Land in Common

community land trust

BUILDING A COLLECTIVE LAND BASE FOR JUST AND RESILIENT FUTURES IN MAINE

An introduction and an invitation

Spring 2020

www.landincommon.org
Land is the source of our nourishment and the ground on which we build our families, communities, and dreams. Yet we live in a culture that has turned land into a commodity—a thing to be bought and sold, used and abused, and traded for profit. Like other necessities, access to land is determined by money, and those without it are locked out.

It doesn’t have to be this way. We can imagine and create new ways of holding, sharing, and caring for the places which sustain us. We can make land accessible to those who have been excluded from it, and we can place more and more land into the hands of people and organizations who are dedicated to growing just and sustainable forms of life and livelihood in our communities.

**This is the project of Land in Common.**

We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit community land trust, founded in 2008, working to develop a durable, state-wide, democratically-run cooperative structure for the ownership, care, and equitable distribution of land in Maine.

Building on years of experience working with members of the Wild Mountain Cooperative (formerly named the JED Collective) and neighboring elder landowners to successfully protect more than 300 acres of agricultural and wild land in Greene, we are now launching a wider phase of work. In collaboration with others, we seek to spark conversation and learning about land justice in Maine, catalyze action toward repairing the relations between land and people, and bring new parcels of land across the state into shared democratic ownership and to redistribute the long-term use and care of this land to those who need it and will use it for good work.
Vision

Land in Common seeks a world in which land is shared and cared for in common, where humans and other species flourish in interdependence.

Mission

Land in Common removes land from speculative markets and places it into a member-run trust, to be cared for over the long-term by its residents. We seek to create a multi-generational land base for sustainable livelihoods, supporting communities working for just, cooperative, & resilient futures.

Values

We believe that land is a vital source of life and sustenance. It is not a commodity.

We believe that land access and security should not be tied to economic wealth.

We believe that a home is a fundamental right of all living beings.

We are committed to justice and anti-oppression in all of our work.

We are committed to bold experimentation and to learning with humility.

We are committed to cooperation, collaboration, mutual-aid, and direct democracy.

We value the true wealth of sufficiency and “enoughness.”

We honor the importance of spirituality, mindfulness, love, and joy.

We are committed for the long haul, in the service of future generations.

We strive to enact these values in the culture and structure of our organization.
The Problem of Land

Land is life, and therefore it is also power. Access to land shapes our abilities to sustain ourselves and our communities, to live secure and stable lives, to build culture and history rooted in place, to grow and hold collective wealth, and to learn to live responsibly with the ecologies that make our lives possible. To lose the land, or to be blocked from access to it, is to lose these forms of power. “Land,” said Malcolm X, “is the basis of freedom, justice, and equality.” It is also, when held unequally and for the benefit of only the few, the basis of tyranny, oppression, and exploitation.

The United States was built on a double theft relative to the land. First, the theft of land from people—the colonization and dispossession of millions of Native people from their territories by European immigrants who turned this land into their “private property.” And second, the theft of people from land—the kidnapping and enslavement of millions of African people who had been rooted on ancestral lands since the very dawn of humanity. Their lives and labor, along with that of enslaved Native people and indentured or underpaid migrant workers from around the world, built much of the wealth that has been accumulated by those who call themselves “white.” Everyone, in different ways, has inherited the wounds of this history, and our land reverberates with this violence.¹

¹ See “Healing and Trauma” (ch. 14) in Leah Penniman’s Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm’s Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land, Chelsea Green, 2018.
Today’s massive inequalities of wealth and power are clearly reflected in and reinforced by the unjust distribution of land. More than 2% of the land mass of the U.S.—an area the size of New England—is owned by only 100 families.\(^2\) Native nations subsist on a tiny fraction of their original land base, and often in marginal places far removed from their ancestral homes.\(^3\) Meanwhile, the five largest landowners (all white) own more land than all 40 million African Americans combined. 95% of farmland in the U.S. is owned by white Americans, and this represents nearly $1 trillion in wealth—in contrast to African American land ownership, which represents less than 1% of this land.\(^4\) Looking for the material base of white supremacy? Look to the land.

In Maine, the situation is just as dire. Much of the land now called “Maine” was forcibly taken from Wabanaki people by European settlers, and attacks on Native sovereignty and sustenance continue to this day.\(^5\) African Americans have long experienced racism and land dispossession in Maine, with the eviction of Malaga Island’s black farming community in 1912 as one prominent example.\(^6\) Meanwhile, more than 2,700 migrant farmworkers, primarily Latinx, Jamaican, and Haitian, help to produce Maine’s agricultural products each year, yet remain at the margins of conversations about land access and farm viability.\(^7\)

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\(^3\) See the interactive map at: invasionofamerica.ehistory.org.  
\(^5\) See, for example, www.sunlightmediacollective.org.  
\(^6\) See www.malagaislandmaine.org.  
\(^7\) Maine Department of Labor, December 2015.
Acknowledgement and Commitment to Reparation and Decolonization

Land in Common works on land that has been marked by a long history of injustice, resistance, and resilience. We recognize the original Wabanaki caretakers of this land that is now called “Maine,” and we honor their elders, past, present, and future. We acknowledge the many histories of racism, colonialism, exploitation, and genocide that have excluded so many people and communities from land-based livelihood. We honor the strength and resilience of all those who have resisted and persisted, and who have passed on the dream of a more just and equitable world. We commit ourselves to the work of reckoning, reparation, and healing, and to learning from the wisdom of those most impacted by injustice. We recognize that we are at the beginning of our journey of putting our values into practice, and we welcome all input about how best to proceed.

And how many white families with low incomes are able to imagine themselves having secure land tenure and joining the movement for local, sustainable food?

Maine’s land inequality mirrors, and maybe even exceeds, that of the US as a whole. Three of the top 100 US land-owning families (Malone, Irving, and Pingree), plus the Wyerhauser corporation, collectively own about 3.8 million acres of Maine, or 17% of the entire state. More than 40% of the state is owned by a combination of multinational corporations, billionaires, and large investment firms. Maine’s Native tribes, in contrast, hold a mere 1% of Maine’s land, and much of this is owned “in trust” by the

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8 The Land Report 100.
federal government. Other people of color in Maine (non-Native), representing around 4.7% of the state’s population, own only a small fraction of a percent (unknown, but surely less than 0.1%) of the state’s land. Farmers of color, in total, operate farms on only 1% of Maine’s farmland.

If land is life and power, how can we build a truly just and sustainable society when the distribution of this land is so unequal?

But the problem runs even deeper: Our treatment of the land as private property to be traded for profit by the privileged few is not only at the root of inequality; it is also a key cause of our ecological crisis. By treating the land as a commodity, we treat life as a commodity, and the soil, water, and air become little more than investment opportunities for the next round of short-term speculation. The same logic that treats some human beings as expendable or exploitable justifies our treatment of the land as a mere resource to be used and abused. This is a recipe for the unfolding disaster we find ourselves living in, from the violence of white supremacy and class inequality, to poisoned food and water and the destabilization of the planet’s climate system.

“We abuse the land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see the land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect” - Aldo Leopold

9 See www.mainetreefoundation.org.
10 U.S. Census, 2018.
11 This number includes Native farmers. USDA Census of Agriculture, 2012. Note that “farm operators” may not own the land they farm on.
It is this entire system of understanding and relating to each other and to the rest of the living earth that must be challenged and transformed if we are to craft a viable and just future for coming generations. To build equitable and resilient futures, and to challenge the harmful ways of living that threaten our communities and our world, we need to radically change the ways that we relate to the land.

Challenges of Land Access & Protection in Maine

Tremendous work has been done in the past 20 years to protect Maine’s precious wildland and farmland in the face of intensive and unrelenting development pressures. Conservation land trusts have protected more than 2.5 million acres of land.\textsuperscript{12} Among these, Maine Farmland Trust—in collaboration with landowners, farmers, and allied organizations—has protected more than 60,000 acres of working farmland.\textsuperscript{13} This work continues, and it is invaluable.

Yet huge challenges and gaps remain. Land in Common is focused, in particular, on three of these gaps: equity of land access, the problem of small-scale homesteads, and the wider call for land justice and reparation.

Equity of land access

The most common strategy for land conservation in Maine is the use of easements. These legal tools permanently enforce development restrictions and land-use rules by transferring certain rights and responsibilities to a dedicated conservation organization (often a land trust). Easements significantly reduce the market value of the land, since it can no longer be sold for

\textsuperscript{13} Maine Farmland Trust, www.mainefarmlandtrust.org.
high-profit development purposes. They also ensure that desired land uses—such as recreation access, sustainable forestry, or farming—are maintained in perpetuity. These are powerful conservation tools, and are highly appropriate for many situations.

When it comes to farmland access, however, easements have some significant limitations. First and foremost, they do not challenge or transform the fundamental market-based relationships that make land and housing inaccessible to many people. Easement-protected land does sell for less than unrestricted land, but any buildings or other improvements on the land remain valued at their full market price. This means that a large farm—especially one with major infrastructure that is located within a high-cost housing market—will only be accessible to people with relatively large means or people willing and able to take on massive debt.

Until we transform the underlying structure of land ownership, this problem will remain. This is why Land in Common, along with other organizations such as Agrarian Trust and the Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust, are working to develop commons-based alternatives that remove land from the market entirely and significantly reduce the cost of housing and other farm infrastructure.14

**Homestead-scale land protection**

Work on farmland protection in Maine has primarily focused on larger, commercial farms and farmland. This is understandable given scarce resources and the urgency of stopping the rapid loss of land to development. But there is a whole world of farms and

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14 See [www.agrariantrust.org](http://www.agrariantrust.org) and [www.northeastfarmersofcolor.com](http://www.northeastfarmersofcolor.com).
life-sustaining homesteads in Maine that often fall through the cracks of conventional conservation efforts. They are too small, or generate too little farm-based income, to become priorities for farmland protection efforts; and they are too small, or too farm-like, to become priorities for local and regional land trusts.

Yet while they may be individually small, these farms and homesteads add up to a significant base of land. According to the USDA, small homesteads non-commercial farms account for more than 803,000 acres of Maine’s farmland. And while they may not produce much farm-based income individually, they collectively account for nearly $2.4 million of annual revenue plus tremendous uncounted value in direct subsistence.

Perhaps most importantly, these places are often vibrant hubs of community, nourishment, ecological and social experimentation, and rural culture. Built on the hard work and commitment of long-time rural homesteaders and back-to-the land progressives, they are beacons of hope and schools of life for many people in Maine and beyond. They are also a key source of community-based resilience in the face of ever-accelerating climate change.

Many homesteaders of the back-to-the land generation are entering their later years, and the future of their land and legacy is unclear. What will happen to these places when their long-time stewards pass on? Will they be sold to the highest bidder and lost

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15 We are aware that the term “homestead” has many meanings, some of which might be associated with U.S. government policies such as the 1862 Homestead Act that worked as a tool of displacement and genocide against Native people. Our use of the term is intended to refer only to small-scale, holistic, and primarily subsistence-based farms that sustain many people in Maine and elsewhere. We are committed to ongoing listening and conversation about whether we should continue using this term, and about alternative—yet widely connective—ways to refer to these places and practices.

16 More than 20% of Maine’s farms (2,204 of them) generate less than $5,000 of farm-related income per year and are ineligible for many of Maine Farmland Trust’s protection strategies.

17 USDA Census of Agriculture, 2007. This includes farms classified as small-scale and under the combined typologies of “lower sales,” “low-resource,” “residential,” and “retirement.”

to development? Will they be unaffordable for less affluent or racially-marginalized members of the next generations who seek to carry on the work of their elders? It is clear that we need new strategies for land protection and stewardship that directly address this urgent set of questions. Land in Common is committed to this path.

**Calls for Land Justice and Reparations**

As we face our collective history of injustice and oppression, and the ways that it has played out relative to land, it is clear that a reckoning is needed. And the responsibility for this work is held with particular weight by those who have benefited most from Native genocide and land theft, from slavery, from the ongoing exploitation of migrant farmworkers, and from the profits derived by heavy burdens of land rent and land-based debt. If we are going to truly heal our relationships with each other and with the land—if we are going to effectively confront the great ecological and social crises of our time—we must honestly acknowledge our histories, take active responsibility for repairing their harms, and step courageously onto the hard and beautiful path of collective healing.

What this means in practice, on the land, is listening to calls for *reparation* from Native people and nations, from African American communities, and from others who have been harmed by colonialism and oppression. What is reparation? As the Movement for Black Lives makes clear, it is not simply about paying individuals for historical harms. It is about challenging and transforming the systems and structures that generate ongoing harms and creating pathways for healing and justice for those communities that have been most impacted.¹⁹

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¹⁹ See https://policy.m4bl.org/reparations/.
We need new models of land ownership, care, and tenure that can fully embrace the work of justice, reparation, and transformation. We must heed calls for “rematriation” and land return by Native people and nations.\textsuperscript{20} We must act on calls for reparation to African American people and communities who have been excluded from land access and yet whose labor has built so much of America.\textsuperscript{21} We must enact justice for migrant farmworkers who have grown so much of our food while remaining invisible, and who long for the chance to build dignified lives working with the land. And, though not necessarily about reparations for direct historical harms, we must continue to welcome New American farmers and other immigrants in ways that enable them to find safety, re-ground themselves on this new land, and share their skills and energies with our communities. This, too, is about building justice—now and for the future.

There are no simple recipes here, and reparations must look different in every context and community. The key is to ask, listen, learn, and act together toward this work. Conservation and land protection organizations in Maine have begun, in recent years, to heed this call and more work is needed. Land in Common is deeply committed to opening learning conversations about land justice and reparations in Maine, bringing people together to discuss strategies and pathways, and catalyzing meaningful action that is directly accountable to the communities most impacted. Only through this work will we be able to create a truly common land.


\textsuperscript{21} See, for example, “White People Uprooting Racism” (ch. 16) in Leah Penniman’s \textit{Farming While Black}, Chelsea Green, 2018.
Our Story (so far)

Fifteen years ago, inspired by visits to communities of Brazil’s Landless Workers Movement (MST), members of the Justice, Ecology, and Democracy (JED) Collective organized a series of meetings with grassroots activists around the state. What would it look like, they asked, to build a movement for land justice in Maine? How might we work together toward healing the legacies of colonization and oppression?
of colonization and land dispossession, addressing the challenges of unequal land access amidst farmland loss, and building truly inter-generational movements for change? A clear idea emerged: create a statewide organization to hold land as a “commons” and ensure its long-term protection, while redistributing its use to people and groups who are dedicated to equitable, community-based changemaking and who would otherwise not have access to secure land tenure—whether due to racism, class inequality, historical dispossession, or other forms of marginalization.

Seeking inspiration and examples of this kind of structure, we found the community land trust (CLT)—a powerful and enduring structure for land protection and land justice. New Communities, Inc. in Georgia was the first CLT, born from the visionary work of civil rights organizers Shirley Sherrod, Charles Sherrod, Bob Swann, Slater King and others. Drawing on the ideas of political economist Henry George, the Kibbutz cooperative movement, and the Indian Gramdan (“land gift”) movement, the CLT structure is rooted in balanced values of collective liberation and redistribution, community ownership of land, and individual freedom and responsibility—a mix well-suited for Mainers seeking social change.

When, two years later, the time came, for the JED Collective to organize the purchase of the land they leased from an elder farmer in Greene, a pathway toward this imagined organization became clear. Working with many allies, JED members created the Clark Mountain Community Land Trust (CMCLT), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that subsequently purchased the land through a grassroots community financing structure. While fulfilling an immediate need, CMCLT was intended to be a “living

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23 See www.landincommon.org/community-financing.
laboratory,” a space of deliberate experimentation and learning from which an expanded future effort could be launched. This is exactly what happened. Over the next ten years, like a caterpillar transforming inside the cocoon, CMCLT crafted the framework for a new organizational stage. It acquired significant new conservation land holdings, honed its internal organizational structures, pursued a number of pilot projects beyond our land in Greene, built a depth of experience and skill among members of our small, committed, all-volunteer Board, and developed the seeds of a strategic vision. In 2018, to better reflect our wider mission, the organization changed its name to Land in Common. In the spring of 2019 we hired our first part-time staff person to help lead the process of program and capacity development as we launch into our next phase of work. We are now ready to grow.

But how we grow is critical. Over the past decade, powered by an all-volunteer group of dedicated people, we have cultivated patience. “The task at hand is urgent,” says a Buddhist teacher, “we must slow down.” And we must listen. Our current leadership (see “Our Board” below) emerged from the particular context of our project in Greene, and is made up of white, settler-descended people. To fulfill our mission in a way that is truly accountable to communities most impacted by land injustice, the composition of our leadership must expand and diversify. We take this seriously as a call to do the hard work of decolonizing ourselves and our practices, and building ever-stronger relationships of trust and solidarity with leaders and organizers in Maine’s Native, African American, Latinx, new immigrant, and white working-class and low-income communities. We are committed to doing this transformative work by “showing up” to do what is needed, being vulnerable to hard learning, and building earned relationships of trust over time rather than through box-checking tokenism.
There is no doubt that we have a challenging path ahead of us as we transform our organization and our leadership over time and scale our land-care model to multiple parcels throughout Maine. But it is clearer than ever that this work is needed, and we are inspired and energized to pursue it. We invite you to join us!

**What is a Community Land Trust?**

Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are built on the innovative idea of separating the ownership of *land* from the ownership of *buildings* and other “improvements.” The land itself is owned by the member-run land trust (in our case, Land in Common) as part of a shared commons, removing it permanently from the market. This land is then leased to residents via an inheritable, renewable, 99-year, “ground lease.” Buildings on the land are owned directly by the residents themselves and may be sold only at values that assure fair compensation (not high profits) for owners *and* long-term affordability for future residents. Long-term protection of the land for agriculture, conservation, affordable housing, and other community-based purposes is achieved; while security, autonomy, and participation in key land-related decisions by land residents is also ensured.\(^{24}\)

Land in Common is governed by two groups of people: those who live on or use the land (Resident Members) and those from the wider community (Associate Members) who support the vision, mission, and values of the organization.\(^{25}\) This structure ensures that both the direct interests and needs of land residents and the organization's wider purpose are placed equally at the heart of all of our work.

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\(^{24}\) For more on Community Land Trusts, see [www.cltroots.org](http://www.cltroots.org) and the “Resources” page on our website, [www.landincommon.org](http://www.landincommon.org).

\(^{25}\) Many CLTs have a 3-part Board, with the third portion made up of local officials or professional experts and appointed by the other two groups. Our two-part structure is intended to enhance the direct democratic accountability of the Board to the organization's membership, since all Board members are directly elected.
Our Board of Directors meets monthly, and holds seasonal retreats for more in-depth work. An Annual General Membership Meeting is held every fall at which new Board members are elected and key decisions are made about the annual budget, ground lease fees, land acquisitions, Bylaw changes, and other proposals that shape the organization’s future.

A core commitment of Land in Common, as we scale up to a statewide level, is to maintain a grassroots culture of direct democracy at the heart of our organization. This includes a deep dedication to making our decision-making processes and practices as accessible as possible; to growing and diversifying our membership in multiple dimensions of geography, experience, ability, class, race, culture, gender expression and identity, and age; to creating ongoing opportunities for members to step into new levels of participation and leadership; and to building staffing structures that reflect our core democratic and egalitarian values.
Strategies for Learning and Connection

Though we have been working on community-based land care for more than 10 years, Land in Common is at the very beginning stages of our wider work. We are in the process of asking questions, listening, learning, and sharing—seeking to move forward boldly while also standing in humility and following the lead of those who have come before us and who are most impacted by the challenges we seek to address. To guide our thinking and action, and to keep us accountable to our values (see p. 2) as we move forward, we have made the following strategic commitments:

- **Create equitable access.** Generate land access and secure tenure, as well as low-cost, limited-equity housing, for and with people and communities who have been excluded from these opportunities. Enact land and housing justice.

- **Manifest alternatives.** Sustain local, community-based agriculture and homesteading; Integrate human communities and livelihood activities with protected wild ecosystems; Enact cooperative forms of living and working.

- **Transform power relations.** Manifest direct participation and leadership by people most impacted by oppression.

- **Build movements.** Participate in and spark wider collective efforts for social, economic, and ecological justice; seek synergies, and weave connections and collaborations whenever possible.
In the months to come we will focus significant energy on the transforming our organization into one that is shaped and led by the people it seeks to serve. We are committed to a vision of Land in Common as a dynamic, community-based organization led primarily by people most affected by land injustice in Maine—Native, African American, Latinx, refugee, and working-class people—with support and solidarity from white, settler-descended allies. As a currently all white, settler-descended board of directors we recognize that there are many hurdles to making this transition; getting from “here to there” requires careful listening and learning, trust-building and collaboration, and intentional, deep personal and organizational change. We are in ongoing conversations with organizers from front-line communities in Maine about collaboration and solidarity work, and have begun to outline concrete strategies for organizational leadership change that we intend to pursue over the next year and beyond.

**Areas of Work**

In addition to this leadership transformation work, we see the next phases of our work unfolding on three fronts: land commons, study circles, and reparations. Each of these elements are intended to complement the others and build toward a holistic approach to cultivating collective land ownership, equitable land access, and sustainable interdependencies between human livelihoods and wild ecosystems.

**Land Commons & Homestead Legacy Land Access Project**

The heart of our work is the “commoning” of land—that is, the gathering of land into a democratically-structured commons
through which its long-term use and care can be shared among the commoners. This is the work we have already been doing in Greene, in collaboration with the Wild Mountain Cooperative, and the expansion of this work is a key focus. Land Commoning in this sense has two sides: the *gathering* of land, and the *redistribution* of its use and care.

**Land Gathering.** We see a number of key pathways to gathering land into the commons:

*Direct land gifts.* A land-owner gifts land or wills land to Land in Common. This might include transfer of land during the lifetime of an elder, with a CLT ground lease to secure their long-term residency.

*Land purchases.* We recognize that purchasing land will be especially necessary in cases where people rely on the value of this land for later-life security. We are particularly interested in scaling-up our existing Community Financing program to generate grassroots funding for the purchase of land. See our website, www.landincommon.org/community-financing.

*Land-seeking Collaborations.* We are excited to partner with people or groups seeking land, and to leverage our skills and resources to support this process—bringing new land into the commons in alliance with those who will then become its long-term residents and stewards.

*Land Shifts.* We also welcome land transfers from existing landowners who are rooted on their land and want to be direct participants in Land in Common—enacting alternatives to private land ownership in their own lives and places. Such collaborations can also serve to build new forms of community and collective support for individual land projects while growing the strength of Land in Common’s base.
Land Redistribution. This may be our most challenging task: with land “in hand,” how is its use best determined? Who gets to have access, and who decides? We will turn to the wisdom and experience of our emerging Advisory Council, among others, as we develop our processes and protocols around this question. We welcome your ideas!

Community Co-Learning Circles

Community education is critical to the success of our work. In order to build a movement of people who are aware of the inequalities that manifest in the tenure of land, who seek to transform these unjust relationships, and who are inspired to participate in actively changing their own relationships to land, we need to provide opportunities for people to learn and reflect collectively.

We are currently considering pathways for the development of a popular education curriculum and community-based co-learning project that would highlight histories of land injustice in Maine and explore change-oriented solutions. The project is in an exploratory phase, as we learn about similar projects elsewhere and have conversations with leaders and organizers from front-line communities across the state about possibilities for collaborative curriculum development and program organizing.

Please let us know if you have ideas about this work, or if you’d like to be part of the conversation!

Reparations

The land upon which most Mainers dwell, and to which some of us claim ownership, was forcibly taken from indigenous people over the course of many generations. Meanwhile, African
Americans and other people of color have been continually excluded and dispossessed from opportunities to secure stable land-based livelihood. These patterns continue. Work for the well-being of our communities and environments must heed the call for reparations—for action that participates in acknowledging, grieving, and repairing the damage that has been done to people, families, cultures, and the land. We are currently entering into conversation with members of Maine’s indigenous tribes and African American communities to explore possibilities for our organization’s active participation in reparations. One possibility that we are actively exploring—building on a structure already in place in our current ground lease with Wild Mountain Cooperative—is the creation of a statewide, voluntary “land tax” for land-owning descendants of white settlers that would generate an ongoing stream of funds to be allocated and used by members of most-affected communities.

Our Board

Land in Common’s Board of Directors has been working patiently and diligently for years to bring the organization to its new phase of life. Because we are only at the early stages of building a truly inclusive, diverse, and broadly participatory organization, we see ourselves as an “interim Board”—holding and cultivating space for what is to come. Who are we?

Sherie Blumenthal (Associate Member), is Manager for Community Programs at St. Mary’s Nutrition Center in Lewiston, a co-organizer of the Lewiston Farmer’s Market, a core member of the Central Maine chapter of Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) and a steadfast advocate for equitable food systems and land access.

Kate Boverman (Resident Member) is core organizer at the Wild Mountain Cooperative, a farmer, community herbalist, permaculture teacher, and a co-
founder of the Northeast Radical Herbalist Network—dedicated to promoting health justice principles within herbalist communities.

Nathan Brimmer (Associate Member) is, among many other things, a long-time social and economic justice activist, a community educator, a dedicated board member of the grassroots catalyst organization Resources for Organizing and Social Change (ROSC), and VP of Operations for Axiom Technologies—coordinating the expansion of broadband internet to Maine’s remote island communities.

Jonah Fertig-Burd (Associate Member) works with farmers, food producers, cooks, distributors, and community members to develop democratic business through his work as Cooperative Development Specialist with the Cooperative Development Institute. He is a co-founder of the Maine Farm and Sea Cooperative, Local Sprouts Cooperative, Greater Portland Community Land Trust, and Cooperative Design Lab. He lives with his partner and two kids at Celebration Tree Farm in Durham, Maine.

Katharine Gaillard (Resident Member) is a passionate farmer and advocate for just food systems. She has been growing food for five seasons, most recently at Wild Mountain Cooperative. She studied politics at Bates College, is a co-founder of the college’s community garden, and has been involved with many other collaborative and community-based projects.

Daphne Loring (Associate Member) is Coordinator of Retreats and Community Programs at the Cobscook Community Learning Center, former coordinator of the Maine Fair Trade Campaign, and a passionate community organizer, educator, and advocate for justice, grassroots democracy, and community-based alternatives.

Ethan Miller (Staff, Resident Member) is an organizer, educator, and researcher focused on just and sustainable livelihoods. Beyond work for LC, he cares for the Wild Mountain Cooperative orchard, teaches courses in Environmental Studies at Bates College, and is the author of a book on ecological futures in Maine called Reimagining Livelihoods: Life beyond Economy, Society, and Environment (U. Minnesota Press, 2019).

Camille Parrish (Associate Member) is a long-time advocate for land conservation and healthy, equitable food systems in the Lewiston/Auburn area. She teaches and coordinates internships in Environmental Studies at Bates College and has served for many years on the board of the Androscoggin Land Trust, is a member of the Good Food Council of Lewiston Auburn, and has worked closely with Lots to Gardens (St. Mary’s Nutrition Center) for nearly two decades.
Join the Movement for Land Justice and Land Commons!

Become a member of Land in Common. We are powered by our members! Please visit www.landincommon.org/membership. We will be in touch with opportunities to get more involved with this work, to connect with others, and to help grow the movement!

Support our work with a financial donation. We thrive through grassroots generosity. Please visit www.landincommon.org/donate to make a tax-deductible contribution, or send a check to the address below (we will send a donation confirmation by mail).

If you have land, consider bringing it into the commons—now or in the future. Get in touch with us to discuss the options.

Share your ideas, inspirations, and questions. We are eager to think together with you about how to strengthen and grow this work!

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