

Our First Impact Report

2020-2022



Introduction

Agrarian Trust grew from the frustration of landless farmers, out of a profound desire to participate in our own survival, in our own liberation. When we gathered the first circle at Paicines Ranch in California, OUR LAND symposia in 2014, we formed a “people’s design assembly” where we each brought our experiences and analysis to confront the structural crisis of land access for regenerative agriculture—as young farmers, conservationists, agricultural historians, lawyers, economists, new economists, activists—asking ourselves: what does the land want? Together we researched Elinor Ostrom and Vinoba Bhave, Henry George and Leo Tolstoy. We looked at the community land trust movement, Terre de Liens in France, historical land reform movements, and Indigenous land governance. We found a law firm in Sustainable Economies Law Center who were tuned to the patterns of council so common across human history as pastoralists, tree cultures and Indigenous land managers that remained in constant feedback with the source ecology and with the spirit of the landscape. We looked squarely at the historical enclosure, land theft, expropriation, and violence so central to U.S. history... central to empires. We listened to our elders challenging us to aim for long-term and restorative tenure, a kind of tenure compatible with generations past and future. We considered the real and immediate needs of resource-limited farmers who are acting in the best interest of the land itself.



Agrarian Trust now holds seven farms in six states, with a total of 415 acres of farmland held in common, with secure, affordable, dignified tenure for the farmers—retiring from the marketplace forever more than \$7.2 million in land. Each parcel, each commons, is overseen by a board of advisors who looks after the interests and accompanies the decisions, and co-creates a generative destiny for the farm organisms. In a country where 98 percent of land is owned by white owners, Agrarian Trust has attracted diversity, talent, and ambition to its leadership and stewardship. Of the Agrarian Commons board members, 36 percent are Black, Indigenous, and people of color and 66 percent are women, trans, or non-binary. Seventy-five percent of long-term leases are held by BIPOC farmers.

Working Together, with land.

Agrarian Trust seeks to heal centuries of alienation from the land, allowing communities to rejoin the gift, the wellspring of ecological health on land and farms that sustain us, forming a spiritual pact with one another to not abuse, to not coerce, to not extract or profiteer, but to hold the gift carefully together. This next phase of our work can be extraordinary, already 36 foundations, 21 donor-advised funds and more than 2,494 people from 48 states and seven countries have donated to this work of the Agrarian Commons. We invite you to join us as a donor, as a farmer, as a board member, as an eater, as a supporter, and as part of the Agrarian Trust family.

Over a few days, then a few months, and then a few years, we laid out the principles and recruited the teammates that would become the Agrarian Commons, a new format for holding land in common. Our goal, then as now, is to help co-create an emancipation of our commodified earth. Each in our own locality, to inhabit a new kind of belonging and mutuality on a human scale and to

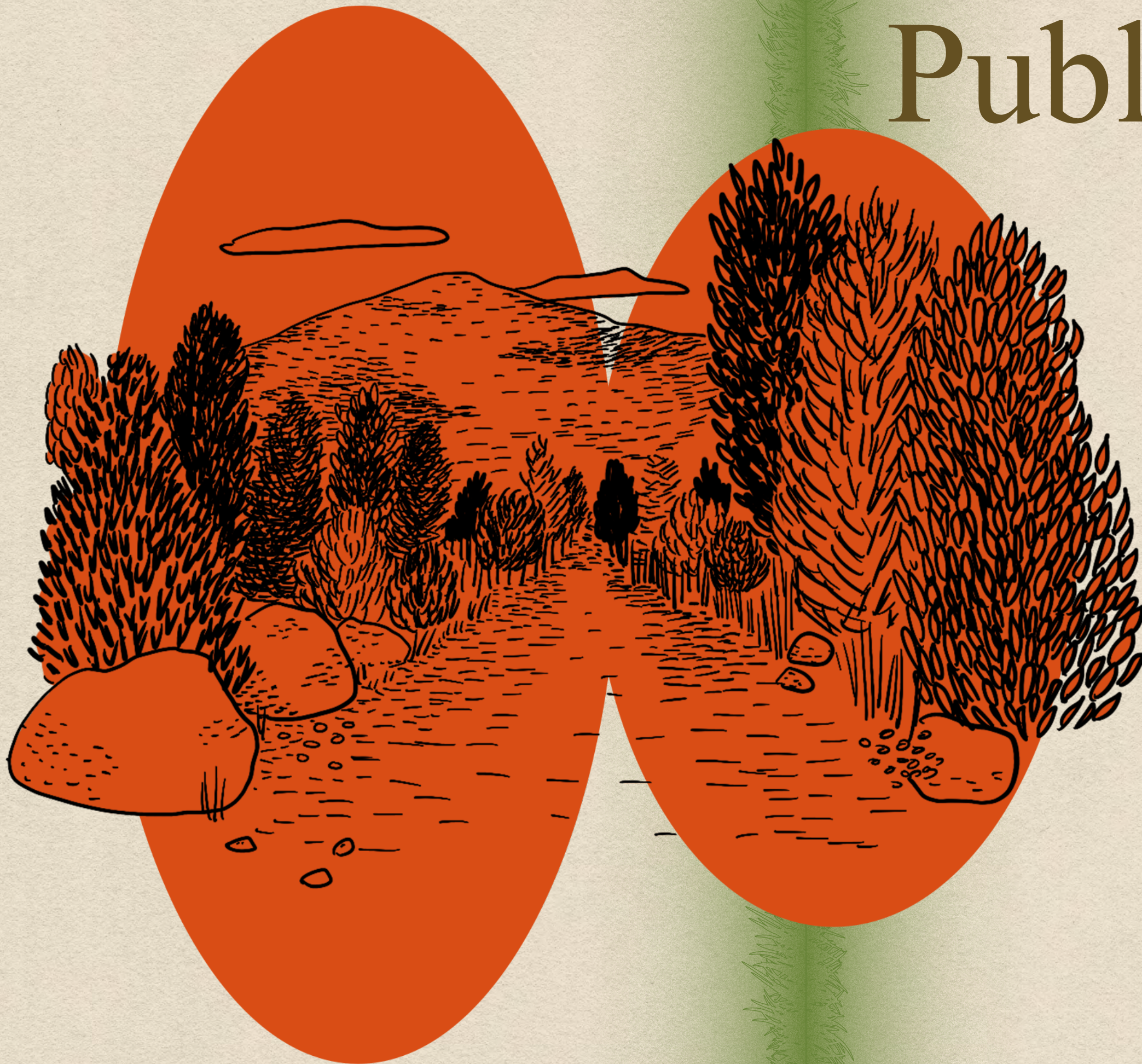
take responsibility for that work. We wanted to hold and be held by a commons, we wanted to uphold the kinds of social and economic relations that truly allow for regenerative agriculture. We wanted to practice out loud, in person, and in front of everyone, the principles shared by countless land reform movements and struggles for freedom. We wanted to let the farmers farm and to let the land sing, and to do so in a way that could spread all across this country!



**Severine von
Tscherner Fleming**

Founder and Board President of Agrarian Trust

Publications & Press



Aljazeera

The work of Agrarian Trust is featured in Aljazeera's podcast, The Take, in the September 21, 2022 episode called, "How are Black American farmers reclaiming their land?" Through the Agrarian Commons, communities of color are transforming land ownership in the US.



Commoners Catalog

Find Agrarian Trust in "The Commoner's Catalog for Changemaking, Tools for the Transition Ahead", which is born of a simple realization: The world we have inherited is no longer working. The good news is that Commoners are building a new world of possibilities right now, through land trusts and relocalized food, collaborative finance and artist collectives, gift economies and open-source everything: essential tools for the transitions ahead.



America's Test Kitchen's Proof Podcast

What does it mean to set up a farm--for and by a minority community--in a predominantly white region? Reporter Ashia Aubourg digs in. A sound journey that tells an amazing story, episode 6 from season 9 of Proof, a podcast from America's Test Kitchen, showcases the Somali Bantu Community Association, the founding farmers of the Agrarian Commons located in Maine.

Equity in Ag Production & Governance

How can the 2023 Farm Bill expand access to land and credit for marginalized producers? As a member organization of the National Family Farm coalition, Agrarian Trust is participating in the creation of recommendations for how policymakers can use the 2023 Farm Bill to increase access to land, credit, and education for marginalized producers, advance equity across USDA programs, facilitate farmland transitions to disadvantaged farmers and more.



Barriers for Farmers & Ranchers To Adopt Regenerative Ag Practices in the US

In this Patagonia-sponsored report, author Jennifer O'Connor highlights the key barriers our farmers and ranchers are facing in moving towards a healthy, resilient, and regenerative food and ag system. In the report, Agrarian Trust and the Agrarian Commons model are featured as examples of critical pathways supporting the breaking down of these barriers.



FaithLands Toolkit

The FaithLands Toolkit serves as a guide to support faith communities in considering their respective spiritual traditions and linking those core values and beliefs to the land. Through case studies and thoughtful conversation, it offers ways to join a growing number of faith traditions in the production of food, the support of basic human needs, and the building of resilient communities, while also promoting equity and justice through the land. This resource is available as a free digital download, or as a print copy.



Bollier

In his article "Saving Farmland, Supporting Young Farmers", David Bollier interviews both Severine von Tscherner Fleming and Ian McSweeney about Agrarian Trust and the Agrarian Commons. David Bollier is an author, activist, blogger and consultant who spends a lot of time exploring the commons as a new paradigm of economics, politics and culture.

For the Wild

Podcast For the Wild explores what land redistribution could look like and how land can be emancipated from the commodity structure with guest Severine von Tscherner Fleming. How do we navigate the settler desire to own land? How can our understanding of the commons invite us into collective commitment to caring for the land and staving of speculative land privatization? In response to these questions, Severine shares the messiness and opportunity of living amongst the prosperity of extraction in the spaces we inhabit while dedicating ourselves to a land-based livelihood that awakens the call to live inside of accountability to people and place.



Collaborative Farming Podcast

We've heard about land trusts, conservation easements, maybe community trusts before, but what if there was one modeled with the farm and the farmer in mind? The mission of Agrarian Land Trust is to build local Agrarian Commons to hold farmland to ensure its sustainable and productive stewardship for generations to come. Former Director Ian McSweeney tells us how Agrarian Commons work, why they're an important model, and where to begin.



Flock Finger Lakes

American fashion model, environmental activist, author, and entrepreneur, known as the world's first "eco-model", Summer Rayne Oakes hosted Agrarian Trust for an interview on her YouTube channel, giving an overview of the national non-profit, the Agrarian Commons model, and examples of how it is working across the country.

Forbes

Lisbet Portman interviewed former Director of Agrarian Trust, Ian McSweeney, in “For Next Gen Farmers, Evolving The Land Trust Structure Is Key”. The discussion explores McSweeney’s background that brought him to this career, how Agrarian Trust is different from other land trusts, and why the mission and work of Agrarian Trust is so critically needed.



New Farmer’s Almanac

A publication from Greenhorns, the New Farmer’s Almanac features essays and stories and poems from farmers, ranchers, ecologists, educators, food bank managers, grocers, gardeners, researchers, and advocates bound by their care for the land, the food system, and the survival of the natural world.



The Guardian

In their article, “We’re trying to re-create the lives we had: the Somali migrants who became Maine farmers” journalist Audrea Lim tells of the community of Somali Bantu farmers who struggled for land security until the farm justice activists of the Agrarian Trust lent a hand.

Go Farm, Young People, and Help Heal the Country

Associate Professor of American Environmental Studies Brian Donahue presents a vision for rural revitalization which includes accessible land and economic support for farms as vital goals and how the Agrarian Commons can help.

NPR & PBS

In “Reparations and restitution through land donation: an interview with Duron Chavis and Callie Walker”, reporter Angie Miles explores the inspiration behind the land gift that seeded the Central Virginia Agrarian Commons, and the need for acts of reparations to heal historical and current injustices.



Go Farm, Young People, and Help Heal the Country

Land Policy

Towards a More Equitable Farming Future



Land Policy Towards a More Equitable Farming Future

A 2020 Report released by the National Young Farmers Coalition. Land, policy, and power are closely intertwined. As millions of acres of U.S. farmland are changing hands, public policy holds the responsibility and the promise to facilitate land justice for the next generation of growers.

High Mowing Organic Seed Catalog

The 2023 High Mowing Organic Seed Catalog featured the Agrarian Commons on the cover, and centered the work of Agrarian Trust in an in-depth feature story.



Reuters

In the article, “Black farming projects look to recoup historical U.S. land losses”, journalist Carey L. Biron tells the story of the Central Virginia Agrarian Commons, and the Southwest Virginia Agrarian Commons, two Agrarian Commons which have worked to secure land access and tenure for Black farmers within USDA-defined food deserts.

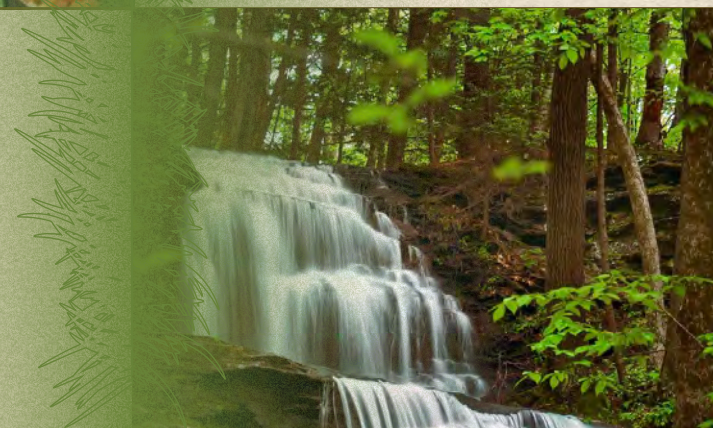
Sum of Us

On the heels of her bestselling book, Heather McGhee embarks on a road trip across Covid-era America, unearthing stories of American solidarity and hope in a time of great division and peril. In her podcast, Sum of Us, McGhee highlights the collaboration between Agrarian Trust, the Little Jubba Central Maine Agrarian Commons, and the Somali Bantu Community Association.



Local Futures Action Guide

The Localization Action Guide from Local Futures / Economics of Happiness is an amazing free and open-source resource to help you find your role in creating a more localized, just, democratic, and healthy environment and society. Agrarian Trust is honored to be listed in this guide.



Writing the Land

A project of NatureCulture, Writing the Land is a sustainable-food-production-and-art-themed anthology that brings together poets and land protection and anti-hunger organizations from across the US. Poems, essays, and Information about the missions of these partners for foodways and social justice are included in this unique book. This year’s anthology includes contributions from poets who visited Agrarian Commons land, and an essay on community land trusts and the Agrarian Commons.



At Agrarian Trust, our particular interest in the “Commons” is farmland and the necessity of community centered protection and ownership so that it stays productive and chemical free in perpetuity. We know that we all need to eat and that the most nutritious and life-sustaining foods are grown on land where the soil is toxin-free and cared for regeneratively. Our solution to keeping productive farms and soils alive and well for generations to come is the creation of the Agrarian Commons.

The Agrarian Commons provides a pathway to community land ownership that addresses the current realities of how land is owned, how tenure and equity are conveyed, and how land stewardship is carried out. This structure challenges corporate and large-scale agriculture land-ownership and offers a new, sustainable approach for the small and mid-size farmer.

The “Caring for the Commons Fund” is Agrarian Trust’s Annual Fund. Annual Funds encourage donors to give at least annually and in many cases monthly, to help support the overhead costs that most grants and many individual donors do not fund.

Caring for the Commons



Please consider becoming a monthly or annual donor to the Caring for the Commons Fund



Land

7 farms in 6 states

3.5 to 104 acres in size

415+ cumulative acres decommodified and secure tenure given to farmers

7.2 M in total real estate appraised value



People

36% of Agrarian Commons Board members are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color

66% of Agrarian Commons Board members are women, trans, and non-binary

992+ students connected or next door to farms

36 foundations and 21 Donor Advised Funds have given

2,494 people from 48 states and 7 countries have donated to Agrarian Commons

75% of long-term leases conveyed to BIPOC farmers



Stewardship

Fundraised and provided technical support for pollinator habitats, soil regeneration, solar energy production, and infrastructure improvements on farms.

415+ acres will be used to produce food using regenerative practices and conveying rights to nature to sustain healthy ecosystems.



Donors

Cumulative Donations 2020 - 2022



All

- 2618 constituents gave 3,947 gifts totaling **\$4,257,506**
- 36 Financial Institutions or Foundations gave 74 gifts totaling **\$1,242,611**
- 21 Donor Advised Funds gave 277 gifts totaling **\$1,123,868.20**
- 40 Donors elected to be recurring donors, giving 522 gifts totaling **\$16,593.35**
- 2507 individuals who are not financial institutions, foundations, or donor advised funds gave 3396 gifts totaling **\$1,223,262**
- 54 organizations who are not financial institutions, foundations, or donor advised funds gave 64 gifts totaling **\$606,764**

Agrarian Trust

- 161 constituents gave 350 gifts totaling **\$1,086,151**
- 16 Financial Institutions or Foundations gave 41 gifts totaling **\$447,339**
- 7 Donor Advised Funds gave 25 gifts totaling **\$289,592**
- 128 Individuals who are not financial institutions, foundations, or donor advised funds gave 272 gifts totaling **\$145,010**
- 10 Organizations who are not financial institutions, foundations, or donor advised funds gave 12 gifts totaling **\$204,210**

Agrarian Commons

- 2494 Constituents gave 3,577 gifts totaling **\$3,087,758**
- 23 Financial Institutions or Foundations gave 32 gifts totaling **\$725,272**
23.4% of total
- 20 Donor Advised Funds gave 252 gifts totaling **\$834,276**
27% of total
- 2407 Individuals who are not financial institutions, foundations, or donor advised funds gave 3,238 gifts totaling **\$1,137,657**
36.8% of total
- 44 Organizations who are not financial institutions, foundations, or donor advised funds gave 55 gifts totaling **\$390,554**
12.6% of total

2618 constituents gave 3,947 gifts

**Total of all donors
\$4,257,506**

**Thank you to those
who create legacies
for future generations
through land gifts:**

Ms. Caroline Gardner gave the first land gift to the Puget Sound Washington Agrarian Commons which catalyzed the national Agrarian Commons movement.

Monadnock Community Land Trust donated Normanton Farms to the New Hampshire Agrarian Commons.

Callie and Dan Walker donated 84 acres of land for the creation of the Central Virginia Agrarian Commons.

**FaithLands
10 donations totalling
\$140,248**

Allied Partners

- Agrarian Trust and Agrarian Commons donors
- Ashoka
- Chipotle Aluminares
- Earth Law Center
- Foodshed Capital
- Greenhorns
- International Land Coalition
- Kalliopeia Foundation
- Lincoln Land Institute
- National Family Farm Coalition
- Food Solutions New England
- Nuns and Nones Land Justice Project
- Patagonia
- Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education
- Sustainable Economies Law Center
- US Food Sovereignty Alliance
- Vermont Law School
- Writing the Land



With these partnerships we have:

- Created the Agrarian Commons Toolkit
- Participated in presentations, workshops, and trainings
- Participated in Writing the Land
- Inspired and contributed to guidebooks and reports
- Advanced sustainable agriculture and food systems through new and equitable land tenure models
- Created the FaithLands Toolkit
- Completed a FaithLands mapping project
- Been part of education, outreach, and technical assistance for faith communities
- Created a robust website full of open-source guidebooks, legal templates, reports, stories, and other resources
- Been part of the New Farmers Almanac

Financials

Income:

Total individual gifts of less than \$1000

2020 - \$188,457.86
2021 - \$106,588.80
2022 - \$101,585.68

TOTAL - \$396,632.34

Total individual gifts of \$1000 to \$10,000

2020 - \$210,294.84
2021 - \$237,479.84
2022 - \$126,860.46

TOTAL-\$574,635.14

Total individual gifts of \$10,000 to \$100,000

2020 - \$487,118.75
2021 - \$863,622.11
2022 - \$342,703.36

TOTAL - \$1,693,444.22

Total individual gifts of greater than \$100,000

2020 - \$0.00
2021 - \$1,300,688.33
2022 - \$252,200.00

TOTAL - \$1,552,888.33

Merchandise Sale / Program Revenue

2020 - \$0.00
2021 - \$1,200.00
2022 - \$9,187.50

TOTAL - \$10,387.50

Expenses:

Staff

(includes salaries, benefits, and taxes)

2020 - \$66,323.44
2021 - \$133,918.60
2022 - \$428,604.92

TOTAL - \$628,846.96

Program Expenses, Grants, Honorarium, Merchandise

2020 - \$288,366.90
2021 - \$317,209.21
2022 - \$177,244.88

TOTAL - \$807,953.00

Contractors

(includes consultants, admin, financial and accounting services, legal)

2020 - \$288,366.90
2021 - \$317,209.21
2022 - \$177,244.88

TOTAL - \$807,953.00

Agrarian Commons Land Acquisition and Investment

(includes repair and maintenance)

2020 - \$582,450.24
2021 - \$1,483,782.40
2022 - \$214,163.75

TOTAL - \$2,518,193.21
(does not include in-kind or land donation)

Advertising and Design

(includes advertising, design, marketing, printing, postage, events)

2020 - \$49,746.65
2021 - \$56,298.52
2022 - \$56,341.45

TOTAL - \$180,986.62

Agrarian Trust Operating costs

(includes utilities, phone, internet, office, data, web, supplies, conferences, meetings, insurance, travel, training, education, development, bank, merchant, taxes, licenses)

2020 - \$29,166.38
2021 - \$35,799.59
2022 - \$186,349.99

TOTAL - \$246,767.34



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Annual Report
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