

For Immediate Release

Contact:

Ian McSweeney, Director
ian@agrariantrust.org
603-801-3120



AGRARIAN TRUST



**Agrarian Trust Launches the Agrarian Commons
A National Model for Community-Centered Farm Ownership**

National, May 1, 2020 — Today Agrarian Trust announces the launch of a transformative new model for community-centered farm and ranch ownership and tenure, the Agrarian Commons. After several years of development and collaborative input, the Agrarian Commons launches in 10 states across the country with 12 founding farms that total 2,400 acres of diversified agriculture serving foodsheds and communities. Diversified agriculture is proven to regenerate soils, sequester carbon, and support healthy ecosystems. Founding boards of the 10 Agrarian Commons are 58 percent women, 63 percent farmers, and 85 percent local to the regions the Agrarian Commons serves.

The Agrarian Commons addresses two primary barriers for beginning and exiting farmers: the high cost of land and high debt burden of modern agriculture. The model decommodifies land through locally governed Agrarian Commons, newly formed legal entities that support farmland access for dispossessed farmers and farmers of color, rebuild human relationships to the land, and return natural capital to land.

Human disconnection from land, the climate crisis, and the catastrophic loss of habitat and species directly impact food security and the health of farms, humans, community, and the earth. The consolidation of industrial agriculture imperils our farms and food systems: Every day, 37 mid-sized farms close across the country. At the foundation of land injustice is the dispossession and theft of land from Indigenous peoples, Black farmers, and other communities of color. More than 60 percent of farmworkers are people of color, yet people of color own less than 2 percent of all farmland in the United States. Underlying all of this is the reality that we are in the midst of 400 million acres of U.S. farmland changing hands as a generation of farmers and ranchers retire. The time for transformation in how land is owned, accessed, valued, and used is now.

The West Virginia Agrarian Commons is building a community to value and sustain interconnected agricultural enterprises, creating equitable ownership, and an agrarian economy that restores the health of the land and its communities after centuries of exploitation. The Southeast Minnesota Agrarian Commons is focused on small-scale farm enterprises that provide new opportunities to rural Latinx immigrants and communities, and build economic resilience and community well-being. Somali Bantu communities resettling the exploited and neglected mill cities of Lewiston-Auburn, Maine are founding the Little Jubba Central Maine Agrarian Commons to hold community farms focused on local food production. Visit the Agrarian Commons website to learn more about the 10 founding Agrarian Commons.

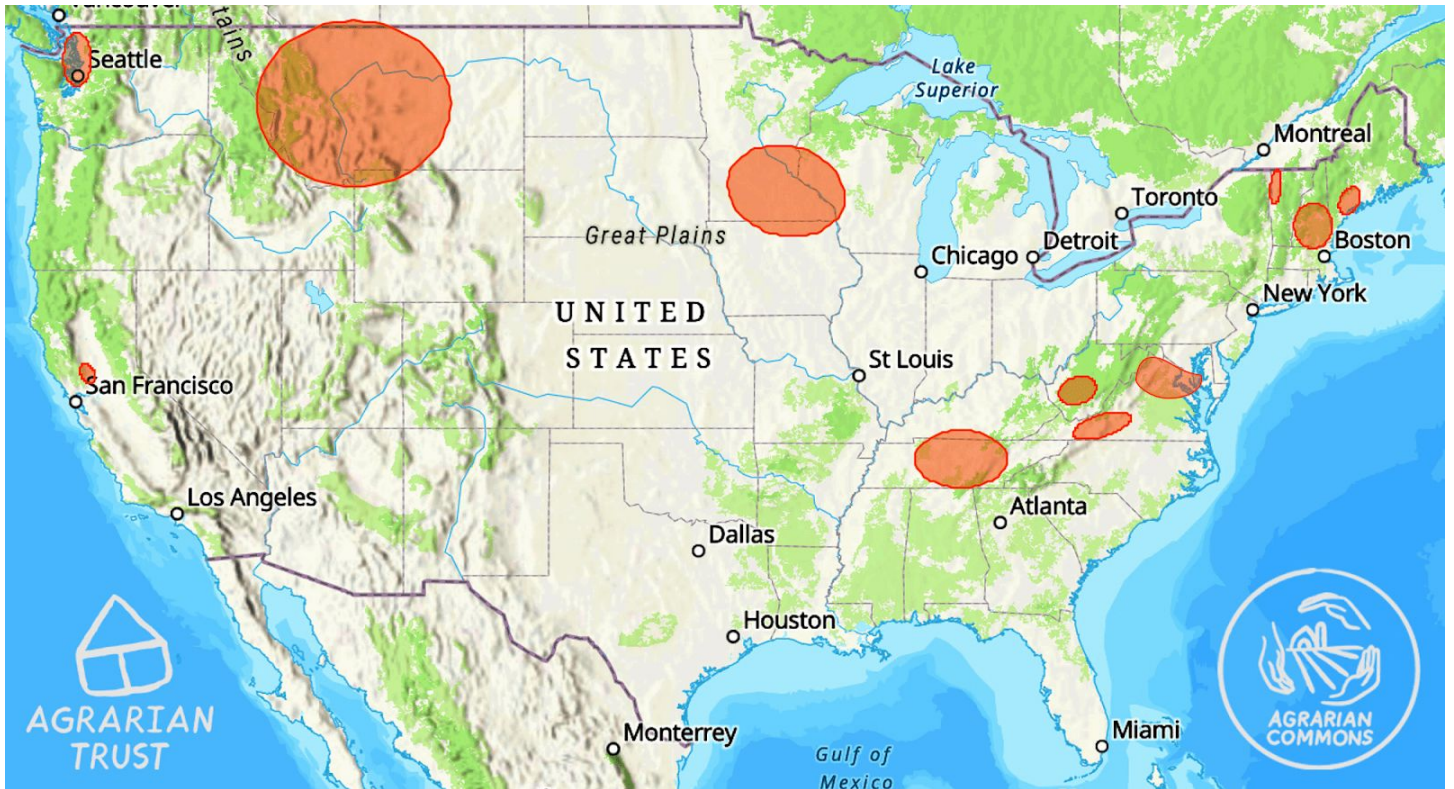
The May 1st, 2020 founding of the Agrarian Commons is a step toward transforming our relationship to land. Agrarian Trust is working to raise \$10 million over the next two years for Agrarian Commons to acquire farms, fund land transaction costs and organizational capacity, and invest in farm viability and ecological health.

Visit: www.agrariantrust.org/agrariancommons

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Agrarian Commons: Location Map and Summaries



[Capay Valley California Agrarian Commons](#) - #capayvalleycaliforniaAC

A collaborative project of several long-standing CSA farms, innovative farm service organizations, and community leaders to support land security, agrarian economy, and community resilience for small-scale diversified food production in the Capay Valley.

Contact: capayvalleycaliforniaAC@agrariantrust.org

[Confluence Agrarian Commons](#) - #confluenceAC

Since 2017, 20 acres of land serving the DC metro region with ecoganic vegetables has been stewarded by Rhize Home community, which, together with the farm owning family and Agrarian Trust, is responsible for transitioning this land into Confluence Agrarian Commons.

Contact: confluenceAC@agrariantrust.org

[Little Jubba Central Maine Agrarian Commons](#) - #littlejubbacentralmaineAC

A rich collaborative and partnership among multiple organizations to support and stand with the Somali Bantu community that makes up one-sixth of the population of the Lewiston–Auburn twin cities along the banks of the Androscoggin River.

Contact: littlejubbacentralmaineAC@agrariantrust.org

[Southeast Minnesota Agrarian Commons](#) - #southeastminnesotaAC

A foodshed-focused, community-centered collaboration and the guiding inspiration for the Agrarian Commons model. This collaboration brings forward innovative leadership in land conservation, stewardship, and regenerative agricultural practices focused on small-scale farm enterprises in the [Main Street Project](#), which

provides pathways out of poverty for rural Latino immigrants through a 100-acre demonstration farm focused on a Poultry-Centered Regenerative Agroforestry system.

Contact: southeastminnesotaAC@agrariantrust.org

[Montana Agrarian Commons](#) - #montanaAC

A statewide partnership that brings together a community land trust, [Trust Montana](#), an organic grain and crop farm and stewardship education institute, Vilicus Training Institute, and Agrarian Trust to support affordable and secure land tenure for regenerative food production, ecological stewardship, and educational opportunities.

Contact: montanaAC@agrariantrust.org

[New Hampshire Agrarian Commons](#) - #newhampshireAC

A collaboration of leading diversified organic farms focused on regenerative land stewardship, soil building, food production for regional markets, and community-supported and engaged food access and land connections.

Contact: newhampshireAC@agrariantrust.org

[Middle Tennessee Agrarian Commons](#) - #middletennesseeAC

A collaborative between long-standing organic and CSA farms creating a legacy and ensuring food, culture, and agrarian connections to Middle Tennessee within the Nashville foodshed. This region encompasses counties that are in the 10 wealthiest and 10 poorest counties in the country.

Contact: middletennesseeAC@agrariantrust.org

[Vermont Agrarian Commons](#) - #vermontAC

A regenerative-focused local community coming together to preserve the agrarian landscape by making farming a viable profession for the next generation of young, diverse farmers. Encompassing over 600 acres of land, equitable tenure is prioritized to support next generation farmers focused on regenerative, diversified food production and sustainable community-centered farms.

Contact: vermontAC@agrariantrust.org

[Southwest Virginia Agrarian Commons](#) - #southwestvirginiaAC

A collaboration between a regional conservation organization, [New River Land Trust](#), an urban community farm, [Garden Variety Harvests](#), and Agrarian Trust to support small-scale agriculture and pollinator habitats. Virginia Tech's [Catawba Sustainability Center](#) is an educational center partner.

Contact: southwestvirginiaAC@agrariantrust.org

[Puget Sound Washington Agrarian Commons](#) - #pugetsoundwashingtonAC

A visionary gift to create an agricultural legacy brought forward the seed that initiated this Agrarian Commons model. The Puget Sound region has a large population, high development pressure, escalating land prices, and high demand for locally-produced and organic food.

Contact: pugetsoundwashingtonAC@agrariantrust.org

[West Virginia Agrarian Commons](#) - #westvirginiaAC

A community creating a national model to hold farmland and support farming in a state with a long history of worker rights and solidarity. This model offers an alternative to the extractive and exploitative economy that has built the U.S. and decimated local communities.

Contact: westvirginiaAC@agrariantrust.org

Visit the [Agrarian Commons website](#) to learn more about each Agrarian Commons.

Agrarian Commons: Illustrations

