

Round UP

ROUND UP AT THE REGISTER EVENT FOR SUSTAINABLE IOWA LAND TRUST (SILT) IS SEPTEMBER 11-25

SILTFest is Thursday, Sept. 14 at Pulpit Rock Brewery;
join SILT for a Co-op tabling event from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. prior to event

SUSTAINABLE IOWA LAND TRUST

SILT

PROTECTING LAND TO GROW HEALTHY FOOD

Oneota Co-op shoppers are invited to “Round Up at the Register” for Sustainable Iowa Land Trust (SILT) Monday, Sept. 11 through Monday, Sept. 25. For this Co-op Q&A, we’ve worked with SILT Events and Communications Coordinator Sophie Sheeder. SILT, Sheeder tells us, “was founded in 2015 with a mission to preserve Iowa farmland to grow sustainable table food, create equitable land access, and diversify our food system.” This nonprofit organization’s goal, she adds, “is to ensure that fertile land remains available for generations to come, supporting a resilient food system and a more inclusive agricultural landscape.”

Below is the full transcript of Sheeder’s Q&A:

OCC: Please tell us about SILT Fest. What is it and how may readers participate?

Sheeder: SILTFest is our annual fundraising event that celebrates sustainable agriculture and community engagement. Held in different areas of the state each year, this event brings people together to learn, connect, and support our mission.

The annual Decorah SILTFest is Thursday, Sept. 14, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Pulpit Rock Brewing Company, 207 College Drive. Attendees can explore sustainable living practices, enjoy live music, and participate in activities that promote a healthier environment and food system. This is a wonderful opportunity for the community to come together and contribute to a more sustainable future.



SILT Executive Director Breanna Horsey began leadership duties this past March. Horsey brings degrees in organizational management and environmental studies to the organization, and a deep commitment to Iowa’s sustainable agriculture efforts.

OCC: Could you please share recent SILT “news”?

Sheeder: SILT experienced a leadership transition this past March upon the retirement of former SILT Co-founder and Executive Director Suzan Erem. We’re excited to announce that Breanna Horsey assumed the position of executive director. Breanna has earned degrees in organizational management and environmental studies; she has been a leader in Buena Vista University’s development and sustainability efforts. Breanna holds a strong and abiding concern for our planet and our state. She brings insight and energy to our mission as we work to further sustainable agricultural practices in Iowa.

Over this past year, SILT has been making significant strides in northeast Iowa, particularly through collaborations like a recent partnership with Carly and Ethan Zierke of Sweet Season Farm of Decorah. By bringing these passionate farmers to properties like the Luzum Heritage Farm of Calmar, SILT is not only



SILT Events and Communications Coordinator Sophie Sheeder joined the organization in January 2022 through AmeriCorps VISTA. She has since transitioned to a full-time role. From Sophie: “As a born and raised Iowan, I’m deeply passionate about sustainability and ensuring a future for Iowa’s farmland. It’s worth noting that despite Iowa’s immense amount of farmland, the state still imports around 90% of its food. This staggering statistic underscores the critical need for initiatives like SILT. My dedication to creating positive change in Iowa’s agricultural landscape drives me every day.”



Sweet Season Farm's Carly and Ethan Zierke are in the process of transitioning farm operations to SILT's Luzum Heritage Farm. This Calmar property was donated to SILT by the Lyle and Sue Luzum family in 2017.

preserving farmland but also contributing to the diversification of the food system and equitable land access.

OCC: What are some of SILT's educational efforts?

Sheeder: We offer a wealth of learning materials at www.silt.org. Go here to gather information about land conservation, sustainable farming, and land use planning. We host field days throughout the year, offering participants the chance to engage directly with experts and learn about various aspects of sustainable agriculture. We welcome readers to "like" our Facebook page for current news and photos.

OCC: How can our readers support SILT's mission?

Sheeder: Oneota Co-op shoppers can actively support SILT's mission by a financial donation, following our social media channels for updates and educational content, and attending our events, like SILTFest. These actions contribute to our efforts to protect Iowa's farmland, create equitable access to land, and promote sustainable practices that benefit both the environment and the community.

Oneota Co-op round up campaigns are intrinsically tied to the Co-op's community service commitment as outlined in the Co-op Missions and Ends statement. Co-op shoppers are provided the opportunity to round up to the nearest dollar to support this organizational end, which reads as follows:

Oneota Community Co-op Organizational End number seven: "Our members are diverse and engaged, working together and sharing time, energy, and resources to build a resilient and thriving local community."



Please join us at the Pulpit Rock Brewing Co on September 14 from 6:30-9 pm!



Pulpit Rock Brewing Co
207 College Drive
Decorah, IA 52101

SILTFests are free events designed for local residents interested in actively supporting SILT's mission to permanently protect Iowa's land for healthy table food farming.

Join us for a night of fun and fundraising! SILTFest is an annual celebration of sustainable farming and land preservation. Come show your support for sustainable agriculture and check out what SILT is working on.

Music by Beth and Jon Rotto of Foot-Notes



See the latest updates from SILT on Facebook and Instagram

