

Reaching Under-Resourced Communities

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Agenda

- History of Regenerative Agriculture
- DNR Agricultural Leases as a Model of Sustainable and Inclusive Land Management
- Barriers to Entry
- Best Practices & Solutions
- Resources
- Q & A



Exercise: What Is Culture?

1. Who here are siblings?
2. It's football season. Who has a favorite football team?
3. It's the holiday season. Who has special traditions in their family?
4. Are there any special foods or recipes that you make during the holidays that are important to your family?



WHAT IS CULTURE?



Merriam-Webster Definition:

The customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group

The set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization



What is Regenerative Agriculture?



- The USDA and the state of Maryland does not have a definition for regenerative agriculture
- The concept of regenerative agriculture promotes soil health and the use of Maryland’s Healthy Soils Practices on farms, such as cover crops, crop rotation, low to no-till, holistically with the stewardship and connections to the land itself
- DNR and MDA are partnering to expand the definition of the Healthy Soils Program to include “regenerative practices and traditions” through the Chesapeake Bay Legacy Act. This partnership will promote regenerative practices on public lands

Chesapeake Bay Legacy Act



“Regenerative Practices and Traditions” means a form of land management and stewardship approaches that:

- I. Draw on traditions and innovations from African, Indigenous, and Original Land Stewards;
- II. Promote culturally important food and climate justice programs and initiatives; and
- III. Enhance the land and ecosystem through adaptive land management and water quality, restore biodiversity, mitigate climate change impacts, and provide the greatest community benefits

History Regenerative Agriculture

- The origins of regenerative agriculture is not well told or understood
- Organic farming practices originated in Africa
- Slaves brought native seeds with them to the US
- Coined by Dr. George Washington Carver, agriculture scientist, inventor, and educator at Tuskegee University
- President George Washington is often praised for his “innovative” farming techniques
- This is cultural appropriation. Indigenous People, African Americans, and Original Land Stewardships have been doing these practices well before Americans



Agroforestry



USDA Definition:

The intentional integration of trees and shrubs into crop and animal farming systems to create environmental, economic, and social benefits. It has been practiced in the United States and around the world for centuries.

Co-Benefits:

- Addresses food insecurity
- Increases access to foraging
- Multi Use of public lands
- Changes the way communities see themselves on our public lands



Planting alternating rows of trees and crops is one possible technique in the agroforestry toolbox.



Trees can provide livestock with food and shade on farms that implement silvopasture.

Culturally Important Species



Increasing Economic Opportunities and Stewardship

1865 Special Field Orders Number 15

1865 and 1919 Blacks owned 15M acres in the South

1872 Fathers of Conservation and Evolution believed in Eugenics

1934 Urban and Rural Redlining

1964 Civil Rights Act

2024 Blacks own 1% of rural land

57.8 is the average age of a farmer

Farmers are struggling to pass land to the next generation

81% of farms are operated by families and individuals

2,301 number of young producers (average at 34)

269 Black farmers in Maryland

POLITICS

In 2022, Black farmers were persistently left behind from the USDA's loan system

FEBRUARY 19, 2023 · 10:36 AM ET



Ximena Bustillo



Lucious Abrams, a plaintiff in the Pigford v. Glickman class action lawsuit, stands in front of a tractor on his Georgia farm.

U.S. NEWS

Black and other minority farmers are getting \$2 billion from USDA after years of discrimination



B



Why Is this Better for the Chesapeake Bay?



- When communities are represented in the work, they see themselves in the work, which increases stewardship
- Increases historical knowledge and education
- Mutual benefits for conservation and people
- Improves soil health, ecosystem health, creates habitat, addresses climate change, reduces flooding
- Reduces costs and benefits local economies
- Uses state resources that are directed for land resources
- This does not exclude any demographic of people
- Further builds on the agriculture industry by addressing barriers
- Restorative justice

Ongoing Challenges & Barriers to Entry

- Lack of Technical Assistance and Education
- Inequities within lease terms
 - Farmers won't receive monetary compensation or equity for infrastructure built on leased land
- Bureaucratic processes create lack of transparency
 - Solutions: regulatory reform, standardization of programs/leases



Solution: Greenspace Equity Program

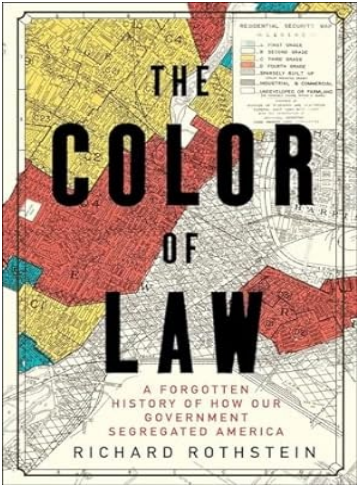
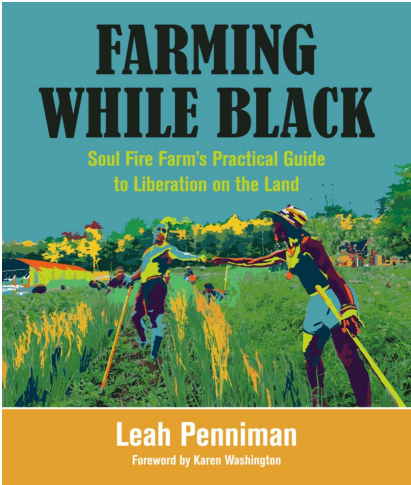
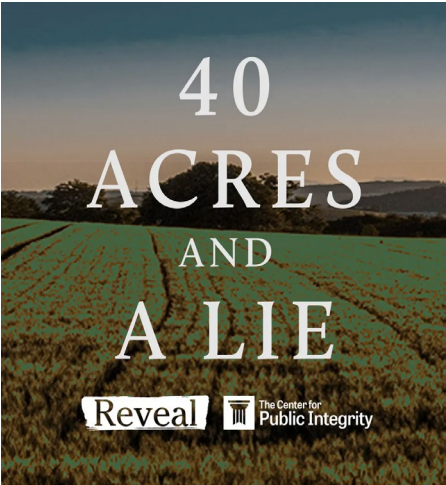


Provides grants for enhancing the public health and livability of overburdened and underserved communities by implementing projects to preserve, create, and improve public health in overburdened and underserved communities

What it Does:

- Assessment of where we lack resources
- Increases opportunities for urban agriculture and urban agroforestry
- Increases opportunities for co-creation and multi-benefits
- Facilitates resources directly into communities
- Incentivises partnerships

Resources



Summary

- Work across agencies
- Meet communities where they are. Build trusted relationships first
- Assess inequities that exist within your processes
- Ensure funding/resources are equitably distributed and dedicated for communities
- Define language in statute: Underserved and Overburdened
- Do not underestimate the true cost and needs
- Co-create programs with communities you are serving. Get feedback on the front end and respond to it
- Create advisory boards and dedicate seats for groups



Questions?

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