

Small Farms Conservation Conference

September 10, 2026
9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Forest Park Inn
Noblesville, IN

Teter Organic Farm
Noblesville, IN



IN SMALL
FARMS
CONSERVATION

INsmallfarms.org

GET THE DIRT

Small Farms Conservation Conference

September 10th, 2026 8:30am - 5:00pm Forest Park Inn & Teter Organic Farm, Noblesville, IN



8:30 - 9:00 am **Networking & Coffee**

9:00 - 9:10 am **Welcome to Get the Dirt: Year of the Woman Farmer**

9:15 - 9:55 am **Session 1 - Breakouts:**

Small-Scale Livestock: Challenges and Celebrations (Panel)

Mulch Hall

- Sabrina Friend, Prairie Hills Farm
- Heidi Potter, Summer Solstice Farms
- Whitney Schlegel, Marble Hill Farm

Moderator: Megan Ayers, IN Small Farms, Unvarnished Farm

Join farmer and Indiana Small Farms Conservationist Megan Ayers in a panel discussion with livestock farmers who center animal welfare and conservation on their farms, reflecting on the challenges and celebrations of small scale livestock production.



Ecology of a Campus Farm

Jackie Kehr, Interim Ullem Farm Manager, DePauw University

Root Zone

The role of a campus farm at a Liberal Arts Institution may seem wildly different than most farms in Indiana, but we are perfectly positioned to teach our students and neighbors about the importance of small, local agriculture. Learn about how we attempt to harness the energy of college students, create opportunities for experiential learning by professors, and feed our community.



9:55 - 10:00 am **Take 5! Quick Break**

10:00-10:45 am **Session 2 - Breakouts:**

Planting Community in City Spaces (Panel)

Mulch Hall

- Kate Sexton, Fields Market Garden
- Danielle Guerin, Soul Food Project Indy
- Samantha Alba, Crooked Creek Permaculture/Rooted in Realty

Moderator: Tanvi Lad, IN Small Farms

Join ecology advocate and Indiana Small Farms Conservationist Tanvi Lad in conversation with farmers who work to build farm businesses and nourish community through food production, social engagement, and cultivating opportunities for connection.



10:00-10:45 am Session 2 - Breakouts:

Silvopasture - The Why and How of Trees in Pasture

Xinyuan Shi, *Technical Assistance Provider at Savanna Institute*

Silvopasture is the intentional integration of livestock, pasture, and trees. It's a practice with ancient roots around the world and has seen recent revitalization and adoption across the Midwest. Xinyuan will be going over the benefits of silvopasture, how you can successfully establish trees into pasture to complement your existing operation, and a handful of proven systems meeting a diversity of end-goals.

 Root Zone



10:45-10:50 am Take 5! Quick Break

10:50-11:30 am Session 3 - Breakouts:

Creative Diversification in EcoMarkets (Panel)

- Karen McMahan, American Wildflower Farms
- Jenny Wyss, Homestead Solutions Plus
- Julie Perkins, Perkins Good Earth Farm
- Elizabeth Tobey, Bundle Sticks Farm

Moderator: Liz Brownlee, Nightfall Farm



 Mulch Hall



Join farmer and SARE coordinator Liz Brownlee in a business plan creation activity before learning about how these farmers bring creative diversification to their farm businesses in meaningful and community-based ways.

Planting Habitat to Maximize Crop Pollination

Ella Stroh, *Indiana Partner Biologist, Pollinator Partnership*

Ella will explore the ins and outs of creating pollinator-friendly habitat areas using Indiana native plants and following best practices to support pollinators and other beneficial insects. She'll cover how to select plants suited to your site, create a diverse mix of species that provide pollinators with resources throughout the growing season, and establish and maintain habitat for long-term success.

 Root Zone



11:35 - 12:25pm LUNCH +Network and visit the resource tables

 Mulch Hall

Outdoor patio hang option Ask the Expert - EQIP for Small Farms
Cara Bergschneider, *Small Scale Conservationist, NRCS*



12:30 - 1:20 pm

KEYNOTE

Growing for Good: the intersection of food, farm, and community

Rachel Beyer, Mavourneen Farm



Rachel will share her personal farm story, from falling in love with the work of growing food at the MSU Student Organic Farm, to starting her own vegetable business on family land with her partner Jonas, and later co-founding the Bloomington Farm Stop, a farmer owned cooperative grocery store. Come hear about the celebrations and challenges inherent to food system work, different ways to be a farmer, and the essential role of community building in conservation.



1:25 - 1:30 pm

Closing Remarks

Pack up & travel to Teter Organic Farm for those who can stay.

2:00-5:00 pm

Farm Tour & Social:

Rooted in Community, Growing for a Better Tomorrow

Teter Organic Farm - Katy Rogers

10980 E 221st St, Noblesville, IN 46062 (6 mi away)

2:00 - 3:30 pm Farm Tour

3:30 - 5:00 pm Happy Hour



Join us for a farm tour and social at Teter Organic Farm, a diversified Certified Organic vegetable and flower farm in central Indiana. Katy Rogers will share Teter's production and conservation practices, followed by a social hour with light food, drinks, and opportunities to connect.



“ Our mission is simple yet profound: to increase access to healthy, nutritious food for vulnerable populations while providing ecological education and building relationships within the community. ”



This is a functioning farm with uneven terrain. Shelter and restroom facilities are available.

Speaker Bios

KEYNOTE: Growing for Good: the intersection of food, farm, and community

Rachel Beyer, *Mavourneen Farm*

Based in the hills of southern Indiana, Rachel has 17 years of experience managing organic farms and leading local food system projects. The Purdue Student Farm and Bloomington Farm Stop Collective are two favorite past endeavors. With willful determination and too much work, she and her husband have been building their own plant nursery and year round vegetable operation, Mavourneen Farm, since 2015.



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PANEL: Small-Scale Livestock: Challenges and Celebrations

Sabrina Friend, *Prairie Hills Farm, Selma, IN*

Sabrina and her husband, Sylvester, are first-generation farmers who transformed nine acres into a regenerative farm. They raise goats, chickens, and turkeys, maintain a six-hive apiary, and grow specialty crops using sustainable, natural, and organic practices.

Their farming journey began with a small garden in Georgia, where harvesting a homegrown bell pepper sparked Sabrina's passion for growing food. In 2020, they left corporate America and moved to Indiana, eventually expanding their homestead from a 24-bed kitchen garden into a diverse farm.

Today, their farm is a place of food, education, conservation, and connection to the land, demonstrating how regenerative practices can nourish communities while protecting the environment.



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Heidi Potter, *Summer Solstice Farms, Deputy, IN*

Heidi is the owner and operator of Summer Solstice Farms in Deputy, Indiana. She started the farm in 2011 in Michigan's Upper Peninsula with chickens, rabbits, and goats. Now the 40-acre farm here in Indiana is home to Dexter cattle and dairy goats as well as a market garden.

Heidi has implemented a variety of conservation practices related to her livestock operation including pasture establishment and inter-seeding, livestock fencing and water pipeline, managed-intensive grazing, silvopasture, and wildlife habitat establishment.



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Whitney Schlegel, *Marble Hill Farm, Bloomington, IN*

Whitney and her husband Kip Schlegel own and manage Marble Hill Farm, a small diversified livestock farm in Monroe County, Indiana. They work to encourage a connection with the land by sharing their farm with community and supporting on-farm educational programs. A whole-farm ecosystem approach guides their land stewardship.

The Lowline Angus beef cattle, Shetland sheep and laying hens are managed in a regenerative grazing system for grass-finished beef, wool, and pasture-raised eggs. These products are sold at local markets.

Their flock of Shetland sheep provides a magnificent array of natural colored wool, which is processed into yarns and roving and wool products for retail sale. Waste wool from shearing is used and purchased for making sheep wool pellets and shreds offered as a soil amendment (9-0-2) and mulch -“Sheep to Soil”.



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Moderator: Megan Ayers, *IN Small Farms & Unvarnished Farm, Deputy, IN*

Along with her role as the Southern Indiana Small Farms Conservationist, Megan is founder, farmer, and chicken and goose wrangler at Unvarnished Farm, established in early 2020 in Southeastern, Indiana, in early 2020. She and her husband are Cincinnati transplants who moved for a job opportunity.

New to the area and the land, they are committed to growing dirt into soil using regenerative practices like rotational grazing of small, multi-species flocks, cover-cropping, no tilling or synthetic fertilization, applying compost, increasing biodiversity, and applying other fun soil health practices.



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In short, Unvarnished Farm aims to grow better food for more people, while staying loyal to the soil.

PANEL: Planting Community in City Spaces

Kate Sexton, *Fields Market Garden, Carmel, IN*

Kate started working with Fields Market Garden in 2022 growing into the full time role of Urban Farmer and Community Supporter in 2023. She oversees the farm's operations and community engagement initiatives.

Fields Market Garden is a space where neighbors with intellectual and developmental disabilities can find work opportunities and integrated engagement opportunities within walking distance of their homes.



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Samantha Alba, Crooked Creek Permaculture, Indianapolis, IN

Samantha is Co-founder of Crooked Creek Permaculture. With a degree in Zoology from Colorado State University and an extensive background in animal husbandry, Sam found herself making a shift towards a more sufficient lifestyle after working as a Livestock Coordinator for several years. There, she worked alongside Lisa Hopman (founder of High Voltage Garden on her off time), who heartened & helped Sam and Co-founder, Adriano Fabbri, when they began their journey.



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For 5 seasons, Sam and Adriano have transitioned from simple annual garden bed production to transform their 1/2 acre property into a permaculture inspired food forest. Crooked Creek Permaculture aims to inspire community-sufficiency & hyper localization in neighborhoods by turning land into food forests.

Danielle Guerin, Soul Food Project Indy, Indianapolis, IN

Danielle is the Executive Director and Founder of Soul Food Project Indy. Since 2017, she has grown a wide diversity of veggies and a small flock of hens on four lots, providing 50-75 CSA shares annually. The farm also has a robust workforce development program for youth and adults. Danielle views food sovereignty as the path to food security and intertwines its principles into all she does as she advocates for an equitable food system in our city.



She is passionate about ending food apartheid in our black communities and raising our young leaders. She lends her ideas to several organizations and serves on several boards. Currently serving as the President for Hoosier Young Farmers Coalition.

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Danielle was born and raised in Indianapolis and became interested in this work after volunteering at a community garden in graduate school. Upon returning from her Peace Corps Service, she was even more determined to work towards improving food access in her neighborhood.

Moderator: Tanvi Lad, IN Small Farms

Tanvi is the Northern Indiana Small Farms Conservationist, and also recently started her own consulting business for ecological restoration projects. Tanvi is a passionate advocate for soil health and conservation practices. She recently moved back to Indiana, where she has rapidly engaged with the farming and conservation community and programs.



Tanvi has a strong passion for education and resource sharing. She has experience in restoration ecology, and managing projects, logistics, and community engagement with a composting nonprofit in Colorado. She was formerly in the Peace Corp in Africa.

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PANEL: Creative Diversification in EcoMarkets

Karen McMahan, *American Wildflower Farms, Madison, IN*

Alongside my husband Damon and two sons, Keegan and Aiden, I operate our 40-acre family farm where we grow specialty cut flowers, raise grass-fed beef, and create value-added farm products. We also provide floral design for weddings and events. Our farm was built on the belief that agriculture can thrive through diversification.

By combining traditional farming with agritourism, direct-to-consumer sale, and conservation practices, we've created multiple income streams while caring for the land for future generations. I'm excited to share our journey, the lessons we've learned, and how conservation and diversification have become an important part of our farm's future.



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Jenny Wyss, *Homestead Solutions Plus, New Haven, IN*

Jenny is the owner of Homestead Solutions Plus and has been homesteading for 23 years. What started as a way to feed two growing boys with ferocious appetites has grown into a business where she and her husband not only sell plants and produce, but strive to teach others the lost art of homesteading.

This journey has led them down the path of gardening, food preservation, raising turkeys, meat and egg layers, and meat rabbits, having bee hives, and a high tunnel to raise food all year long. Jenny loves learning and expanding on the natural garden and conservation practices she currently has in place.



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Julie Perkins, *Perkins Good Earth Farm, Demotte, IN*

Julie co-owns Perkins' Good Earth Farm in DeMotte, Indiana, with her husband Dan, where they grow and sell certified organic vegetables through their CSA program, retail store, and wholesale accounts. Julie manages their retail store, where they source and sell products from other local farms and businesses, as well as their on-farm commercial kitchen, where they make grab-and-go soups and salads, gluten-free baked goods, cold-pressed juices, and more, using as many local and/or organic ingredients as possible.

Julie also manages their two on-farm Airbnbs, 4 Harvest Host/HipCamp sites, the educational materials for CSA, as well as the marketing and book work for the farm.



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Elizabeth Tobey, *Bundle Sticks Farm, Lanesville, IN*

Elizabeth (she/her) is president and co-founder of Bundle Sticks Farm, a craft-focused farm in Harrison County, IN. Along with her partner, Brian Geier, they grow basketry willow, broom corn, flowers, raise sheep for meat and fiber, and have a small native plant nursery. They sell fresh flowers, dried flower wreaths and arrangements, handmade brooms, and woven willow products, as well as materials for other crafters to use. They also offer educational workshops and events focused on connecting people to place through craft, and advancing sustainable agriculture.



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Elizabeth has been deeply involved in food-systems work for the past 15 years, leading on-farm field trips, teaching in school gardens, and coordinating a beginning farmer training program before launching Bundle Sticks Farm four years ago. A crafter-of-many-trades, a skilled facilitator and communicator, and an unwavering social justice advocate, Elizabeth grew up unschooled on a small family farm in Oregon and her family's history includes California cattle ranching and Bay-area artists and craftspeople, both legacies that live on in her today. She is grateful to be here and for the opportunity to share her story and experience alongside other incredible female farmers.

Moderator: Liz Brownlee, *Nightfall Farm, Crothersville, IN*

Liz is a livestock farmer in southeast Indiana. She and her husband Nate run Nightfall Farm on Liz's family's land. They've converted fifty acres of corn and soybean land to silvopasture, where they rotationally graze meat chickens, laying hens, turkeys, pigs, and sheep. Their grazing practices sequester carbon and raise animals with care – which turns into very tasty meat and eggs.

Find Nightfall goods via their CSA, at local restaurants and independent groceries, and farmers markets. All of this work is motivated by a love for the natural world, a desire to fight climate change, and a belief that food can bring people together.



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Presentation: Ecology of a Campus Farm

Jackie Kehr, *Interim Ullem Farm Manager, DePauw University*

Jackie manages DePauw University's Ullem Campus Farm, a 3 acre vegetable farm that produces fresh vegetables to the campus. She also co-manages the Giving Garden, a portion of the farm that produces vegetables for distribution to community members through the Putnam County Food Pantry Coalition.

Jackie brings together her work in community service, education, and ecological sciences to help students and community members experience sustainable vegetable production.



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Presentation: Silvopasture - The Why and How of Trees in Pasture

Xinyuan Shi, *Technical Assistance Provider at Savanna Institute*

Xinyuan (she/her) is part of Savanna Institute's Agroforestry Technical Assistance Program and currently lives in Indianapolis. Raised in Upstate NY, Xinyuan has gathered a variety of experiences in tree-based agricultural systems as a Peace Corps volunteer in the tropical climates of Zambia, an apprentice working with nut experts in Ohio at Route 9 Cooperative, and a Cornell maple technician in Ithaca, New York.

She has completed a master's through the University of Missouri's online agroforestry program which involved compiling niche fruit and nut cultivar information from decades of reports into a searchable desktop database.

She joined Savanna Institute 4 years ago to complete a research project and publish Multifunctional Buffers: Design Guidelines for Buffers, Corridors, and Greenways. She has since been hired to provide agroforestry technical assistance in Indiana.



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Presentation: Planting Habitat to Maximize Crop Pollination

Ella Stroh, *Indiana Partner Biologist, Pollinator Partnership*

Ella grew up in Missouri and has spent time working in agriculture and natural resources throughout the Midwest. She earned her Bachelor's in Environmental Studies at Centre College in Kentucky and her Master's degree in Entomology at Purdue University. There, she worked on Indiana farms to research native bees and the pollination services they provide to specialty crops.

Ella enjoys helping producers explore pollinator habitat and management practices to support pollinators on their land. As Pollinator Partnership's Indiana Partner Biologist, Ella assists traditional, small-scale, specialty, urban, and other producers across the state with establishing pollinator-friendly habitat by providing Farm Bill application and conservation planning support.



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Farm Tour & Social: Teter Organic Farm

Katy Rogers, *Director of Operations and Farm Manager, Teter Organic Farm*

Katy Rogers is a farmer and advocate who has worked in agriculture and the food system from soil to plate. As a graduate of Indiana University, she worked in the political arena but always kept a side job on a farm. In 2011, she began her own farm and started her first Community Supported Agriculture program. During that journey she dove into advocacy for the hungry and helped build a non-profit in the southeast that is still working to facilitate access to nourishing, culturally appropriate food.

Transitioning from conventional to ecologically based methodology has given Katy a broad understanding of the food system in the US. The last 13 years she has focused on increasing access to nutritious food and improving systems for human and environmental health through farming, education, and advocacy.

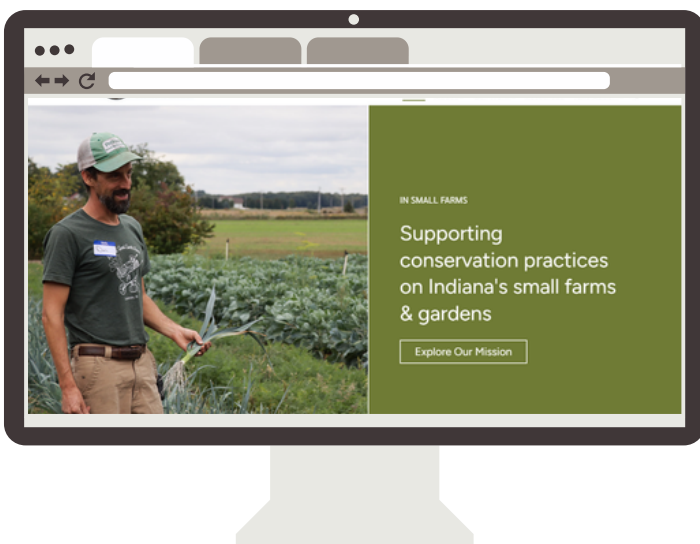


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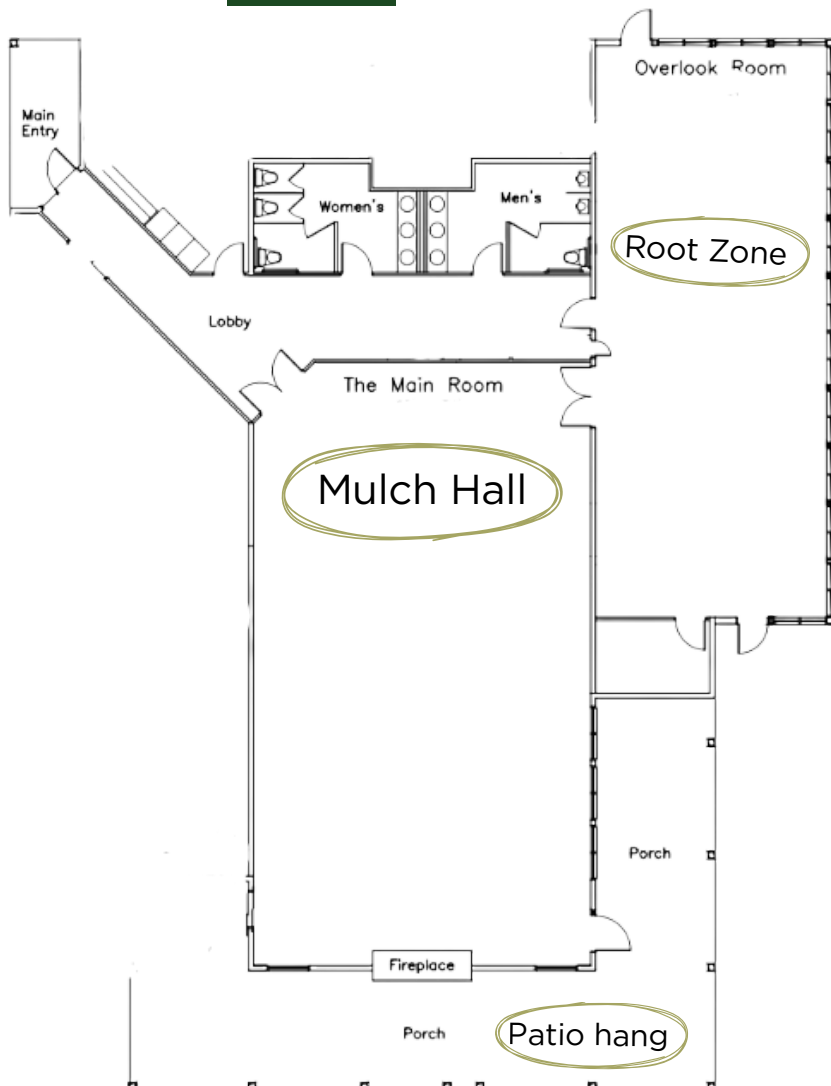






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Getting Around



CONquest

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