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Sustainable
Climate Solutions



CSCS Climate Ride Update

"On the Road", Week 6



Hi and welcome back to the Climate Ride. During week six of their trip, the climate riders traveled from Iowa City, Iowa to Goshen, Indiana. The week was filled with meeting new people, learning about land-based issues like agriculture and migration and lots and lots of rain.

During their rest day in the Iowa City area, the riders toured the Geyer farm, a small-scale farm run by Anna and Dave Geyer who have been experimenting with creative ways of generating an income from the land. Besides growing conventional crops like corn and soybeans, the Geyers also raise grass fed beef, have a cut flower business, run an airbnb and folk school, have a metal shop and sell wood-fired pizza with ingredients from their garden.

The Geyers are some of the only farmers around who get all of their income from their farm. “What makes it economically sustainable,” Anna said, “is that there’s a lot of things that are diverse that all add a little bit.”

That and their dedication to living simply. Anna's advice: "When you choose to engage with money in a way that is authentic to who you are, you can make it work."

In the evening, members of the Justice Peace Outreach Group joined us for a screening of the play "Vang: A Drama about Recent Immigrant Farmers." We highly recommend the play which was written by Mary Swander about the experiences of contemporary immigrants in the midwest.

After leaving the farm, the riders rode to Iowa City where they stayed at First Mennonite Church. While there, the group met over zoom with Ellen Sharp, the director of the [Butterflies and Their People](#) organization based in Macheros Mexico. Ellen lives near the Cerro Pelon Monarch Butterfly Reserve in Mexico where she and her husband organize tours of the overwintering grounds and direct a program of park guards to patrol the reserve and protect the monarchs.

Ellen explained that monarch behaviors are very dependent on ambient temperatures, so temperature changes due to climate change and deforestation have big effects on monarch migration. This year, the monarchs roosting at Cerro Pelon had the earliest departure on record due to warmer winter temperatures. Monarch migration is dwindling rapidly, and while Ellen said it's unlikely monarchs will go extinct as a species, the fragile phenomenon that is the monarch migration could soon end completely.

Monarchs aren't necessarily the best pollinators, Ellen said, but because of their beauty and their ability to travel incredible distances, monarchs help attract people, like herself, to the cause of conservation. Saving the monarchs is important, Ellen said because "losing them is losing that draw to conservation for a lot of people."

The rain began after the riders left Iowa City. After one especially wet day on their bikes, the riders were grateful to find refuge at Hungry World Farm, an educational farm near Tiskilwa, Illinois. During a potluck with members of Willow Springs Mennonite Church, local farmers explained that increased rain and big rain events are some of the biggest effects of climate change in the region. After spending weeks in the drought-plagued west, the rain was a welcome change for the riders, but, they learned, it can also be a cause for concern as farming, and all life, is dependent on predictable weather patterns that are being disrupted by climate change.

After leaving Hungry World Farm, the riders continued to make their way through the rain to Indiana for their next rest day in Goshen.



“How should we as the church respond to climate change?” townhall; Goshen, Indiana

After a week of riding through rain, mud and cornfields, the climate riders arrived in Goshen, Indiana where they had a chance to gather with over 120 community members at Fidler Pond park for a townhall discussion around the question “How should we as the church respond to climate change?”

Over thirty bikes of all shapes, sizes and colors were parked around the Chiddister Pavilion where attendees gathered to hear from the six panelists including four community leaders and two riders.

Doug Kauffman, a pastor at Benton Mennonite Church and CSCS's director of pastoral ecology, spoke about how he came to care about climate change, and the unique perspective he brings to his work with climate change as a pastor.

"I started getting involved in these kinds of things because I baptize people in the Elkhart river," he said. "The Elkhart River sometimes has too much crap for safe baptism, and so we've been involved now for 15 years looking at the water. If theologians and pastors can be involved in climate change, journalism majors and others can be involved too. We need all kinds of perspectives to work on climate change. It's not just a scientific problem, it's a human problem that we all need to engage in." ...

[Continue reading the full story on this event here...](#)

[And read the stories, or watch recordings, from other past events here...](#)



Loren Friesen "It's hard to plan for a destination when two people are reading different maps. It's hard to organize an action plan when the problem is not mutually understood. For me, information literacy – how to properly sort through, consume, and discern information – in the digital age, is a crucial foundation if there is to be any sort of meaningful dialogue on the topic."

Sierra Ross Richer "But baptism is also a chance to publicly announce one's commitment to a cause, a path, and that's what this trip is giving me. I can't bike across the country in a yellow jersey that says "Climate Ride" and pretend I don't care about the climate. My commitment is displayed on my shirt and in everything I do this summer. This trip is not only a chance for me to profess my commitment across the country, it also creates a network to hold me accountable for my choices now and in the future."

Read the full reflections [here](#)



CSCS Resources



How can your church get involved with climate advocacy?

CSCS [Climate Futures Fellow](#) Clara Weybright and the others at [Washington D.C. office of Mennonite Central Committee](#) are arranging for climate riders to

meet with their representatives when they ride to the Capitol on July 28, the last day of their journey.

Have you ever met with political representatives to talk about climate change? If not, then you're with the majority of other Mennonites. A recent Mennonite church survey by CSCS [Climate Futures Fellow](#) Clara Weybright found that most respondents had not met with representatives to talk about climate change. Interestingly, however, **most respondents feel that climate advocacy as a faith practice is in keeping with the theology of their church.**

Read the results of this survey in her recent CSCS white paper "[How U.S. Mennonite churches relate to climate advocacy](#)". See [other white papers along with our newsletters](#) for more CSCS's innovative work to understand how to engage effectively with climate change.

You and your church can also get involved with advocacy. See the [set of resources](#) that Clara created in partnership with the MCC Washington D.C. office to get started! And watch for stories of the climate riders' advocacy meetings at the [last townhall](#).

"Broken hearts can be fertile ground. Broken hearts can be fertile soil. Make your broken heart a fertile place to infuse your imagination into it, and what grows out of that can be beautiful, no matter what kind of world we're facing."

Amy Huser, at the Goshen townhall on how the church responds to climate change.

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