

NWTRCC Affiliate Evaluation Project

(Draft by Clark Hanjian - 3/20/07)

Summary

This project has 3 parts: (1) conduct a substantive phone conversation with each NWTRCC affiliate in order to gather information about their particular interests and their commitment to participation in NWTRCC; (2) prepare a report that summarizes the results of these conversations; and (3) assess the big picture of our affiliates to determine if it would be prudent for NWTRCC to consider revising any aspects of our operation.

Rationale

As NWTRCC approaches 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 check-in with our affiliates to assess the status of our coalition.

The 2003 “Strengthening the Work of NWTRCC” survey provided a useful self-evaluation and led to some good work over the last few years (e.g., the national conference, the travel fund, the NWTRCC Handbook, and the emphasis on the November meeting for business).

The most significant interest that emerged in the survey - and the one major area which we have not yet made a serious effort to address - is building stronger relationships with our affiliates. This project offers a first step: by engaging in actual conversations with our partners (and not simply exchanging emails and newsletters), we will hopefully develop some connections with a little more depth.

Additionally, the 2003 survey revealed strong interest in reassessing certain aspects of how NWTRCC operates. Three specific areas were identified:

- (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.
- (2) *Evaluate and possibly revise the structure of Administrative Committee (AC).* The 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.
- (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.

Since NWTRCC is a coalition founded on affiliate participation, before we spend any energy considering these three items, we need to have a clearer sense about the current interests and commitment of our affiliates. This project will provide us with information for determining what operational changes, if any, would strengthen the work of NWTRCC.

Advance Mailing

Prior to the phone conversations, a letter will be mailed to all affiliates informing them about this project and that someone from NWTRCC will be calling to speak with them in the coming month(s). The letter should include: a copy of the NWTRCC Statement of Purpose, the web address for the NWTRCC Handbook, and the list of questions we would like to discuss.

The Conversations

Who will be called? Appendix A lists 45 affiliates (12 national and 33 local/regional) who qualify for a call.

What does each call involve? The process for each call will probably take at least one hour, including the following elements:

- Identify the correct person to speak with, and set an appointment to talk. If Ruth does not have an accurate name and phone number for the person who is the affiliate's liaison with NWTRCC, then a separate phone call or two might be necessary to track down this information. (5-15 minutes)
- Conduct the conversation, being sure to get answers to the questions outlined in Appendix B. This process might require more than one phone call if the affiliate is larger and requires checking-in with a program committee or board. (30 minutes)
- Write-up the details from the conversation and email them to the person who will prepare the summary report. (30-45 minutes)

Who should do the calling? Whoever conducts the calls should have at least a little history with NWTRCC and a reasonable knowledge of how we currently operate. Especially in regard to affiliates with whom we have had minimal contact, this call could serve as a starting place for stronger relations. Since whoever conducts the calls will be an ambassador for NWTRCC, we might want to give extra consideration in determining who this will be. The combined calling/reporting process outlined above is likely to take 50-70 hours. Thus, we either need to raise money to pay someone to do this work (70 hours x \$20/hour = \$1,400) or we need to divvy up the list and share the task among volunteers. Options for callers include:

- *Coordinator*: While our Coordinator is an obvious choice to handle this task, there are concerns of time use (do we want her to divert this much time from her normal work?) and decentralization (do we want another network function to emanate from the national office?).
- *AC Members*: Since AC members play a leadership role in NWTRCC, their identified presence as callers might help convey the importance of these conversations.
- *Active CC Members*: A group of interested CC members who volunteer to call seems ideal. However, a key concern with volunteers (AC or CC members) is follow-through. If callers are not diligent about completing the calls and reporting back in a timely manner, either a chunk of work would need to be re-delegated to someone else, or the project would founder.
- *Contracted CC Member*: A benefit of hiring an individual CC member to make the calls is that we can select a person who hopefully will represent us at our best, will build on existing relationships, and will do a good job at drawing out the information we seek. We also get the benefit of a more consistent conversation and reporting format, which should give us results that are more reliably comparable from affiliate to affiliate. Major drawbacks include the possibility of hiring the wrong person and coming up with the money.

Summary Report

Each caller will write-up the information from their phone conversations and forward this to the person designated to prepare the summary report. The summary report should provide a one-paragraph overview of the status of each affiliate. It should also provide some big picture analysis (e.g., trends, cumulative results, comparative tables). Before finalizing the report, a draft should be reviewed by all the callers and then revised as necessary.

Assessment

After the summary report has been finalized and distributed, we will meet (during a regular CC meeting weekend) to discuss the results and determine next steps, with special attention to the three operational areas identified in the 2003 survey.

What Do We Need to Decide?

- Is this plan worth implementing? If so, does it need any revisions?
- Should the caller(s) be volunteer or paid?
- Who should be the caller(s)?
- Who will prepare the summary report?
- Can NWTRCC reimburse long distance calls without a budget request?
- What type of timeline do we want?
 - Complete calls and submit all information by:
 - Circulate draft summary report to callers by:
 - Callers submit review comments by:
 - Final summary distributed by:
 - Meeting date to assess results and determine next steps:

Appendix A
Affiliates Report
(Prepared by Ruth Benn, 01/07)

Codes:

Active, regular contact

#% Active but 1 person pretty much

* Paid Dues in 2006

@ Friendly but little contact or involvement in WTR

+ No recent contact (red means a really long time)

^ David Waters called in fall '06 (red means he never got a call back or found a good contact person after a few tries)

#Active usually indicates they do something on WTR and at least returned the postcard for network list update in 9/06

In some cases the date of the last payment is in () after their name. All have gotten dues notices in the last year; David W calls included dues request follow-up.

National:

#* War Resisters League

^ Fellowship of Reconciliation (02)

#* Mennonite Central Committee

@ Center on Conscience & War (10/05 – rec'd notice Nov 06)

#* National Campaign for a Peace Tax fund

@ Sojourners (runs our ads/mentions us at least 1x per year)

@^ War Tax Resisters Penalty Fund (03, told David they'd send check but hasn't arrived)

#* Christian Peacemaker Teams

^ Episcopal Peace Fellowship ('01, mentioned us/WTR in newspaper in 06)

@ Voices for Creative Nonviolence (promotes wtr regularly)

^ Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (02, Susan Quinlan in regular contact)

#* Conscience & Military Tax Campaign

Regional/Local:

#* Pioneer Valley War Tax Resisters

New England War Tax Resistance (04)

#* New England War Resisters League
 #* ME WTR Resource Center/ROSC
 #* New York City War Tax Resistance
 #* Ithaca War Tax Resisters
 + Princeton Fund for Life (03)
 #* WTR Life Fund of Lehigh Valley
 #* Phil. Yearly Meeting Conscience, Militarism & War Tax Concerns
 #* Washington Area War Tax Resistance
 + Louisa Alternative Fund (03)
 #%* Christians for Peace
 #* Fools of Conscience/Taxes for Life! Alternative Fund
 # Louisville FOR (just sent \$\$ recently I think)
 #%* Birmingham War Tax Objectors
 #* Michiana War Tax Refusers
 #* Milwaukee War Tax Resistance/Alternative Life Fund
 # Madison Area War Tax Resistance/ Alternative Fund
 ^ MN Military Tax Resistance Network (01, weak these days)
 # St. Louis Covenant Community of War Tax Resisters (05)
 # Iowa Peace Network (04)
 #% Boulder War Tax Information Project (6/05)
 #* S. Arizona War Tax Refusers
 #* Austin Conscientious Objectors to Military Taxation
 #* War Tax Alternative Fund and Southern California WTR
 #% Civilian Congress (99)
 #* Northern California War Tax Resistance/People's Life Fund
 #* Sonoma County Taxes for Peace
 #* Oregon Community for WTR
 #* Taxes for Peace Not War (Eugene)
 #* Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation (came to Seattle meeting)
 #* Nonviolent Action Community of Cascadia
 + Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (05)

Appendix B

Draft Questions for Affiliates

Preliminary Call

- [Introduce yourself, NWTRCC, and purpose of call.]
- Are you the correct person to speak with regarding your organization's relationship with NWTRCC?
- What is your role/position in the organization?
- Did you receive the advance mailing about this call? If not, can I mail you another copy?
- Can I confirm your contact information?
 - Organization name
 - Mailing address
 - Best phone number
 - Best email address
- When is a good date/time for me to call back for so we can talk for 30 minutes?

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, one 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 to 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 decisions-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?