



A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

Emily Bidgood

What does it mean to be Local? It may be a buzz word, but “Local” still means a great deal; it means everything to those who depend on their land for their living. For our friends like Adam and Abby Borden of Sunset View Farm, Jonesborough, local is life. Adam and Abby did so much for us this year– donating the fruits of their labor, teaching a workshop, and hosting teen interns.

I am so thankful to the many local hands, like the Bordens, that supported our organization in 2016. It astonishes me that volunteers gave over 1,500 hours this year, doing what they love: mentoring youth, teaching new farmers, expanding the Quilt Trail, and so much more.

Local is certainly what gives life to RC&D. From Local volunteers to the Local businesses who are integral to our big events– like Linda at Tennessee Quilts; Pat and Johnny at Farmhouse Gallery & Gardens; Jamie & Elise at Main Street Pizza Company; and, our new all-local grocer, Boone Street Market, that catered monthly workshop meals. Local chefs put on over a dozen events to promote farmers’ markets and local produce. We were awarded new grants from Local foundations Washington County Community Foundation and the Greene County Fund. And Local friends gave financially too. We are so grateful and thankful for all of your Local care and support. Keep on with us on the journey!

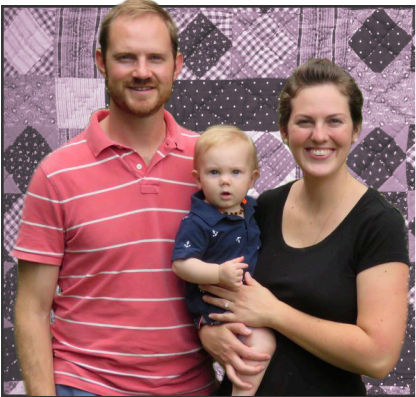
Local Food in Local Kitchens

Katie Bashor is the Farm Operation Manager at River Creek Farm, a five-acre farm in Limestone, TN owned by Jamie Dove and Elise Clair. In addition to being a produce supplier to Main Street Pizza Company, River Creek also currently has around 130 CSA (Community Support Agriculture) accounts for this year which Katie manages– planning, planting, and harvesting. The CSA has been running for two years. River Creek Farm employs two more people year-round in addition to Katie; during summer, additional employees double.

“CSA is catching on,” said Bashor. “We were a part of the CSA Fair that Emily Bidgood and Lexy Close put together. It introduces us to a lot of new customers.”

Katie attended our Field School in 2016. “I learned a lot about farming practices and how to better plan my crops,” said Bashor. “Everyone at the ARC&D has such a great passion for farms and programs to educate and better our careers.”

Thanks to Leah Matson at AccelNow who profiled new farm entrepreneurs, including Katie.



From Neglected Farm to Small Business

Connecting Families with Resources

In 2013, Ethan Gouge traded his career as a U.S. Marine officer for a chance to put a newly formed passion into practice: restoring his grandparents’ overgrown farm property in Roan Mountain. He and his wife, Katie Gouge, married in October of 2014 and together they are bringing the farm back to life with a focus on berries and apples. The Gouge’s are working towards a 5-acre certified organic apple orchard. In early 2016, they talked with us about a Rural Development grant opportunity to conduct a feasibility study to expand their business goals.

“As a small farm/business owner dedicating the time it takes to learn what grant reviewers expect as well as write/ format a grant application would not have been possible on our own. Emily’s grant writing expertise and professional execution were invaluable in creating an impressive product for USDA Rural Development. Emily’s contacts with University of Tennessee connected us with a feasibility consultant at a fraction of the cost. Emily allowed our business to reach a level previously unattainable. Thank you!”

STAFF AND SUPPORT 2016

Emily Bidgood, Executive Director
Lexy Close, Beginning Farmer Support
Rachel Wheeler, AmeriCorps VISTA
Lorelei Goff, Summer Associate

Wenny Elrod, Sowing Seeds Leader
Shae Keane, Sowing Seeds Leader
Sheri Cooper, Build It Up Leader
Taylor Malone, Build It Up Leader

Sowing Seeds Interns: Darwin Bashor,
Nakyla Brady, Kobalt Cooper-King,
Dezmond Carpenter, Austin Sengsouk.

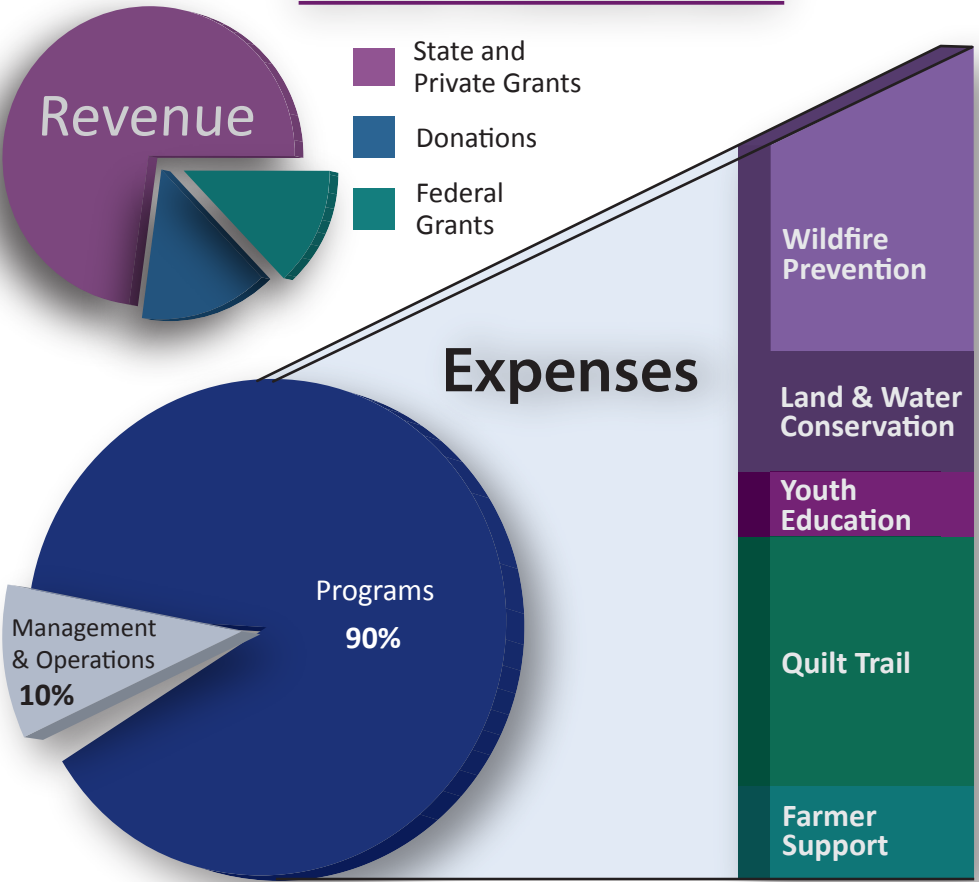
Donna Sue Groves, the mother of the Quilt Trail movement, would tell you that love is the driving force for the largest folk art initiative this country has ever seen. This past August, representatives from Quilt Trails from all over the U.S. and from Ontario, Canada gathered together in our very own Greeneville, TN to celebrate the Quilt Trail, to learn, and to share our love for our communities. We walked away revitalized and with a much stronger international network of support.

Linnie Greene, Greeneville volunteer and quilt block artist, “The National Gathering was a very special event which served to unite community minded people from across the country. I was enlightened, invigorated and inspired. The event was flawless and professionally organized.”

We have something to be proud of. Our Quilt Trail, thanks to the countless volunteers who give their hearts and energy, is one of the best in the country. Greene County has given more than 500 hours of volunteer time to host the Quilt Trail Gathering and create quilt blocks to preserve communities’ stories. It isn’t just because we have a rich quilting tradition, but because we are driven to better our communities. We love our mountain roots and our neighbors. I would urge you to be a tourist for a day and enjoy the Quilt Trail!

By Rachel Wheeler

2016 Financials



For close to ten years we have partnered with the TN Division of Forestry to help mountain communities in the Smokies and beyond limit their wildfire risk (it’s over 30% of our budget). Three of our “Fire Wise” communities witnessed the latest wildfires. One, Cobby Knob, lost 90 homes, so please keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

Recognizing with Gratitude

- AccelNOW
- Appalachian Sustainable Development
- Boone Street Market
- Brushy Fork Environ. Consulting
- Conservation Legacy VISTA Team
- Drop Collaborative
- Downtown Farming
- Emerging Technology Center at East Tenn. State University
- Extension Service of UT & TSU
- Farm Bureau Jonesborough
- First Bank & Trust Ag Lending
- First Frontier Quilters Kingsport
- General Morgan Inn
- Green Earth Connection
- Greeneville Partnership-Tourism
- Greeneville-Greene County History Museum
- Heavenly Stitches Quilt Shoppe
- Jennings Accounting Group
- Johnson City Parks & Recreation
- Main Street Pizza
- Myers Farm & Pumpkin Patch
- River Creek Farm
- Rural Support Partners
- Rural Resources
- Second Harvest Food Bank
- Sunset View Farm
- Tennessee Quilts
- TN RC&D Council Assoc.
- Yee Haw Brewing Company
- Johnny and Pat Lynch / Farmhouse Gallery & Gardens

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 13 - Open House Holiday Party, for all RC&D volunteers and supporters, 3:00-5:00pm, 142 Matthews Mill Rd Telford (RSVP 423-979-2581)

January 12 - Farming Financially Smart w/ Adam Hopkins, Farm Bureau Jonesborough (\$10, pre-register, 423-979-2581)

February TBD - TriCities “Know Your Farmer” CSA Fairs, Johnson City & Bristol (free)

February 9 - Markets for your farm products - several farmers and reps of area markets talk about opportunities for sale and how to plan production around selling, Farm Bureau Jonesborough (\$10, pre-register)

April 29 - Post-Harvesting Handling and Soil Health Field Day (cost & details TBD)

www.ARCd.org | 423-979-2581
facebook.com/AppRCD

Youth Learning in the Garden

We are proud to partner with Sheri Cooper, teacher/counselor at Johnson City’s Alternative Center, and her Foodtopia Program where kids get hands on training in cooking, gardening and growing for market.



Austin Sengsouk is 17 years old and a recent graduate of Science Hill; part of his diploma was earned at the Alternative Center where he was drawn to the Foodtopia program. Austin says, “Cooking gives me independence,” and it turns out that he is quite a good cook.

Foodtopia gives students like Austin a new way to engage in learning and persist to graduation. He enjoyed harvesting pumpkins and beans at Sunset View Farm, a large family-owned produce farm in Jonesborough, learning about equipment and larger scale operations.

Our food-and-farm internships for Alternative Center teens began in September. All teens must volunteer for 40 hours before promoting to paid internships, under a grant from the Washington County Community Foundation. Austin quickly completed his volunteer requirement and has worked over 50 additional hours.

2016



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THE FUTURE OF LOCAL

Connecting Youth, Farms, Food, and Community

Our assets grow from our local hands and local lands, drawing from the oldest mountains in the world. Yet amidst the richness, one in five northeast Tennesseans live in poverty. With more than one out of every five children struggling with obesity, in 2011, Tennessee ranked 5th in the nation for childhood obesity rates. We are losing family farms and fertile soils at a rate of 10% a year to development. And the average farmer in our region is over 60 years of age. What will our rural landscape look like in 20 years? Who will grow our food in 20 years and where will it come from? How will we work together to make fresh nutritious food available and affordable for everyone?

Appalachian RC&D Council is committed to helping our region meet these challenges and work toward a sustainable farm culture into the future. We are sowing seeds, working with three amazing teachers, Shae Keane, Wenny Elrod, and Sheri Cooper, implementing nature and nutrition lessons with youth across Johnson City thanks to a two-year grant from the Washington County Community Foundation. Shae tells us, “There are indeed immense food disconnections that exist amongst this generation. When asked where cheese comes from, one child answered: from a cheetah. Another answered: from Cheetos. When asked where the meat on a hamburger comes from, some children answered that they did not know. One answered: pig. Another answered: camel. This is, to me, one of the most important reasons that we have created this program in addition to expanding access to fresh, organic foods— to reconnect children in relationship with their foods, in hopes that this will have a positive rippling effect in their health, well-being, sense of community, and their lives overall.”

Through Sowing Seeds and many other programs, we have made a lot of progress and touched many lives this year. Thank you for allowing us to share the stories of how we put our commitment into action throughout 2016. We look forward to weaving more stories with you in 2017.

“Farmers are asset rich and cash poor,” said Adam Hopkins, UT Extension agent, at a Field School workshop for beginning farmers. This principal can easily be applied to our whole region: we are asset rich. But how do we use these assets in a positive and sustainable way?”

Rachel Wheeler
AmeriCorps VISTA and
Sullivan County native

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