

# Fibershed Annual Report 2023





## OUR MISSION

**Fibershed develops regional fiber systems that build ecosystem and community health. We transform the economic systems behind the production of material culture to mitigate climate change, improve health, and contribute to racial and economic equity.**

Making a Tule Boat workshop with Charlie Kennard at the Fibershed Learning Center in Point Reyes Station, California *Photo by Fibershed Staff*





## OUR PRIORITIES

**We expand opportunities to implement climate beneficial agriculture to improve ecosystem health.**

**We develop regional fiber systems and manufacturing networks that catalyze local economies.**

**We provide and use education and advocacy to connect, inform, and strengthen fiber communities.**

Climate Beneficial™ cotton grown as part of the California Cotton & Climate Coalition (C4), a partnership including farmers, fiber producers, and garment manufacturers





## OUR PROJECTS

**We work throughout our ecosystem of farmers, ranchers, mills, makers, designers, educators, and changemakers to create opportunities for learning, collaboration, and positive transformation.**

Bodega Pastures is a Fibershed Producer Network Member, dedicated to building soil health and regional fiber systems



# We look to the natural world to inform our process.

Building relationships and creating networks of support are not linear processes; we are inspired by branching systems, webs of connection, and interwoven relationships.

## Observe

We observe our surroundings carefully to inform our engagement with the land.

## Prototype

We model a potential solution, and then we test it. And test it again, and again. We co-create models with our collaborators, supporting a shared vision.

## Research

We learn, seek, and ask questions. We make connections and look for layers of meaning, influence, and context.

## Refine

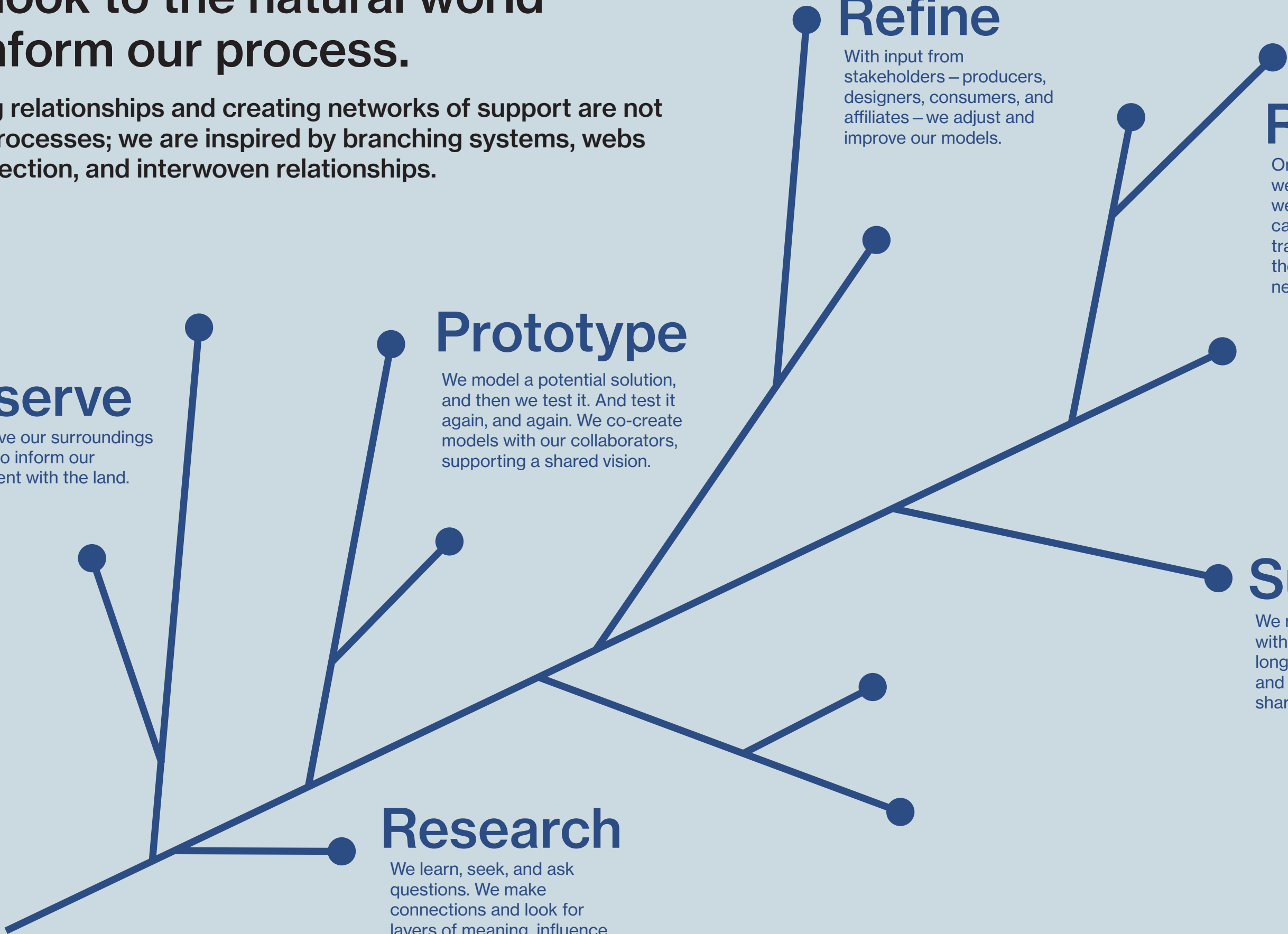
With input from stakeholders – producers, designers, consumers, and affiliates – we adjust and improve our models.

## Release

Once something is working, we let it go. The models we design and establish can grow, replicate, transform, and thrive under the leadership of our vast network of co-creators.

## Support

We remain in relationship with our network for the long term, offering support and continuing to grow our shared vision together.





## A LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR

**2023 was Fibershed's 10th year as a formal organization.** One decade ago, we were finishing up a California Wool Mill feasibility study, a document that outlines what it will take to move our state and region forward on making use of the existing fiber we produce, something we've been woefully unable to do even though we are the largest volume producer in the United States. And yet, two amazing small mills have been built in these 10 years and a third mill successfully transitioned to the next generation owner. While the country continues to lose fiber manufacturing systems, our region trends in the opposite direction, thanks to support from many of you who are reading this.

To add to our regional textile industry's strengths, the country's largest garment worker population runs an array of facilities in Los Angeles, and this community has organized successfully in the last several years to monumentally improve labor conditions and protect the garment district from gentrification (thank you, Garment Worker Center!)

And yet, with all of this human talent and agricultural abundance – not to mention the numerous textile brands headquartered here – we are still processing less than 1% of the wool grown here, there are no systems to spin our state's extra-long staple cotton (which we are a global leader in producing), and there remains no flax, hemp, or nettle processing, nor any capacity to blend recycled natural fiber from the numerous “waste” streams from clothing that is too far gone to be reworn or reused. Why does manufacturing continue to be something I'm taking the time to write about and work on? Because it proves (time and time again) to be the catalyst, enabler, and sustainer of climate change-mitigating and adaptive land stewardship, it promotes rural community regeneration, and it is the means to lower the ecological and social impact of urban population consumption.

These manufacturing systems are needed more than ever. This year, Fibershed laid the groundwork to expand our Climate Beneficial™ Agriculture Program nationally. We've been given a humbling vote of confidence by federal and state agencies to scale the work we began in California rangelands and pastures to the entire country, supported by hard-working partners that are discussed in this report. Millions of acres of land will become increasingly climate resilient and provide great societal benefit as we implement practices that will draw greater and greater quantities of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere each year. Farmers and ranchers will produce tens of millions of pounds of Climate Beneficial™ fiber from these restored landscapes – verified for its ecological and social benefits – all of which will be entering markets. To ensure that the growers retain the value of what they grow, we will need to expand upon existing systems and build new circular manufacturing systems designed to empower and partner with our land stewards.

Thank you for taking this journey with us over this decade, for committing to building out the demonstrations and pilot projects, and staying by our side as this work scales. We are so grateful for your support.



*Rebecca Burgess*

Rebecca Burgess  
Executive Director

## CONTENTS

**2023: Year in Review** *p. 12*

*Our Priorities:*

**Regional Textile Economies** *p. 14*

**Climate Beneficial™ Agriculture** *p. 18*

**Education and Advocacy** *p. 24*

**Ten Years of Fibershed** *p. 32*

**Financials** *p. 34*

**Thank You** *p. 36*

**Support Our Work** *p. 38*

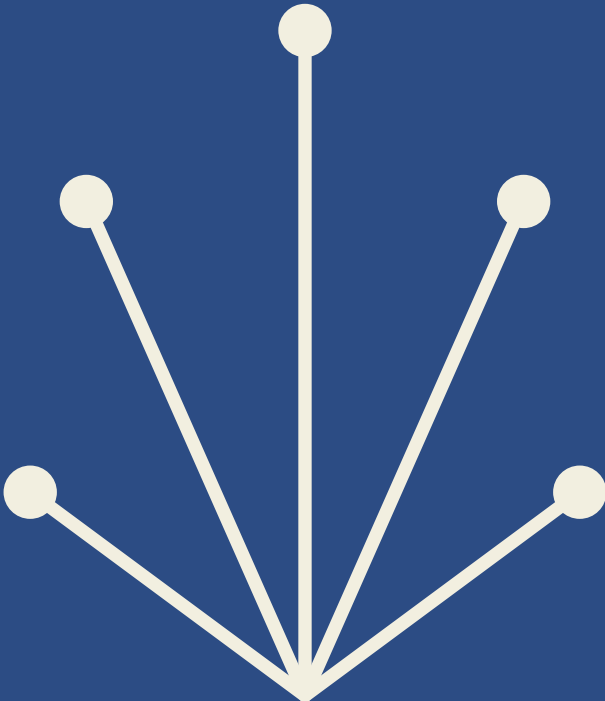
COVER IMAGE Bowles Farming Company in Los Banos, California is a sixth-generation operation that grows cotton, vegetables, and native seed, and protects over 650 acres of wetland habitat for migrating bird species who travel the Pacific Flyway.

# 2023: Year in Review

## REGIONAL TEXTILE ECONOMIES

**The Global Fibershed Movement**  
We continue to expand our Affiliate Network Program, facilitating regional fiber communities across the world. *p. 15*

**Fibers Fund**  
We are in partnership with Sustainable Agriculture & Food Systems Funders to grow the Fibers Fund to undergird and expand domestic manufacturing. *p. 17*



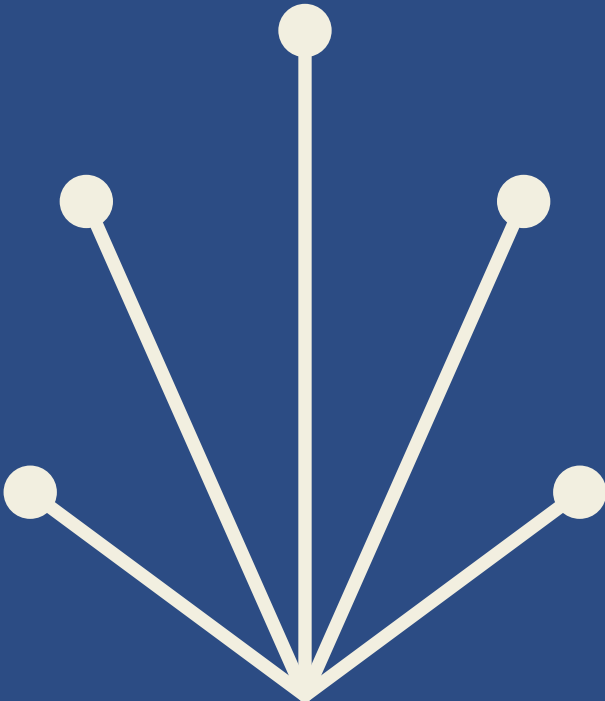
**Field Support and Training for Animal Husbandry**  
We created educational opportunities to support soil-regenerating farming and ranching practices. *p. 16*

**Community Events**  
We hosted large public events and marketplaces to showcase regional textile producers. *p. 17*

## CLIMATE BENEFICIAL™ AGRICULTURE

**Climate Beneficial™ Fiber**  
We play a pivotal role in supporting cotton and wool producers whose practices prioritize soil health, support rural economies, and mitigate climate change. *p. 19*

**California Cotton & Climate Coalition (C4)**  
We supported brand partners in bringing their first C4 cotton consumer products to market. *p. 19*

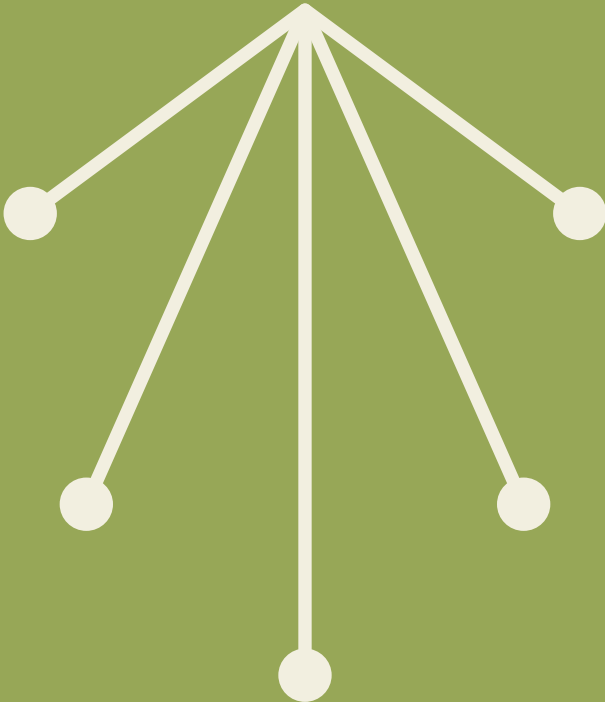


**Scaling Climate Beneficial™ Agriculture Nationwide**  
We continued to expand carbon farming practices through regranting partnerships to distribute major state and federal funding. *p. 20*

**Carbon Farming**  
We funded carbon farming practices, and measured the impact of Climate Beneficial™ practices on the ground in Northern California. *p. 22*

**Borrowed From the Soil: A Design Challenge**  
We hosted a year-long design challenge and culminating exhibition to connect local designers with regional farms and materials. *p. 24*

**Learning Center Highlights and Vocational Training**  
We facilitated knowledge sharing and skill-building with the community via workshops and trainings *p. 27*

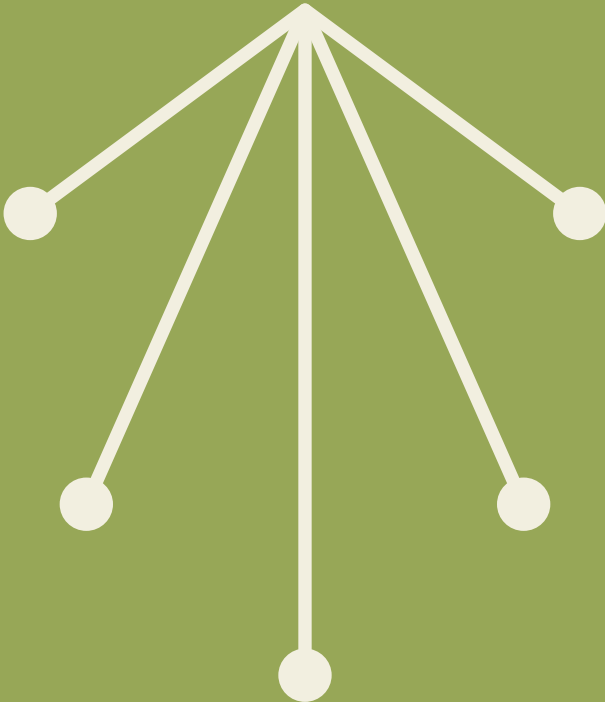


**Annual Symposium**  
We brought together the Fibershed community, in person and online, with hands-on learning and opportunities to build relationships. *p. 26*

**Learning Intensives**  
We went deep with community groups via educational intensives. *p. 28*

**Increasing Visibility for Fiber and Textile Legislation**  
We brought attention to important policy impacting fiber systems to inspire engagement in government locally, regionally, and across the globe. *p. 29*

**California Textile Policy Engagement**  
We are helping to shape emerging regulatory and industry priorities through our advocacy for healthy regionally based textiles. *p. 30*



**Fibershed Amplifiers**  
We built a network of allies and amplifiers to strengthen our network and expand the reach of our mission. *p. 29*

**Microplastics Education**  
We provided experiential learning and built public awareness about the ecological impacts of synthetic textiles. *p. 29*

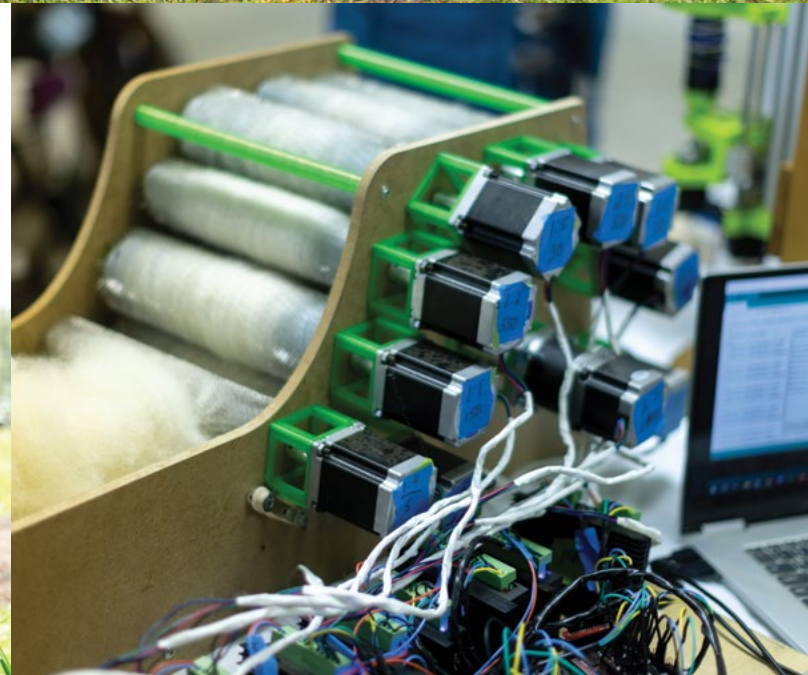


# Regional Textile Economies

*What would it take for a regional textile system to create an economy rooted in equity and resilience?*

We envision thriving regional textile systems where locally grown and made goods are accessible and function as drivers for economic and ecological prosperity for everyone in the value network.

We can realize this vision by supporting local economies and creating opportunities for historically marginalized communities. To develop useful and beautiful goods that flow from soil-regenerating production systems, we need to be informed and shaped by the context of place.



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## The Global Fibershed Movement: Our Affiliate Program

Through our Affiliate Program, Fibershed is fueling a global movement of regional textile economies. We provide opportunities and support to the 71 regional fibersheds in the international Affiliate Network.

Through their work, our affiliate fibersheds connect the pieces of their own regional systems, working with fiber farmers, shearers, mills, artisans, and designers to produce clothing and other textiles rich with life and stories of the land and communities. Fibershed Affiliates are collectively revitalizing regional textile economies and extending the values of soil-to-soil textile systems around the world.

### AFFILIATE SPOTLIGHTS

#### **Pembina Fibreshed** *Eastern Manitoba, Canada*

In 2023, the Long Way Homestead Wool Mill, a small-scale facility for local producers, celebrated its five-year anniversary. The revival of regional mill infrastructure is critical to creating resilient regional fiber systems.

#### **Acadiana Fibershed** *Louisiana*

A coalition of producers are revitalizing the production and processing of the regional heirloom varietal Acadian Brown Cotton, creating a cultural connection rooted in tradition and identity.

#### **Fibreshed Scotland and Central Appalachia Fibershed** *Scotland and West Virginia*

These two regional Fibershed Affiliates are collaborating on the research and development of open-source technology micro-mill equipment to help small farmers add value to their natural fibers.

TOP Flax harvest in Blackburn England, part of the "Homegrown Homespun: Field to Fabric" project by the Northern England Fibreshed Photo by New England Fibreshed

BOTTOM LEFT Three generations of the Dufrene family at Bosco Cotton Farm and Fiber in Lafayette, Louisiana, members of the Acadiana Fibershed Affiliate

BOTTOM RIGHT Emerging open-source micro-mill technology, being developed by multiple Fibershed Affiliate partners



# Regional Textile Economies



## Field Support and Training for Shepherding and Animal Husbandry

To address the need for skilled sheep shearers in California and other parts of the United States, Fibershed supported opportunities for vocational development in partnership with the University of California’s Hopland Research and Extension Center (HREC) and the Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District.

Fibershed supported two lambing school and three shearing school sessions in 2023 in partnership with HREC. Forty students completed the programs successfully, and we were pleased to offer scholarships to 50% of the students. We also held a Spanish-language Grazier Leadership Workshop, which covered financial skills, herd growth, and job bidding. These Northern California graziers are actively involved in fire fuel load reduction and integrated crop and livestock systems.

Recent shearing school graduates came together at Rancho Las Palmas in coastal California for a bilingual educational experience in both English and Spanish. Participants learned how to care for 100 sheep who support the farm’s soil health through grazing as part of an integrated cropland management approach.

LEFT Apprentice shearers training on the job – providing shearing, hoof trimming, and vaccinations – at Rancho Las Palmas in Davenport, California

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP Fiber twisted into yarn at an industrial wool mill

OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM Community members at the Swap-Mend-Furoshiki event



## Fibers Fund

The Fibers Fund is a catalytic fund to support small U.S. natural fiber and textile producers and processors, with a specific focus on environmental equity. Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Funders (SAFSF) and Fibershed established the Integrated Capital Fibers Fund to facilitate the investment of financial capital into the domestic natural fibers and textile industry. The Fund is a direct response to the specific capital gaps identified in the [SAFSF Fibers Roadmap Report](#) and through the Fibershed Regional Fiber Manufacturing Initiative. In 2023, the Fibers Fund has distributed ten grants totaling \$240,000. *Learn more about the Fibers Fund’s impacts on page 35.*



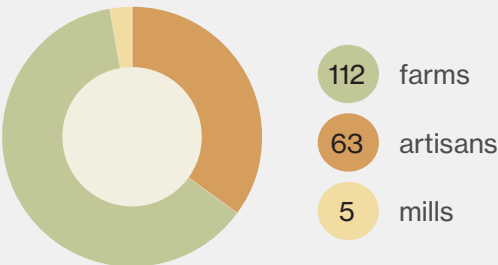
## Community Events

Fibershed produced and hosted three large public engagement events in 2023: Swap-Mend-Furoshiki, the Natural Dye Farmers Market, and the Summer Farmers Market.

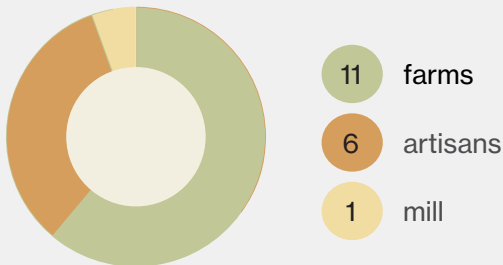
Through these community offerings, our staff welcomed over 500 people to the Learning Center, connecting our community with 30 Fibershed farmers and artisans, regionally produced natural fiber goods, and circular economic and skill-building opportunities through clothing swaps, mending, over-dyeing, furoshiki, and family-friendly fiber arts workshops.

### NORTHERN CALIFORNIA PRODUCER NETWORK

**180**  
total Northern California  
Producer Network Members



We welcomed  
**18 new members**  
to our Northern California  
Producer Network in 2023



### AFFILIATE NETWORK

**71**  
current Affiliate Network  
Members, internationally

**31%**  
increase in the number of  
Affiliate Network Members  
since 2020

Since 2017, we’ve granted  
**\$231,000**  
to 83 projects as part of our  
Fibershed Affiliate Network  
micro-grant program

- 2023 Affiliate Working Groups and Regional Hubs**
- Bast Fiber Working Group
  - Waste Wool Working Group
  - European Hub
  - Canadian Fibershed Network



# Climate Beneficial™ Agriculture

*How do we stimulate a climate-friendly, life-promoting textile economy?*

Healthy soil supports our world – it is the basis (literally and figuratively) on which life and civilization rest. The future of our world is ensured when we prioritize agricultural practices that build soil, instead of those that deplete soil and create commodities in surplus.

Like food, fiber crops are part of an interconnected agricultural system that impacts health, social justice, and the environment. These familiar yet often overlooked agricultural products include plant-based fibers like cotton, hemp, and flax and animal-based products like wool, alpaca, and leather.

We work directly with land stewards to implement land management practices that build soil carbon and increase productivity naturally.



## ← Climate Beneficial™ Fiber

Fibershed's Climate Beneficial™ Program supports farmers and ranchers in implementing land stewardship practices that accelerate carbon drawdown, and builds markets around the natural fiber they produce. In addition to climate change amelioration, many of these practices have significant co-benefits, such as: improving soil health and ecological function, increasing on-farm biodiversity, and boosting soil water-holding capacity, all while producing high-quality regional and domestic fiber and textiles.

This program partners with cotton and wool producers across the country, technical assistance providers, scientists, researchers, supply chain partners, and brands in order to build regional economies around climate-smart fiber production.

### California Cotton & Climate Coalition (C4)

C4 works to restore our connection with regional working landscapes; to that end, we coordinated two days of farm tours for 40 people at Pedretti Ranches, Bowles Farming Co., and Stoneland Farm in October of 2023. We provided presentations on San Joaquin Valley land use history, climate change impacts, biogeochemistry, and carbon cycling, and we provided in-field demonstrations in small groups on topics including water infiltration and soil aggregation testing.

Our brand coalition members saw the fruits of our pre-competitive farm-to-yarn program this year; Reformation, Outerknown, Coyuchi, Trace, and Mate the Label all brought consumer products to market from fields that they have become more intimately connected to and from farmers who they know on a first-name basis. These brands provided our community the added benefit of using excess production to make 1,300 yards of the most affordable and accessible T-shirt-weight fabric we've ever produced at a regional scale. Thanks to our coordination across the value network, we're seeing farm-forward textiles in the creative hands of design students, micro-designers, and a host of new community members.

TOP 2023 C4 Cotton Tour field days connecting designers, manufacturers, mills, and cotton producers to their supply chain

BOTTOM LEFT Cotton bales at the West Haven Gin

BOTTOM RIGHT Robert Martinez, a skilled cotton gin operator supporting the C4 program



# Climate Beneficial™ Agriculture



## Scaling Climate Beneficial™ Agriculture in California and Nationwide

Fibershed was selected to administer two multi-year grants, providing financial and technical assistance to fiber producers to implement climate beneficial land stewardship. In 2023 we worked with partners to develop administrative structures, outreach strategies, and new technology platforms to hold and grow this work. In 2024 we will support project development, conduct outreach to new growers, and issue funding to expand the uptake of carbon farm practices.

As part of a USDA Climate-Smart Commodities Grant project, we have partnered with the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), Carbon Cycle Institute, Colorado State University, New York Textile Lab, and Seed2Shirt to scale the Climate Beneficial™ fiber program in five regions across the country, with the goal of expanding nationwide. The project aims to meet the equity goals of the Justice40 Initiative and will prioritize engagement with traditionally underserved producers.

Through a California Healthy Soils Program Block Grant, we will distribute \$4M of funding over three years to fiber ranchers and farmers in California, with a priority focus on Fibershed Producer Network Members and historically underserved populations.

*Learn more about these grant programs on page 35.*



## Climate Beneficial™ Wool

The Climate Beneficial™ wool pool aggregates fine wool from ranches within Fibershed's producer program, and with the support of a for-profit partner, moves those wool bales to the last large-scale wool washing, combing, and pin drafting station in the United States, located in South Carolina. The wool is then spun in North Carolina (due to a complete lack of fine-gauge yarn spinning in California). Once the yarn is spun, it is then provided to a range of designers across the United States. Fibershed provides ranch- and farm-specific reports to the designers that showcase all the existing and new practices that are being implemented to benefit the climate, improve soil health, and enhance the welfare of the flocks. 2023 brought many beautiful Climate Beneficial™ wool goods to market with some new and some loyal fiber designers. Designers included Mara Hoffman, Vincent St. James, Wolhide, All Species Studio, GynnaMade, and an array of new designers, many of whom took part in the Borrowed from the Soil Design Challenge. A ranch tour was held at McCormack sheep ranch and provided over 30 design students, brands, and micro-designers an opportunity to meet the sheep, the people, and the amazing dogs who steward our California rangelands.

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP Focus areas of USDA Climate-Smart Commodities Grant

OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM Seed2Shirt is one of our USDA Climate-Smart Commodities partners, focused on bringing agricultural technical assistance and project funding to Black growers throughout the Southeastern United States

THIS PAGE Sheep growing Climate Beneficial™ wool at McCormack Ranch in Solano County, California



There are  
**180,000+ acres**  
currently enrolled in the  
Climate Beneficial™ Program



**150 carbon farming practices**  
implemented by Climate Beneficial™  
producers in 2023

**599 carbon farming practices**  
implemented by Climate Beneficial™  
producers since the program began  
in 2016



Since the inception of the Climate  
Beneficial™ Program in 2016, enrolled  
producers have implemented carbon  
farming practices that we estimate  
will sequester

**130,000+ metric tons  
of CO<sub>2</sub>e over the next  
20 years**

In 2023,  
**531 acres**  
+  
**1 million pounds  
of cotton**  
grown within the tomato, corn,  
wheat, garlic, cantaloupe, and  
onion rotations was  
**verified  
Climate Beneficial™**

The Climate Beneficial™ agricultural practices we will fund  
over the next five years – as part of the USDA Climate-Smart  
Commodities Grant – are expected to draw down an estimated

**3 million  
metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e**  
over 20 years



# Carbon Farming



## Measuring Our Impact

In 2023, producers in the Climate Beneficial™ Program collectively implemented a total of 150 carbon farming practices, accounting for an estimated 17,905 Mg of CO<sub>2</sub>e sequestered and 23,677 Mg CO<sub>2</sub>e projected to be drawn down over the next 20 years. This is the equivalent of taking over 5,200 gas-powered cars off the road for one year.

Prescribed grazing, compost application to rangelands, and cover cropping were the most commonly implemented practices. Over the life of the Climate Beneficial™ Program since 2016, compost application on rangeland accounts for the largest amount of carbon drawdown, sequestering an estimated 72,123 Mg CO<sub>2</sub>e over the next 20 years. This represents the majority of the 20-year carbon impact for grazed systems seen in the chart to the right, as a single application of compost to a rangeland causes continued soil carbon drawdown each year for decades.



## What Is Mg CO<sub>2</sub>e?

**Mg** refers to **metric tons** (also known as MT, “tonnes,” or “megagrams”) and is equal to 1,000 kilograms or about 2,240.6 pounds. It is a common way of quantifying and measuring greenhouse gas emissions.

**CO<sub>2</sub>e** (or “**carbon dioxide equivalent**”) is the standard unit for quantifying greenhouse gas emissions, where 1 Mg CO<sub>2</sub>e is the global warming equivalent of 1 metric ton of carbon dioxide.

TOP Sheep grazing at Bodega Pastures, Sonoma County, California

BOTTOM Multispecies cover crop in cotton field

Excerpts from our 2023 Carbon Farm Impact Report, which highlights the collective carbon drawdown impacts of Climate Beneficial™ producers. See the complete report at [fibershed.org/23-CFIR](https://fibershed.org/23-CFIR).

## Carbon Farm Seed Fund

Our Carbon Farm Seed Fund was created to provide direct financial assistance to producers enrolled in the Climate Beneficial™ Program to implement carbon farming practices. In our 2023 round we awarded over \$62,000 to 14 producers to support carbon farming projects, which we estimate will draw down over 1,600 Mg CO<sub>2</sub>e over the next 20 years.

	2023	Cumulative
Amount awarded	\$62,000	\$308,506
# of projects	14	75
Project acreage	555	14,552
20-year CO <sub>2</sub> e drawdown	1,641 Mg	11,911 Mg

## Climate Beneficial™ Program

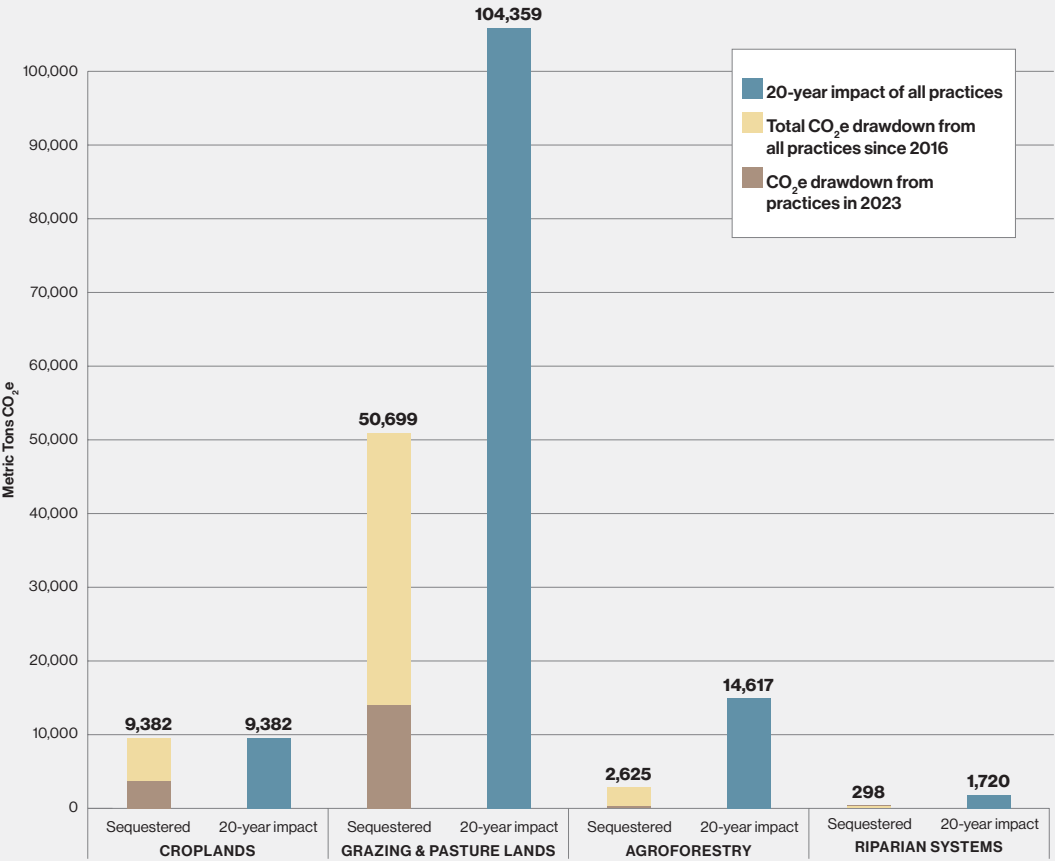
TOTAL PARTICIPATING PRODUCERS AND ACREAGE

CB™ Verified
147,669 acres + 24 producers
CB™ Transitional
37,850 acres + 45 producers
New producers
172 acres + 9 producers
TOTAL
185,691 acres + 78 producers
currently enrolled in the Climate Beneficial™ Program

## Cumulative CO<sub>2</sub>e Drawdown by Category

2023 PRACTICES AND ENTIRETY OF CLIMATE BENEFICIAL™ PROGRAM

Fibershed Carbon Farm Seed Fund, Northern California Producer Network, and California Cotton & Climate Coalition (C4)



### Why 20-year impact?

Some practices such as planting trees or applying compost to rangelands continually draw down carbon over the years, even if just done once.

Other practices, such as cover cropping, must be done annually to have continued carbon drawdown. These metrics show the impact of practices that have already been implemented by producers, and these measurements differentiate between practices with one-time and 20-year impact.



# Education

*What does it take to shift peoples’ perspective and change their behavior?*

Education can encourage new paradigms of thought and action by enabling informed choices.

A large part of Fibershed’s education program works to connect people to the source of their clothing and help them understand how their choices affect our environment and collective future.

Our goal is to shift demand towards ecologically sensitive, locally grown and locally made products. We do this by connecting the local community to the ethnobotany of their landscape, supporting producers and designers in more resilient and climate beneficial practices, and training educators to pass along their knowledge.



## Borrowed from the Soil: A Design Challenge and Exhibition

Fibershed launched a year-long Design Challenge in March 2023 to encourage regional designers to explore beyond the product, connecting their process and materials with the farmers, the people, and the land in our region, while also looking at how design choices can embed longevity, compostability, and respect for the soil.

In November, Fibershed hosted its “Borrowed from the Soil” Design Exhibition, which explored a future vision where the way we produce and use one of our most basic human necessities – clothing – can support the longevity and health of our local ecosystems and communities.

We invited community members to help build a collective understanding of the interconnectedness between material, design, and consumer choices, and the land and people whom these choices impact.

Fibershed collaborates with design schools in Northern California and beyond to help shape the future of fashion. Through these collaborations, we connect the next generation of sustainable fashion designers to regional textile material sourcing and supply chains. Students gain an understanding of how a soil-to-soil approach is not only urgently needed, but possible.

This year, Fibershed partnered with the Fashion Merchandising and Management Program at California State University, Sacramento. This program prepares students for careers in the fashion industry, emphasizing the contemporary and historical ways of meeting consumers’ economic, physiological, aesthetic, psychological, sociological, and cultural needs.

TOP Mira Musank, Design Challenge and Exhibition participant

BOTTOM LEFT Tonisha Sade, Design Challenge and Exhibition participant

BOTTOM RIGHT Participants in the Design Challenge





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### Annual Symposium: Relationships of Change

This year’s symposium, “Relationships of Change: the Interdependence of People, Policy, and Materials,” explored the interconnectedness of the people, policy, and materials that are necessary for transforming our soil-to-skin textile system.

The event connected the global community by bringing together changemakers, designers, farmers, ecologists, scientists, and the general public to hear from those working on critical issues of fossil fuel divestment from textiles and fashion, garment workers’ rights, and new laws aiming to internalize the costs of our textile “waste” while catalyzing shifts in material choice and design. We also heard from Fibershed Affiliates, the Fibers Fund, and efforts to bring climate-benefiting farming and ranching incentives to the national scale. We hosted this year’s gathering as a hybrid event: both in person in Point Reyes Station and online via Zoom. For the first time, we organized a concurrent Learning Activities Showcase next door, with demos and hands-on activities from Fibershed Producers, which was open to the public, free of charge.

THIS PAGE, TOP Ayesha Barenblat, CEO of Remake, and Fibershed Executive Director Rebecca Burgess at the Fibershed Annual Symposium

BOTTOM Roy Clemes and son, demonstrating fiber carding at the Learning Activities Showcase, Annual Symposium

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP Participants of Mushroom Dye workshop by Alissa Allen, at the Fibershed Learning Center

OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM Members of the School Garden Network at a teacher training at the Fibershed Learning Center Photo by Fibershed staff



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### Learning Center Highlights

The Fibershed Learning Center hosts events and workshops for the Northern California fiber community, forging connections to fiber and dye, and creating opportunities for connecting within the community.

We organized and hosted 36 skill-building workshops attended by 374 students, providing 47 scholarships.

*Learn more about three community events we held at the Fibershed Learning Center on page 17.*



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### Learning Intensives for Educators and Community Groups

We provided hands-on learning sessions for community groups, including a daylong bilingual workshop for youth and families from the Raizes Collective of Santa Rosa, and visits from four area high school programs.

We hosted two daylong trainings for 50 school garden teachers in partnership with the School Garden Network. Teachers received instruction, resources, plant materials (seedlings and seeds), and fiber and dye curricula for their school garden classrooms. “Train-the-trainer” intensives expand the impact of the Learning Center site.

50+

school garden educators served through learning intensive workshops

300+

participants in the annual symposium, remote and in-person

Key Education Partners in 2023

Fashion Merchandising and Management Program at California State University, Sacramento

California College of the Arts

Department of Design and Merchandising at Colorado State University

Fibershed provided personalized education to more than

1,700 people

through presentations within classrooms and at community events

2023 at the Learning Center

36

Learning Center workshops

374

Workshop students

47

Scholarships provided

We’ve sown and planted more than 22,500 native plugs and directly seeded native flora yielding over 15,000 annual diverse wildflower meadow species, along with harvesting and processing 750 pounds of Japanese indigo

20%

of the 3,956 students and community members that have come to the Learning Center to date have been provided access to events or classes free of charge



# Advocacy

*How can we collaborate, connect, and communicate the importance of healthy regional natural fiber textile systems?*

Trends in the textile industry require policy changes to address waste, pollution, labor inequity, and a growing disconnection from our local ecosystems. Natural fiber textiles – sourced and cycled within equitable, regional production systems – can play a role in solving for many of these challenges, but they must be upheld by public policy that recognizes their value.

Every day our local, state, and federal governments are making critical decisions about investments, regulations, land-use laws, and more. These decisions largely determine how our textile economies will affect ecosystems, workers, and our communities’ well-being.

Building public and institutional awareness of the value and opportunities provided by healthy regional textiles, we are cultivating momentum for change. Fibershed provides direct input on policy discussions leading to legislative and regulatory support for soil-to-soil material systems.

Over 60% of clothing sold today is made of plastic.



Hidden plastics in our clothing present several issues that consumers and policymakers shouldn't ignore.

WARNING: WHEN WEARING AND WASHING, THIS GARMENT WILL RELEASE MICROPLASTICS INTO OUR ECOSYSTEMS. MICROPLASTICS DO NOT BIODEGRADE.



THANK YOU TO THE 524 COMMUNITY AMPLIFIERS

Who helped elevate Fibershed's message this year!

## ← Increasing Visibility for Fiber and Textile Legislation

Across the world, advocates are calling on lawmakers to increase investments in regional fiber systems, protect farmworkers and garment workers, and develop a bold vision for a circular economy.

In 2023, through a series of engaging, information-rich articles on our website, Fibershed provided a unique and needed voice for holistic solutions addressing textile waste and the true source of microplastic microfiber pollution.

In our article “Textile and Fiber Policy 101: Influential New Legislation You Should Be Paying Attention To,” we shared four influential pieces of legislation in clear language, in an effort to encourage involvement and advocacy at the regional, state, and national level.

### Fibershed Forward

We launched the Fibershed Forward email storytelling campaign in 2023, introducing community members, makers, activists, growers, and leaders who are effecting change and inspiring action in the world of textiles and clothing. This campaign utilizes digital storytelling to educate, enriching the reader’s ability to advocate and communicate on behalf of the Fibershed community’s goals.

### Fibershed Community Amplifiers

In 2023, Fibershed launched a Community Amplifier program after an overwhelming response to our annual survey revealed that people were looking for more opportunities to activate their networks in support of transforming our material culture.

Every month, the **524 (and growing!) Fibershed Community Amplifiers** elevate resources, research, and stories that advance nature-based and equity-centered textile systems. With their support, we were able to activate an online network to respond to critical policy updates and circulate inspiring stories.

TOP Graphic from Fibershed's 2023 Microplastics social media education campaign Design by Bark Media

BOTTOM LEFT Graphic promoting our Fibershed Forward email campaign Design by Bark Media

BOTTOM RIGHT Graphic thanking our 524 Fibershed Community Amplifiers Design by Bark Media



# Advocacy



## Microplastics Experiential Education

Across the year, we provided in-person experiential learning about the ecological impacts of synthetic textiles. This fall, Fibershed presented at a learning adventure organized by Materevolve, a consultancy led by textile scientist Krystle Moody Wood and ocean advocate and scientist Carolyn Box. Drawing from our work with farmers, textile companies, and policy partners, we outlined the role that natural fiber systems can play in addressing microplastic pollution and ocean health to an audience of 40 textile brand representatives and sustainability and policy experts.



## California Textile Policy Engagement

Fibershed brings these important advocacy topics into state textile policy work through participation in the Statewide Textile Recovery Advisory Committee hosted by the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC). As a Committee member, we bring perspectives from the Fibershed community into monthly policy discussions affecting state legislation like EPR bill SB707 and regulatory programs for textiles. We also provided direct input through state, federal, and international regulatory comment opportunities.



## Microplastics Social Media Advocacy

Harnessing the connective power of social media, in 2023, Fibershed developed a popular series on Instagram and other platforms that shared facts and provocations about microplastics and clothing in order to uplift microplastic fibers in the awareness of mainstream audiences.

We saw tremendous engagement on this series: views, likes, shares, and comments. This campaign increased our following, which allows Fibershed to have an even more impactful voice on future social media campaigns.

THIS PAGE Graphics from our Microplastics social media campaign

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP Experiential learning participants aboard sailboat "Call of the Sea" in the San Francisco Bay

OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM Fibershed informational display at a CPSC event on textile recovery for policymakers and industry representatives *Photo by Fibershed staff*

### COMMUNICATIONS



In 2023, we've seen a  
**10% increase**  
in email subscribers...  
and a  
**40% increase**  
in visitors to fibershed.org

We gained  
**2,102 new followers**  
on LinkedIn in 2023

Our posts on LinkedIn led to a  
**923% increase**  
in traffic to fibershed.org, compared to 2022

Our posts on Facebook led to a  
**345% increase**  
in traffic to fibershed.org, compared to 2022

Our 2023 microplastics social media campaign received

**41,000**

total impressions across Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn

Our four policy-based call-to-action articles of 2023 received

**49,495 impressions**

across Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn

### POLICY



We delivered comments in January and August to California's Ocean Protection Council on Statewide Microplastics Strategy implementation



Our Executive Director Rebecca Burgess co-wrote an **op-ed for Science Norway**, responding to false solutions of washing machine filters as a means to mitigate microplastic fiber pollution



We submitted feedback on SB707-Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) framework proposed for textiles in California



# Ten+ Years of Fibershed

In the decade since Fibershed’s founding, our projects and programs have grown into thriving regional networks and fiber systems, all working towards healthy communities and a healthy planet.

Here are ten milestones for ten years of Fibershed.  
Read more about each one, and see additional milestones at [fibershed.org/history](https://fibershed.org/history)



2011

## A Seed is Planted The Origins of Fibershed

It all began with an experiment by our founder and Executive Director, Rebecca Burgess. What would it take to wear clothing made only from materials grown, woven, and sewn in her local area of Northern California? This question led Rebecca to **a network of connections with farmers, ranchers, and artisans**, laying the groundwork for a regional textile economy and the entire concept of a “fibershed.”

2013

## Envisioning the Future Wool Feasibility Study

Partnering with engineers and textile specialists, Fibershed produced its Wool Mill Vision, outlining a **viable regional milling economy fueled by local wool resources**. Fibershed constructed a technical roadmap for a closed-loop mill design utilizing renewable energy, water recycling, and composting systems, created to support local farms and ranches while providing livelihoods and ecologically sensitive, regional goods.

2014

## Rooting Down and Expanding The Grassroots Fibershed Movement

One year after Fibershed's non-profit was established in 2013, Fibershed developed its Affiliate Program to support and promote the **development of regional soil-to-soil fiber systems communities around the world**. Since the program's establishment, the network has grown to 71 (and counting!) Fibershed Affiliates.

2015

## Restoring Soil Health Climate Beneficial™ Agriculture

Fibershed's goal to **restore ecosystem health and stabilize our climate** was realized through the development and expansion of the Climate Beneficial™ Verification program, which offers technical and financial support for carbon farming practices, and builds markets for fiber coming off of these landscapes.

2016

## Integrating Systems Crop and Livestock

Partnering with the Plant Sciences Department at UC Davis, Fibershed co-hired a PhD candidate who conducted seminal research on the **soil health and ecosystem dynamic benefits of integrating livestock into perennial cropping systems**. This research led to the development of business curricula for contract graziers, a suite of Spanish-language grazer trainings, and an ecosystem service credit for sheep in vineyards.

2017

## Weaving Relationships Community-Supported Cloth

Inspired by models of direct connectivity and upfront investment, Fibershed facilitated a **reinvention of the supply chain from the ground up**. Community members reserved yardage of a forthcoming Climate Beneficial™ cloth, including a margin to reinvest directly in soil health building practices. More than 100 buyers committed to that first production, igniting a Community-Supported cloth program that continues today.

2019

## Growing Manufacturing With the RFMI

The Regional Fiber Manufacturing Initiative provided **legal, financial, alternative business model, and engineering technical assistance to multiple regional entrepreneurs** who have gone on to develop natural fiber businesses within our community and in different regions within the U.S.

2020

## Spreading Knowledge Fibershed Learning Center

Fibershed opened the Learning Center, a multi-use space in Point Reyes Station that includes a hands-on lab, a small farm, and multiple demonstration sites, connecting the community with local fiber and dyes. The Learning Center hosts **opportunities to connect, learn, and exchange knowledge**, unifying a community. The space is actively evolving in collaboration with regional partners.

2021

## Scaling Solutions California Cotton & Climate Coalition (C4)

Fibershed helped launch C4 by inviting all stakeholders from seed to product to join us in this effort to **forge a path for farm-forward Climate Beneficial™ sourcing** to become the norm, and for all partners working with the coalition to build the expertise to design textiles in this way.

2022

## Extending Impact National Climate Beneficial™ Partnership

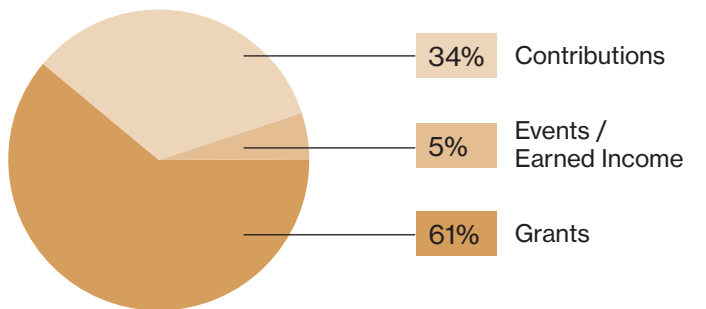
In collaboration with five partners, Fibershed was awarded \$30 million from USDA to **scale the Climate Beneficial™ fiber program over the next five years**. The project will expand regional capacity for Carbon Farm Planning, directly fund producers to carry out carbon farming projects, and create an open-source Carbon Farm Planning and Verification Online Portal.



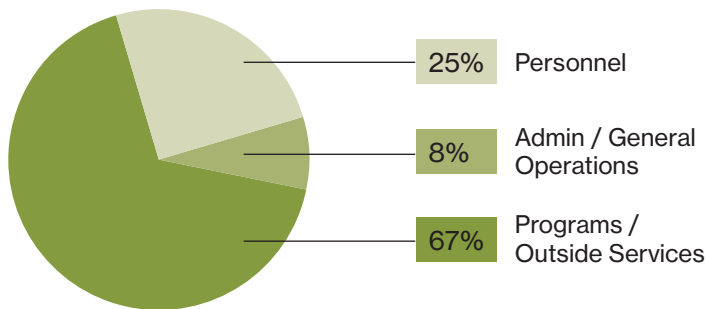
# Financials

We are honored to do this work and we thank our funders for supporting our projects and programs. 2023 was a year that initiated our new role of leading and administering state and federal grants to build healthier soils across the state, expand markets for Climate Beneficial™ fiber nationally, and address climate change with our agricultural landscapes.

Revenue	
Grants	\$1,171,066
Contributions	\$664,121
Event / Earned Income	\$101,052
Total Revenue	\$1,936,239



Expenses	
Programs / Outside Services	\$1,198,809
Personnel	\$455,389
Admin / General Operations	\$144,800
Total Expenses	\$1,798,998



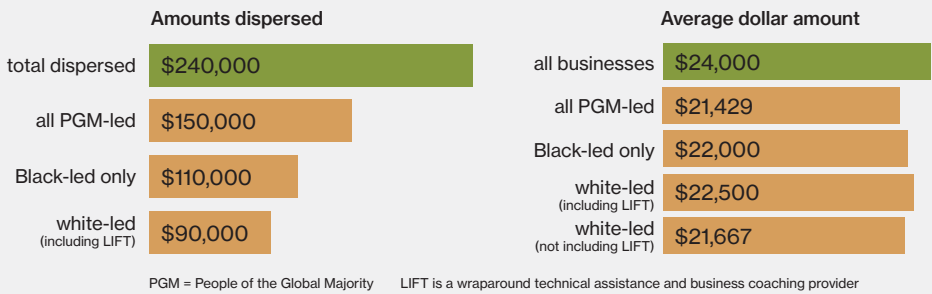
Assets + Liabilities	
Current Assets	\$1,388,649
Total Assets	\$1,388,649
Liabilities	\$73,735
Equity	\$1,314,914
Total Liability + Equity	\$1,388,649

# Regranting Impacts

Fibershed creates opportunities to finance farmers, ranchers, designers, mills, and pilot projects that improve the regional production of textiles, foster climate solutions, and contribute to community prosperity. In 2023, Fibershed was entrusted to regrant funding for the following:

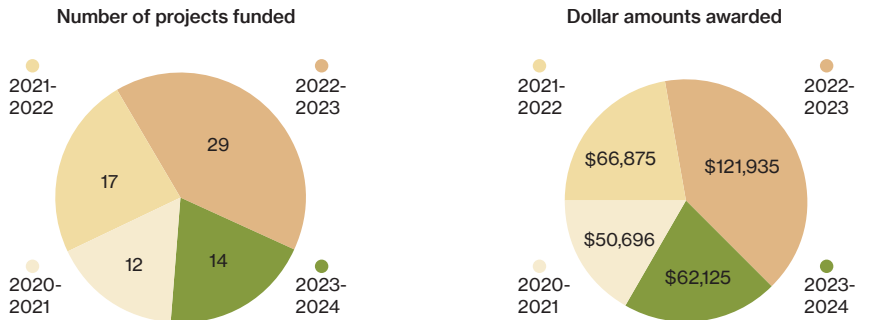
## Fibers Fund

Fibershed and the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Funders (SAFSF) have a joint MOU on the Fibers Fund, which issued \$240K in total grants this year, with support for flax, hide tanning, natural dyes, and the Black Fiber Cohort.



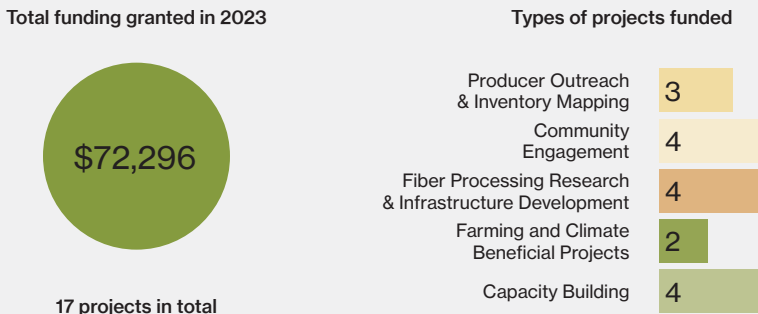
## Carbon Farm Seed Fund

Fibershed offers grant funding directly to producers through the Carbon Farm Seed Fund to help fund the implementation of carbon farm practices, usually between \$2,000 and \$6,000 to an individual farm to execute projects.



## Affiliate Network Micro-Grant

Fibershed supports Affiliate Network members in developing and implementing place-based community activities, research, prototyping, educational events, and other resource development to serve their vision. Since 2017, this grant has supported over 83 projects – totaling more than \$231,000 of funding.



Dispersement of the following grants will begin in 2024:

## USDA Climate-Smart Commodities Grant

Fibershed and project partners will disperse **\$18M** over five years to support carbon farming practices, to draw down **3M Mg of CO<sub>2</sub>e**, and build markets for 1.6 million pounds of cotton and 225,000 pounds of wool.

For **cotton** producers in California, Georgia, Indiana, Alabama, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and North Carolina; and **wool** producers in California, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and New York.

## California Department of Food and Agriculture Healthy Soils Program Block Grant

Fibershed will disperse **\$4M** over three years to fund carbon farming practices, with additional support for growers defined as socially disadvantaged (Spanish language speakers and tribal populations) by the state of California.



# Thank You

Our donors make our work possible. Thank you for supporting our producers, the planet, and our growing regional fiber system. We could not do this work without you.

## FOUNDATION GRANTS

11th Hour Project, a project of The Schmidt Family Foundation	Macdoch Foundation	Pledgeling Foundation
Anonymous Donors	Maine Community Foundation	Regenerative Agriculture Foundation
Community Foundation for San Benito County	Marin Community Foundation	RSF Social Finance
Globetrotter Foundation	Metabolic Studio and the Annenberg Foundation	The McCurdy Family Foundation
L. P. Brown Foundation – Special Fund	Mighty Arrow Family Foundation	The San Francisco Foundation
Lydia B. Stokes Foundation	Nordstrom Foundation	The Samuel and Grace Gorlitz Foundation
	One Earth	William and Elizabeth Patterson Family Fund

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	Kathryn Ortolano and	Mary Dirnberger	

## CARBON FARM SEED FUND

Alisa Rose Seidlitz	Daniel Rosen	Leslie Simon	Robert LaPlante
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Claire Podoll	Imperial Yarn	Paula Clark	Virginia Petite
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Annaise Meyers-Goldsby	Gordon Wood	Kerry Keefe	Mary Coble	RSF Social Finance
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Barbaree Jernigan	Hannah Thiessen	Kristine Cunningham	Meg Hanrahan	Sara Holwerda
Battenkill Valley Fibers	Harry Keally	Leah Swindler	Megan Dunning	Sarah Eapen
Ben Podoll	Heather Boright	Lesley Ocean Parks Studio	Megan von Feldt	Sharon and John Nasstrom
Bernadette Geuy	Heather River	Leslie Simon	Melecio Estrella	Simone Parrish
Beth Hagenlocker	Helen Krayenhoff	Lexi Fujii	Melissa Tan	Stephanie Smagala
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# Support Our Work

Fibershed is a nonprofit organization that develops regional fiber systems that build ecosystem and community health. Our work expands opportunities to implement climate-benefitting agriculture, rebuild regional manufacturing, and connect end-users to the source of our fiber through education. We transform the economic systems behind the production of material culture to mitigate climate change, improve health, and contribute to racial and economic equity.

By donating to Fibershed, you directly support our mission. Visit the [fibershed.org/join](https://fibershed.org/join) to become a monthly donor or make a one-time contribution.

We are grateful for your support.

*“My ideal fiber future would be one centered in an ethos of quality-over-quantity, where our clothing contributes to the experience of building a true sense of belonging to a place. That’s what textiles used to do — textile culture, food culture, music, storytelling, all these things are hardwired to remind us of where we come from and our relationship with landscapes and the things that allow us to exist in these bodies. I think textiles could become a decent, if not a perfect, reminder of our relationship to ecosystems.”*

Rebecca Burgess, Executive Director



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San Geronimo, CA, 94963

[fibershed.org](https://fibershed.org)

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