



May 2022

Friends,

**This is the time of year that our work typically slows down a little.** Farmers are inundated with work—tending seedlings, transplanting crops out into the field, tracking down stray calves and bottle feeding kids, and getting back into the swing of farmers markets. There is way too much to do to carve out time for a loan application.

Somehow, this year is different. Maybe it's that **we're rounding the bend on five years in operation**, and we've built up enough trust in the food systems space that people know to look to us for affordable capital and long-term partnership—we hope so! Or maybe, it's that **the need for Reparative Capital is only increasing** as costs explode across sectors and accessing affordable farmland is more difficult than ever.

Either way, we find ourselves with a pipeline full of loan applications, and **we're doing our level best to meet the needs of underserved, regenerative farmers and food producers** throughout the region—quickly and transparently. We're on the road visiting farms, learning about challenges and opportunities first-hand, and telling the stories of our new partners in the hopes that their success will inspire your support.

Although we're not relaxing as much as we might have in past years, **the opportunity to "dig in" and support our food producers carries us forward.** We hope you enjoy the following highlights of May in our world, and as always, you can [support our work here](#) if you're moved to.

Cheers,

## Breaking Ground with Rural Beacon Initiative



*Executive Director Michael Reilly (fourth from the right) and Lending Coordinator Emily Sepulveda (right) attended the groundbreaking ceremony with project partners at Rural Beacon Initiative, Croatan Institute, and Slow Money NC.*

We're excited to share that our partners at [Rural Beacon Initiative](#) have officially broken ground on their new property, **Vera Brown Farm**. A funding collaboration with [Croatan Institute](#) and [Slow Money NC](#), as well as philanthropic support, allowed us to finance Rural Beacon's purchase of the 52-acre heirs property in a historic freedmen's community of eastern North Carolina. Over the next few years, Rural Beacon will be transforming the land into a **regional sustainability hub that demonstrates regenerative agricultural and forestry practices, powered by renewable energy, while increasing food access** in the region. Vera Brown Farm will also offer educational programming and serve as a community gathering space.

Rural Beacon was founded by **William Barber III**, a legal and environmental scholar, activist, and advocate, with nearly a decade of experience in grassroots and community organizing. Rural Beacon works to **bridge climate investment and social equity** by creating model resilient, regenerative communities that are replicable, scalable, and address the urgent social and environmental issues of our



time. Vera Brown is the first of what will hopefully become many similar regional hubs.

### *>>> 0% Interest for Black Farmers <<<*

Philanthropic support is critical to our work keeping interest rates low, and it's a key reason **we were able to offer Rural Beacon a 0% interest loan for their land purchase.** We are incredibly grateful for the support that allows us to continue this work, and invite you to join the effort. **If expanding Reparative Capital for Black Farmers inspires you, please consider supporting our work here:**

[Support Black Farmers](#)

**Expanding the Agrarian Commons**



Say hello to our newest partners at [New Roots Community Farm](#) in Fayette County, West Virginia. This **women-led operation** serves as a food aggregation and distribution site, a diversified veggie demonstration farm, and an educational and community space committed to organic practices, soil monitoring, and climate change mitigation.



New Roots operates on land that is now part of the [Agrarian Commons](#), a subsidiary organization of the [Agrarian Trust](#) that challenges traditional methods of land tenure and **increases equity and access in land ownership for small farmers**. The Commons hold land and related assets in community-centered entities that then convey **affordable and equitable leases to farmers** expanding regenerative, chemical-free, diversified food production.

Foodshed Capital has partnered with Agrarian Trust to expand the Commons throughout the region with low-cost financing for land acquisition, equipment purchases, or infrastructure development. New Roots is the first Agrarian Commons loan we've closed, with more to come in central Virginia in the near future.

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**What is "Regenerative," anyway?**

2022

# Regenerative Agriculture and Climate



FUNDERS  FOR  
REGENERATIVE  
AGRICULTURE

Our mission is to build more equitable, *regenerative* foodsheds. Although this word lacks a formal definition in the legal sense, there are myriad operational definitions and a growing number of [groups working to add meat to the bones](#) of what it means from a management perspective. As an organization, we find ourselves thinking about this term all the time, as it plays a big role in determining which farmers and food entrepreneurs we can support with Reparative Capital.

The conversation is ongoing, but it is not new. ["Regenerative" principles have been used in indigenous community food production for thousands of years](#), and we want to stress that our efforts to clarify the term internally are by no means a way of taking ownership of it. Rather, it is our hope to share with our supporters and future partners what we mean when we say we're helping build "regenerative" foodsheds.

Broadly, we interpret the word to mean practices that add and restore more than they extract and take away. Specifically, this means we look for agricultural practices that **increase biodiversity, enrich soils, protect and restore watershed health, capture more carbon than they emit, and support ecosystem function.**

If you're new to the "regenerative" conversation, click below for a thorough deep dive prepared by the wonderful folks at [Fundors for Regenerative Agriculture \(FORA\)](#).

[What is Regenerative?](#)

# Building more equitable, regenerative foodsheds is only possible with your help.

If our work preventing Black land loss, offering 0% loans, and increasing equity and representation in food systems inspires you, please consider supporting our work.

We really can't do it without you, and we welcome gifts of all sizes.  
Thanks!

Support Our Work

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