



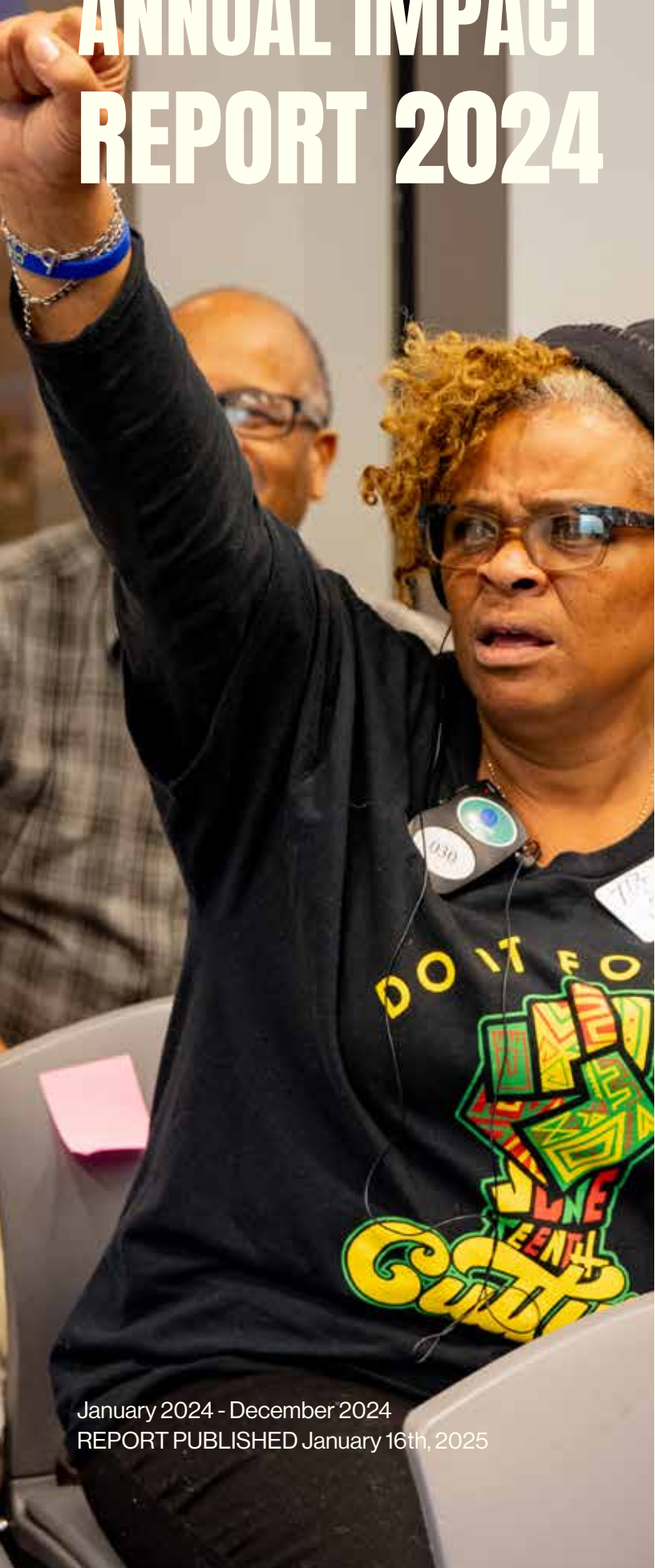
**TAPROOT
EARTH**



ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2024

SEEDING ABUNDANCE, HARVESTING POWER

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2024



January 2024 - December 2024
REPORT PUBLISHED January 16th, 2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To those who light the way, we acknowledge your power.

In 2024, Gulf South for a Green New Deal (GS4GND) organizers taught us the meaning of solidarity when they joined forces with Appalachian organizers, in recognition of their similarities and mutual power. Thank you to the Gulf South organizers who shifted their governance structure to design a new formation: Gulf South to Appalachia (G2SA).

At the same time, Appalachian organizers brought their storied history of resistance, tangible skills, and detailed knowledge of extractive industries to our new G2SA formation, strengthening it and building its power through their solidarity. Thank you to the Appalachian organizers for recognizing the value of building together.

This year and every year, Taproot Noire has held a sacred space for Black community and joy. They teach us that when Black folks get free—from New York to Nairobi to the global Black Diaspora—we all get free. Thank you to the Krewe, leaders, and members of Taproot Noire for reminding us of our core mission.

Taproot Earth's work would not be achievable without the many partners who support and collaborate with our Krewe. We honor the leadership and solidarity of the philanthropic community that invests in frontline movements and sustains our work. We also extend our gratitude to the consultants and partners who have strengthened our systems, improved our processes, and helped document our journey.

Finally, Taproot Earth thanks the families and community members of the climate movement whose invisible labor and care make our work possible. We acknowledge the kin and community who sustain our organizers, Krewe, and workers as they produce our programming. Thank you to the invisible hands that ensure we can all go home to live, rest, thrive.

With Gratitude and in solidarity,





Image: The Original Pinettes Brass Band plays at the Katrina 19: Rooted in Resistance Dinner in August of 2024

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2024 IN A WATERSHED

1

**Movement to to build climate justice
with LIBERATION at its horizon**

75

**Frontline leaders from Gulf South, Appalachia,
and the global Black diaspora who received
direct leadership investment by participating
in fellowship and training programs.**

400

**Partner and participant organizations,
groups, and communities engaged
in Taproot Earth Convenings**

1,000

**Community-accountable leaders who
engaged with and helped shape frontline
solutions through Taproot Earth Convenings**



ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2024 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Image: The 200 participants at [the Global Climate Reparations Governance Assembly 2024](#) in Nairobi, Kenya

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2022, Taproot Earth has cultivated frontline power and advanced climate justice for communities across the US and the global Black Diaspora. Taproot Earth's vision is to achieve the [Liberation Horizon](#), which means building a world where we can all live, rest, and thrive in the places we love. We have set ourselves the goal of reaching this horizon by 2030 – a date seen by many climate scientists and activists as a point of no return. To advance our goal, Taproot Earth has adopted three main programmatic roles to support the movement towards justice. This Impact Report shares some insights for how Taproot Earth advanced these strategies in 2024.

1. We **design and convene** sacred and powerful spaces for frontline leaders to envision, connect, and implement solutions to the climate crisis and growing authoritarianism
2. We **resource and implement** community leaders and community solutions to show that frontline vision is not only possible, but the strongest pathway forward for a liberated people and planet
3. We **document and replicate** narratives, stories, processes, and solutions so that collective governance, Black liberation, Indigenous land sovereignty, and climate justice can spread and root like mighty oaks across the globe for a better world.



Image: Participants raise their hands at the GS2A Governance Assembly in Pittsburgh, PA in December 2024

Growing and Learning as a Sunset Organization

This year the Taproot Earth krewe nearly doubled in size, **growing to 30 members across 13 U.S. states, Puerto Rico, Portugal, and Kenya**. As part of our commitment to building, documenting and replicating accountable systems, we developed internal governance models that prioritize collective-decision making. We transitioned from hierarchical leadership structures to a circular, collective decision-making model known as the STORM process, which centers equity and community governance while decentering whiteness and individualism. We also transformed our workflow to integrate continuous feedback loops, cross-functional collaboration, and inclusive frameworks for decision-making. Finally, we developed a new policy handbook that addresses systemic injustices and an iterative debrief-and-evaluation cycle to ensure we remain true to our values. Together, these efforts have strengthened our team relationships, improved accountability, and maintained alignment with frontline priorities, all while connecting personal growth to structural change.

At Taproot Earth, we know that the climate emergency does not recognize state and national borders. Across watersheds, regions, states, and nations, Taproot Earth catalyzes domestic and global solidarity.

Program Highlights: #WeChooseNow

Rooted in the Gulf South and Appalachia, Taproot Earth's #WeChooseNow initiative renewed existing relationships, catalyzed new connections, and invested in the growth of the [Gulf South to Appalachia \(GS2A\)](#)—a powerful frontline formation that became a force of nature.

- Echoing the local streams that flow into rivers and converge in the mighty Mississippi, the GS2A convened over 600 people from across our regions in Birmingham, Alabama for a historic [#WeChooseNow](#) Community Assembly in July 2024. Gathering on ground that is sacred to the Civil Rights movement, we celebrated, learned together, and affirmed our commitment to developing frontline solutions to the climate and political crises we face.

- Emulating the fertile bayou that supports the mighty oaks growing in its midst, Taproot Earth invested in training 40 leaders representing over 2,000 neighbors and community members through two programs: the GS2A Fellowship and the Building a Movement (BAM!) training in collaboration with Project South.
- Mirroring the migratory sparrows that return each year to raise a new generation, Taproot Earth and our GS2A Fellows convened in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to host a Governance Assembly for over 75 community-accountable leaders. We facilitated these emerging leaders in developing their skills in governance and making decisions that advance a Gulf and Appalachia-centered vision in face of the climate crisis and rising authoritarianism.

Program Highlights: Global Climate Reparations

Rooted in years of relationship-building and conversation, Taproot Earth's Global Climate Reparations Initiative affirmed a vision for repair in our broken world and established a firm direction for how to achieve it.

- Through our Global Climate Reparations Fellowship Program, Taproot Earth invested in the leadership of 13 climate and community leaders from nine countries.
- Together with the Taproot Earth Krewe, our GCR Fellows formed a Global Climate Reparations Facilitation Team that led the [2024 Global Climate Reparations Governance Assembly](#). Over 200 global participants from 29 countries convened at the Assembly and iterated a groundbreaking new [Global Climate Reparations Working Statement](#).
- We launched our GCR Working Statement [at COP29](#), alongside a bold call to center future action in frontline accountability and leadership. We [redefined climate finance](#) as reparative climate justice



Image: The Global Climate Reparations facilitation team discusses strategy

investments and called for community-generated solutions, such as [the Community Controlled Fund model](#).

Members from our global and domestic facilitation teams attended our governance assemblies in Nairobi and Pittsburgh. Meanwhile, our All-Black [Taproot Noire](#) formation hosted the [Black Climate Leadership Summit at NYC Climate Week 2024](#), which brought together 100 Black-identified global and domestic frontline leaders to build new and exciting relationships and exchange knowledge.

We build our initiatives and formations from the empathy that binds us. We honor our sacred identities and our shared global ecosystem that transcends borders.

Taproot Earth commits to transformative understandings of people, place, and programming.

Follow the frontlines.



Image (left): Movement Makers leads the Global Climate Reparations Governance Assembly in an energizer for the body



Image (right): A line dance at the #WeChooseNow Community Assembly in Birmingham, Alabama

DESIGN & CONVENE

Taproot Earth designs and implements spaces of healing and joy for communities impacted by climate injustice across the world. In 2024, we convened frontline communities from Lisbon to New Orleans to Nairobi to repair harm and cultivate solutions. We seek to transform existing cultures of extraction into cultures of abundance, liberation, and sustainability.

#WeChooseNow Community Assembly

In July 2024, Taproot Earth's Gulf South to Appalachia formation (GS2A) convened 600 frontline leaders and community members at the #WeChooseNow 2024 Community Assembly in Birmingham, Alabama. This gathering marked the official launch of our Climate Action Strategy and commemorated the 60th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act. The Assembly featured community-led learning sessions, skill-building, and cultural celebrations. We cultivated

relationships between members from the Gulf South and Appalachian regions. We expanded relationships within Taproot Noire, the Black climate leaders network, through the provision of an all-Black space at the assembly.

Global Climate Reparations Movement Governance Assembly

In August 2024, Taproot Earth convened 200+ frontline and social movement leaders in Nairobi, Kenya for a Global Climate Reparations Movement Governance Assembly. We also partnered with movement formations including Africans Rising, Afrikki, Children's Environmental Health Network, Lapid Leaders, and Sustainable Energy Access Forum-Kenya, as well as culture bearers Dr. Mila Thigpen, Ashé Culture and Arts Center, and Junebug Productions. Our Movement Governance Assembly cultivated a collective



Image: Frontline, community leaders enjoy the celebration at the Katrina 19 Rooted in Resistance Dinner in August 2024

vision among movement leaders and built power by strengthening inter-organizational relationships. Overall, participants from 29 countries and 125 organizations rooted in Black liberation came together to create a Global Climate Reparations working statement to guide frontline work for years to come.

Working Statement for Global Climate Reparations

During the Global Climate Reparations Governance Assembly, participants drew on many ideas, values, and examples, as well as over 150 individual definitions to synthesize the following working statement:

[Climate reparations is the restoration of healthy and balanced relationships with all that comprise a shared global ecosystem. Reparative action begins with those who benefit most from the historic and current systems of oppression. It requires the abolition of debt, restitution for injustice and the establishment of accountable systems rooted in Black and Indigenous liberation for all oppressed people and future generations.]

Katrina 19 Rooted in Resistance Dinner: A Celebration of Hurricane Katrina's Leaders

In August 2024, Taproot Earth collaborated with the Foundation for Louisiana and the Ashé Cultural Arts Center to gather frontline leaders who responded to the impacts of 2005's Hurricane Katrina and have been working to restore their communities across the Gulf South ever since. We convened 55 leaders to build community, celebrate local music and cuisine, and plan for the future. Our Rooted in Resistance Dinner also served as the inaugural gathering for the Katrina 20 Local Committee, a regional network of 75 local organizations and community leaders dedicated to reclaiming the narrative around the Katrina disaster. In the year ahead, the Katrina 20 Local Committee will design and convene a community assembly in New Orleans to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina and lift up the voices of the community, informed by the lived experiences of those directly impacted and displaced.

Taproot Noire Black Climate Leadership Summit

During NYC Climate Week 2024, the Taproot Noire formation convened 70+ Black-identified climate leaders for our annual Climate Leadership Summit. Under the theme of Soul to Soil: Connecting Land, Liberation, and Black Joy — inspired by pan Africanist leader Amílcar Cabral's 1972 speech "Connecting the Struggles: An Informal Talk with Black Americans" — the Summit provided a Black exclusive space for leaders across the Gulf South, Appalachia, and the Global South to connect and build a shared understanding of critical issues facing Black communities. Together, participants produced a powerful analysis of the intersections between the Black experience, climate justice, relationships to land, and collective liberation.

COP 29

In November 2024, Taproot Earth participated in the 29th United Nations Climate Change conference (COP29), in Baku, Azerbaijan. At the conference, Taproot Earth joined the urgent call by global movements to establish climate finance goals that center justice, reparation, and accountability to frontline communities. We uplifted the demand for those who have historically perpetrated harm to atone for their role in creating the current climate crisis by committing \$5 trillion per year to repairing the climate debt owed to the Global South. Finally, we called for the abolition of debt and the creation of grant-based, non-debt funds governed by local communities themselves to ensure sustainable future outcomes.

After the climate disaster flooded the informal settlements of Nairobi, killing hundreds and displacing thousands of people in Spring 2024, Taproot Earth, local partners and members of the global facilitation



Image (above): The GS2A Governance Assembly in Pittsburgh, PA

GS2A Governance Assembly

In December 2024, the Gulf South to Appalachia formation (GS2A) convened a Governance Assembly in Pittsburgh alongside contributions from Taproot Noire. The Assembly focused on five collectively-identified regional priorities:

Stop the Fossil Fuel Build Out and Transition to
Community-Controlled Renewable Energy
Resist Privatization and Ensure Access to Clean,
Safe Water for All
Divest from the Disaster Economy and Establish
Community-Based Response and Preparedness
Combat Housing Instability and Ensure Climate-
Resilient, Affordable Housing for All
Reimagine Labor and Center Equity and Dignity

Taproot Earth is processing the results of the GS2A Governing Assembly and will provide a full analysis in early 2025.

Global Climate Reparations Fellows from Africa, two from Europe, and two from the United States. These participants learned facilitative leadership skills that prepared them to advance strategic conversations, honor and hold space for intra-movement tensions, and guide collective decision-making. Together, our Facilitation Team developed the political alignment and skills they needed to fulfill their commitment to create our Global Climate Reparations Assembly, where they advanced our Global Climate Reparations Initiative.

In fact, our GCR Fellows not only co-facilitated our GCR assembly, they also helped design and facilitate our Black Climate Leadership Summit in NYC and our GS2A Governance Assembly in Pittsburgh. Our Fellows also shared [their vision for climate reparations at COP 29](#), and are helping to advance climate reparations with the Catholic Church in its Jubilee Year.

GS2A Fellows

In November, Taproot Earth launched the inaugural cohort of Gulf South to Appalachia (GS2A) Fellows to support development of the GS2A formation. Seven community-accountable leaders from across the Gulf South and Appalachia joined together to align on strategies to strengthen their power and advance collective frontline solutions.

The GS2A Fellows participated in political education and training, received coaching, conducted outreach, and practiced facilitation skills during monthly formation regional calls and the GS2A Governance Assembly. Through May 2025, the fellows will continue coordinating within the formation by anchoring work teams established at the Governance Assembly to advance GS2A's priorities and work plan.

Resources Mobilized

By leveraging our access and philanthropic partners, Taproot Earth mobilized hundreds of thousands of dollars to support frontline-led projects and organizations. As part of our commitment to frontline accountability, we ensure that our investments in local partner organizations reflect our values of Black Liberation and Indigenous Sovereignty.



Image: The GS2A Governance Assembly participants raise their hands

For example, at the GS2A Governance Assembly in Pittsburgh, we prioritized our resource allocation by:

- Using a union hotel for lodging over 100 participants and krewes;
- Investing \$40,000 into Black-owned businesses, including food services, venue rental, and childcare services; and
- Offering intentions, gifts, and donation to local representatives of the Seneca Nation, who opened the assembly with a welcome ceremony.

Perhaps most importantly, the assembly took place at the August Wilson African American Cultural Center, a multidisciplinary arts hub created to celebrate the African American experience and its influence on American popular culture. At the conclusion of the assembly, we contributed to sustainable infrastructure for the local community by purchasing new water filtration systems for the center.



Image (left): Founding Partners Anthony Giancatarino and Colette Pichon Battle speak to the participants at the GCR Governance Assembly



Image (right): Vision and Initiatives Partner, Colette Pichon Battle speaks at Bioneers 2024

DOCUMENT & REPLICATE

Taproot Earth documents the models we use and the interventions we design so that we can replicate frontline solutions for communities across borders. The frameworks we develop:

- Choose abundance over scarcity
- Uplift love over fear
- Prioritize power over charity

Narrative and Communications

In 2024, our communications team advanced solution-oriented climate justice narratives rooted in Black liberation, resistance, and love. Our messages at a wide range of events and media, from COP 29 to policymaking bodies and roundtables to podcasts and more, foregrounded frontline priorities in global climate conversations. Our Vision and Initiatives Partner, Colette Pichon Battle, served as the keynote speaker at the Bioneers Conference in Berkeley,

California in March and was featured in a ProPublica article in April. We also expanded our digital channels and spread our core messaging to engage new audiences in increasingly nuanced conversations about climate justice. Throughout these conversations, we consistently prioritized the people and places most impacted by the climate crisis. We say: follow the frontlines.

Expanding and Aligning Toward the Liberation Horizon

Gulf South to Appalachia Regional Formation

In 2024, the Gulf South for a Green New Deal formation (GS4GND) ratified a merger with Appalachian leaders and formed the Gulf South to Appalachia formation (GS2A), facilitated by Taproot Earth. This formation hosted 8 monthly regional calls with over 50



Image (right): The permanent mural, “Radical Seeds,” in Birmingham, Alabama celebrates community, resistance, and leaves behind beauty after the Community Assembly is said and done. Mural by: Langston Austin, [read more about the mural here](#).

organizations throughout 2024. In December, GS2A also held its first Governance Assembly in Pittsburgh, PA to solidify governance, membership, and future priorities. Throughout the year, community leaders from GS2A formation catalyzed and influenced Taproot Earth’s work. G2SA members supported the #WeChooseNow Community Assembly in Birmingham, Alabama, participated in the Global Climate Reparations Movement Governance Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya, and joined both the Building A Movement and the Global Facilitation Team cohorts. Over the next five years, Taproot Earth will continue to build the leadership and infrastructure of the Gulf South to Appalachia formation to ensure the formation’s successful transition to self-governance when Taproot Earth sunsets in 2030.

Developing Internal Models for Accountability and Collective Governance: The STORM Process

As an organization committed to Black liberation, we prioritize community accountability. We align our work with Black global frontline formations dedicated to addressing the harms of slavery, colonization, resource extraction, cultural theft, and other predatory practices that target the global Black diaspora. Our Taproot Earth krewe has grown to include 30 organizers, fellows, and members from 13 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, Portugal, and Kenya. Our leadership comprises Black, white, Brown, and Indigenous individuals, 80% of whom identify as female or non-binary. Our team comes from the Global South, Gulf South, and Appalachia and is grounded in the legacy of Southern organizing. We practice facilitative leadership and accountability to build relationships that dismantle the political and psychological borders that perpetuate harm. **Together, we engage in hard conversations, navigate differences, and learn from mistakes. We hold the values of liberation, care, and transformation, and connect personal growth to structural change by targeting systemic inequities.** By building diverse networks, we integrate equity into everything we do.

At Taproot Earth, we live our values. Externally, through our mission and programs, we advance accountable systems of governance worldwide. Internally, we are developing structures that serve our work as an emergent organization responsive to frontline communities that will sunset in 2030. **This year, we adopted the circular, collective decision-making we call the STORM process, which improves on our previous model by de-centering whiteness and individualism while uplifting equity and community governance.** This iterative approach has strengthened our effectiveness and advanced our work while deepening team relationships and fostering autonomy in decision-making.

In 2024, we implemented several structural shifts that enabled us to continuously learn and adapt based on feedback from the krewe. We:

- **Transitioned the traditional hierarchical staffing** and reporting structure into a model where supervisors focus on coaching, support, advising, and information-sharing, while teams collectively oversee and implement work.
- **Established continuous feedback loops** with krewe, frontline formations, and key partners to inform decisions and cultivate strategy.
- **Created cross-functional, collaborative spaces** to advance our three strategic elements—Design & Convene, Resource & Implement, Document & Replicate—eliminating silos and strengthening cross-krewe communication.
- **Adopted and evaluated new frameworks** for collaborative decision-making to ensure an inclusive process where krewe members can contribute their greatest strengths.
- **Developed systems of accountability** to maintain alignment with frontline priorities. Introduced a new policy handbook to center race, class, and gender, while challenging policies that unintentionally reinforce systemic injustice.
- **Implemented a debrief-and-evaluation cycle** to allow for emergence and collaborative visioning.



Image (above): At Taproot Earth's All Krewe Retreat in April 2024, we spent time in reflecting, planning, and relationship building at the sacred site of [the Penn Center](#), a long-time movement training grounds, on St. Helena Island, South Carolina.

LOOKING TO 2025

Taproot Earth will build on the power of 2024 with three future convenings. In March 2025, in conjunction with the Catholic Church's Jubilee Year, we will convene a Frontline Peoples' Jubilee Council made up of 100 global leaders charged with integrating our Working Statement on Global Climate Reparations into the Catholic Church's Jubilee plans. In August, the Katrina 20 Local Committee will host a disaster commemoration and future power building convening in New Orleans. And in November, at COP 30 in Belém, Brazil, we will convene a Global Climate Reparations Assembly attended by 250 global leaders.

Our world faces intersectional crises in 2025: new local and global climate realities, democracies under attack from rising authoritarianism, and fossil fuel interests advancing scarcity and fear. The global economy extracts labor from workers; culture, health, and wellbeing from communities; and sacred resources

from the Earth. This toxic blend of extremism, extraction, and ecological emergency threatens everyone's ability to live in the places we know and love.

Rest assured, 2025 will bring both new challenges and new horizons of possibility. Taproot Earth is not resting for a moment. We are growing and building our movement, seeding the roots for collective governance of water, energy, and land to heal our democracy, our economy, and our relationship to labor. Our formations and accountability to frontline climate organizers remain at the heart of our work. We follow the frontlines, always, toward the Liberation Horizon. Thank you for moving with us.

Peace,



Follow the frontlines.



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