What a whirlwind of activity around War Tax Day this year in Maine! Individuals and groups of people reached out to youth and the public at large to help them understand the connection between federal taxes paid and the grinding war machine that underlies the US economy and influences the economies around the globe.

Beginning in March, tabling occurred at Peace Action Maine’s environmental event at University of Southern Maine. Arthur Harvey tabled at the Changing Maine Festival at UMaine, Augusta. Len Simons tabled every Tuesday for two hours at UMaine, Machias, for six weeks. Larry Dansinger worked with UMaine, Orono’s, student Peace Action group to reach out using a penny poll (see attached results) before War Tax Day and afterwards at the Hope Festival with the help of Alan Clement and Jane Livingston. Gabrielle Wellman tabled at the Blue Hill Coop. Lynne Rayburn and Alan Clement tabled all day at the Belfast Coop. Frank Donnelly leafleted throughout Ellsworth. Suzanne Hedrick leafleted in Damariscotta. Peace Works’ Rosalie Paul was joined by Bruce Gagnon, Joanne Hardy, Mary Donnelly, Carol Scribner and Christine DeTroy who leafleted at the Brunswick Post Office. Marylyn Wentworth had the novel idea of tabling at the Kennebunk contradance which she will continue to do this summer. Jacqui Deveneau, Mike Michalski, Lora Somlyo, Seth Berner tabled all day with a penny poll (see attached results) at the corner of Congress and High Streets in Portland.

Thanks to Peace Action Maine for organizing speeches in Portland by Richard Clements of Veterans for Peace, Bruce Gagnon of the Global Network against Weapons in Space, Lisa Savage of the Natural Guard, Michelle Fournier of 350 Maine, and Ginny Schneider of our own Maine WTR Resource Center. Rosalie Paul emceed and Michael Hasty entertained with music. Peace Action Maine augmented media coverage of the day by recording it for public access tv and getting coverage by Channel 6 and MPBN.

Where to next? The Maine WTR Resource Center is fundraising (we are over half way there!) to increase youth and militarism work in Maine. Later this spring we will plan the Divest from the Pentagon project. The center will also increase outreach at the Cannabis Festival in August where we will have a table, speak on stage and hold a workshop. We are applying to have a table at the Common Ground Fair in the fall. The center has pledged to sponsor the Maine Peace Walk this fall as well.
We are looking for space where we are visible and can connect with young people. This is an ongoing effort that involves discussions with organizations and individuals throughout Portland. Any and all ideas are welcomed in this regard.

Thank yous go out to the National War Tax Resistance Resource Center, Resources for Organizing Social Change, Conscience and Military Tax Campaign – Escrow Fund and four generous individual donors for their grants and donations to make this work possible. Thank you to ARRT! for making the terrific banner in the photo graph at the top of this report.