



FARM & FIBER TOUR

2022 Grant Report

The 2022 Farm & Fiber Tour was a collaboration between Three Rivers Fibershed (TRF) and Wisconsin Farmers Union (WFU) funded through the WFU Local Initiative Grant Program. Three shepherds, members of both WFU and TRF, hosted on-site events during August & September to engage community members in learning about local fiber systems and soil-to-soil agricultural practices.

Each event featured shepherd-led farm tours describing their experiences with farming, the climate-beneficial practices they use, and information on the specific sheep breed(s) they raise. TRF and WFU board members and staff hosted booths at each event to provide outreach and education. Fiber demonstrations and participatory activities showcased local fiber and textiles. And TRF stewards were provided space to sell local fiber products.

FARM & FIBER TOUR EVENTS

Autumn Larch Farm
Saturday, August 6th
WFU Taylor-Price Chapter

Curlee Acres
Saturday, August 27th
WFU Polk-Burnett Chapter

Priory Farms and Kubb Farm
Sunday, September 25th
WFU Eau Claire Chapter

70

Community members
attended farm tour events

26

Volunteers contributed
100+ hours of support

10

WFU & TRF staff, board
members, and stewards
provided outreach and
education

185

Photographs that will be
used in ongoing outreach
& communication efforts

15

Fiber demonstrations
and hands-on activities

6

TRF stewards had an
opportunity to market
local fiber products

OBJECTIVE I

Educate community members about TRF and WFU. Highlight the importance of regional textile systems and local farms. Provide education on climate-beneficial, soil-to-soil farming practices.



OUTCOMES

- 5 farm tours took place across the three events and highlighted TRF steward experiences, animals & breeds they raise, and the soil-to-soil farming practices they engage on their farms
- 3 aspiring shepherds attended multiple events to learn about small-scale, sustainable fiber farming practices
- 15 fiber & natural dye demonstrations and activities engaged community members in learning how to use local, natural fibers and dyes and the unique characteristics of different fiber animal breeds..
- TRF and WFU board members and staff distributed educational materials on local fiber & textile systems, local agriculture & small farms, and soil-to-soil agricultural systems that are good for people, communities, and the environment.
- NRCS (Natural Resource Conservation Service) provided education materials for distribution focused on climate-beneficial agriculture practices and programs available for technical and financial assistance



OBJECTIVE II

Connect community members to local fiber farms in Wisconsin. Strengthen connections between TRF and WFU members and chapters.



OUTCOMES

- 3 Wisconsin Farmers Union local chapters hosted on-farm events (Taylor-Price, Polk-Burnett, Eau Claire)
- 70 community members attended events including adults and children ranging in age from 1-99 and traveling from as close as next door to greater than 100 miles away.
- 8 new signups for the TRF newsletter, which will allow attendees to continue engaging with the fibershed
- Provided marketing opportunities to 6 TRF stewards who sold their local fiber products at the events
- WFU & TRF collaborated on outreach and communications including producing an event flyer, press release, and website & social media posts
- Strengthened connections between TRF and WFU board members and staff through on-site connection, discussions, and resource sharing



Additional Reflections

- Interest was expressed by other TRF stewards in hosting similar events at their own farms in the future. There is a possibility of making the Farm & Fiber tour a regular part of TRF annual programming.
- There were three individuals who attended multiple events as aspiring shepherds looking for educational opportunities on fiber farming. One individual traveled over 100 miles to attend because it was the only opportunity she could find focused specifically on small-scale, sustainable fiber farming. While these individuals represent a small percentage of attendees, it points to a need for beginning farmer education opportunities specifically focused on fiber farming for soil-to-soil, regional textile systems.
- Fiber demonstrations and hands-on activities seemed to encourage higher levels of engagement among community members and should be replicated and enhanced at future outreach & education events.



Thank You!

**WFU Local Initiative Grant
Program for funding the Farm
& Fiber Tour**

**Danielle Endvick of WFU for
the creation of event publicity
materials**

**Hosts Autumn Larch Farm,
Curlee Acres, and Priory
Farms**

Volunteers and fiber artists

**Photographers Danielle
Endvick, Connor Nelson &
Kathleen Melin**

*Report by Rachel Schindler
Grants & Programs Director
Three Rivers Fibershed*

*Photos by Connor Nelson & Kathleen Melin
Curlee Acres Farm & Fiber Tour*