

2023

IMPACT REPORT

SHARING
OUR ROOTS
Acres of Innovation

Pepe Romero, community member

CELEBRATING OUR MOMENTUM



Every day at the Sharing Our Roots Farm is a day worth celebrating, because every day for the past eight years, our team has stewarded this land from a degraded cornfield to a thriving ecosystem. Every day we celebrate the land and waters, the return of birds and frogs, and the people who breathe new life into this amazing place. Every day we celebrate and honor those who came before us - what we call the Sharing Our Roots Farm today, was once the home of the Wahpekute or "Shooters Among the Leaves" - a tribe of the Dakota peoples from whom we have much yet to learn.

This year, was particularly special because we got to celebrate the farm with you – our community – in our largest event in Sharing Our Roots history. More than 115 of you attended our Open House in August, walked the land with us, and enjoyed delicious gorditas made by a local Latina farmer. We also announced our closing on a new 43-acre parcel, bringing our total land base to 163 acres! This new land too has suffered, and it is our commitment to restoring it once again through conservation easements, regenerative farming, and climate-friendly practices in the years to come.

We are excited and ready for the critical work that lies ahead of us! Having hired four new team members in the fall: Natural Lands Manager, Farm Manager, Community Connector, and an Administrative & Grants Assistant; We now have a staff of 12 dedicated professionals with decades of farming, education, and community organizing experience. As Sharing Our Roots grows, so does our impact!

We hope you will join us in our dedication and commitment to reimagining the future of farming – one that respects the land and is rooted in community.

See you at the farm!

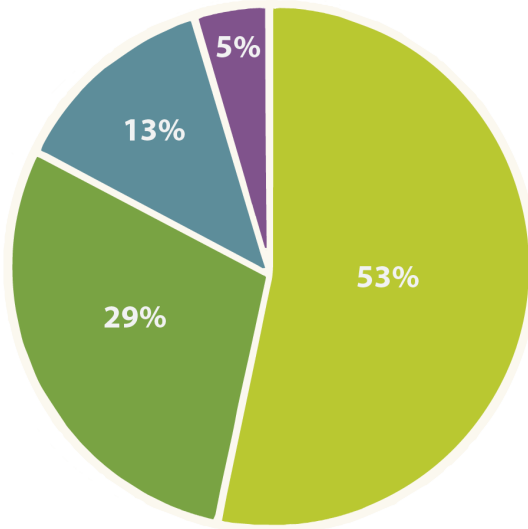
Rocky Casillas-Aguirre
Executive Director

Megan O'Hara
Board Chair



2023 FINANCIALS

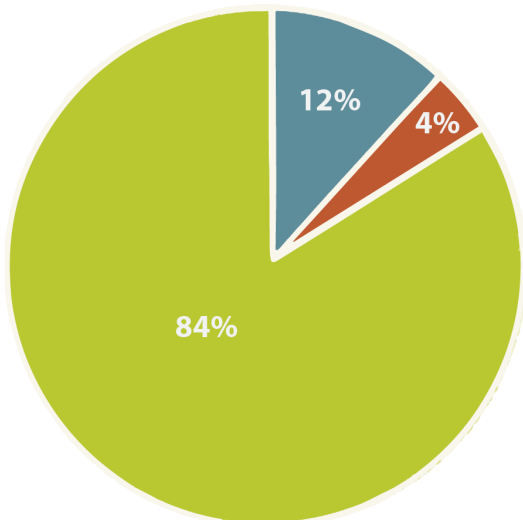
TOTAL RAISED: \$839,761



- \$441,855**
Foundation, Corporate & Gov. Grants
- \$242,993**
Individual Gifts
- \$106,227**
Program Service Contracts
- \$38,686**
Farm Revenue & Other Income

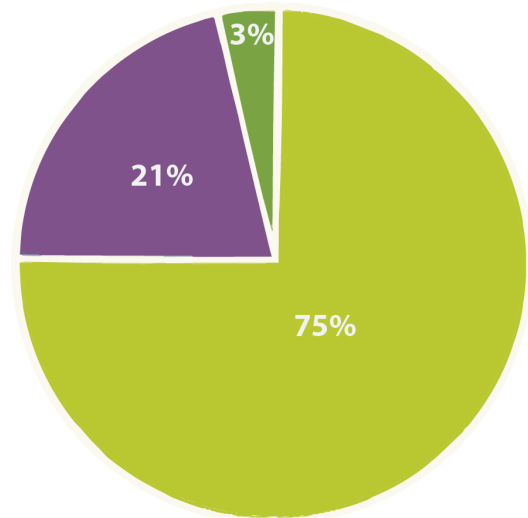
TOTAL EXPENSED: \$1,080,934

Expenses by Type



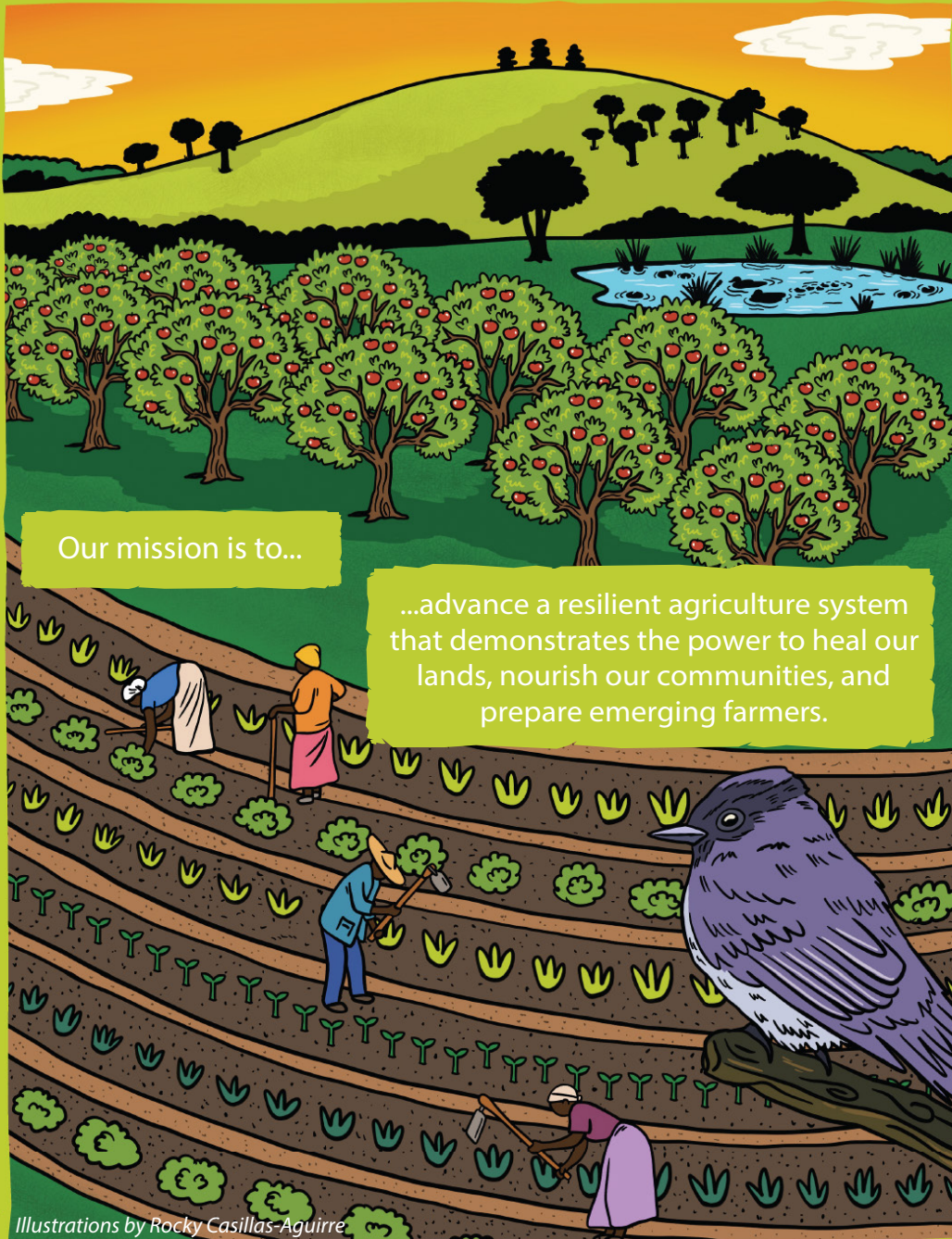
- \$909,340**
Programs
- \$127,844**
Admin & Communications
- \$43,750**
Fundraising

Expenses by Program



- \$683,514**
Working Lands & Commons Cohort
- \$195,124**
Community Connectors
- \$30,702**
Natural Lands & WildlifeCounts

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



Our mission is to...

...advance a resilient agriculture system that demonstrates the power to heal our lands, nourish our communities, and prepare emerging farmers.

Illustrations by Rocky Casillas-Aguirre



Biodiversity

We are committed to modeling farming practices that enhance biodiversity and preserve our wildlife heritage.



Equity & Justice

We innovate equitable pathways for immigrant, BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and emerging farmers to access land and culturally-significant foods.



Sharing

We share knowledge, traditions, and stories with one another, embracing all cultures and generations.



Healing

We honor the land and all it provides, and create intentional spaces for all who walk it to find connection and healing.



Community

We co-create solutions that address inequities and environmental crises with like-minded individuals and organizations.

LAND ACCESS IS JUSTICE WORK

Our country's food and agricultural system was built on stolen Indigenous lands, centuries of slave labor, and the backs of immigrant workers.

It is a system that gives preference to white men with wealth and political power, while exploiting, oppressing and excluding low-income, Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), women, and LGBTQ+ farmers.

Sharing Our Roots believes in dismantling the barriers created by the pervasive racism, sexism, transphobia, homophobia and classism that have denied marginalized groups from equitable access to the basic needs that sustain all of us – food, water, and land. Our mission is rooted in racial justice and requires intentionality, action, and accountability across all aspects of our work.

Sharing Our Roots embraces all of the qualities and conditions that make us human. We believe our future, and the future of our planet, depends on our openness to sharing the best parts of ourselves and working cross-culturally and intergenerationally.



The following are our Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) commitments:

- To embody racial justice principles while unlearning white supremacy culture and other forms of oppression.
- To continue to challenge capitalist-centered values and embrace a paradigm shift towards commons-based principles and shared economies.
- To ensure diverse racial representation at all levels of our organization, including staff and board leadership.
- To ensure our internal policies and practices are not biased or discriminating, but instead promote equity and inclusion.
- To invest in ongoing racial equity and cultural competency training for staff and board so that we can develop a shared understanding of the communities we work with.
- To value the knowledge, lived experiences, and expertise immigrants, BIPOC, and LGBTQ+ farmers bring, and engage them in democratic, community-led decision making processes and outcomes.
- To uplift and partner with organizations and institutions committed to social justice.
- To hold ourselves accountable through racial equity metrics of success that are tangible, transparent and support correcting past wrongs.
- To honor and braid Indigenous histories into our farm and programming and build meaningful relationships with local Indigenous communities.
- To create safe and welcoming spaces where people can express themselves authentically; sharing their languages, traditions and ways of thinking with one another.

OUR TEAM



Margaret Anderson
Americorps VISTA Member



Antonio Alba Meraz
Community Connectors Program Dir.



Noemi Carreon
Community Connector



José Carreon
Land Steward



Rocky Casillas-Aguirre
Executive Director



Erika Gomez
Land Steward



Jenne Herbst
Admin & Grants Assistant



Alissa Jacobsen
Farm Manager



Moses Momanyi
Farmer Mentor



Nic Nelson
Natural Lands Manager



**Lina "Mama Tshutshu"
Nyaronge**
Community Connector



Wendy Romero
Community Connector



Lucia Possehl
Commons Cohort Program Facilitator



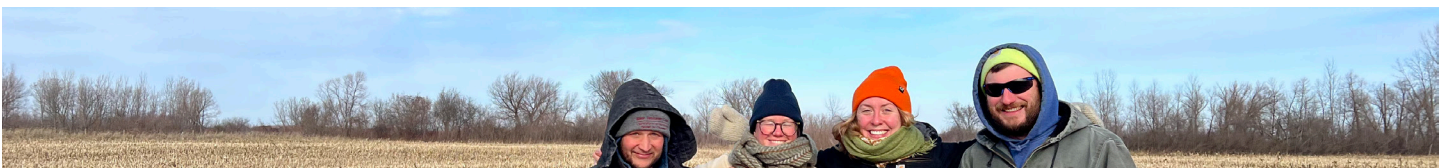
Wyatt Parks
Equipment Manager



Dawn Wegscheid
Operations Director



Charlie Zieke
Communications Coordinator



OUR BOARD



Kanko Akakpovi
Board Member



Gwen Anderson
Board Vice Chair



Antonia Cristofaro-Hark
Board Member



Dan Hernández
Board Treasurer



Ana Isabel Gabilondo-Scholz
Board Member



Maxime Groen
Board Member



Virginia Kearny
Board Member



Alex Kucich
Board Member



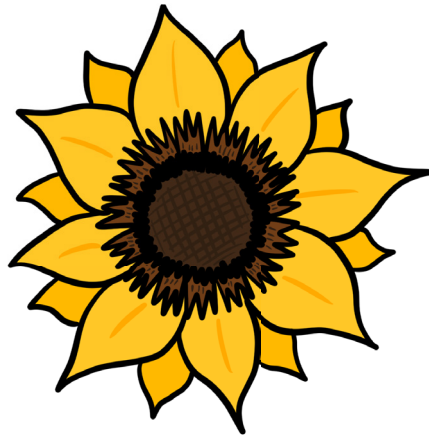
Megan O'Hara
Board Chair



Connor Rohwer
Board Member



2023 at a glance



18 local events

were led and co-organized by Sharing Our Roots, including a Go Farm Connect field day on farm record-keeping and loan preparedness, and Cannon Valley's Meet Your Makers event with 17 local producers.



40+ students

were engaged for experiential learning at the farm, including harvesting, buckthorn removal, and wildlife monitoring thanks to our partnership with Carleton's Center for Community & Civic Engagement.



25+ farmers

from 10 farm operations raised livestock, grew produce, cut flowers, and botanicals at the Sharing Our Roots Farm.



First Emerging Farmers' Market

was held in August, offering SOR farmers and gardeners an opportunity to sell their farm products.



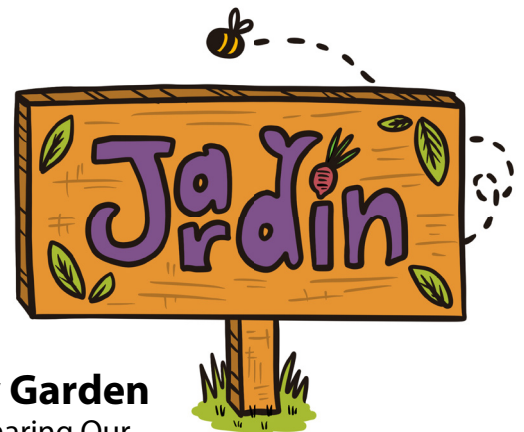
43 acres were purchased

to the east of the current Sharing Our Roots Farm, raising our stewarded area to 163 acres!



7 new members

with extensive farming, conservation, communications and community organizing expertise were welcomed to the Sharing Our Roots team!



A New Community Garden

was established at the Sharing Our Roots Farm and the Cannon River Park garden in Faribault was doubled, provided safe spaces to grow food for 40 Latine and Kenyan families.



\$17,505

was raised

from 39 donors in our most successful GiveMN campaign yet!



136 families

from 7 community gardens were supported in growing 4,751lbs+ of culturally-relevant vegetables.

SHARING OUR ROOTS FARM

We are transforming degraded soil into a thriving ecosystem.



When we began stewarding the land in 2016, the soil was legally classified as marginal farmland from decades of monocropped soy and corn harvests. In partnership with Dakota County, we serve as an example of how with care and relationship, conventionally farmed land can be restored into resilient ecosystems of people, livestock, wildlife, and plants that benefit soil & water health.

We are demonstrating a model for a resilient future.

At the Sharing Our Roots Farm, we model a biodiverse system of symbiotically connected livestock and perennials, with no chemical inputs, that builds soil, retains and cleans water, and delivers economic benefits to our community.

We model an interdependent way of farming that is based on freely sharing our resources with immigrant, BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and emerging farmers and gardeners.



We are part of a long history of stewards to this land.

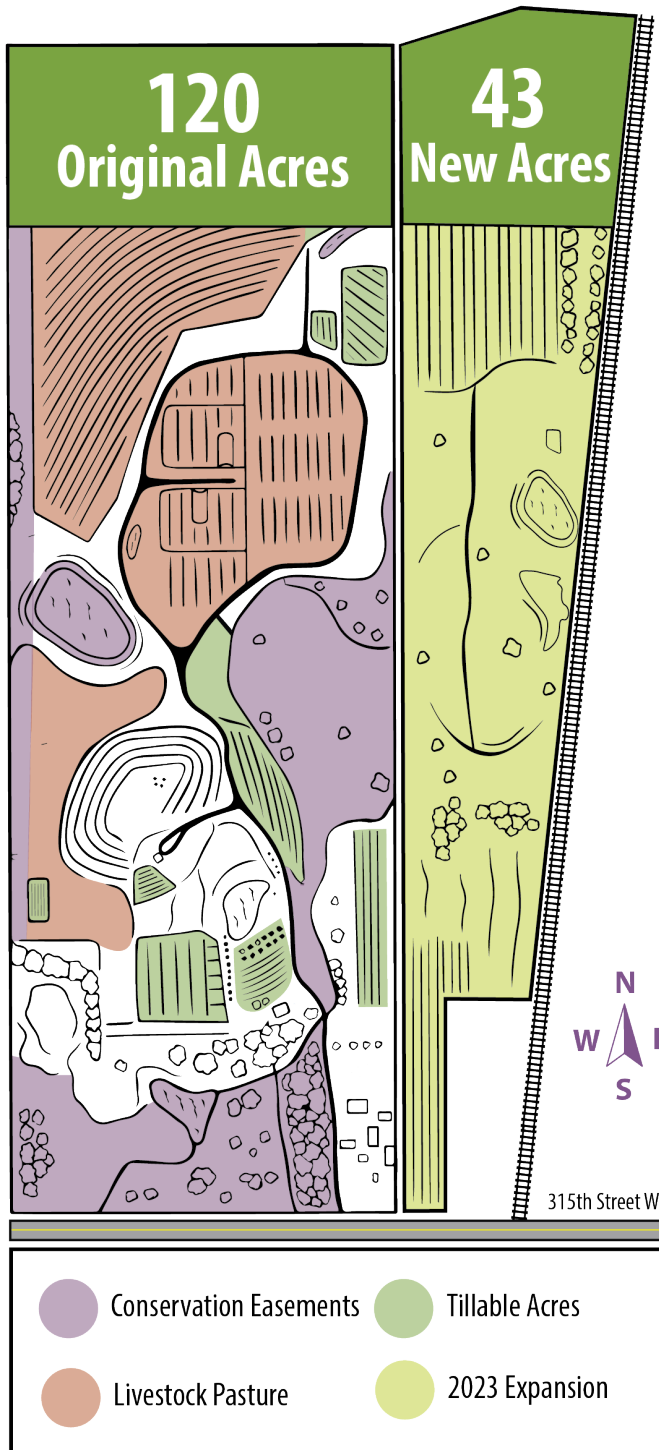
The Sharing Our Roots Farm is on the homelands of the Wahpekute Band of the Dakota Nation. This land was ceded to the United States Government in the 1851 Cession Treaties, for which little payment was ever received.

Prior to white colonization and settlement, the land would have consisted of wetlands, wet meadows, wild ricing ponds, and hills with scattered oak trees.



EXPANDING OUR WORK

SHARING OUR ROOTS FARM



Sharing Our Roots expanded in 2023!

We acquired an additional 43 acres of adjacent farmland, raising our stewarded acreage to 163 total.

This expansion will allow us to continue addressing local land access gaps, while supporting our conservation and biodiversity efforts.

The new acreage contains precious wetland and prairie habitat that was continually disrupted from decades of corn and soy crop production. We are committed to protecting these essential biomes, and the native species that rely on them, through holistic management efforts and conservation easements.

Through dedicated restoration, the new 43 acres will support farmers and gardeners in years to come.



COMMONS COHORT

By sharing what resources we have available - 163 acres of land and farming infrastructure - we work towards a more resilient and diverse agricultural system.

Sharing Our Roots' work is centered in just and equitable access to land for emerging farmers. Our land sharing efforts began as collaboration with community members who were seeking spaces to grow food for home consumption. Through time, feedback, and relationship, we heard again and again that what was most needed was reliable access to land and farming infrastructure. Since 2019, the Sharing Our Roots Farm has been home to a Farmer Cohort made up of local emerging farmers who want to farm in community, sharing land and infrastructure with each other.

Sharing Our Roots provides long-term land agreements and the farmers agree to work cooperatively to improve our shared stewardship of the space. With support from SOR staff, Cohort members organize themselves through shared community norms and meet regularly throughout the season to provide feedback.

In line with our mission and the need we see in our current agricultural system, Sharing Our Roots prioritizes land access for farmers from communities who have been excluded from farmland access due to systemic oppression and generational wealth gaps, including immigrant, BIPOC, and LGBTQ+ farmers.

2023 SUCCESSES

- Connected farmers to regional wholesale, food shelf, and market opportunities (including LFPA partnership with the Community Action Center, the Good Acre's LEAFF program, and SOR's own Emerging Farmers' Market).
- Expanded on-farm shared infrastructure, including improved irrigation systems, a greenhouse, and tool shed.
- Developed the Sharing Our Roots Commons Council to provide guidance around cohort-related decisions, rooted in commons principles and Sharing Our Roots' values.





COMMUNITY CONNECTORS

Since 2019, Sharing Our Roots' Community Connectors have worked to improve food security and food sovereignty for immigrant families living in Rice County.

Through this initiative, Sharing Our Roots provides employment, training, and resources to leaders of color in Northfield and Faribault, known as Community Connectors, to mobilize their neighborhoods and enact positive change within their communities.

Our Community Connectors help enhance and establish safe garden spaces where families can release stress, socialize, and grow culturally-significant foods close to home. They offer garden assistance, lead community dialogue, cultivate local partnerships, and create links to essential resources, including land access at the Sharing Our Roots Farm.

Originally from Mexico and Kenya, Community Connectors share lived experiences and stories in a common language and heritage with their neighbors. They are trusted and respected leaders advancing local food security and sovereignty in our region.

2023 SUCCESSES

- Community Connectors partnered with Hiawathaland to establish a new bus route from neighboring apartments to the SOR Farm.
- Established a community garden at the Sharing Our Roots Farm to deepen connections between gardeners and farmers.
- Expanded the Cannon River Park Community Garden by 100%.
- In partnership with the Northfield School District, we installed a new irrigation system at Greenvale Community Garden.



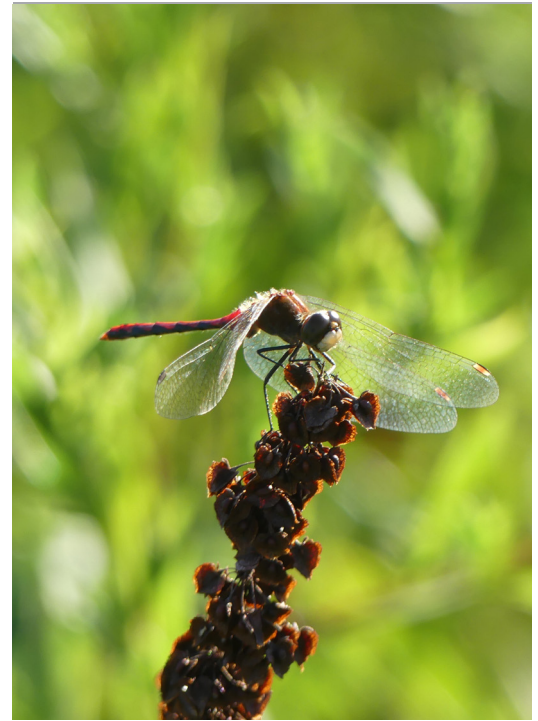
WildlifeCounts

Large-scale agriculture has been known to have significant global negative impacts on biodiversity, but farming can also be part of the solution.

Since 2020, our Wildlife Counts initiative has documented the return of wildlife to the Sharing Our Roots Farm after decades of land degradation from conventional agriculture. We are demonstrating how, through regenerative agriculture practices and conscious conservation efforts, we can produce nutritious food, while creating habitat for wildlife.

The presence and diversity of wildlife species in agroecosystems indicates a healthy balance. Healthy ecosystems, including native wildlife species, support more resilient and productive farms and crops. Birds, amphibians and insects, in particular, play an important role on farms through the ecosystem services they provide: pollination, seed dispersal, disease control, and pest management.

Our citizen-science volunteers monitor wildlife on the farm through bird counts, insect surveys and trail cameras. **So far, we have documented 57 birds, 10 amphibians and reptiles, 13 mammals, and 66 insect species at Sharing Our Roots Farm!** We value biodiversity and know there is much we can learn about a landscape from the perspective of its non-human inhabitants.



2023 SUCCESSES

- Our partnership with Carleton's Center for Community & Civic Engagement (CCCE) brings Carleton students onto the Sharing Our Roots Farm for hands-on, experiential regenerative agriculture learning. This has included Carleton students participating in year-round Wildlife Counts monitoring.
- Two students, Alyssa Alvarez and Annie Jay, created a website visually displaying the bird species data they'd collected at the SOR Farm. Their findings showed that Barn Swallows, Killdeer, and Red Winged Black Birds were the most common birds at all monitoring locations.

PARTNERS



THANK YOU

We would like to express our deep gratitude to the Loretto and Wasner families, our community allies, and funding partners for all of your support this year.

We simply could not do this work without you.

Muchas gracias! Asante sana! Thank you!

SHARING OUR ROOTS

FARM

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Delanie Harrmann, Commons Cohort farmer