

ANNUAL REPORT • 2014



fibershed[®]
local fibers • local dyes • local labor

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



COVER PHOTOS & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PHOTO BY PAIGE GREEN

Fibershed has focused on the foundational aspects of building our ‘Soil-to-Soil’ fiber system this year. With a solid research body that we had developed from our analysis on fiber supplies and manufacturing potentials in 2013, we were well informed to advance our regional fiber system in three key areas: 1) Healthy soils & carbon farming, 2) Agro-ecological research for bast fiber, and 3) Education and outreach to build demand for regionally farmed fiber goods.

It is clear that local milling systems will not be built overnight—returning manufacturing to the landscape will require that our community puts value on, and begins to demand, the ‘Grown and Sewn Close to Home’ ethos. Fibershed continues to create the conditions for increasing this demand through awareness-raising events and hands-on education. We simultaneously work to ensure that locally-farmed materials are made widely available. Fibershed is supporting a spectrum of scales of production—from organizing artisan-level farmers’ market booths, to developing new online portals for farmers and artisans, to working with the single largest textile corporation in the world to create the first bioregional mainstreamed garment (post NAFTA). The feature and theme of all of this advocacy work is to create ‘fertile fiber economies’ that acknowledge their reliance on healthy working landscapes, and begin to put fiber farming and ranching at the forefront of the textile conversation.

Building demand for local fiber, however instrumental to our movement, isn’t enough. Those working in agricultural production are already affected by apparent climatic shifts. We traveled the landscape to interview our producer community this year, to hear their stories and share the science behind sequestering atmospheric carbon into our working landscapes. Across the board the effects of the drought have taken unparalleled historic tolls, and from the producers themselves there is a 100% commitment and interest in building healthy soil carbon stocks, with the understanding that increased soil carbon levels leads to increased water holding capacity and forage production. In collaboration with farmers, ranchers, government agencies, and scientists, we are working with our producer community to begin designing the plans for the implementation of soil carbon building practices, and we have created an implementation fund to initiate the first stages of land-based restoration work. We are in the process of developing a ‘Climate Beneficial™ Certification’ for raw fibers that derive from these landscapes, with the intent to both re-value our locally farmed materials and drive demand for climate-conscious consumption.

Dressing humans in soil-based renewable fibers can be done in tandem with restoring the land and sequestering carbon in our soils, all the while keeping those that manage our farms and ranches financially intact. We’re stacking the functions and advancing an integrated approach—and to that end our organization moved quickly when the opportunity arose to initiate research on the most biomass dense fiber crop known. We implemented hemp seed trials in Colorado and Kentucky in the late spring of 2014. Working with veterans and sixth

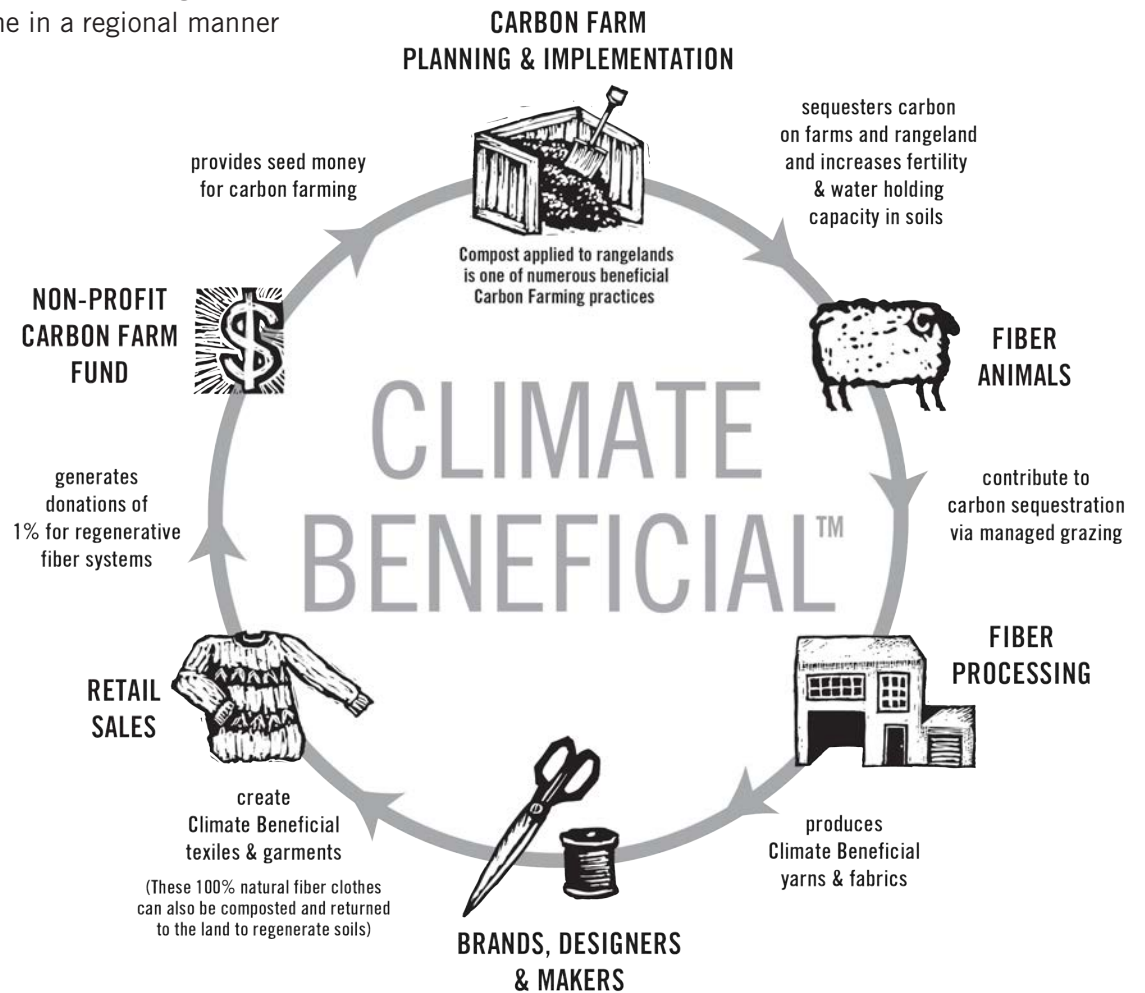
generation farming families in both states, we tested several fiber varieties and we've determined that hemp does live up to its reputation of high biomass yields for relatively low water use. Without any herbicides or pesticides, we have already seen per-acre yields of textile-grade fiber that are very promising. Our work with hemp continues into 2015 with increased no-till research plantings, and developing (in partnership with engineers and entrepreneurs) the early stage artisanal markets that will help re-establish this plant as a high value (non-commodity) crop within agricultural communities that are in search of how to both continue and thrive in land-based livelihoods.

We are so grateful for your support and engagement with our work, and we are elated by the prospects of what we see unfolding in 2015—a landscape where urban and rural communities expand their understanding of their own interconnectedness through the clothes that they wear, and that together we produce and consume in a regional manner that nourishes the soil, air and water on which we all depend.

In appreciation,



Rebecca Burgess





◀ **Public interest in carbon farming** was sparked by presentations at our Wool Symposium in 2013, so we partnered on an event with Carbon Cycle Institute in early 2014 to take the conversation a step further. A video of the event can be seen at <http://www.fibershed.com/carbon-conversations/>



▲ Fibershed invited materials research staff from The North Face to a presentation on **carbon farming** at the ranch of John Wick. Fibershed executive director, Rebecca Burgess, presented the concept of **Climate-Beneficial™ textiles** that utilize fiber sourced from ranches implementing carbon farming practices, thus building regenerative fiber systems.

HEALTHY SOILS & CARBON FARMING



Regenerative fiber systems begin with the soil. Current research on grazed and managed landscapes by UC Berkeley's Silver Lab suggests that a one-time application of a half-inch layer of compost on grazed pasture and rangeland will increase soil water-holding capacity and forage, while sequestering one metric ton of CO₂ per hectare per year for 30 years, without any re-application. The implication of this research shows the key connection between climate change solutions and fiber systems.



▲ **Dr. Jeff Creque of Carbon Cycle Institute and the Marin Carbon Project** educating Fibershed Producer members about making compost and carbon farming.



Throughout 2014, Fibershed staff and interns traveled to the farms and ranches of our members, to hear their stories and to share information about **carbon farming**. We are now working with our producer community to develop carbon farm plans, and have created an implementation fund to initiate the first stages of land-based restoration work.

◀ Producer member Amy Chesnut discusses carbon farming with Fibershed staff. PHOTO: PAIGE GREEN

◀ PHOTO: PAIGE GREEN



◀ Fibershed's interest in hemp is founded on the precept that fiber systems are best if designed to minimize detrimental impacts to the biosphere, and to enhance ecosystem function where possible. **Hemp is biomass dense.** Fiber strains are able to produce upwards of 2,000 pounds per acre of useful textile and cordage fibers with no need for pesticides or herbicides. PHOTO: RIO DE LA VISTA

AGRO-ECOLOGICAL RESEARCH FOR BAST FIBER



▲ In Colorado, Fibershed worked with Costilla County Commissioners and supportive community members to test soils for carbon and nitrogen content and plant two strains of hemp for fiber research. The hemp that was harvested in fall of 2014 is soon to be processed, spun and woven into cloth as part of Fibershed's textile research. PHOTO: MICHAEL KEEFE

Fibershed provided support for the processing of a **Kentucky hemp crop planted by members of Growing Warriors**, an organization that trains military veterans with farming skills. PHOTO: MEGAN HOLLENBECK ▼



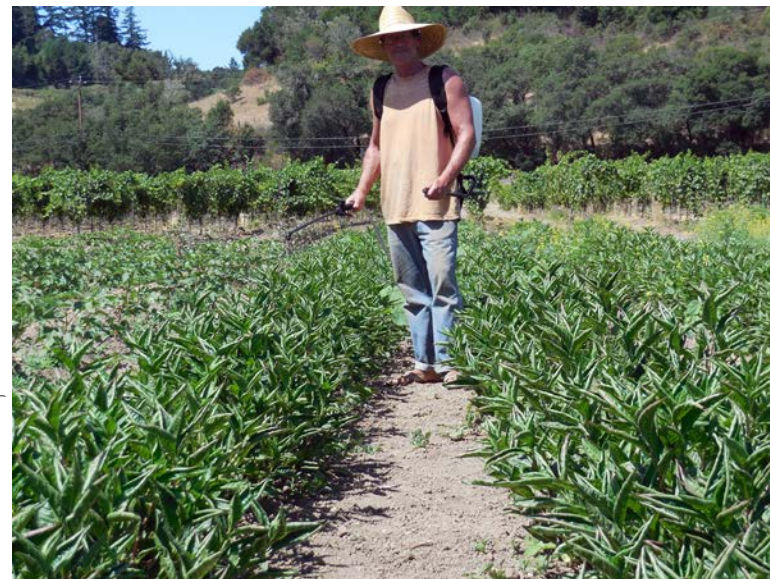
▲ A **decorticator** built by Kevin Lanzi of Growing Warriors is used to hand-process the dried hemp stocks and separate the fiber from the woody hurd. PHOTO: MEG WILSON PHOTOGRAPHY



▲ **Sheep and alpaca fiber** has been acquired from Kentucky ranchers (Alvina Maynard, above, and Kathy Meyer, left), and will be used in Fibershed's textile research, blending hemp with animal fibers to create Kentucky cloth. PHOTOS: MEG WILSON PHOTOGRAPHY



After three years of early stage commercialization and research on organic production by Fibershed founder Rebecca Burgess, indigo farming was launched by Craig Wilkinson at two sites in Sonoma County—a retired dairy and a vineyard—to explore **how to integrate indigo into a biodynamic system** with color-grown cotton. ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF CRAIG WILKINSON



▲ Fibershed Producer member and biodynamic grower, **Craig Wilkinson**, at the biodynamic site for indigo and color-grown cotton at DaVero Winery.

CALIFORNIA INDIGO PROJECT

Volunteers help with the **spring indigo planting**. ▼



▲ Indigo leaves prepared for a **fresh leaf dye vat**.

Volunteers help separate dried leaves from stems in preparation for composting the leaves to produce **sukumo**, a **traditional Japanese method** of processing indigo. ▼



▲ Cotton yarn dyed with indigo, using a traditional Japanese fermentation vat.



Thanks in part to relationships that Fibershed built and nurtured, one of the first bioregional projects by a major brand since NAFTA took effect was launched in 2014—**The Backyard Project hoodie by The North Face**. This collaborative project is a module that we see as a critical step towards regenerating our fiber system—a system reliant on farmers, ranchers, farmland, rangeland, skilled manufacturing jobs, and family-owned businesses. PHOTOS: LEFT, BY SALLY FOX; RIGHT, BY PAIGE GREEN ▶



BUILDING DEMAND FOR REGIONALLY FARMED FIBER GOODS

Land-based education and economics are brought together at the **Fibershed Marketplaces**. Creating spaces to increase access to homegrown fibers allows the public to spend time directly with artisans and farmers and meet those responsible for “growing our wardrobes.” PHOTOS: PAIGE GREEN



“The presence of Fibershed at the farmers’ markets has been a huge benefit. The markets are a great way to educate the public about Fibershed and the producers’ and artisans’ products.”

– Jackie Post, sheep farmer, educator, and Fibershed Producer member





The theme of the sold-out third annual Fibershed Wool & Fine Fiber Symposium was **The Ecology of Wool**, featuring informative presentations on **breeding practices** that build heirloom garments, plus **predator- and pollinator-friendly practices** that harmonize and blur the line between wild and domestic spaces, all bringing beauty and function to our fields and wardrobes. PHOTOS: PAIGE GREEN

FIBERSHED WOOL & FINE FIBER SYMPOSIUM



A display of **fibers from throughout the region** was on exhibit. Information about each farm or ranch was displayed along with both raw and hand-processed samples of wool, alpaca, angora goat and angora rabbit fiber. PHOTO: PAIGE GREEN ▼



Fibershed producers (including Robin Lynde, above; Marnie Jackson, right; and Sierra Reading, far right) were on hand to provide **demonstrations** on sheep shearing, skirting, wool grading, angora rabbit shearing, cashmere fiber processing, felting, and natural dyes. PHOTOS: PAIGE GREEN





Fibershed's workshops for the public continue to provide experiential learning opportunities that develop new **fiber and natural dye skills** in relation to the natural environment.

◀ **Patagonia Natural Dye Workshop** with Rebecca Burgess, on-site at Patagonia Headquarters, Ventura, CA

Mushroom Dyes with Alissa Allen at the Napa, CA ranch of Fibershed Producer Mary Pettis-Sarley ▶



PUBLIC EDUCATION



▲ Rebecca Burgess demonstrates **indigo dyeing** at the Berkeley Art Museum (BAM) indigo vat, using her California-grown indigo.

Student samples of indigo and coreopsis dyed fabric from the classes at BAM ▶



▲ Katharine Jolda's **felted vest workshop** takes place at Bodega Pastures sheep ranch, so that students come away with not only a garment that they made by hand, but with a deeper connection to the animals and the land.

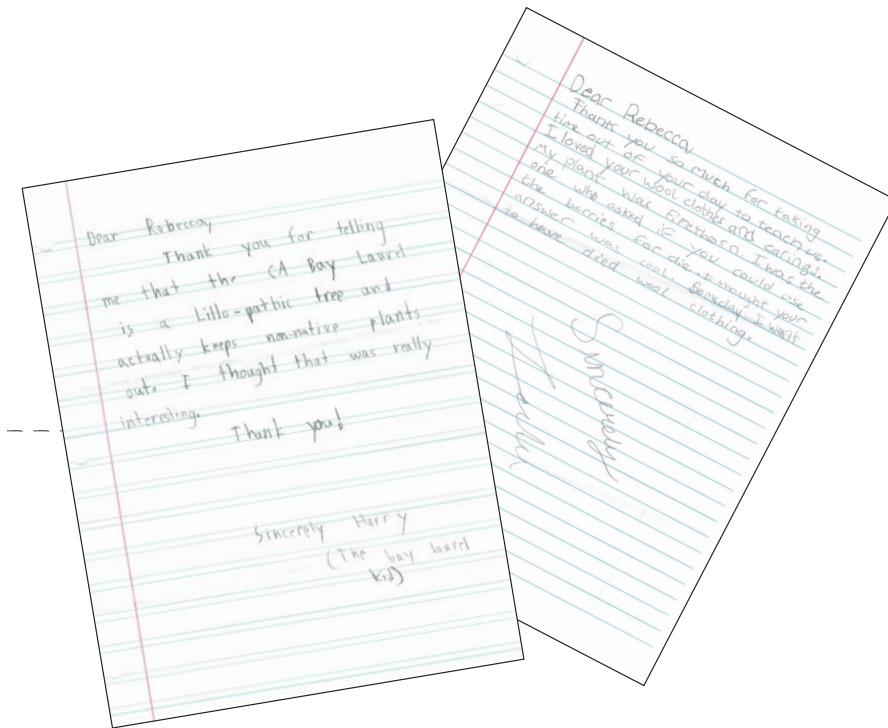
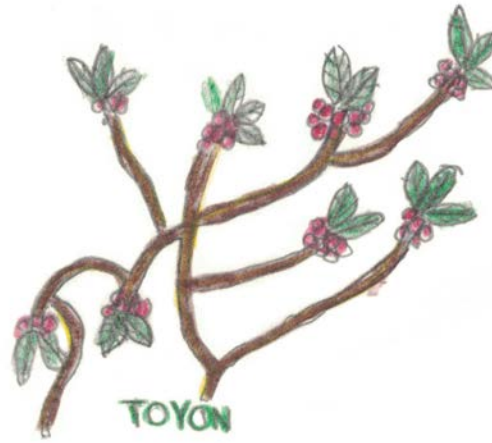


◀ Using invasive species: **French Broom for natural dyes** with Rebecca Burgess
PHOTO: PAIGE GREEN

▲ **Lichen Dyes** with Shelly Benson and Sarah Minnick gave students the opportunity to work with a source of native color in the habitat where it is found.

Fibershed supports an understanding of place, through **the intersection of restoration education and material culture**. We explore the concepts of having human needs met while caring for the natural systems on which we depend.

Drawing and letters from students at Marin Country Day School that attended a class taught by Rebecca Burgess. ▶



PUBLIC EDUCATION

Students at Greenwood School, where teacher Yoriko Yamamoto introduced 100% **Fibershed yarns and plant-based dyes** for the handwork program.

Dyes used were marigold, sour grass, fennel, eucalyptus, loquat, indigo, madder, and logwood. PHOTOS COURTESY OF YORIKO YAMAMOTO





The **Fibershed Producer Program** focus in 2014 was education and outreach to our community on the benefits of carbon farming, including: how we can increase water holding capacity in our soils, increase forage production, and produce carbon sequestering fiber.

◀ Shearer Matt Gilbert offers a valuable service to other Fibershed producers. PHOTO: PAIGE GREEN



▲ *“We are proud to be a part of our local Fibershed community and network, collectively bringing our wool, our mill, and our finished products to local artists and the public.”*

– Ariana & Casey Mazzucchi, sheep ranchers, Valley Ford Wool Mill owners and Producer members. PHOTO: PAIGE GREEN

FIBERSHED PRODUCERS & AFFILIATES

In 2014, **Fibershed's Affiliate Program** grew to 28 communities of artisans and farmers around the world. In addition to the US, affiliate groups are currently located in Canada, England and Australia.

One of the original affiliate groups, **Fibershed LA**, presented a 2-week pop-up show in an urban setting, featuring re-skilling classes, as well as exhibits and lectures on local fibers and dyes. PHOTO: SHERISE LEE ▼



◀ *“Fibershed has broken ground on a path I have been interested in going down, which is still in a nascent stage—linking the farmers and ranchers, designers and crafters, research and public education together, to create a healthy and functioning fiber agricultural system in California.”*

– Marie Hoff, sheep farmer, Fibershed market manager, and Producer member. PHOTO: ALCIA LANG

Fibershed artisans Heidi Iverson and Jen Kida procure **locally grown wool and cotton** from other Fibershed members for their handmade creations, sold under the label HIJK. ▶



DONORS & MEMBERS

Our general membership program is a way to engage the general public with our work. Members receive various benefits depending on their level of membership, and all members are welcomed into the Fibershed community through early invitation to our events, workshops and symposiums.

Our donors consist of individuals, organizations and foundations that have the ability to allocate generously to Fibershed's projects and general operating expenses. These donations, which are tax-deductible, make up the largest sum of Fibershed's annual budget.

GRANTS

Anonymous family foundation
11th Hour Project,
Schmidt Family Foundation
Blackie Foundation
Clif Bar Family Foundation
Patagonia.org
Rathmann Family Foundation
VF Services, LLC
Whitman Institute

INDIVIDUAL & BUSINESS DONORS

Chevron Humankind
Matching Gift Program

PRODUCER MEMBERS

Leslie Adkins
Carol Albrecht
Pia Andersson
Vicki Arns
Dyan Ashby
Judith Ashley
Marcia Barinaga
Kim Bethel
Robin Hough Chapin
Sandra Charlton
Alison Charter-Smith
Bonnie Chase
Amy Chesnut
Lisa Colorado
Emily Cunetto
Kacy Dapp
Marlie de Swart
Molly de Vries
Harmeet Dhillon
Margaret Drew
Nan Eastep
Lena Eastes
Debbie & Mark Emery
Lani Estill
Korina Farrell
Barbara Fiorica
Hazel Flett
Dana Foss

Sally Fox
Noelle Gaberman
Deb Galway
Linda Gamble
Matthew Gilbert
Chelsey Greene
Heidi Harris
Janet Heppler
Marie Hoff
Diane Hoschler
Heidi Iverson
Marnie Jackson
Jim Jensen
Katharine Jolda
Roanne Kaplow
Julie Kennedy
Jen Kida
Kenneth & Judith Kirkland
Lacy Lackey
Robin Lynde
Erin Maclean
Katya Madrid
Ed Mann
Theda Maritzer
Theresa Markwood
Ariana & Casey Mazzucchi
Rochelle McLaughlin
Deepa Natarajan
Lauren Ohlsen
Monica Paz Soldan
Mary Pettis-Sarley
Jacalyn Post
Yvonna Ray
Lily Reid
Dru Rivers
Alexis & Gillies Robertson
Julie Rosenfeld
Meghan Shimek
Colleen Simon
Amber Steinhauer
Cindy Studdert
Kathy & Richard Varian
Deborah Walton
Cathy Wayne
Ama Wertz

Craig Wilkinson
Leah & Conor Williams

RETAILER MEMBERS

B. Spoke Tailor
Black Mountain Artisans
Sea Ranch Woolworks
Spinning Tales & Other Yarns
Valley Ford Wool Mill
Warner Mountain Weavers

GENERAL MEMBERS

Nada Abbott
Tatyana Acuna
Janis Anzalone
Victoria Ayres
Judy Beebe
Amber Bieg
Ann Blake
Caroline Bledsoe
Meredith Buck
Robin Carpenter
Deborah Chiarucci
Hannah Crawford
Sara Crew
Pamela Dale
Rio de la Vista
Barbara and Barry Deutsch
Kristen Drapesa
Julian Drazic
Miriam Dym
Sean Ellis
Anne Farrar
Lauren Fenner
Jonatha Foli
Deborah Frankel
Marianne Frost
Barbara George
Marissa Goodman
Anne Green
Jason Green
Marianne Guillen
Reirin Gumbel
Holly Hapka
Joan Harris

Corina (Nina) Hatfield
Jilda Hellinga
Karen Hess
Katherine Hoag
Elaine Holliman
Sharon Jones
Joanne Jordan
Roanne Kaplow
Matt Katsaros
Kathleen Lanphier
Carrie Lindemuth
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Barbara MacDonald
Lucia Magee
Linda Mansour
Colleen McGlynn
Irene Miller
Kate Morejohn
Kristin Morrison
Rebecca Newburn
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Christine Pearson
Jennifer Pellman
Elyse Perambo
Isabella Pezzulo
Andrea Pfeifer
Heather Podoll
Benjamin Privitt
Nieves Rathbun
Melissa Rodge rs
Crimson Rose
Barbara Ryan
Alison Sargent
Laurel Schaffer
Claudia Schimmer
Alison Smith
Dona Snow
Darlene Southworth
Donna Spilman
Adele Stafford
Sherry Stanley
John Strohmeier
Virginia (Ginger) Summit
Leanne Taylor
Leslie Terzian Markoff

Beth Upstill
Linda Vaughn
Rebecca Waegell
Patricia Walters
Lisa Waterman
Lydia Wendt
Stephany Wilkes
Christine Williams
Ronald Zampa
Robert Zeien
Renee Zuur

VOLUNTEERS

We are deeply grateful to those who volunteered at our events in 2014. (If we have omitted anyone accidentally, please accept our apologies.)

Erin Axelrod
Jess Daniels
Shaine Drake
Julia Drazic
Matt Forkin
Heidi Harris
Hilary Heaviside
Kerry Keefe
Deb Kiger
Maggie Knapp
Alycia Lang
Bridgette Larson
Nina Levit
Lucia Magee
Elena Montemayor
Rita Parks
Rick Raddue
Caroline Spurgin
Deborah Walton

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Jan 1 - Dec 31, 2014

(corrected 2/14/15)

REVENUE AND EXPENSES

Revenue	
Grants	165,000
Earned Revenue	19,759
Contributions	1,391
Total Revenue	\$186,150

Expenses	
Programs	98,417
Fundraising/Development	16,770
Administration	7,608
General/Shared	1,416
Total Expenses	\$124,211

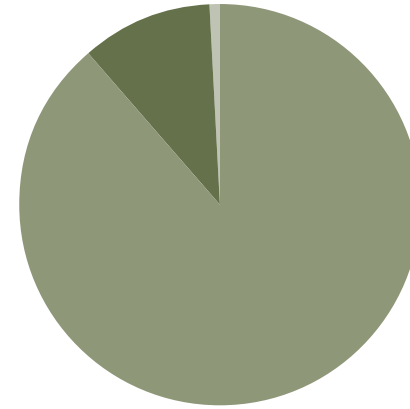
LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Current Assets	
Unrestricted Assets	57,910
Restricted Assets (Grants)	26,750
Total Assets	\$84,660

Total Liabilities 169

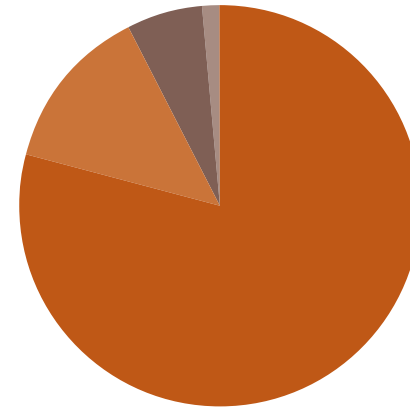
Equity 84,491

Total Liabilities & Equity \$84,660



REVENUE

- 89% Grants
- 10% Earned Revenue
- 1% Contributions



EXPENSES

- 79% Programs
- 14% Fundraising/Development
- 6% Administration
- 1% General/Shared

Fibershed is exempt from federal tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. EIN# 45-3055196.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our board was created to reflect the community that we serve, and represents farming, ranching, small business ownership, and those with hands-on fiber skills training.

Fibershed

P.O. Box 221
San Geronimo, CA 94963

phone: (415) 717-0619
email: fibershed@gmail.com
web: www.fibershed.org



Rebecca Burgess, Chair

Rebecca Burgess is an author, weaver, and educator. She wrote the book *Harvesting Color* to promote the wild, weedy, and cultivated plants that can be used for natural color creation. She received an M.Ed. in place-based education in 2011. She is the Executive Director of Fibershed, having founded the non-profit organization in 2011.

PHOTO: PAIGE GREEN



Marlie de Swart

Marlie de Swart is a teacher and small business owner in West Marin County. She's an expert knitter, fiber scientist, and pattern drafter who has been working with fiber for over 40 years.

PHOTO: PAIGE GREEN



Dustin Kahn, Secretary/Treasurer

Dustin Kahn is a graphic designer, natural dyer and gardener. She brings over 35 years of graphic design and marketing experience to her work as graphic designer and administrator for Fibershed.

PHOTO: ANNA SMITH CLARK



Mary Pettis-Sarley

Mary Pettis-Sarley is a caretaker, sheep rancher, and educator living in Napa County. She has 35 years of experience blending fine art and ranching. She teaches children and adults, and keeps an art career afloat while managing over 200 fiber animals on the 2,000 acres that she's been caretaking for over 20 years.