

Seedcorn Annual Report – 2011

Prepared by Robin McClellan, Speaker of the Council

It's been a good year for Seedcorn. We ended the year with four projects underway, two of which have been around a while and two new ones.

- Friends of Bittersweet Farm, which supports Bittersweet Farm's educational program,
- Sustainable Living Project, which produces the Local Living Festival, numerous other workshops on low impact living, and is now branching out into other areas,
- YESEleven, which is promoting the maintenance and sustainable expansion of the US Route 11, and
- The Children's Museum, which is starting with a hands-on museum without walls that can travel the North Country (and beyond!).

In addition, Seedcorn is co-sponsoring a project called "Finding Common Ground" with the League of Women Voters and American Association of University Women.

The Council has maintained its strength at 8 and expenses at a bare minimum: insurance, minor office supplies and mailing, and our website. We have moved our website over to a standard platform (WordPress) where it can be more easily edited, we now need only to generate content. Membership remains small, but the mission to support new organizations remains vital.

The Council lost Jean Dawson, Juanita Babcock and Joan Heidenreich and added Rajiv Narula who became recording Secretary. Robin McClellan, Ann Bradburd, Jim Benevenuto, Margaret Weitzmann, Chelle Lindahl, Ann Bennett, and Klaus Proemm remained on the Council. Robin remained as Speaker, Ann Bradburd as Treasurer and Jim and Margaret shared the position of Corresponding Secretary.

Project Reports

The YESEleven and the Children's Museum Projects were taken on late in 2011 so there are no annual reports from them yet. We will post information on them on www.seedcorn.org as soon as we have it.

Sustainable Living Project

Because of the sheer size of the Sustainable Living Projects (SLP) accomplishments, they are condensed here with references to the SLP website for more details!

Review of Programs

Local Living Festival (LLF)

September 25 & 26 at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Living Farm, Canton, NY. Featured 78 adult workshops, 14 children and teens workshops, 61 Exhibitors, 1300+ attendees—nearly 10% of attendees used non-fossil fuel means to arrive to the Festival. Three homes featuring renewable energy and “green” building were toured by 27 people the following weekend. Positive Evaluations. **See** <http://www.sustainablelivingproject.net/local-living-festival>

Evaluation results polled very strongly positive. Ongoing sessions include Bees & Beekeeping, Garden & Home Food-Waste Composting, Nutritious, Delicious (and Cheap!) Cooking Seminars, Community Contra Dances, The Ark Gathering for Local Homesteaders, and continuing Green Home Tours. Many seasonal offerings. **See** <http://www.sustainablelivingproject.net/workshops-groups>

Outreach

The Sustainable Living Project (SLP) attended nearly twenty-five outreach events, reaching thousands of people with an interactive agenda and professional, yet home-spun, booth display. **See** <http://www.sustainablelivingproject.net/workshops-groups/outreach-events---tabling-displays-booths>

One Sustainable Thing Pledge Campaign employed at Summer outreach events. “Greenhorns” movie presented at Cinema 10 during Local Living Festival week. Two benefit concerts were presented in our support. Community Contra Dance listserv and e-mail management assumed. Our e-mailing list swelled to nearly 1100 recipients. Nearly one thousand promotional brochures were distributed.

Media & Advertisements

Conducted a highly successful, near-weekly media campaign for events promotion. Our website more than doubled the size in content from 2010. Facebook page was created and regular postings made: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Sustainable-Living-Project-Local-Living-Festival/173368836038454>. SLU campus video on SLP participation with the Community Based Living program at <http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=572308916459&oid=7323146307&comments>. Advertisements in North Country This Week, NY-Northeast Organic Farming Assn. (NOFA) newspaper, Northeast Region NOFA newsletter Legume/Cover Crop Supplement, Potsdam SummerFest Program, and the Local Non-Profit Guide. Local

Living Festival blitz: North Country This Week insert to 11,000; website button ad; print advertisements; saturation coverage of lawn signs and posters.

Administrative

- Planning began for incorporation and 501(c)3 status for The Hub Agricultural Depot & Rural Resource Center, not under the aegis of Seedcorn, Inc.
- Reporting requirements to Seedcorn, Inc. were met, as were all reporting requirements and benefit disbursement obligations for our funding partners.
- Hired Dr. Rajiv Narula as a part-time Project Organizer on an independent contractor basis on June 19, 2011. Total paid hours for 2011: 453.50

Finance & Fundraising

See attached Financial Report for more detail or <http://www.sustainablelivingproject.net/donations-volunteers-sponsorship/major-sponsorship/financial-reporting>

Twenty-eight major donors made our work possible, for which we are grateful.

<http://www.sustainablelivingproject.net/donations-volunteers-sponsorship/major-sponsorship>

Partnerships & Collaborations

Fruitful collaborations and networks were formed with nearly fifty local organizations, farms, businesses and in-kind event sponsors in 2011.

<http://www.sustainablelivingproject.net/about-us/partnerships-networks-collaborations>

Volunteers & Interns

95 volunteers assisted the Local Living Festival, 40 assisted the SLP as a whole. Eleven Interns were mentored. They came from the Community Based Learning program at St. Lawrence University, the SUNY Potsdam Community Health Program, SUNY Potsdam Sociology Department, and the SUNY Potsdam Office for Experiential Learning. Interns contributed to workshop, display, and multiple survey creation and execution, as well as assisting the Sustainability Forum for Colleges and zero-waste efforts for the **Local Living Festival**, plus “CSA” marketing display creation. **Please see** <http://www.sustainablelivingproject.net/campus-related/intern-opp-s>

Volunteer and Intern Hours Log:

Local Living Festival 2011 - 1212.00 Intern hours - 513.00

Sustainable Living Project - 251.50 Volunteer Coordinators - 2200.00

IN-KIND VOLUNTEER & INTERN HOURS, 2011 TOTAL - 4176.50 hours

Evaluations

All Workshops and the **Local Living Festival** utilize Evaluation forms for attendees that are referenced in ongoing planning. Additionally, a post-Festival evaluation meeting, of and by the coordinators, discussed the overall impact of the Festival and potential areas of improvement. These are fully reflected in future organizing efforts.

Future Plans

- The Hub Agricultural Depot & Rural Resource Center (0-3 years)
- Homesteading College (3-5 years)

Please see <http://www.sustainablelivingproject.net/future-plans>

Friends of Bittersweet Farm

2011 began well for Friends of Bittersweet Farm with volunteers coming throughout the month of January and one student staying in the cabin, on and off, for most of the month. February saw the continuation of our work with Saint Lawrence University's Community Based Learning program. We are working with 22 students from 4 different classes. Projects being engaged in by student classes, at their request, are woodwork, greenhouse season extension, learning to harness and drive the horse, vermiculture, starting chickens, and upgrading the off grid cabin. We also saw new faces as our graduating volunteers brought underclassmen to the farm to continue what they had started. Most weeks we host between 3 & 10 volunteers from the universities. Students utilize the cabin at least once a month for recreation and a change of pace. Everyone is learning how to cook on the cookstove.

March saw a renewal of our relationship with the Youth Advocacy Program. President Stephanie Hart stated, "I would like to develop a 100 year relationship with Bittersweet Farm." At this time that entails at risk youth, ages 5 to 18, coming to the farm, getting to know the animals, and working in the garden, at least twice a week. Also we will be hosting family groups twice a month for activities like tree planting, horse work, backyard chicken raising, and container gardening.

Sister Bethany, and the Newman Center, will be joining us again this year for another tree planting/reforestation day. 100 seedlings will be planted, with the YAP family group joining in. This makes for a great mentoring experience for both students and the families. Scheduled date is April 30th.

WWOOFers (Worldwide Workers on Organic Farms) continue to be a staple with Friends of Bittersweet Farm from as far away as Cameroon. We expect 4 of our past WWOOFERS to return again this year.

From Alfred University we will be welcoming Lisa Wolfgang for a summer long internship. We are developing a farm swap to better meet the needs and learning interests of interns. Lisa, who has a great interest in goats, will be working with Joe Metz and his partner on their farm in Madrid at least 1 day a week.

Outside of this first quarter, we are excited to continue to develop a working relationship with the Sustainable Living Project, helping to make the Homesteading College work, and sharing our knowledge at the Local Living Festival.

Friends of Bittersweet Farm has joined GoodSearch.com and GoodShop.com which donates a penny and a percentage every time a user designated us as their non-profit of choice. This will not be a huge fundraising activity but will spread the word and be a small addition to our funds.

2nd Quarter

Despite the rain, our farm program with YAP got off to a great start. Everyone learned to tolerate the weather and we learned how unpredictable the lives of families and youth at risk can be. Flexibility was the name of the game.

Sister Bethany came once again and we planted Eastern White Pine and Sugar Maples, 100 total. The day ended with lots of fudge frosted brownies and good cheer. Sister Bethany drove Pearl(the horse) and no one had to carry all the shovels as the buckboard carried it all.

Of all the tools on the farm available to be used, the buckboard has proven to change even the most reluctant youth's attitude. Once we hook the horse up, everyone wants to ride or drive, and no one has to carry tools or fencing or lumber 500 feet to the project site. It is one of the best educational items here.

We hosted BOCES at risk high school students again this year, with a bit of a turn around as they all wanted to put on a cook-out for us ! One of our 3 year veterans of this experience has graduated and as a direct result of coming to the farm is going on to continue her education as an early childhood care giver. Seeing that happen is what makes it all work.

Lisa Wolfgang joined us as planned on June 4th and what an intern she is. She was joined once again by Malcolm (his 3rd year here). In addition to being an intern, she was also a mentor for the younger kids coming to the farm program.

We look forward to a busy summer and even busier fall

3rd Quarter

Summer is always busy at the farm so 'Friends' programs take a bit of a back seat. Lisa stayed with us until the 17th of August. We miss her and hope to have her return soon.

July 24th we hosted a NOFA NY New Farmer Field Day. We had participants from as far away as Rochester and have continued to mentor attendees via phone and email. As always, our focus is on sharing our knowledge so others can succeed.

September 7th saw the arrival of Brad Melaugh as a WWOOFER. Brad joins us after a 2 year teaching experience in South Korea. Also our St Lawrence students came back, with new volunteers and 3 CBL classes that total 16 students. We had a surprise one day when a past CBL student showed up with a bunch of Fraternity Brothers and then scheduled a big volunteer day in October.

The YAP farm program came to its conclusion and is now evolving into new ideas to reach families that need to interact in a healthy way with their kids.

We started mentoring a young science teacher and his wife in farming, raising pigs and chickens. They are now regulars here, coming to learn and help out with whatever is happening.

One of the most exciting new developments is that Malcolm, a three year WWOOF veteran is graduating from Brown University and is applying for a Fellowship grant to be an artist in residence here with 'Friends'. One of our goals is to merge a Community Supported Agriculture model with a Community Supported Arts model, allowing/integrating artists into life on the farm. As a writer and journalist we hope

Malcolm will not only be able to pursue his own creative talents but also utilize them for Friends of Bittersweet Farm and other projects and programs that we are connected to. Malcolm is a generous and willing individual and I am sure that he would share his talents with other Seedcorn projects.

4th quarter

The end of the year saw an increase in requests to stay in the cabin and WWOOF, unfortunately we have determined that hosting long term in the winter months becomes more of a lesson in survival, rather than a teaching of sustainable agriculture and living methods, so we had to turn down several requests after Dec 1st.

November saw the leaving of Brad Melaugh, now living in Ontario and working on an urban CSA in Geulph.

Activities wound down and planning for 2012 began. Our work with YAP has now become a weekly group activity where families come to the farm, or just youth and help with animals and learn about healthy food.

2012 looks to be as busy as ever.

Highlights of 2011

- Hosted 1 long term summer intern from Alfred University
- Hosted 7 WWOOFERS
- Interacted with 5 YAP Families and 7 YAP at risk youth
- Hosted BOCES Community Connections for our Spring education series (3rd year)
- Planted 100 trees with the Newman Center
- Put on NOFA NY Field Day
- Ongoing mentoring of new young farmers

Finding Common Ground

This project started in summer 2011 with Robin McClellan, Donna Seymour American Association of University Women (AAUW), Kathleen Stein, League of Women Voters (LWV) and Dan Dullea, Center for Excellence in Communication at Clarkson University. Over the past year we had talked about getting together to bring people of disparate views together to talk about real solutions beyond ideology. These programs were produced and videotaped, then shown on WCKN, the local public access channel, and posted on YouTube. We also maintain (not well!) a website with links to the YouTube videos. In the future, we would like to use the website to generate questions and find out what people would like to know and what new and innovative solutions they might have.

In 2011, we produced our first program on wind power (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GU4nnR_tHWA). We planned to produce 2 more in 2012, one on education (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJt-jD28XY4>) and one possibly on energy. In the meantime, we are working on two other projects—documenting the Norwood Energy/Poverty Initiative and a documentary on the wind farm in Chateaugay. There are a number of other projects that we work on under different project names—Conversations with the Candidates and North Country Matters—so it's sometimes difficult to figure out what goes where since it's the same people. Seedcorn has been associated with Finding Common Ground, but its possible that it may want to lend its name to the other projects as well.

Seedcorn does not support this project in the same way that it supports other projects. There is no expense involved and the sponsorship is in lending its good name to the project...which in turn adds to Seedcorn's realm of activity. In keeping with the educational mission of the Seedcorn, AAUW and LWV, we do not advocate any particular positions but try to elucidate current positions and highlight innovative ideas.

Financial Statements

Bank Balances

	12/31/2010 Balance	12/31/2011 Balance
Friends of Bittersweet Farm	\$ 1,751.37	\$ 848.48
NCSB Checking	3,231.43	4,409.58
NCSB Savings	577.85	579.58
SLP Checking	2,842.99	4,788.61
YESEleven Project	-	228.41
Total	\$ 8,403.64	\$ 10,854.66

Revenue / Expense Statement

	Seedcorn Administration	Friends of Bittersweet Farm	Sustainable Living Project	YESEleven	Total
INCOME					
Admin Fee	562.73	-	-	-	562.73
Donations	75.00	192.00	19,187.50	499.27	19,953.77
Workshops	-	-	132.00	-	132.00
TOTAL Donations	75.00	192.00	19,319.50	499.27	20,085.77
Event Income	-	-	5,430.00	-	5,430.00
Workshops	-	-	1,121.50	-	1,121.50
TOTAL Event Income	-	-	6,551.50	-	6,551.50
Interest income	6.95	-	13.07	0.05	20.07
Memberships	842.00	-	-	-	842.00
Other Inc	-	-	0.18	-	0.18
Sales	-	-	1,042.00	-	1,042.00
TOTAL INCOME	1,486.68	192.00	26,926.25	499.32	29,104.25

Revenue / Expense Statement

Revenue / Expense Statement					
EXPENSES					
Admin Fee Paid	-	-	562.73	-	562.73
Admin Fee Waived	518.91	-	(518.91)	-	-
Advertising	-	-	3,034.20	-	3,034.20
Conference	-	-	337.00	-	337.00
Contract Labor	-	-	5,923.00	-	5,923.00
Cost of Event	-	-	936.75	-	936.75
Booth rentals	-	-	300.00	-	300.00
Bus	-	-	660.00	-	660.00
Merchandise	-	-	654.00	-	654.00
Mileage	-	-	562.33	-	562.33
Printing	-	-	2,970.94	-	2,970.94
Sanitation	-	-	475.82	-	475.82
Speaker Fee	-	-	4,019.50	-	4,019.50
Supplies	-	-	611.97	-	611.97
Tent Rentals	-	-	1,630.00	-	1,630.00
workshop expenses	-	-	192.56	-	192.56
TOTAL Cost of Event	-	-	13,013.87	-	13,013.87
Dues to Other Orgs	140.00	-	725.00	-	865.00
Equipment	-	-	705.68	-	705.68
Insurance	188.13	-	-	-	188.13
Legal Professional	50.00	238.00	-	-	288.00
Office Expense	8.06	-	390.25	20.91	419.22
Other Printing	37.95	-	-	-	37.95
Postage	8.80	-	68.60	-	77.40
Repairs	-	30.03	-	-	30.03
Supplies & Misc	70.00	826.86	24.16	-	921.02
Website	-	-	-	250.00	250.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,021.85	1,094.89	24,265.58	270.91	26,653.23
OVERALL TOTAL	464.83	(902.89)	2,660.67	228.41	2,451.02