

NWTRCC Affiliate Report

October 1, 2007

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Project Overview

As NWTRCC celebrates its 25th anniversary, it is important to consider the big picture of who we are and what we do. The world, the landscape of peace and justice movements, and NWTRCC itself have all changed over the past 25 years. Now is a good time to assess the status of our coalition and to determine if there are ways we can improve our functioning.

A proposal to interview our affiliates was approved by the Coordinating Committee (CC) at its meeting in May 2007. The purpose of these interviews was twofold. First, we wanted to collect information about the status and activity of each group in our coalition. (See *Appendix A* for a list of the questions asked.) Second, we wanted to engage our colleagues in genuine conversation. The most significant interest to emerge from our 2003 “Strengthening the Work of NWTRCC” survey was the need for building stronger relationships with our affiliates. This project was one attempt to develop some connections with a little more depth than our usual exchange of emails and newsletters.

Over the last several months, Robert Randall, Peter Smith, Susan Van Haitsma, and David Waters conducted phone interviews with almost all of our affiliates. This report is based on their good work. Ruth Benn was instrumental in sorting out many loose ends, and special thanks are due to Peter Smith for coordinating the interview process.

This report summarizes the information collected during the interviews. Then it poses a list of questions which have been pending since the 2003 survey. The plan is for the CC to discuss these questions and to identify possible changes and initiatives that might strengthen the work of NWTRCC. The process should conclude with the CC identifying who will develop which specific ideas into well-considered proposals for action.

Results

NWTRCC identifies 46 coalition members as “affiliates.” (See *Appendix B* for the official description of an affiliate.) All 46 groups were contacted and, at the time of this report, 8 groups had not responded. This gives us an 83% response rate. *Appendix C* outlines the individual affiliates and their quantifiable responses via a chart and supplemental notes. This project was not conducted in a scientific manner, and all the numbers and assessments should be considered approximate. Due to the interview style of collecting information, responses and clarifying comments did not always lend themselves to easy quantification. This report cannot be used to explore nuance, and should only be used to identify trends and make rough comparisons.

Summary

The results suggest two themes regarding our network of affiliates.

On one hand, our network is not very strong.

- 60% of our affiliates have 8 or fewer members, and 25% have only 1 or 2 members.
- Aside from the NWTRCC Coordinator position, the network has practically no paid staff working on WTR organizing and support.
- Our relations with affiliates having “organizational purposes broader than WTR” are often weak or non-existent.
- 70% of our affiliates hold meetings once per year or less for the purpose of discussing/working on WTR issues. 40% of our affiliates never meet at all for such purposes.
- Over 60% of our affiliates expressed no interest in playing an active role in NWTRCC decision-making.
- Over 60% of our affiliates do not expect to send a representative to at least one NWTRCC meeting per year.

On the other hand, our network maintains a low, but persistent, level of activity and interest.

- There appear to be at least 200 individuals actively participating in over 30 WTR groups around the country.
- Interest in WTR appears to be hovering around steady, and there are some pockets of growing interest.
- 30% of our affiliates meet at least once every few months for the purpose of discussing/working on WTR issues.
- 75% of our affiliates distribute WTR literature, organize public actions around WTR (e.g, tax day actions), and make referrals to the NWTRCC office or website.
- 68% of our affiliates feel that the NWTRCC Statement of Purpose still rings true and does not need any improvement at all. Other affiliates suggested minor corrections and revisions, but there were no major concerns.
- Almost all of our affiliates are interested in maintaining a connection with NWTRCC by (a) having NWTRCC use their name in public materials as a sign of moral support, (b) making a financial contribution to NWTRCC, and (c) maintaining occasional communications with NWTRCC via email and phone. Over 60% expect to participate, from time to time, in working with NWTRCC on special projects.

Approximately how many active members does your organization have?

24%	0-2	Active Members
34%	3-8	Active Members
21%	9-16	Active Members
21%	30-2000	Active Members (Most of these larger numbers are identified as “active” mailing lists. These numbers must be distinguished from the number of individuals who participate in the routine functioning of the group.)

Note: When an affiliate provided a range, the average was used.

Does your organization have any paid staff person who devotes staff time (or could devote staff time) specifically to WTR work?

Aside from the NWTRCC Coordinator position, almost no one is being paid to work specifically on WTR. Three affiliates (Mennonite Central Committee, Lehigh Valley WTR, and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting) each have a paid staff person devoting a very small percentage of time directly to WTR, and New England WRL expects to have a paid intern working on the WTR campaign in 2008.

How would you assess the current interest in WTR in your organization?

- 13% *Growing Interest* (5 Affiliates: Christian Peacemaker Teams, New England WRL, Boulder CO, Eugene OR, and Spokane WA)
- 61% *Steady Interest* (Many noted that while interest was steady, the level of activity was low or dropping.)
- 26% *Fading Interest* (Including two of our long-time and active affiliates: WRL National and Northern CA.)

On a scale of 1 to 10, approximately what portion of your organization's work is devoted specifically to WTR? (1=Hardly any of our work is devoted to WTR. 10=All of our work is devoted to WTR.)

For this question, it is useful to consider the full set of 46 affiliates, and to divide that set into two subsets.

Subset (A) is comprised of affiliates who identify themselves in their official name as groups whose *primary purpose is WTR and/or redirection*. This subset includes 28 affiliates (about 60% of our total). Out of this subset, all affiliates but one responded to the survey and most, as expected, reported a "10" in response to this question. (Several affiliates in this subset reported a much lower number, suggesting that they understood the question to be about the "quantity" of WTR work they do, as opposed to the "portion" of their work that is devoted to WTR.)

Subset (B) is the area of greater interest, and it is comprised of affiliates who clearly have *purposes broader than WTR*. This subset includes 18 affiliates (about 40% of our total). Out of this subset, 7 affiliates simply did not respond to the survey. Of the 11 affiliates that did respond, most of these reported about a "2" in response to this question. Several reported higher numbers and suggested that they work on many issues and types of resistance that are related to WTR.

Approximately how often does your organization meet specifically to discuss or work on WTR issues?

- 40% Never meet specifically to discuss or work on WTR issues.
- 30% Meet only once per year.
- 15% Meet once every few months.
- 15% Meet approximately monthly.

What has been your organization's main type of activity with WTR in recent years?

While respondents often shared details (many of which have been reported in *More Than a Paycheck*), this report shows the percentage of our affiliates that engage in each of the following activities.

- 82% Distributing WTR literature.
- 76% Organizing public actions around WTR. (Most comments indicated that these are primarily tax day actions.)
- 76% Making referrals to the NWTRCC office.
- 68% Phone WTR counseling. (While several groups reported receiving about a dozen requests per year, most groups reported receiving not more than a couple of calls per year, and some only one call every couple of years.)
- 61% Publicizing WTR issues (e.g., letters to editor, educational programs).
- 47% In-person WTR counseling.
- 47% Organizing WTR workshops.
- 42% Maintaining an alternative fund. (Many groups reported having only a few contributors.)
- 34% Redirection of resisted war taxes.
- 0% Essentially inactive on WTR issues.

As an affiliate of the NWTRCC coalition, does the Statement of Purpose still ring true for your organization? Do you feel the need for any improvements?

- 68% Statement is fine as is.
- 24% Have minor suggestions. Mostly corrections, clarifications, and terminology updates. These suggestions will be worked into a proposal to revise the Statement.
- 8% Need to check with group before responding.
- 0% Have major concerns.

Looking ahead to the next several years, in which of the following ways do you expect that your organization is likely to participate in NWTRCC?

This report shows the percentage of our affiliates that said they would do the following in the coming years.

- 100% *Network List:* We can be listed on the Network List and will respond to calls for basic WTR information.
- 97% *Use of Name:* NWTRCC can use our organization's name in public materials as a sign of our moral support. (Most responses were unqualified, but several groups said that they would like to know how their name would be used in advance.)
- 95% *Finances:* We expect to send a financial contribution probably in the range of \$ _____ to \$ _____ per year.
- 89% *WTR Work:* We expect to promote WTR and/or support war tax resisters within our membership or local constituency.
- 89% *Communications:* We can maintain occasional communications with NWTRCC via email and phone.
- 61% *NWTRCC Projects:* We expect to participate, from time to time, in working with NWTRCC on special projects (e.g., workshops, publications, research, media work, meeting organization, special campaigns, etc.)
- 39% *Decision-Making:* We want to play an active role in NWTRCC decision-making. (It should be noted that, except for WRL-National, none of our affiliates having "organizational purposes broader than WTR" reported an interest in this item.)
- 37% *Meetings:* We expect to send a representative to at least one NWTRCC meeting per year. (Many affiliates in addition to this percentage reported that they would try to send a representative when a CC meeting was in their area.)
- 0% *End Affiliation:* We cannot do any of the above. We need to end our affiliation.

What does your organization need from NWTRCC, or from other NWTRCC affiliates, to improve your work with WTR? Is there anything else you want NWTRCC to know?

These two questions prompted a variety of specific minor requests (e.g., literature requests). One group had a more significant request, suggesting that NWTRCC revisit the idea of developing some sort of mutual aid system for WTR's facing health care emergencies or retirement. Ruth is reviewing these comments and will respond as appropriate.

Questions for the Coordinating Committee

The 2003 “Strengthening the Work of NWTRCC” survey revealed strong interest in reassessing certain aspects of how NWTRCC operates. Three specific areas were identified, and the CC should now begin to address them.

- (1) Clarify and possibly revise the composition of the Coordinating Committee (CC).** By doing this, we would be clearer about who should be in the CC communication loop and who is eligible to participate in CC decisions. While there are some benefits to the current amorphous arrangement, a little more clarity would help build some internal accountability and would help with the logistics of maintaining a healthy network.

Should we define the composition of the CC more specifically? Should we set more specific criteria to determine which groups (and individuals?) should be in the CC communication loop and which are eligible/expected to participate in CC decisions?

Should we refine our affiliation categories to distinguish between (a) groups that are primarily interested in being connected to a WTR network and (b) groups that want to go one step further and participate actively in the NWTRCC decision-making process?

- (2) Evaluate and possibly revise the structure of Administrative Committee (AC).** The 2003 survey showed that more than a few folks wanted to consider possible changes to the AC (such as increasing its size, increasing its responsibilities, increasing the frequency of meetings) so that a more consistent and representative core group could handle more NWTRCC business between CC meetings.

Should we shift some responsibilities from the CC to the AC?

Should we revise the composition or expand the membership of the AC?

Should the AC meet more frequently?

- (3) Evaluate and possibly revise the CC meeting format.** The current meeting format (two meetings per year, each including a mix of public program, AC business, and CC business) and range of participants (AC members for sure, always at least a few CC members, and very variable as far as public participation) has served us well for years. However, if we decide to make any improvements in the CC or the AC, and in light of continuing increases in travel expenses, we should evaluate this meeting format.

Should we consider any changes to the CC weekend meeting format?

Should we consider having more or fewer CC meetings each year?

Appendix A - Questions Asked of Affiliates

Questions About Your Organization

- Approximately how many members does your organization have?
 - Active _____
 - Inactive _____
- What has been your organization's main type of activity with WTR in recent years?
 - Organizing public actions around WTR (e.g, tax day actions)
 - Publicizing WTR issues (e.g., letters to editor, educational programs)
 - Phone WTR counseling
 - In-person WTR counseling
 - Making referrals to the NWTRCC office
 - Organizing WTR workshops
 - Distributing WTR literature
 - Maintaining an alternative fund
 - Redirection of resisted war taxes
 - Essentially inactive on WTR issues
- On a scale of 1 to 10, approximately what portion of your organization's work is devoted specifically to WTR? (1=Hardly any of our work is devoted to WTR. 10=All of our work is devoted to WTR.)
- How would you assess the current interest in WTR in your organization?
 - Growing interest
 - Steady interest
 - Fading interest
- Does your organization have any paid staff person who devotes staff time (or could devote staff time) specifically to WTR work? If yes, can you say a little about the nature and extent of this position?
- Approximately how often does your organization meet specifically to discuss or work on WTR issues? (e.g., once a month, twice a year, once every couple of years)

Questions About Your Organization's Affiliation with NWTRCC

- As an affiliate of the NWTRCC coalition, does the Statement of Purpose still ring true for your organization? Do you feel the need for any improvements?
- Looking ahead to the next several years, in which of the following ways do you expect that your organization is likely to participate in NWTRCC?
 - Use of Name:* NWTRCC can use our organization's name in public materials as a sign of our moral support.
 - Finances:* We expect to send a financial contribution probably in the range of \$_____ to \$_____ per year.
 - Network List:* We can be listed on the Network List and will respond to calls for basic WTR information.
 - WTR Work:* We expect to promote WTR and/or support war tax resisters within our membership or local constituency.

- Communications*: We can maintain occasional communications with NWTRCC via email and phone.
 - Decision-Making*: We want to play an active role in NWTRCC decision-making.
 - Meetings*: We expect to send a representative to at least one NWTRCC meeting per year.
 - NWTRCC Projects*: We expect to participate, from time to time, in working with NWTRCC on special projects (e.g., workshops, publications, research, media work, meeting organization, special campaigns, etc.)
 - End Affiliation*: We cannot do any of the above. We need to end our affiliation.
- What does your organization need from NWTRCC, or from other NWTRCC affiliates, to improve your work with WTR?
 - Is there anything else you want NWTRCC to know?

Appendix B - *NWTRCC Handbook* Section on “Affiliates”

(A) *Benefits of Affiliation*

- (1) Affiliates help support a staffed office that focuses on war tax resistance:
 - Providing support to war tax resisters, connecting them to local organizations and individuals.
 - Tracking changing regulations.
 - Providing news about actions throughout the country and internationally.
 - Crafting national outreach strategies.
 - Bringing together peace activists semi-annually in regional gatherings.
- (2) Affiliates receive the following benefits:
 - A subscription to *More Than A Paycheck*, NWTRCC’s bi-monthly newsletter.
 - Reduced costs on some NWTRCC materials.
 - Technical assistance on WTR organizing, counseling, alternative funds and local WTR campaigns.
 - Participation in the NWTRCC decision-making process as members of the Coordinating Committee.
 - Coordination of Tax Day activities with other groups and free national publicity.
 - Updates on late-breaking WTR developments.
 - A web site link.

(B) *Expectations of Affiliates*

- (1) Provide your group’s name, address and telephone number for NWTRCC’s Network List.
- (2) Respond to requests for information by:
 - (a) Answering from your own experience and knowledge, or;
 - (b) Supplying basic WTR materials from stock you keep on hand (you may charge costs for this service.)
 - (c) Evaluating the complexity of concerns and referring questions for counseling to WTR counselors, the NWTRCC office, or to lawyers, CPA’s or others as appropriate.
- (3) Keep track of WTR activities in your area and pass the info on to the NWTRCC office.
- (4) To the extent that you are able, promote, advertise, and network WTR in your area.

Possible activities include:

 - (a) Helping individuals connect with WTR groups, and helping groups to cooperate with each other on WTR.
 - (b) Advocating tax day demonstrations and other resistance activities.
 - (c) Providing op-eds and advertisements for local publications and developing relations with area journalists in order to spread the idea of WTR.
 - (d) Setting up and participating in trainings for WTR and WTR counseling.
 - (e) Convincing organizations to accept WTR as part of their concerns and activities.
- (5) Affiliates are asked to make annual affiliation contributions to NWTRCC. Suggested amounts are \$100 per year for local groups, \$125-\$300 for regional groups and \$500 for national groups. Regional groups would be the group in a large city, for example, or for a region of a state or several states.

Appendix C - Affiliate Notes & Response Chart

National

(1) War Resisters League (NY)

WRL produces and distributes the annual WTR pie chart, a WTR brochure, and the WTR manual. Interest in WTR is fading among leadership. Most WTR work is done by non-staff contractors. WTR report at semi-annual national meetings. They recently provided a \$2,000 grant for the NWTRCC movie project.

(2) Fellowship of Reconciliation (NY)

NO RESPONSE. They have been in transition, and Ruth is trying to develop a contact there. In recent years, there has been some uncertainty regarding their affiliation with NWTRCC.

(3) Mennonite Central Committee U.S. (PA)

MCC serves about a dozen different denominational groups. They produce some of their own WTR materials, and have led a “learning tour to Colombia on WTR.”

(4) Center on Conscience and War (DC)

Executive Director describes CCW as the most conservative in the peace movement, and sees WTR at the far end of the conscientious objector spectrum. As a legal services organization, they generally dissuade people from WTR. They make referrals to NWTRCC (rarely) when clients desire more information. Staff member Bill Galvin occasionally attends NWTRCC meetings.

(5) National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund (DC)

Executive Director sees energy for their campaign coming largely from WTR's. Their organization does not formally promote WTR, but they are supportive of NWTRCC. They noted the importance of unifying as much as possible in our efforts, and working to limit the occasional rifts between those who focus energy on peace tax fund legislation and those who focus on resistance.

(6) Sojourners (DC)

NO RESPONSE. They usually run at least one WTR related ad or piece almost every year.

(7) War Tax Resisters Penalty Fund (IN)

6 person steering committee, 250 regular contributors, and 600 person mailing list. Primary focus is annual appeal and distribution of funds to WTR's who have been charged penalties by the IRS. They also function as a small local group.

(8) Christian Peacemaker Teams (IL)

Their staff earn too little to owe taxes. They try to send a representative to NWTRCC meetings when possible, and they expressed strong support for NWTRCC.

(9) Episcopal Peace Fellowship (IL)

NO RESPONSE. They do run WTR pieces occasionally in their newsletter.

(10) Voices for Creative Nonviolence (IL)

VCNV staff are all WTR's in that they earn less than taxable level. They focus more on living WTR than talking about it.

(11) Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (CA)

NO RESPONSE. They are going through internal problems. Might be time to drop them from the list.

New England Region

(12) Pioneer Valley War Tax Resisters (MA)

Each year, they have 4 -6 new folks with questions, but they do not become part of group.

(13) New England War Tax Resistance/Alternative Fund (MA)

The organization is recovering from some hard times. They are now renewing the structure of the group and are optimistic.

(14) Agape Community (MA)

They practice noncooperation with much in mainstream society.

(15) New England War Resisters League (CT)

Maintains an active program, including WTR work, in the New England region. Many WTR's in local groups are Catholic Workers, living below taxable level. They expect to have a paid intern working on the 2008 WTR campaign.

(16) Maine WTR Resource Center/ROSC (ME)

200 active members is the email list. They meet at gatherings, workshops, and have an annual statewide meeting. WTR is a regular part of their broader program in the state.

Eastern Region

(17) New York City War Tax Resistance/Alternative Life Fund (NY)

Primary focus is the alternative fund and redirection. Have not had much call for or interest in other WTR activity in recent years.

(18) Ithaca War Tax Resisters (NY)

Their group has seen a bit of new interest in the community, as well as some fading interest by regulars who used to participate.

(19) Princeton Fund for Life (NJ)

They are mostly inactive, but do continue a small tax day action. The fund currently has only one contributor.

Mid-Atlantic Region

(20) Lehigh Valley WTR Life Fund (PA)

They do some WTR activity in conjunction with LEPOCO, a regional activist group. A member of the group is on LEPOCO's staff and is paid to do a little WTR work.

(21) Philadelphia Yearly Meeting/Conscience, Militarism, and War Tax Concerns (PA)

Staff person works one day a week on general programming regarding militarism and WTR. Most group members are older, and they function as "institutional memory and resource." She emphasized that they feel they have been mostly unsuccessful in "framing WTR in ways that attract younger people."

(22) Washington Area War Tax Resistance (DC)

They note that interest in their group is steady to fading. No response at this time regarding NWTRCC Statement of Purpose (Carol wants to poll the group's active members).

(23) Christians for Peace (VA)

NO RESPONSE. However, Ray Gingerich has continued WTR activity and connection with NWTRCC.

Southeast Region

(24) Fools of Conscience/Taxes for Life! Alternative Fund (NC)

Group does provide members with mutual support, but they have been less cohesive in past 2 years. Leader says he is burned out on activism, and no one else has stepped up.

(25) Louisville Fellowship of Reconciliation (KY)

Current contacts are long-time WTR's, but there does not seem to be much group interest in WTR. They are in the process of setting up a new contact person.

(26) Birmingham War Tax Objectors (AL)

They have no formal meetings.

Great Lakes Region

(27) Michiana War Tax Refusers (IN)

They meet once every couple of years. Peter is NWTRCC's webmaster.

(28) Milwaukee WTR/Casa Maria Catholic Worker Alternative Life Fund (WI)

They meet once every couple of years. Only two people left in alternative fund. Lincoln does the legal updates for NWTRCC and coordinates the young adult working group. Says that biggest need is for continued updating of NWTRCC website. He refers many people there for info and literature.

(29) Southern Wisconsin Alternative Tax Fund (WI)

Jerry does most of the printing for NWTRCC.

(30) MN Military Tax Resistance Network (MN)

It is not clear that this group is currently functioning. The new Executive Director of Friends for a Nonviolent World (a larger group with whom the MN Military Tax Resistance Network is affiliated) responded to the questions. He noted that they might be able to reactivate the group in another 6 months.

Central Region

(31) St. Louis Covenant Community of WTR's (MO)

NO RESPONSE. Bill Ramsey is active with NWTRCC and, as far as we know, the group is still active.

(32) Heartland Peace Tax Group (KS)

This group is hosting the current Coordinating Committee meeting, and Susan has been on the Administrative Committee twice. Group has stronger emphasis on promoting peace tax fund legislation than on WTR.

(33) Iowa Peace Network (IA)

NO RESPONSE. However, they did maintain contact with NWTRCC this year.

Northcentral & Southwest Regions

(34) Boulder War Tax Information Project (CO)

This project is part of the Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center. They refer WTR enquiries to Gary. He notes that interest is small but growing, especially among young people in his area.

(35) Southern AZ War Tax Refusers / Nuclear Resister (AZ)

Couple publishes the *Nuclear Resister*, which publicizes info about jailed WTR's. They do not operate formally as a local group.

(36) Albuquerque War Tax Alternative Fund (NM)

Only 2 members (out of the 5 active ones noted) are active WTR's.

(37) Austin Conscientious Objectors to Military Taxation (TX)

Although interest is steady, the group's activity level has decreased in recent years due to several reasons. Meetings used to be monthly but are now less frequent. A year or two ago, one group member got a grant to do outreach regarding the peace tax fund legislation.

West Coast Region

(38) Southern California WTR and War Tax Alternative Fund (CA)

Their group communicates mostly via email conferences and, if anything, they have seen some slight growth. Joe has helped edit several NWTRCC publications.

(39) Civilian Congress (CA)

NO RESPONSE. Seems to be a one-person operation. Does send notes occasionally to the NWTRCC office.

(40) Northern California WTR/People's Life (CA)

In addition to their 10 active members, they have 30 "connected" members.

(41) Sonoma County Taxes for Peace (CA)

They have monthly support potluck dinners. Larry says they tried to do too much hosting the WTR conference (and NWTRCC meeting) back in 2003. It burned out many folks and now the group is just hanging in there.

Northwest Region & Beyond

(42) Oregon Community for WTR (OR)

They found a lot of interest in WTR last year, but it has really tapered off this year.

(43) Taxes for Peace Not War (Eugene) (OR)

They have a general meeting every other month, and a monthly steering committee meeting.

(44) Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation (WA)

Not a membership organization, but an area committee coordinating local FOR chapters. They focus on military resistance in general, and not so much on WTR. Local interest in WTR fluctuates and is hard to gauge.

(45) Nonviolent Action Community of Cascadia / Conscience & Military Tax Campaign

(WA) CMTC is listed as one of our national affiliates but, in practice, these two groups are the same.

(46) Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (WA)

They focus on war issues generally, with occasional attention to WTR. There is one half-time staff position, and some of that time is devoted to military spending issues. They know of no active and public WTR's in their area.