



# VT Climate Economy Initiative Model Communities Program Greater Middlebury Climate Economy Initiative

## TASK FORCE FACILITATOR WORKSHEETS

### Help farmers transition to organic and regenerative practices

Community Chair: **TBD**

Facilitator: **Ben Doyle**, *Community and Economic Development Director*, USDA Rural Development

Resource Team Members: **Kirsten C. Workman**, *Agronomy Specialist*, University of Vermont Extension and Champlain Valley Farmers Coalition

**Maddy Monty**, *Membership Manager & Policy Advisor*, NOFA-VT

Transitioning from conventional farm practices to organic and regenerative practices can have a positive impact on the environment and a farmer's bottom line. This Task Force will convene to develop incentives and other approaches to encourage an increase in organic farming and carbon sequestration in Addison County.

### Action Steps: (IN ORDER OF PRIORITY)

1. Form consensus and define "regenerative agricultural practices." Ensure that the definition is positive and inclusive.
2. Strengthen the taskforce. Each member should bring a friend to the next meeting at which the group will think strategically about who the key players are to help in this effort. While the taskforce must be open and inclusive, it's also important to do some extra recruitment of these key players.
3. Identify metrics with baseline data so that the group can measure progress. Some of this data might already exist (look to partners like UVM Extension) while additional information (i.e. awareness) might be collected through surveys.
4. Develop strategic plan(s) to communicate. Look for ways to share information/results about this effort with various stakeholders. A strategic plan for communication will help identify these stakeholders as well as best means of dissemination.
5. Create a "Climate Hero Farmer" initiative that shares the stories of local ag producers who are using regenerative farming practices. Create window displays in the downtown that serve both to celebrate these hero farmers and educate the public about regenerative practices.

### Additional Action Steps

- Increase educational opportunities for farmers around regenerative practices. Leverage existing efforts (i.e. Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition)

- Educate consumers about the market potential/positive economic impact of regenerative practices
- Investigate the role of food hubs in emerging markets for regenerative ag practices
- Identify alternative products (produced through regenerative ag) that there might be a market for
- Encourage large institutions in the area to purchase products made through regenerative practices
- Facilitate conversations about on-farm energy efficiency practices
- Identify and education technical assistance providers (seeds/fertilizer sales, veterinarians, advisors, etc.)
- Engauge ACORN to see if it can help in this effort
- Look for ways to incentivize regenerative ag practices through local/state policy

## **Resources**

1. Local legislators (Chris Bray, Amy Sheldon)
2. Joshua Faulkner (UVM), Climate Change and Farming program
3. NOFA Winter Conference (host a roundtable)
4. Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition
5. USDA Rural Development
6. UVM Extension (Middlebury Office)
7. USDA NRCS and local Conservation District
8. Middlebury College (faculty and students)
9. ACORN
10. Rural Vermont
11. VT Community Foundation (funding for Hero Farmers window campaign)
12. Vermont Arts Council (funding for Hero Farmers window campaign)
13. Vermont Land Trust
14. Middlebury Co-Op

## **Next Meeting Date, Place and Time:**

Thursday, December 7, 6:30 PM

UVM Extension, 23 Pond Lane

(This location does not work)

## Task Force Signups

First	Last	email	phone
Lise	Anderson	<a href="mailto:liseand55@gmail.com">liseand55@gmail.com</a>	
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