



“Nourishing and (Re)Imagining Collaboration, Conservation, and Community”

Tuesday, December 12th & Wednesday, December 13th, 2023

Starting each day at 8:45 a.m.

**Blue Ridge Community College, Plecker Workforce Center
One College Lane, Weyers Cave, Virginia 24486**

Speakers and panelists will address and discuss regenerative agriculture, safety trauma, emotional ecology, drought resilience, managing pasture, the power of land and agency, community food webs and clusters, connections between soil health and human health, diversifying and stacking complementary enterprises, value chain connections, market development, local and regional food system development.

Learn more and register at <https://tinyurl.com/2023VAF2TConfReg>



Dr. Elizabeth Heilman
Professor of Education
of Wichita State
University



Dale Strickler of
Regenerative Wisdom
and author of *Drought Resilient Farm*



Dr. Gail Myers of
Farms to Grow, Inc.
and Director of
Rhythms of the Land



Dr. Heather Coiner of
Little Hat Creek Farm
and Common Grain
Alliance



Ken Meter of Crossroads
Resource Center and author
of *Building Community Food
Webs*



Dr. David R. Montgomery &
Anne Biklé authors of *What
Your Food Ate*



Dr. Pedro Aponte of Saint
Isidore Homestead and
Permaculture



Daniel Austin of Lit-
tle Red Hen Farm
and Green Sprig Ag

On Tuesday afternoon, there will be a special exclusive screening of *Rhythms of the Land*, a multimedia documentary film directed by Dr. Gail Myers, a cultural anthropologist, farmer, and co-founder of Farms to Grow Inc.. For more information about the networking and social time, please contact Eric Bendfeldt at 540-232-6006.



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

DAY 1 — TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2023

8:00 — 8:45 AM	REGISTRATION & REFRESHMENTS (FOYER & ROOM C)
8:45 — 9:00 AM	<p>OPENING & LOGISTICS (ROOM A & B)</p> <p>Eric Bendfeldt, Virginia Tech and Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) Mary Sketch Bryant, Virginia Tech and the Virginia Soil Health Coalition</p> <p>INTRODUCTION OF VISIONING AND PLANNING ACTIVITY:</p>
9:00 — 9:10 AM	WELCOME (Room A & B) – Dr. Michael Gutter, Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension and Associate Dean, Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
9:10 — 10:00 AM	<p>NURTURING ROOTS OF RESILIENCE: HARVESTING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE (Room A & B)</p> <p>Dr. Elizabeth Heilman, Professor of Education, Wichita State University and National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT)</p>
10:00 — 10:50 AM	<p>CREATING A DROUGHT RESILIENT FARM (Room A & B)</p> <p>Dale Strickler, Soil health guru, farmer, agronomist with Regenerative Wisdom and author of <i>The Drought Resilient Farm, Managing Pasture, and Restoring Your Soil</i></p>
11:00— 11:50 AM	<p>REVIVING THE MID-ATLANTIC GRAIN ECONOMY</p> <p>Dr. Heather Coiner of Little Hat Creek Farm and Common Grain Alliance</p>
11:50AM — NOON	<p>INTRODUCTION AND INSTRUCTIONS OF VISIONING AND PLANNING ACTIVITY</p> <p>Eric Bendfeldt, Virginia Tech and Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) Dr. Elizabeth Heilman, Professor of Education, Wichita State University and facilitators</p>
12:00 — 1:30 PM	<p>LUNCH Catered by Harvest Table of Dayton, Virginia (ROOMS A, B, & C)</p> <p>PRESENTATION OF 2023 CARL LUEBBEN SOIL HEALTH AND WATER QUALITY AWARD</p> <p>SPURRED CREATIVITY: VISIONING AND PLANNING EXERCISE</p> <p>What would you want to exist and be present that does not currently exist in relation to community development, regional food system infrastructure, natural resource conservation innovation, and food security?</p>
1:30 — 2:30 PM	<p>EXCLUSIVE SCREENING OF RHYTHMS OF THE LAND (AUDITORIUM)</p> <p>Dr. Myers of Farms To Grow, Inc. started the documentary project in 2012 and toured 10 southern states -- Texas, Arkansas, South Carolina, North Carolina, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Tennessee and Florida – to interview over 30 farmers, sharecroppers, gardeners, and a 5th generation coil basket weaver. Several of the interviews were with elders ranging in ages from 92 to 109. These interviews represent generations of cultural traditions of Black farming philosophy that honors land, sustainability, God, family and love for their community.</p>
2:30 — 3:30 PM	<p>WHY LAND IS IMPORTANT FOR LIBERATION: LAND HAS SO MUCH POWER (AUDITORIUM)</p> <p>Dr. Gail Myers, Cultural Anthropologist, Co-Founder of Farms to Grow Inc., Director and Producer of <i>Rhythms of the Land</i></p> <p>In this talk, Dr. Myers enlightens that beyond the intrinsic value of land, the place-based relationship furthers a collective work and responsibility ethic, and a sense of power. As all-Black towns developed in the late 19th and 20th centuries, it was the collective approach that sustained these Black communities. Landowners donated parcels of land for building churches and schools for the entire community. Black Farmers and ranchers maintained agrarian traditions that provided the provisions to maintain traditional food ways.</p>
3:30 — 4:30 PM	<p>REFLECTIONS, NETWORKING, AND MUSIC BY THE FLIP CHARTS (ROOMS A & B)</p> <p>What have you heard? What are you most excited about? What new alliances have you formed?</p>

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

DAY 2 — WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2023

8:00 — 8:45 AM	REGISTRATION & REFRESHMENTS (FOYER & ROOM C)
8:45 — 9:00 AM	OPENING & LOGISTICS (AUDITORIUM) Eric Bendfeldt, Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) Mary Sketch Bryant, Virginia Tech and the Virginia Soil Health Coalition
9:00 — 9:10 AM	WELCOME— COLLABORATION, CONSERVATION, AND COMMUNITY (ROOMS A & B) Dr. Edwin Martinez, State Conservationist, Virginia USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service
9:10—10:00 AM	HOW DO WE (RE)IMAGINE AND CHANGE THE SYSTEMS THAT BRING US FOOD? (ROOMS A & B) Ken Meter of Crossroads Resource Center and author of <i>Building Community Food Webs</i>
10:00 — 10:20 AM	RESTORE THE SOIL AND SKIN OF THE EARTH Dale Strickler, Soil health guru, farmer, agronomist with Regenerative Wisdom and author of <i>The Drought Resilient Farm, Managing Pasture, and Restoring Your Soil</i>
10:20 — 11:20 AM	WHAT YOUR FOOD ATE: HOW TO HEAL OUR LAND AND RECLAIM OUR HEALTH (ROOMS A & B via ZOOM) Dr. David Montgomery and Anne Biklé authors of <i>What Your Food Ate, Growing a Revolution, The Hidden Half of Nature, and Dirt: The Erosion of Civilizations.</i>
11:20 AM — 12:00 PM	SUSTAINABLE ECOLOGY OF CARE FOR THE COMMON GOOD (ROOMS A & B) Dr. Pedro Aponte of Saint Isidore Homestead & Permaculture and James Madison University's Music Department
12:00 — 1:30 PM	LUNCH Catered by Harvest Table of Dayton, Virginia (ROOMS A, B, & C) VIDEO: AGAINST THE GRAIN, BEYOND THE GRIND (RE)IMAGINING COMMUNITY, DEMOCRACY, AND A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE (Room A & B)
CONCURRENT SESSIONS I 1:30 — 2:45 PM	A CASE STUDY IN FARM DIVERSIFICATION: WHAT WE'VE LEARNED SO FAR ABOUT SOIL, ECONOMIC, AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS (AUDITORIUM) Daniel Austin of Little red Hen Farm and Green Sprig Ag SOIL FOR WATER: REGENERATIVE GRAZING AND SOIL HEALTH SYSTEMS PART I (ROOM A) Dale Strickler of Regenerative Wisdom and Lee Rinehart, National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) moderated by Becky Szarzynski of Virginia Forage and Grassland Council (VFGC) VIRGINIA URBAN AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS INITIATIVE (ROOM B) Kim Niewolny, Director, VT Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation, Steph Zhu, PhD student, Virginia Tech, and Renee Foster, County Executive Director, Farm Service Agency Urban Ag Committee PUBLIC IMAGE WORKS JUMPSTART: FROM CLARITY TO IDENTITY TO PUBLICITY PART I (ROOM P122) Ennis Carter and Social Impact Studios team
CONCURRENT SESSIONS II 2:45 — 4:00 PM	AGAINST THE GRAIN, BEYOND THE GRIND (AUDITORIUM) Nico Melas of Mill Song Bakery, Charlie Wade III of Deep Roots Milling at Woodson Mill, Daniel Austin of Green Sprig Ag. Moderated by Madelyn Smith of Common Grain Alliance SOIL FOR WATER: REGENERATIVE GRAZING AND SOIL HEALTH SYSTEMS PART II (ROOM A) Brent Wills of Bramble Hollow Farm, Sarah Morton and Ralph Morton of Cattle Run Farm, and Erin Shibley of Virginia Working Landscapes moderated by Becky Szarzynski of VFGC. REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT (ROOM B) Ken Meter of Crossroads Resource Center, Michelle Edwards of Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Planning Commission, and Mo McGonagle of Roanoke Foodshed Network PUBLIC IMAGE WORKS JUMPSTART: FROM CLARITY TO IDENTITY TO PUBLICITY PART II (ROOM P122) Ennis Carter and Social Impact Studios team
4:00 — 4:30PM	REFLECTIONS, DEBRIEF, AND CLOSING MUSIC BY THE FLIP CHARTS (Rooms A & B) SAFE TRAVELS!



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Conservation, and Community”**

Tuesday, December 12th and Wednesday, December 13th

Blue Ridge Community College, Plecker Workforce Center, Weyers Cave, VA

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell: _____

Email: _____

Business/ Organization _____

I will be attending (check all that apply)	<u>Before 11/30/23</u>	<u>After 11/30/23</u>
_____ Day 1 : Tuesday, December 12th.....	\$45	\$65
_____ Day 2: Wednesday, December 13th.....	\$45	\$65
_____ Two-day full registration (December 12th and 13th)	\$90	\$130

Total Enclosed: _____

Make checks payable to “Treasurer, Virginia Tech”

Mail completed registration form and payment to: VCE Northwest District Office
2322 Blue Stone Hills Dr., Suite 140, Harrisonburg, VA 22801



Register online at <https://tinyurl.com/2023VAF2TConfReg>

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive accommodations to participate in the conference, please contact Eric Bendfeldt at 540.232.6006/TDD* from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to the event.

