



2024



IMPACT REPORT

Community. Commitment. Climate-focus.

"The best benefit of Climate Land Leaders? The smart, caring, creative, and engaged people that are a part of it." - Jim Sayers (IA)

Mission:

To provide community and support for land stewards creating climate resiliency

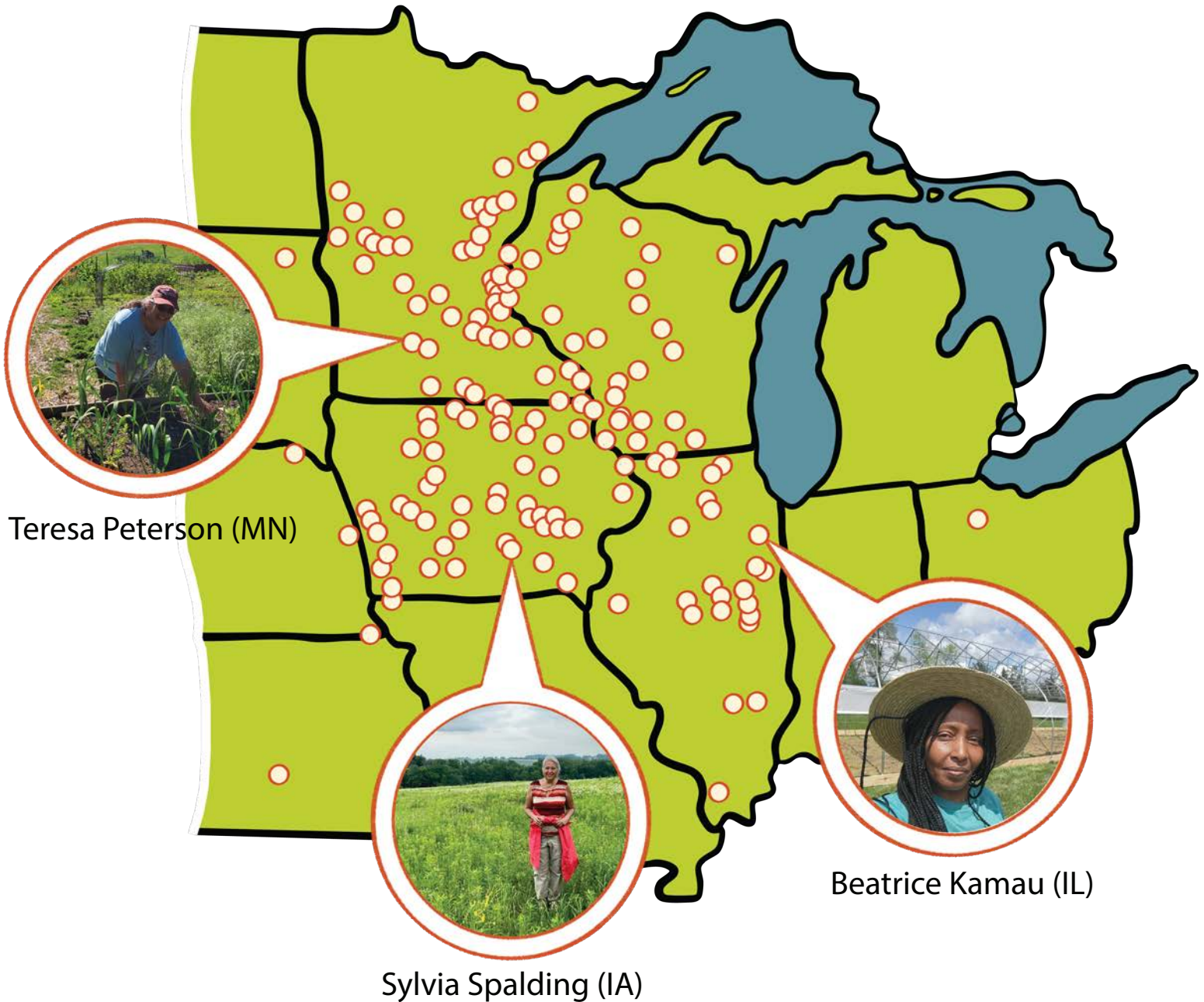
Vision:

Plant, animal, and human communities thrive through our land stewardship

Guiding Principles:

- Take urgent climate action through land stewardship, advocacy, and collective measures.
- Grow food and fiber using practices that heal ecosystems and build farm resiliency.
- Be guided by Indigenous knowledge and scientific evidence.
- Be part of the solution in dismantling inequities that limit access to land tenure.
- Invite and welcome people at all stages of their land transformation journey.
- Respect and learn from the natural world through observation, listening, and engagement.
- Support each other and kindly hold each other accountable.
- Work with non-profit, government, and business partners for greater impact.

There are more than **190** Climate Land Leaders
stewarding more than **47,000** acres



"The peer-to-peer element is the best I've experienced and I'm so grateful to have found this group" –Alanna Koshollek (WI)

Climate Land Leaders Take Action

Less than five years after landowners came together to form Climate Land Leaders, the Initiative has flourished. By year-end 2024, **190 participants who care for 47,000 acres** were part of the community, all working to ensure that plant, animal, and human communities thrive through our land stewardship. And - through recruitment by current participants - the Initiative is growing fast. 93% of Climate Land Leaders report that they are very likely to recommend this community to a friend.

Climate Land Leaders focus on **implementing natural climate solutions** - planting trees, shrubs, and grasses, restoring wetlands, managing forestlands, and other actions that not only sequester carbon and reduce emissions but also help strengthen biodiversity and provide for healthy soils, cleaner water, vibrant communities, and much more.

Participants share their conservation goals with each other at the beginning of the year and meet throughout the year to address barriers to success. Late in the year, they celebrate each others' successes.



Oliver Luker (left), here with partner Vanessa Oniboni (right), (IL) helps the cohort understand the top climate solutions for their lands



Perennial Stipends Expand Possibilities

To help the Climate Land Leaders achieve their ambitious conservation goals, the Climate Land Leaders Initiative **provided more than \$50,000 in stipends in 2024.**

"The stipend made it possible to devote significant time to invasive species removal," says Paul Mairet of Nine Hazels Farm (MN). Margaret McQuown, Resilient Farms (IA), reports, "The stipend is supporting my transition from production row crops to perennial pasture."

Naima Dhole (MN), pictured to the left, took advantage of Climate Land Leaders' perennial stipend to plant trees and shrubs on the farm she owns with husband Fagas Salah.

Befitting their moniker of “leaders”, Climate Land Leaders welcome the opportunity to speak out about the joys and challenges of stewarding land and the need for policy that helps them accomplish the land stewardship that benefits all of us. In opinion pieces, at state legislatures, on Midwest stages, and on their farms, in 2024 Climate Land Leaders made the case for robust, long-term investments in conservation that will reduce the climate toll and taxpayer burden of our current agriculture system and increase the resiliency of our lands and communities.

Soil Testing

The Climate Land Leaders Initiative provided 32 soils consultations in 2024, led by soils consultant Tiffany LaShae (pictured, left) and Dr. Sharon Weyers, U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Research Service. Participants were provided with easy-to-read reports on their soils from the Cornell University Soil Health Lab.

“In many ways, our impact story is being written beneath the surface of our farm,” says Jackie de Batista (IL) (pictured, right). “Tiffany showed me plant roots and soil life beneath the surface - good signs that we are building carbon and protecting our soil resource through our management.”



Liz Garst and Darwin Pierce (IA) hosted the Climate Land Leaders at Whiterock Conservancy in Iowa

The Climate Land Leaders Initiative held 50+ meetings in 2024 that included topics like:

- Prairie and wetland restoration
- Collaborating with a farming tenant
- Woodland stewardship
- Climate resilience on Indigenous lands
- Families, farmland, and legacy
- Communicating about climate
- Climate science and measuring ecosystem services

2024 Financial Information

TOTAL REVENUE: **\$578,841**

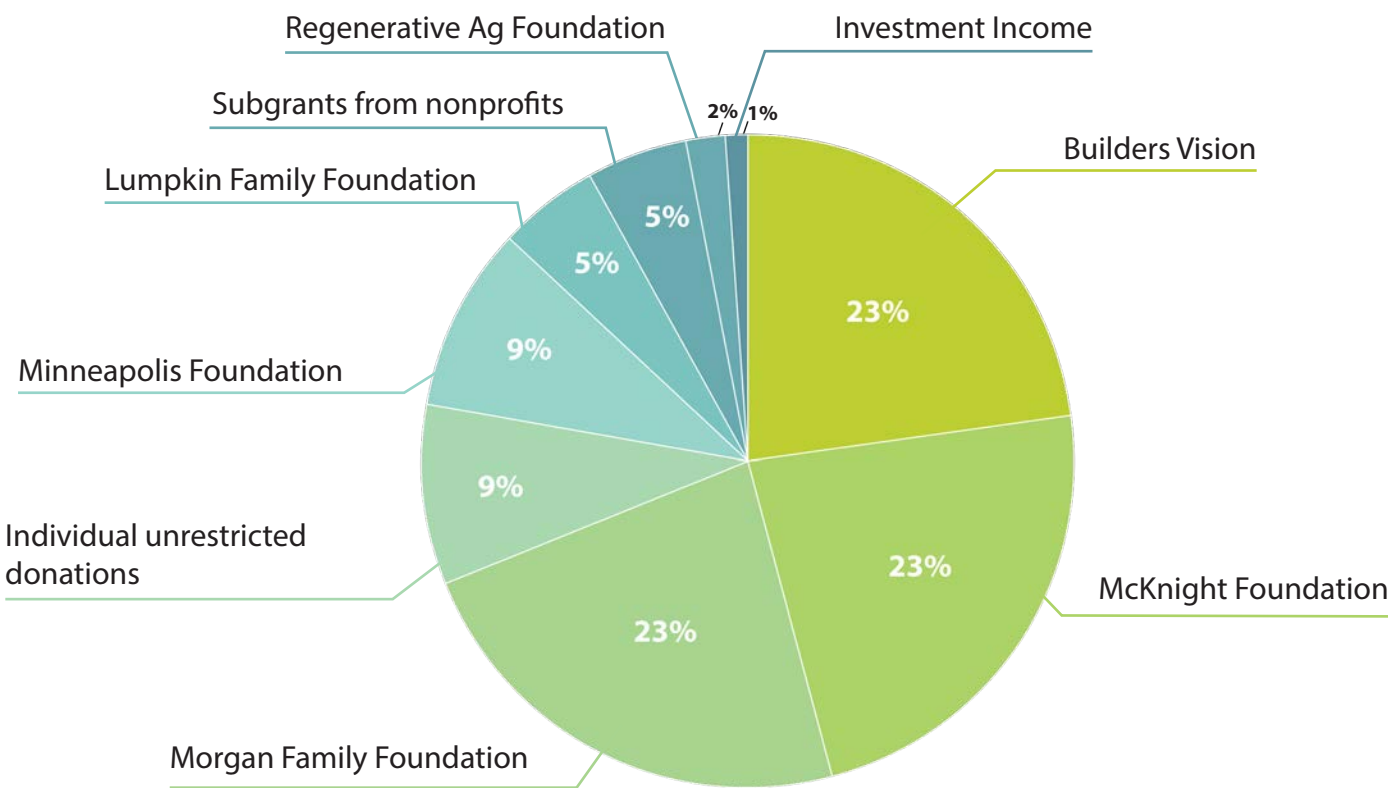
TOTAL ASSETS: **\$272,900**

TOTAL EXPENSES: **\$374,218**

TOTAL LIABILITIES: **\$10,316**

NET REVENUE: **\$204,623**

Income Sources



See www.climatelandleaders.org/accountability for legal documentation, 990s, and more.

28

Climate Land
Leaders
spoke at
conferences
and events

80%

of Climate Land
Leaders say the
Initiative has
helped them
achieve their
conservation
goals

84

Climate Land
Leaders
featured on
social media

53

Connection
opportunities
in-person and
virtually for
Climate Land
Leaders

**BY THE
NUMBERS
2024**

21

Number of
times Climate
Land Leaders
were featured
in the press

20

Climate Land
Leaders served
as policy
leaders

87%

of Climate Land
Leaders say the
Initiative has
given them a
stronger
community

78%

of Climate
Land Leaders
say they con-
nected with
other “CLLs”
outside regu-
lar meetings

Climate Land Leaders Team

Board of Directors



Jackie Armstrong (IA)

Iowa landowner



Heather Cusick (MN)

Climate Bridge Strategies, LLC



Gail Hickenbottom (IA)

Illinois landowner

(Executive Committee)



Rozina Kanchwala (IL)

Eco.logic and Illinois landowner



Ben Lilliston (MN)

Institute for Ag and Trade Policy



Dr. Michelle Montgomery (WA)

Haliwa Saponi (enrolled)/Eastern Band Cherokee (descendant)



Kate Moos (IA)

Iowa landowner

(Treasurer, Executive Committee)



Meg Nielsen (WI)

Minnesota landowner

(President, Executive Committee)



Jane Shey (IA)

Iowa landowner



Sylvia Spalding (HI)

Iowa landowner

Staff and Consultants



Naima Dhore

Farmer Advisor



Christina Foster

Illinois Lead



Sarah Hunt

Program Director



Wendy Johnson

Federal Policy Co-lead



Alanna Koshollek

Wisconsin Lead



Tiffany LaShae

Soils Consultant



Theresa Keaveny

Minnesota State Policy Lead



Teresa Opheim

Executive Director



Teresa Peterson

Indigenous Advisor



Taylor Sklenar

Iowa State Policy Lead

Committees

Strategic Planning

Carol Bouska (MN)
Christina Foster (IL)
Angela Smith Harris (MN)
Sarah Hunt (MN)
Alanna Koshollek (WI), facilitator
Kate Moos (IA)
Meg Nielsen (WI)
Teresa Opheim (MN)
Lee Tesdell (IA)

Equity Subgroup Co-Chairs

Sally McCoy (WI)
Paula Westmoreland (MN)

Belonging Committee

Naima Dhore (MN)
Wendy Johnson (IA)
Dr. Michelle Montgomery (WA)
Teresa Peterson (MN)
Sylvia Spalding (HI)
Paula Westmoreland (WI)

Policy Leaders

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Hannah Bernhardt (MN)
Naima Dhore (MN)
Christina Foster (IL)
Sarah Hunt (MN)
Wendy Johnson (IA)
Theresa Keaveny (MN)
Kate Moos (IA)
Meg Nielsen (WI)
Glenn Nielsen (WI)
Sally Lasser (IL)
Joe Luetmer (MN)
Maggie McQuown (IA)
Teresa Opheim (MN)
Deb Paulson (CO)
Jim Sayers (IA)
Sylvia Spalding (IA)
Lee Tesdell (IA)
Steve Turman (IA)
Matt Vermeersch (IA)
Seth Watkins (IA)
Tim Welsh (IA)

Partners



RURAL CLIMATE
PARTNERSHIP



**MINNEAPOLIS
FOUNDATION**

The Acreage at Osceola
Canopy Farm Management
Climate Bridge Strategies, LLC
Cornell Soil Health Laboratory
CURE (Clean Up the River Environment)
Eco.logic
Ecological Design
Farmers Rising
Green Lands Blue Waters
Indigenous Speaker Series
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
The Land Connection
Land Stewardship Project
Minnesota Native Landscapes
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
1000 Farms
Renewing the Countryside
Savanna Institute
Sharing Our Roots
Somali American Farmers Association
Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota
USDA Agricultural Research Service
Wild Rivers Conservancy

Individual Donors

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Sarah Hunt
Jeremy Iggers
Wendy Johnson
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Catherine Jordan
Rozina Kanchwala
Theresa Keaveny
Stephanie Lafarge
June Lavelle
Becky Lourey
Megan MacAlpine
Jane Maland Cady
Sally & Tom McCoy
Maggie McQuown & Steve
Turman
Ray Meyer
Kate Moos & Valerie
Arganbright
Connie Mutel
Jan & Rick Neville
Glenn & Meg Nielsen
Ann Novak
Mary & Irving Ochsenschlager

DeAnn & Doug Opheim
Paul Opheim
Teresa Opheim &
Rich Schuler
Deb Paulson
Margaret Pennings & Dan
Guenthner
Ruth Rabinowitz
Jodi Reese & Terry Langan
Suzanne Rhees
Jim Sayers
Diana & Karl Schuler
Joan & Gareth Schuler
Jane Shey
Dick Sloan
Angela Smith Harris
Sylvia Spalding
Neil Stahl
Barbara Strandell
Ray Sundby
Lee Tesdell
Tim Welsh
Paula Westmoreland
Rebecca Wiinanen
Bonnie Winslow-Garvin
Doug & Lidia Zehr
Mark Ziemer



Carol Bouska (MN)



Pat Collins & Carolyn Brue (MN)



Prescott Bergh (WI)

*Climate Land Leaders
Darwin Pierce (IA),
Valerie Arganbright (IA),
Omar Tesdell (IA), and
Lee Tesdell (IA) share a
laugh at the June 2024
Whiterock Conservancy
meet-up.*



*Climate Land Leaders
Beatrice Kamau (IL) and Christina
Foster (IL) and Board President
Meg Nielsen (WI) discuss land
and climate at the October 2024
Madison, WI meet-up.*



*Climate Land Leaders
Rebecca Wiinanen (IA),
Pam Arnold (MN), and Jane Shey (IA)
chat on a sunny porch at the June
2024 Whiterock Conservancy
meet-up.*





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