, and encouragement.

AKWESASNE TASK FORCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT (ATFE)

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ATFE BACKGROUND

The Akwesasne Task Force on the Environment (ATFE), a community based, grass-roots organization, was formed in 1987 to address the environmental problems facing the Mohawk Nation community of Akwesasne. The mission of the Akwesasne Task Force on the Environment is to conserve, preserve, protect and restore the environment, natural and cultural resources within the Mohawk territory of Akwesasne in order to promote the health and survival of the sacred web of life for future generations and to fulfill our responsibilities to the natural world as our Creator has instructed. ATFE is composed of members of the Mohawk community and staff of environmental agencies, Mohawk governments, and organizations within Akwesasne who share a common concern for the environment and the effects of various toxic substances on human and ecosystem health. Because the Mohawk Nation is part of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy, ATFE works in conjunction with other Haudenosaunee communities with organizations such as the Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force

ATFE PROJECTS

Kaniatarowanen'neh Research Institute

- Advocacy
- Aquaculture Project
- Black Ash Project
- Cultural Resource Program
- Environmental Education
- Environmental Laboratory
- Fruit Tree Project
- Maple Sugar Project
- Medicine Plant Restoration Project
- Research and Partnerships
- Sustainable Agriculture Program
- Sweet Grass Project
- Traditional Medicines
- Wild Rice Project

The Akwesasne Task Force on the Environment has many goals to improve environmental quality in the Mohawk community of Akwesasne. These goals include developing training, education and advocacy programs; addressing community concerns about industrial pollution from nearby ALCOA, General Motors and Reynolds Aluminum; implementing strategies to restore environmental and community health; supporting culturally appropriate sustainable development projects; conducting and supporting scientific research including sampling and testing for toxicants; and networking with other Native communities, environmental and legal professionals.



About AFSC

The American Friends Service Committee carries out service, development, social justice, and peace programs throughout the world. Founded by Quakers in 1917 to provide conscientious objectors with an opportunity to aid civilian war victims, AFSC's work attracts the support and partnership of people of many races, religions, and cultures.

AFSC's work is based on the Quaker belief in the worth of every person and faith in the power of love to overcome violence and injustice. The organization's mission and achievements won worldwide recognition in 1947 when it accepted the Nobel Peace Prize with the British Friends Service Council on behalf of all Quakers.

The AFSC is directed by a Quaker board and staffed by Quakers and other people of faith who share the Friends' desire for peace and social justice.

Mission and Values

AFSC Mission Statement

The American Friends Service Committee is a practical expression of the faith of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Committed to the principles of nonviolence and justice, it seeks in its work and witness to draw on the transforming power of love, human and divine.

We recognize that the leadings of the Spirit and the principles of truth found through Friends' experience and practice are not the exclusive possession of any group. Thus, the AFSC draws into its work people of many faiths and backgrounds who share the values that animate its life and who bring to it a rich variety of experiences and spiritual insights.

This AFSC community works to transform conditions and relationships both in the world and in ourselves, which threaten to overwhelm what is precious in human beings. We nurture the faith that conflicts can be resolved non-violently, that enmity can be transformed into friendship, strife into cooperation, poverty into well-being, and injustice into dignity and participation. We believe that ultimately goodness can prevail over evil, and oppression in all its many forms can give way.

AFSC Values

We cherish the belief that there is that of God in each person, leading us to respect the worth and dignity of all. We are guided and empowered by the Spirit in following the radical thrust of the early Christian witness. From these beliefs flow the core understandings that form the spiritual framework of our organization and guide its work.

We regard no person as our enemy. While we often oppose specific actions and abuses of power, we seek to address the goodness and truth in each individual.

We assert the transforming power of love and nonviolence as a challenge to injustice and violence and as a force for reconciliation.

We seek and trust the power of the Spirit to guide the individual and collective search for truth and practical action.

We accept our understandings of truth as incomplete and have faith that new perceptions of truth will continue to be revealed both to us and to others.

AFSC Work

We seek to understand and address the root causes of poverty, injustice, and war. We hope to act with courage and vision in taking initiatives that may not be popular.

We are called to confront, nonviolently, powerful institutions of violence, evil, oppression, and injustice. Such actions may engage us in creative tumult and tension in the process of basic change. We seek opportunities to help reconcile enemies and to facilitate a peaceful and just resolution of conflict.

We work to relieve and prevent suffering through both immediate aid and long-term development and seek to serve the needs of people on all sides of violent strife.

We ground our work at the community level both at home and abroad in partnership with those who suffer the conditions we seek to change and informed by their strength and vision.

We work with all people, the poor and the materially comfortable, the disenfranchised and the powerful in pursuit of justice. We encourage collaboration in social transformation towards a society that recognizes the dignity of each person. We believe that the Spirit can move among all these groups, making great change possible.

Seeking to transform the institutions of society, we are ourselves transformed in the process. As we work in the world around us, our awareness grows that the AFSC's own organizational life must change to reflect the same goals we urge others to achieve.

We find in our life of service a great adventure. We are committed to this Spirit-led journey, undertaken "to see what love can do," and we are ever renewed by it.

Adopted by the Board of Directors, June 19, 1994



**American Friends
Service Committee**