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MASTER'S PROJECT: LEARNING TO DISRUPT STRUCTURAL RACISM
IN THE FOOD SYSTEM

A Project Presented

by

Megan Elizabeth Browning

to

The Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources
University of Vermont

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Master's Degree Specializing in Leadership for Sustainability

May 2020

Defense Date: August 19, 2019

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ABSTRACT

In this project I explore the role that I can play as a white farmer in disrupting systems of racism in the food system. After opening my eyes to recognize that the food system benefits white people over all others, I sought to understand how I could leverage the privilege and access afforded to me to disrupt this pattern. Through research and study, and a developing practice of conversations at the intersection of race and agriculture, I grew my understanding of structural racism and explored what it means to farm in a way that supports collective freedom. Seeing the ways my white identity shaped my worldview and the way I showed up in my life and work was central to this process. Through this project I began to unlearn the pieces of my white identity that do not serve collective freedom, and open to new ways of being and knowing. I learned the importance of embodying love and centering well-being in my leadership practice as I connect to the deep past of agriculture in this country, rooted in stolen land and stolen labor, and take responsibility for my role in the present to breathe life into a different future.

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INTRODUCTION

I have been farming on diversified vegetable farms in New England for almost ten years. Tending the land, and producing food that feeds my community and me is nourishing to my body, heart and soul. Until reading an article by farmer and food activist Leah Penniman, I had failed to confront the history of stolen land and stolen labor that form the foundation upon which our agricultural system is built today (Penniman, 2017) or understand my role in responding to this as a white person within this system. I started this project by asking “What is my role as a white farmer in disrupting systems of racism in the food system?”

Throughout history, land, wealth, and power have been intentionally concentrated in the hands of white people and used to other and oppress communities of color (Minkoff-Zern, Peluso, Sowerwine, & Getz, 2011).¹ The core purpose of this project was to explore ways to use my privilege and position to disrupt this pattern. I planned to document this learning and share it in order to encourage and support my local agriculture community in Vermont in engaging this work.

In her book *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Indigenous scholar Robin Wall Kimmerer describes the reciprocity embedded in the act of farming and gardening, posing the question “Do you think that the earth loves you back?” (Kimmerer, 2013, p.124). As I deeply considered this question, I wondered why I had never learned to see the land as a partner in this work, or to see myself as part of the land instead of separate from it. What had I missed out on? And why?

As I listened to the knowledge of those working at the intersection of race and agriculture, I saw for the first time that the myth of white supremacy had built the value system

¹ See Appendix A for an annotated list of resources that provide background and context on racism in the food system.

guiding my farming practices.² Despite being small scale, organic, and growing for local markets, the way I learned to farm still reflected many extractive patterns that perpetuate systems of oppression. This culture of extraction (The Leap Manifesto, n.d.; Ferguson, 2019), works subtly to keep white farmers from connecting to the land, our bodies, our communities, and the system and history of which we are a part. How then could farming in a reciprocal, relational way, be a form of resisting white supremacy culture? What practices could I learn that connected me to the land, that prioritized well-being, that held love and care at the center?

As Monica White describes in her book *Freedom Farmers*, Black farmers have been farming as an act of resistance throughout history, using farming as a tool for healing and overcoming oppression by reclaiming land, power, and access to fresh food that have been systematically stolen from them (White, 2018). Dr. White also notes that many white farmers she interviewed had entirely different reasons for farming that often indicated a lack of connection to their place in the story of agriculture (UWMulticultural, 2013). Julie Guthman builds on this by pointing to the ways many white farmers are blind to the whiteness of the space they occupy and the values that guide their work (Guthman, 2008).

Throughout this inquiry, I listened for what was asked of me by those who have been in this work much longer than I have. “Of critical importance is that white members of the [food] movement recognize how they benefit personally and organizationally from the work of racism in the food system, in the community food movement and in society more generally” (Slocum, 2006, p. 338). I studied the story of this land, learning that not only am I a part of it, I can choose to write myself and community into this story in a way that resists perpetuating a history of structural racism and begins to build a different future.

² For a clear explanation of the link between white supremacy and food systems, watch or listen to the following response from Luz Calvo, Soleil Ho, and Stephen Satterfield in this panel discussion, starting at 1:27:45, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1FZvK6Ep8A> and referenced in Appendix B, on page 21 of this report.

Over time my inquiry shifted to focus on the following questions: “What does it look and feel like to farm in a way that resists white supremacy?” and “Who is modeling this work?” Whereas I had come into farming somewhat unintentionally, accidentally discovering the nourishment I received from connecting with the land to produce food for my community, many farmers of color who I interacted with throughout this work had come to farming with deep intention and spiritual connection. I asked: “How can I follow their lead? Lift up their work? And use my privilege and access to transfer resources to these farmers?”

Additionally, I sought white farmers who were struggling through these questions, and modeling these practices, who could provide support and guidance. How could connecting to the land and to farming by honoring the history that came before me, and accepting the responsibility of building a different future, help me to show up more fully as a farmer today? How could I learn to be a farmer who models this mindset and these practices for other white farmers and food systems workers?

My work in this project is learning to embody the loving leadership that will guide my practice of conversation and change making at the intersection of race and agriculture. I aim to push myself and the farmers around me to consider both our shortcomings and our gifts as they relate to overcoming oppression in our work. In the following report, I will document the work of this project, sharing the methods, joys, challenges, reflective insights and questions that this project has evoked, and the path forward that emerged from this learning. This path will guide me in a continued practice of collective visioning and embodiment of a just and equitable food system.

METHODS

I designed this capstone project to address the following learning edges:

- Deep listening for what is being asked of me and what gifts I have to offer
- Initiating and participating in conversations about race and being aware of when and why this can make me uncomfortable
- Leaning into potentially uncomfortable conversations that do not have resolution
- Engaging my personal and professional communities about racial equity being central to my core values
- Unlearning dominant colonial patterns and the ways in which I am complicit within them, specifically related to food and food systems

I structured the project in three overlapping phases. In Phase One I aimed to learn more about racism in the food system. I listened for wisdom from those who are deeply involved in this work. I developed a reading list that grew rapidly as I followed emerging threads of new learning. I listened to podcasts, and watched films and videos of lectures and panel discussions.³ I attended conferences and workshops, intentionally seeking out spaces in which people were comfortable talking about race, as a tool for building my comfort and confidence having these conversations in my community.⁴

In *White Fragility*, Robin DiAngelo writes “I did not set this system up, but it does unfairly benefit me, I do use it to my advantage, and I am responsible for interrupting it. I need to work hard to change my role in this system, but I can’t do it alone.” (DiAngelo, 2018, p. 126).

³ See Appendix B for an annotated list of resources that I engaged throughout this work. Note that this list is just a selection of many resources that influenced me during this project. Podcasts that influenced my thinking and learning during this project are listed separately in Appendix C.

⁴ See Appendix D for an annotated list of conferences and workshops that I attended related to the work of this project.

Phase Two of this project was designed to change my role in the system through a practice of intentional conversation. To learn and practice, I gathered farmers and food systems workers in my community to discuss racism and whiteness within the food system in Vermont, and began building an accountability network to last beyond the timeline of this project.

In Phase Three, I planned to share the story of my learning as an invitation for others in my community to engage in this work. From this place a path forward emerged that would allow me to live into the values and principles that were growing from and guiding my personal transformation.

Practicing emergent strategy⁵ pushed me to stay open to surprise, trust that what needed to emerge would emerge through the process, and accept that not everything can be perfectly planned from the start. I embraced emergent strategy intentionally to begin unraveling the elements of whiteness ingrained in me that I would be working to disrupt in my community's food system through the work of this project.⁶

I used the open source software Zotero as a tool to collect and organize resources, and keep notes on my learning. To track my shifting perspective I used the Capstone Learning Tracking document, a running list of Emerging Thoughts and Ideas, as well as journaling to help process my learning and capture the ways my mind and heart were feeling and growing.

In her article "Leverage Points: Points to Intervene in a System," Donella Meadows describes individual paradigm shift as "a click in the mind, a falling of scales from eyes, a new

⁵ In her eponymous book, adrienne maree brown describes emergent strategy as the process of "...intentionally chang[ing] in ways that grow our capacity to embody the just and liberated worlds we long for." (brown, 2017, p. 3).

⁶ "First, whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second, it is a "standpoint," a place from which white people look at ourselves, at others, and at society. Third, "whiteness" refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed." (Frankenberg, 1993, p.1)" In recognition that the need to be an expert, and the need to control the outcome is one of many cultural practices shaped by my white identity that have typically guided my work and learning, one of my goals was to challenge this within myself while engaging with the work of this project. I intended to use the work of this project as practice in letting go of the need to be an expert, building my capacity for vulnerability, and opening to other ways of knowing.

way of seeing” (Meadows, 1999, p. 19). This project is a story of my personal paradigm shift. “Whole societies are another matter,” writes Meadows “they resist challenges to their paradigm harder than they resist anything else” (p.19). In this project I worked to address the leverage point of paradigm change by starting with myself, and slowly reaching outward by engaging my local community.⁷

⁷ To track the progression of this paradigm shift I used an adapted Outcome Mapping Tool that can be read in entirety in Appendix G.

RESULTS

Like Meadows proposes, my shift happened in a millisecond, and then took (and will continue to take) extended time to work through the resulting unsettling and reimagining. The result is a new way of being that supports others around me to see in this new way, to shift their own paradigms so as to work collectively toward building a different future.

I found that most people who I engaged with were eager to discuss further. Several conversations emerged, some completely open, and some based on a shared resource such as an article or film. I noticed that inviting these conversations and receiving enthusiastic participation gave me hope for building a different future. These collaborations provided space to dream together and model the values that we wanted reflected back to us. Often these conversations sparked further dialog.⁸ To invite further conversation within my regional community, I submitted a workshop proposal to the New England Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG) conference to explore the ways that identity shapes our relationship to land.⁹

As I built toward Phase Three, tension arose in this question: could my story of understanding whiteness and learning to resist it be at once valuable for other white people and potentially harmful for people of color to hear? This work is in service of bringing white people into consciousness in order to move toward liberation through a collective process of seeing, reckoning, transformation, and redistribution.

This tension generated another way forward. In addition to a continued practice of learning, and intentional conversation, I am choosing to share this work by embodying with strength and power the deep love and care that are so essential to building a different future. It is

⁸ In one instance a friend visiting from out of town participated in a film screening, potluck, and conversation that I hosted, and later reached out to let me know she was hosting a similar gathering with her community back home.

⁹ See Appendix E for the workshop proposal I submitted to NESAWG.

central to my leadership practice to connect to the past, and leverage my life in the present to begin building a new future. I will lead, live, work, and farm in a way that leaves a different legacy by centering love in everything that I do, every decision that I make, and every relationship I form.¹⁰ I will do so with the goal of inviting others into this work.

Throughout this project I gathered necessary wisdom about strategies for spreading out power, working collaboratively, caring for each other and the land, honoring those that came before us, and intentionally practicing a new way forward. I sought invitation and permission from others who were leading the way.

As I move beyond the timeline of this project, I recognize the need to create a farming space that uplifts this wisdom. By creating this space in collaboration, I will build the support system I need to continue this work and remain accountable to the goals that this project helped me to clarify. It is my hope that this space can serve as inspiration for others who believe in centering love as vital to building a future of collective freedom.

Throughout my Capstone Project I recognized the line between this work and my lived experience blurring, pointing to the lasting impact of my personal transformation. The following quote from *Emergent Strategy* perfectly reflects this recognition: “...I notice the more I pay attention, the more I see order, clear messages, patterns, and invitations in the small or seemingly random things that happen in my life,” (brown, 2017, p.11). While my work farming provided a lens through which to examine my role in seeing and challenging whiteness, this work and learning will continue to guide me toward showing up more fully in all aspects of my life as I work to create conditions for all life to thrive for the long haul.¹¹ “I am listening now with all of

¹⁰ See Appendix F for a list of practices I am developing to uphold this commitment.

¹¹ “Creating conditions for all life to thrive for the long haul” is the Program Aspiration for the Master’s of Leadership for Sustainability Program.

my senses, as if the whole universe might exist just to teach me more about love” (brown, 2017, p.11).

EVALUATION

I evaluated my process and progress primarily using self-reflection and listening for feedback. To facilitate self-reflection, I used the following tools as progress markers to track how my thinking and being changed over the course of this work: Project Proposal, Capstone Learning Tracking Document, Outcome Mapping Tool, Peer Coaching Group Journal, and a Personal Journal.

I began this project from a fearful place. I was afraid of change, and facing my complicity in this system. I feared discomfort and disruption, and I was unaware that my ability to choose comfort and safety was a choice afforded to me by my privilege. Trusting in the process of this project helped me to move through fear to a place of energy and excitement for the path forward, and for the opportunity to live fully into my core values that were illuminated by this project.¹²

I listened for feedback from those with whom I collaborated in this process. I met monthly with my anchor coach, Scott Nine, who provided feedback on my process and questions to push me toward deeper learning. I also met regularly with a Peer Coaching group to discuss emerging challenges. Three five-minute Slam Stand Presentations provided the opportunity to pause, reflect on my progress, and receive feedback from a variety of program affiliates, colleagues and friends. Each time I heard both encouragement to keep going, and questions that pushed me to dig deeper.¹³

While much of my reading and research demonstrated that white people tend to avoid conversations on race, I found that the people with whom I shared a pre-existing, loving relationship showed their love through their interest in my work, and openness to learning and

¹² See Appendix G for specific examples from these evaluation documents.

¹³ See Appendix H for feedback from program affiliates after two slam stand presentations.

discussion.¹⁴ I tracked this feedback in messages, emails, and verbal feedback I received from people with whom I engaged in these conversations.¹⁵

¹⁴ It is important to note a pattern of choosing to engage with people who I perceived would be open to discussion, a reflection of my tendency toward comfort and protection. With some practice I found myself opening to the vulnerability of bringing up this work with people whom I had less confidence would be interested and open to discussion. This is still an emerging practice for me. Moving forward as I continue to embody the work of this project, I will practice bringing my whole self and these conversations intentionally into open spaces that allow room for generative tension and building new relationships.

¹⁵ See Appendix I for examples of feedback I received.

NEXT STEPS

My next steps include both tangible action steps, and the embodiment of a different way of being that invites others into the healing and growing work I believe is essential to reshaping the future.¹⁶ I trust the relationships that I have built with both my MLS cohort and with thinking partners in my community of friends and colleagues to provide feedback continuously as we collaborate into the future. I trust my strength in working with my networks to continue creating spaces for conversation, connection, and change making.

The learning from this project is now woven into my being. I cannot unlearn or un-see all that I have opened and awakened to. This way of being drives my commitment to intentionally put myself in spaces that center racial justice. The more I engage—from attending events, to joining email list-serves and following relevant social media accounts—the more I am pulled into deeper learning as opportunities present themselves to continue this work. I needed an invitation into this work, and, as such, I believe that showing up as my most authentic self, and embodying the core values that were illuminated for me through this project, provides an invitation for other white people to engage in moving together on a path toward collective freedom.

Moving through the pain of connecting to the past, and opening to my responsibility to use my life in the present to create a new future is healing for me. I am exploring my role as healer, storyteller, and community builder as I continue to show up with love, and build my practice of loving leadership. I see my work and efforts reflected back to me; as I embody my learning from this project, I notice friends, family and colleagues engaging with me on issues of

¹⁶ Throughout the course of this project I have worked to recognize the ways that the cultural norms of whiteness show up in me. With the help of my advisor, Scott Nine, one area I have identified is a tendency toward doing over being, which can be a characteristic of whiteness (personal communication, March 12, 2019). I have worked to recognize and value the results of this project not only as what I will do next, but how I will be differently as a result of this work, and see the relationship between doing and being. The way that I show up will continue to grow and change in alignment with the way that racism in the food system develops over time. I will listen to what is asked of me over time, and stay attuned to broader time scales knowing that both my doing and being will have impacts beyond my lifetime.

racism, racial equity, and food systems, often in ways that we had not engaged with each other in the past. I recognize that this work, learning and engagement will continue beyond the timeline of this project.

As I mark the completion of the project timeline, I am walking the next steps on a path that was highlighted for me through this work. This includes joining a leadership institute working to facilitate a regional network of leaders in the food system through conversations that center racial justice in the future that we are building.¹⁷ Additionally, I am part of the Conference Planning Committee for the New England Sustainable Agriculture Working Group Conference, an annual event holding conversations at the intersection of racial equity and the food system. I will bring these conversations back to my local community to build a path forward together.

As I move forward in my professional work, the values that grew in me from this project will guide my next steps. I am drawn to organizational and business structures rooted in cooperation and democracy, intentionally working to more equitably distribute power and center love. It is my hope that by participating in a working model of what the future could hold, I can help to shift collective consciousness in my community toward seeing the ways we are complicit in a white supremacist system, and taking responsibility for our collective role as agents of change.

¹⁷ See Appendix J for my application to the Food Solutions New England Network Leadership Institute.

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Slocum, R. (2006). Antiracist practice and the work of community food organizations. *Antipode*, 38 (2), 327-349. Retrieved from <http://doi.wiley.com/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2006.00582.x>

UWMulticultural. (2013, March 28). Dr. Monica White: Black Farmers, Food Security and Justice (Part 1/2) [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_0o0F5G6068

White, M. M. (2018). *Freedom farmers: Agricultural resistance and the black freedom movement*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT FOR STRUCTURAL RACISM IN THE FOOD SYSTEM

While this project required me to study and learn a great deal about structural racism in the food system, this report is focused on my personal transformation through this journey. Throughout the process of sharing this project, however, I found it critical to provide context around what structural racism in the food system means and looks like. As each day of this project revealed more and more layers of this complex system, minimizing this information to a summary from my point of view seemed more and more inadequate. Many farmers, thinkers, and scholars have written on structural racism in the food system. Below I highlight just a few of the many sources that provide accessible summaries. It is my hope that engaging with any one (or all) of the resources listed below will provide valuable context to the readers of this report, and spark interest in continued learning.

Ferguson, R. (2019). Why We Can't Separate Justice and Sustainability in the Food System.

Union of Concerned Scientists. Retrieved from <https://blog.ucsusa.org/rafter-ferguson/why-we-cant-separate-justice-and-sustainability-in-the-food-system>

Rafter Ferguson provides a compelling argument for the critical link between sustainability and justice. The article consists of a broad and concise account of inequities throughout the food system, and poses important questions toward imagining a food system that is just and sustainable.

Giménez, E.H. & Harper, B. (2016). Dismantling Racism in the Food System [PDF document].

Oakland, CA: Food First. Retrieved from <https://foodfirst.org/publication/backgrounder-dismantling-racism-in-the-food-system/>

This article provides an accessible summary of systemic racism in the food system. It is the “first in a series about how racism and our food system have co-evolved, how present day

racism operates within the food system, and what we can do to dismantle racism and build a fair, just and sustainable food system that works for everyone.” Giménez and Harper discuss the creation of whiteness, the connections between whiteness and capitalism, and the lasting impacts of systemic racism in the food system on communities of color, and the importance of recognizing this in moving toward a sustainable system that serves all involved.

Horst, M. (2019). New Research Explores the Ongoing Impact of Racism on the U.S. Farming Landscape. *Civil Eats*. Retrieved from <https://civileats.com/2019/01/25/new-research-explores-the-ongoing-impact-of-racism-on-the-u-s-farming-landscape/>

Megan Horst shares an approachable version of her research on racial, ethnic and gender inequalities in land ownership. She calls on white led organizations to face the ways they are perpetuating racist systems, and highlights efforts being made to center Indigenous people in decisions about land. “What’s needed is no less than a radical transformation of the entire U.S. food system,” Horst proposes, “to one that values the people who tend the land and cultivate the food we eat.” This work provides a model of using power, privilege and access to highlight inequity and call for change.

Morrison, D. & Brynne, A. (2016). Responsibilities and Relationships: Decolonizing the BC Food Systems Network [PDF document.] *Indigenous Food Systems Network*. Retrieved from [http://Indigenousfoodsystems.org/sites/default/files/resources/BCFSN%20CFICE%20report%20FINAL%20\(1\).pdf](http://Indigenousfoodsystems.org/sites/default/files/resources/BCFSN%20CFICE%20report%20FINAL%20(1).pdf)

This text includes a “Decolonizing Pledge” on page 12 with specific actions for those of us who are benefiting from colonization to engage with as a means of undoing the colonial systems that hold captive our collective liberation. The authors emphasize the progress in

achieving Indigenous food sovereignty and discuss the need for everyone to act in solidarity with Indigenous peoples. Morrison and Brynne offer a call to focus on co-creation, involving Indigenous people from the beginning, and supporting their organizing efforts, not merely making space for their voices. This text asks me to consider ways that my work can lift up the voices and leadership of Indigenous people from the start, centering the perspective of those whose land was stolen for our current food system to exist.

Nguyen, M. (2017). The one thing my farm training never covered: Racism. National Young Farmers Coalition. Retrieved from <https://www.youngfarmers.org/2017/07/the-one-thing-my-farm-training-never-covered-racism/>

Mai Nguyen's personal account of facing racism in her career as a farmer clearly illustrates the ways that racism manifests in agriculture. I met Mai at the National Young Farmers Coalition Convergence several years ago and was inspired by her stories of farming as a way to connect to her family history by cultivating culturally relevant crops, as well as enlightened by her stories of encountering racism as a farmer. This article highlights the change-making work that Mai is doing to build community among Southeast Asian farmers, and her contribution to the Farmer Equity Act in California, a tool for increasing access to resources for farmers of color. Mai's stories and work to make change inspires action and resilience toward creating conditions for all farmers to thrive.

Penniman, L. (2017). 4 Not-so-easy ways to dismantle racism in the food system. *yes! magazine*. Retrieved from <https://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/4-not-so-easy-ways-to-dismantle-racism-in-the-food-system-20170427>

This article was the primary invitation into this work for me, and I have referred many others to this resource for a clear and accessible introduction to racism in the food system. The

text focuses on the stolen land and exploited labor that are at the root of our food system, and proposes four solutions for moving forward, toward a more just food system. The article highlights the ways that our colonial history impacts our current food system today and illustrates the discrimination that black farmers have faced in acquiring land and other resources necessary to start a farm. The article demonstrates that farm management is one of the whitest professions, while farm labor tends to consist mostly of people of color. Penniman asserts that it is critical to “follow the lead of those directly affected by the issues.” I returned to this article many times throughout the course of this project and will continue to hold it as an important reference in this work.

APPENDIX B: EXTENDED ANNOTATED REFERENCE LIST

The following are a selection of resources that have been significant to my work and learning. By sharing them here I hope to honor some of the wisdom that made the transformational work of this project possible. This list includes some specific podcast episodes; see end of list for full podcast programs.

Alkon, A.H. & Agyeman, J. (Eds.). (2011). *Cultivating food justice: Race, class, and sustainability*. Boston, MA: MIT Press.

I read this book early in the course of this project and it provided a wealth of perspective from a diversity of voices in the food system on a range of food justice issues. In the introduction the editors emphasize the need for the food movement to build alliances with communities who are most harmed by the current realities of our food system. If the dominant social change strategy of the current food movement is to provide economic support for small farmers, this necessitates the inclusion of people of color. The authors acknowledge the challenge here, given that the current narrative “fails to incorporate the histories and experiences of people of color” and has excluded communities of color from the dialog. Chapter Four opened my eyes to the story of discriminatory policy that has intentionally worked to exclude people of color from holding power in the food system.

Auburn Seminary. (2016, June 16). *Radical Dharma: Rev. Angel Kyodo Williams talks race, love & liberation* [Video file]. Retrieved from

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cP7CZIIoFKE>

In this interview, my introduction to her teaching and thinking, the Reverend Angel Kyodo Williams invites listeners to move toward living a more liberated life. I listened to this interview around the same time I was beginning to recognize the importance of reconciling with

the history of agriculture in this country. This allowed me to understand the importance of connecting with all that came before me to make it possible for me to farm today, reconcile with the difficult parts of this, and look toward a future of the way things could be.

Dunbar-Ortiz, R. (2014). *An Indigenous peoples' history of the United States*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

This story was critical to my understanding of the history of land in the United States. Dunbar-Ortiz clearly articulates the trauma inflicted on the Indigenous people of North America. As I recognized how little I know about the true history of this country and began to see the story of land as critical to this history, this text gave me the tools and language to talk about erasure of Indigenous people, and encouraged me to work actively against this by bringing this story into white spaces. The story connects the dots over many years of history to where we are today, and is a call to action to move forward into a different story that celebrates and makes visible the stories, legacy, and presence of Indigenous people.

Dean, David. (2017, September 12). *Tim Wise: The Creation of Whiteness* [Video file].

Retrieved from

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FRC7cRwCvx4&feature=youtu.be&mc_cid=0bcb47f533&mc_eid=dda1af37db

In this short video Tim Wise explains the social construction of race in an accessible and simple way, and emphasizes the role of land in this history. He reminds listeners that prior to the creation of whiteness there was a great deal of collaboration between landless white peasants and black slaves. Because this collaboration threatened the white elite, the elite class used their power to break apart this allegiance. Wise uses powerful storytelling to explain how this

upholding of white supremacy and the continued othering of poor, landless, black slaves has lasting implications today.

The Edible Schoolyard Project. (2019, April 13). *Representation Matters in Food Media*, Naomi Starkman with Soleil Ho, Stephen Satterfield, Luz Calvo [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1FZvK6Ep8A>

One of the last questions asked of this panel (at 1:27:45) and the responses from the panelists is an example of white people facing white supremacy in food systems in a public setting in a way that is important for other white people to experience. At one point during the discussion, one of the panelists had referenced kale salad in connection with white supremacy. At the end of the panel, one white student, blinded by whiteness, admits that he did not understand this connection and asks the panel to explain it. The panelists answered this student with impressive grace and composure, storytelling and explaining the ways that the food system is dominated by whiteness. As Stephen Satterfield expresses in his response, the student is blinded by his whiteness, unable to see the obvious ways that whiteness permeates our not only food system but every aspect of American culture. In the white supremacist culture we live in, it can be hard as a white person to find your way to questioning white supremacy when it is so blinding. This question and the resulting responses clearly illustrate the way that white supremacy shows up in food systems, and I have referenced this video several times to help friends and colleagues to understand this connection.

Goldfarb, J. (Ed). (2019). Completely and without pause: feminist notes on oppression and expansion.

“This publication attempts to do three things: (a) move resources to Roots of Labor Birth Collective and Black Women Birthing Justice, two birthing justice organizations in the Bay Area

(b) center the voices and experiences of women of color, trans and nonbinary folks of color, and the collective urgency of dismantling white systems of oppression, and (c) bring a myriad of people together to share ideas about healing, power, and liberation.” This publication models the work of a white woman owning her privilege, and utilizing her access to transfer resources to black-led organizations. The author displays vulnerability in her introduction, publicly exploring her thoughts on accountability and her role as a white person in justice work. Through this publication she holds space for a diverse group of writers and thinkers to share their work and thoughts, and through sales of the publication, raises money for two black-led organizations. While this publication does not directly relate to food, the writings inspired me to think about many facets of whiteness, as well as ideas such as the need for an ethic of love to guide us forward into the future.

Gelder, S.V. (2019). What Indigenous culture can teach us about a fair economy. *yes! Magazine*.

Retrieved from <https://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/the-new-economy/what-Indigenous-culture-can-teach-us-about-a-fair-economy-20190208>

Many cultural and societal problems today are directly linked to capitalism and the fear that is brought on by a mindset of scarcity. Our economic system rewards extraction, and does not encourage us to take care of our people and our place. Unfortunately, this capitalist system can feel binding when there are few alternative models. This article inspires me to think critically about our economic system and apply this framework of centering fairness and reciprocity to rethinking land, food and farming. How can we build an economic model of farming that prioritizes equity, sharing, care for each other and the land? How can a business in a capitalist system be structured to resist the harms of capitalism?

Horst, M. & Marion, A. (2018). Racial, ethnic and gender inequities in farmland ownership and farming in the U.S. [PDF document.] *Agriculture and Human Values*, 36 (1), 1-16.

Retrieved from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10460-018-9883-3>

In this report (summarized in the Civil Eats article listed in Appendix A), the authors use data to show racial and ethnic inequities in agriculture, and recommend further research to highlight these facts and pressure policy makers to disrupt this system. Horst and Marion's brief recap of the history of structural racism in the food system is easy to read and paints a clear picture of how we got to where we are today. The authors report on the way that consolidation of farm businesses results in reduced opportunity for small-scale agriculture, which disproportionately impacts farmers of color, immigrant farmers, and female farmers. The report names the necessity for additional scholarship and data to expand on this work and "highlight[s] the need for intervention to confront the legacies of racialized and gendered capitalism and patriarchal white supremacy."

Jones, M.L. (2019, May 22). #033 Land Liberation. *Edible Activist Podcast*. Podcast retrieved from <http://edibleactivist.fullserviceradio.org/dc1fa464>

This conversation digs into the meaning of land liberation as moving away from private ownership toward collective stewardship. The invitation is to see the way that private ownership stems from a colonized mindset and the need to demystify and decolonize our minds by re-connecting physically and spiritually to the land, remembering that the land is a part of us, not just a source of profit. Dom Hosack shares his thoughts on seeing ourselves as connected to the same ecosystem with the land we tend and centering care and reciprocity as we build our relationship to land. Hosack shares his story and process of leaving academia to become a farmer and builder as a step toward embodying land liberation. He discusses the way his black identity

shaped his path. This conversation and story inspired me to consider the value of working as a farmer, practicing the solutions in real time and recognizing how our identities and privileges shape our choices around food, land and agriculture.

Kimmerer, R. W. (2013). *Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teachings of plants*. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed.

Dr. Kimmerer writes in a way that inspires me to connect more deeply to the land and non-human beings. My thinking shifted when I read Kimmerer's framework of reciprocity with the land in the chapter, "Epiphany In the Beans," where she poses the question, "Do you think the land loves you back?" and describes the land's expression of love in beans, strawberries, and other fruits and vegetables that nourish us in return for nourishing her.

The Leap Manifesto. Retrieved from <https://leapmanifesto.org>

The Leap Manifesto was a critical resource for me in drawing connections between whiteness and capitalism, and gave me the language to discuss some of the themes emerging in my Capstone project work. This Manifesto explores moving away from a culture of extraction toward a culture of care and consent. I used this framework as a lens to view the agricultural system, and the resulting reflection and inquiry was pivotal to this project as I began to vision a food system that holds care at the center. Much of the current agricultural system relies on extractive practices, especially regarding land and labor. What would a food system that is not rooted in capitalism look like? How do we farm in a way that prioritizes caring and caretaking? What could this look like for me in my work as a farmer, and who is already engaged in this work?

Network Weaver Learning Lab. Weaving together a world without violence: A collection of principles, practices and recipes for healing [PDF document]. Retrieved from

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1atGdx_8gGKDErOT0iwVT29fWleqtfwA6/view

This essential resource helped me to connect to the healing involved in this project—both my role as a healer, and the role of healing in my life through building connection and practicing radical love. This collection offers many gifts including invocations and specific practices for healing that encourage the embodiment of a better future. Written with joy and love at the center, this resource serves as a practical guide, an inspirational invitation from a group of loving leaders, and a model in itself of the values that it teaches. I have looked to this resource as a source of wisdom from a diverse group of people who have been on this path and in this work for much longer than I have, and offer their love, support, encouragement, and knowledge.

Our Platform for Real Food. (n.d.). *HEAL Food Alliance*. Retrieved from

<http://healfoodalliance.org/strategy/the-real-food-platform/>

The HEAL Food Alliance is working to build a food system that centers the health of people, our economy, and the environment. Their platform is a roadmap or vision for the future of what our food system could be. Rooted in the belief that the two biggest challenges to our food system are concentration of power and the legacy and current realities of racism, HEAL is working to collectively vision and enact a food system that pushes back on these challenges. HEAL's platform advocates for a combination of cutting edge agricultural science and time-honored Indigenous wisdom. "Our Platform for Real Food is grounded in the conviction that food system transformation is inseparable from the ongoing work to dismantle racism and the mythologies that hold profit as more valuable than people or the planet."

This document serves as a guidepost for my Capstone Project, visioning where our food system could be if we focus on addressing issues of equity. It is a reminder that without addressing racism and equity, our food system cannot be sustainable. This platform poses an in-depth, clear and achievable path forward built by a multi-racial group of people who represent the interests of communities who are “most burdened by the disparities of our current systems.”

Penniman, L. (2018). *Farming while black: Soul Fire Farm’s practical guide to liberation on the land*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green.

Part practical guide, part narrative, this book written by a black farmer for black farmers is an invaluable resource. With so many resources written by and for white farmers, this book fills a critical gap by providing tools for farmers of color, as well as a direct call to action for white farmers. Reading Chapter 3 on Spiritual and Ancestral Connection coincided with a book club dialog with a Black farmer who shared about spiritual and ancestral being essential to his farming practice, and asked about how white people understand their spiritual connection to the land. This opened up new thinking for me as I began to recognize my lack of spiritual connection to the land. I asked, “How can I begin seeing and truly understanding myself as part of the earth and not separate from it?”

Soul Fire Farm Institute. (2018). Food sovereignty action steps [Google Doc]. Retrieved from https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dt0hicyhGdJSK1C3qyE1AbG9fdDrONjUh_M_bE0KMGs/edit?usp=drive_web&ouid=118446018610580150897&usp=embed_facebook

Among many other things, this guide offers an essential reminder to white people to work with other white people and avoid organizing people of color. I vision part of my role in this work as working with white people to see whiteness and build the skills and tools to resist it. The guide also includes resources on Black-Indigenous Led Organizations Working on Food, Land,

and Freedom, as well as Racial Justice resources, Equity resources, and Dismantling Racism trainings.

Sow, A. & Friedman, A. (2018, August 31). White fragility. *Call Your Girlfriend Podcast*.

Podcast retrieved from <https://www.callyourgirlfriend.com/white-fragility>

This interview introduced me to the teachings of Robin DiAngelo, who helped me to understand the idea and problem of white silence. It also helped me to understand why white people tend to avoid talking about race and to see that being able to avoid uncomfortable conversations and general discomfort around race is a privilege afforded to white people who do not need to face their race daily. In addition, DiAngelo's confidence talking directly about race as white person serves as an important model for me and other white people building a practice of anti-racism.

Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture. (2017, December). *Keynote: Ricardo Salvador and Mark Bittman* [Video file]. Retrieved from

<https://www.facebook.com/stonebarns/videos/10155797961394070/>

Willoughby, J. (2018). A digital map leads to reparations for black and Indigenous farmers. *yes!*

magazine, Retrieved from <https://www.yesmagazine.org/peace-justice/a-digital-map-leads-to-reparations-for-black-and-indigenous-farmers-20180221>

In this video of the 2017 Young Farmer Conference at Stone Barns, food writer Mark Bittman is asked by chef and educator Nadine Nelson, "How do you hold yourself accountable to communities of color and vulnerable communities?" He dismisses the question by responding, "Fair enough." When pressed, Bittman shares that he doesn't know what "hold yourself accountable" means. In her follow up article, writer Jean Willoughby connects with Nelson and others in the room who took part in follow-up dialog that sparked a call to action for many white

farmers present at the conference. This interaction and follow-up action illustrates generative tension. The discomfort and rupture yielded growth and connection, and ultimately led to a transfer of resources from white farmer Douglass DeCandia to Dallas Robinson, owner of the first fully-funded project listed on the Black-Indigenous Reparations Map created by Soul Fire Farm.

Tess Brown-Lavoie: Generosity and justice in RI. [web log interview] Retrieved from

https://nesawg.org/news/tess-brown-lavoie-generosity-and-justice-ri?mc_cid=de790da9fa&mc_eid=1f0b333e55

In this interview, farmer Tess Lavoie-Brown clearly articulates her work and thinking around racism and whiteness within the food system. Tess speaks with power about navigating what it means to be a white farmer and about her work developing and participating in an Agriculture and Justice working group. Lavoie-Brown models what it can look like to farm in a way that holds care at the center, and actively works to resist and reject white supremacy daily in the way she shows up. “I will add that it is important to me as a white person to approach leadership in this realm with a sense of humility and real care. Even in responding to this interview, I have an immediate conflict: between a sense that my voice is not the one that should be amplified to speak on issues of racial justice, and the conviction that white people need to develop their vocabularies, mobilize, and not defer to people of color in initiating this work.” Lavoie-Brown provides an inspiring example of how to be in process, share openly, and practice humility in this work.

Tuck, E. & Yang, K.W. (2012). Decolonization is Not a Metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1, 1-40. Retrieved from

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277992187_Decolonization_Is_Not_a_Metaphor
[or](#)

After the first Slam Stand presentation, faculty affiliate Connor Stedman suggested that I re-read this article and consider this framework for examining land and agriculture in my project. I appreciated the question posed in this piece, “What does decolonization want?” and it inspired me to ask, “What does an anti-racist food system want?” or “What does a decolonized food system want?” This work set me on the path toward realizing the need to reject white supremacy in the way that I show up to my work as a farmer and in my broader role in the food system.

Turshen, J. (2017). *Feed the Resistance*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books LLC

Julia Turshen provides an inspiring example of sharing her journey and process to finding food as a tool for resistance. This was one of many resources that modeled work in food with racial equity, love, and caring at the center. I was drawn to Turshen’s reminder that food “is a constant reminder of transformation and possibility.” Turshen weaves together recipes and her stories of each one, with contributions that highlight the work of people of color led food justice movements.

White, M. M. (2018). *Freedom farmers: Agricultural resistance and the black freedom movement*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

UWMulticultural. (2013, March, 28). Dr. Monica White: Black Farmers, Food Security and Justice (Part 1/2) [Video file]. Retrieved from

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_0o0F5G6068

Dr. White’s book is one of the first to tell a new story of black farmers in America. This narrative illustrates both the ways that black farmers have been dispossessed and disempowered throughout U.S. history, and the way they have used farming as a way to connect to the land,

heal from a history of violence, and resist forces of oppression. Dr. White uses examples of three black owned collective farms engaged in this work. In her lecture at the University of Wisconsin, she expands on the story of her work by describing the evolution of her inquiry. Dr. White's work inspired me to examine the ways that my white identity has shaped my relationship to land. White's line of thinking pushed me to ask how agriculture can also be an act of resistance for white farmers if we consciously connect with the history that brought us here and work together to change it with a shared goal of collective freedom.

Wilkerson, I. (2010). *The warmth of other suns*. New York, NY: Random House.

This book is a critical resource to understanding the racial wealth gap and history of racism that is perpetuated today. It is written in an engaging and accessible story-based way, and paints a picture of a period of time in which race relations in America were rapidly changing. The stories from this book provided context for most of my subsequent learning about racism in the United States.

Williams, J. M. & Holt-Giménez, Eric (Eds.). (2017). *Land justice: Re-imagining land, food, and the commons in the United States*. Oakland, CA: Food First Books.

In the introduction, Indigenous scholar Winona LaDuke writes, "The struggle over land in our nation begins and ends with recognizing our spiritual relationship with our seeds, our food, the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the earth we walk upon." This collection of stories and essays provides invaluable perspective on the story of land, the relationship between land and gender, land and race, land and privilege, and the overall field of land justice. This text highlights voices and perspective "from the core of what it means to produce real food and to live with the land in the United States." I took away critical lessons for understanding myself as

connected to the land, and a new narrative about the value of land commons in the work of collective liberation.

Young, A. (2019, April, 17). adrienne maree brown on pleasure as birthright. *For the Wild Podcast*. Podcast retrieved from <http://forthewild.world/listen/adrienne-maree-brown-on-pleasure-as-birthright115>

adrienne maree brown has been a consistent source of wisdom, strength and positivity since I was introduced to her work. She models a deep focus on joy, and pleasure. In this interview, speaking about her recent book *Pleasure Activism*, brown advocates for making the work of social change the most pleasurable experience one can have. brown discusses the importance of imagination as a tool for bringing to life the world we want to be a part of. This concept has inspired me to imagine the way that farming and food systems are integral to building a future of collective freedom, and begin working to embody this in my life and work in the present.

Zimmerman, K. & Quiroz, J. (2016). Love with Power [PDF document]. Oakland, CA: Movement Strategy Center. Retrieved from https://movementstrategy.org/b/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/MS-C-Love_With_Power.pdf

I was invited to read this report by my advisor, Scott Nine, who reminded me that talking about love in a soft way diminishes its power and meaning. Alternatively, centering love can be a radical practice. Using examples of organizations that are intentionally centering love, this report provides models of what it looks like to use radical love as a tool for transformation, internally and externally. This paper provided me with a foundational understanding of the transformative power of loving leadership, something that was essential to this project and remains central to my work in the world beyond the scope of this Capstone project.

APPENDIX C: PODCASTS

Call Your Girlfriend <https://www.callyourgirlfriend.com/episodes>

CTZNWell <http://www.ctznwell.org/ctznpodcast>

Edible Activist <https://edibleactivist.simplecast.com/episodes>

For the Wild <http://forthewild.world/listen>

Good Ancestor Podcast <http://laylafsaad.com/good-ancestor-podcast>

Healing Justice <https://www.healingjustice.org/podcast>

National Young Farmers Podcast <https://www.youngfarmers.org/category/podcast/>

On Being <https://onbeing.org/series/podcast/>

Still Processing <https://www.nytimes.com/column/still-processing-podcast>

Read Food Reads <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/real-food-reads/id1215522970>

The Table Underground <https://thetableunderground.com/the-table-underground/category/PODCAST>

The podcasts listed above have been influential in the development of my thinking, and helped to cultivate a practice of continued learning in my leadership. I often listened in the car during my commute to and from work, and at home while cooking meals. Listening to the conversations on these podcasts allowed me to surround myself with the wisdom of scholars, writers, thinkers, farmers, food justice activists, and others who practice vulnerability and the centering of love and care as they discuss their work. Through listening to so many conversations on race, and the work that various people are doing to confront racism, I am building my capacity to confront racism in my own work, and talk about it with vulnerability and humility.

APPENDIX D: EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS ATTENDED

The following is an annotated list of events and workshops that I participated in that inspired learning related to the work of this Capstone Project.

- Deep Change for Water Justice Conference – Vermont Law School, South Royalton, VT, November 2018

At this conference I participated in difficult and uncomfortable conversations on race. It was a challenge to be in a space that was intentionally being held for these conversations, and to have such a difficult time getting on the same page with a group of people who had seemingly all showed up working toward a similar goal. I experienced two interactions in which white fragility dominated the conversation, and asked many questions about my role in these scenarios. My experience at this conference provided practice working with white people at a variety of stages on their journey of learning about their own racial identity. Throughout the course of this past year, I have reflected back on the events of this conference as a way to check-in with how my learning is evolving. As my learning and racial identity developed during the course of this project, I referenced the events of this conference to reflect on how I would or could have showed up differently.

- Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group Conference, Little Rock, AR, January 2019

Attending the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group Conference (SSAWG) was one of the most diverse agricultural spaces I had been in. It was also a space that was mostly occupied by farmers and people working in food in the South. Participating in a variety of workshops on land and agricultural history, I observed a significance and difference about having these conversations in the South, on land that held a history of slavery. I chose to attend

this conference specifically because it had been recommended to me as an agricultural event that centered conversations at the intersection of race and food systems. Participating provided many opportunities both to observe this dialog and engage with it in ways that were noticeably more direct than any conversations I had been a part of in the North about race and agriculture. In one workshop the facilitators briefly discussed the history of agriculture and asked workshop attendees to speak with a neighbor on the prompt “Where do you see yourself in this story?” In the conversation that followed I had the opportunity to practice talking about my family history in the story of agriculture, and discuss with my partner the ways in which white culture discourages connection to our history and ancestry, and the importance of overcoming this. On the whole, this conference provided a model for what this type of space can look and feel like, giving me some practice and tools needed to build this space in my home community.

- Cracking the Code: Dismantling the Dynamics of Oppression – Intensive, SSAWG Conference, Little Rock, AR, January 2019

In this intensive workshop led by Wakesa Madzimoyo, we explored the dynamics of oppression by examining a variety of different identities and how each of them holds or does not hold power. One particularly meaningful lesson from this workshop was a deep dive into emotions and tools to identify our emotions in order to show up more fully to the possibility of authentic relationship. Madzimoyo teaches that sadness and fear can often be misidentified as anger, and expression of anger closes off the possibility for building relationship. If, however, we are able to identify and express sadness and fear when we feel them, this opens the door for building authentic relationship. Madzimoyo spoke about the ways that people of different identities have been socialized to relate to those that are not like them, playing into the prescribed dynamics of oppression, and he noted the importance of seeing through this and

working to dismantle these dynamics. This workshop provided practice learning about and confronting racism in a multiracial space, and I learned a lot from observing the way that Madzimoyo facilitated the space and encouraged participation from all in the room. He invited participants to be direct when talking about race, modeling this throughout his facilitation of the workshop. Working from a place of deep love, and sharing a host of personal stories, Madzimoyo created a space that invited conversation and learning for all participants.

- Roots Deeper Than Whiteness: Waking Ourselves for the Benefit of All – Online Course, Winter 2019

This course, designed for white people by white people, works to bring white people into consciousness specifically about the connection between capitalism and racism. Through readings, reflection prompts, and four weekly online conversations with white people from around the country, this course brought together a community of white people struggling through reckoning with the realities of whiteness. In addition to raising consciousness and providing space to process in connection to others on this learning journey, this course helped me to recognize the importance of lifting up people who are modeling what it looks like to be a white anti-racist. Several of the resources shared during this course were integral to my understanding of whiteness and beginning to see a different way forward.

- Uprooting Racism in the Food System – Soul Fire Farm, Petersburg, NY, May 2019

This training at Soul Fire Farm brought together a multiracial group of farmers to work together on understanding and uprooting racism in the food system. Led by Leah Penniman, the one-day workshop modeled the centering of love and care in the way it was facilitated, and created space for connecting to each other and our unique roles in this work. The workshop built from a lesson on the history of structural racism in the food system and then moved to working

to see disparities in access and privilege, and uncovering the ways our farms and organizations are perpetuating or dismantling white supremacist culture, and building action steps for confronting racism in our communities. Something that stuck with me after the workshop was some deep reflection on what I am actually doing in my work to transfer resources to communities of color. While my work is focused on conversation, I felt a certain lack after spending the day with so many people who were doing work toward actual resource transfer. This workshop made me question the value of my work and rethink and reframe my way forward.

- Eric Holt-Giménez Lecture: Can We Feed the World Without Destroying It? – University of Vermont, Burlington, VT, April 2019

Holt-Giménez provided a global perspective on hunger and food insecurity, pointing to the domination of white people and white supremacist values throughout the global food system. He reminded attendees that the food system is not broken, but working just as it was designed to work by white people in a capitalist system. He spoke to the connection between global trade and agricultural infrastructure and hunger, pointing out that the stock values of Monsanto are directly correlated with the percentage of people who are hungry, and he exposed some critical errors in the ways that we calculate and represent hunger around the globe. Holt-Giménez challenged the capitalist system, and proposed some radical solutions to rebuilding the food system, ending his lecture by reiterating the question: “Can we feed the world without destroying it?” His answer: “Yes, but we have to change everything.” He highlighted the potential for the Green New Deal to make significant change in equity and access in the food system if we push hard for things like parity pricing. He proposed working to “tip the balance between our social and our capital activities” by thinking about creative ways to stabilize income in rural areas, and creating a

framework for local commons. My take-away from this lecture was how far reaching the systems of white domination are spread, through things like global trade agreements and international policy. I practiced deep listening, and seeing the value of work within my small community to have ripple effects outward toward the global food system. Additionally, this lecture was a reminder to consider scales of time, knowing that the work I do did not start and will not be finished within my lifetime.

- Food Systems New England 21 Day Racial Equity Challenge – Online, April 2019

Joining this Racial Equity Challenge was a way for me to connect with others in my regional community who were also thinking and learning about racism in the food system. I appreciated the opportunity to complete this challenge alongside some of my co-workers and have discussion along the way. The resources on racial identity development and spotting and unraveling white supremacy culture in the workplace were particularly impactful. Additionally, one day of this challenge provided a wealth of resources and discussion around Just Economic Transition that examined economic and business models promoting justice and sustainability. This learning pushed me to apply this framework to farming. What are models of farm businesses that are promoting justice and sustainability? This line of thinking brought me towards deep exploration of cooperative business structures as a model for equitable distribution of power.

APPENDIX E: WORKSHOP PROPOSAL

Workshop Proposal for the 2019 New England Sustainable Agriculture Working Group
Conference

Title of Session

Land and Identity: Exploring disconnection and connection in our relationship to land

Session Description/Abstract

This is what will be listed in the program and on our website. Response limited to 700 characters.

What is your relationship to land? In what ways do you feel connected or disconnected to the land you farm or garden? How does your identity inform this? Explore your relationship to the land you farm and garden and build practices for deepening connection to land. Bring stories and questions to this panel discussion where we will hear a variety of perspectives on connection to land and the ways our history and identities shape this relationship. You will also have the chance to share in small groups to build community and connection. We hope that you will leave this workshop inspired to further explore your relationship to land and hold some practices that can help you do this.

Longer Description of your Session

Please describe the format of your session (i.e. panel, interactive activity, etc.), how you plan to engage session attendees, what each of your speakers will cover, and what you hope attendees will leave the session having learned or done. Response limited to 2100 characters.

I am interested in making space for farmers and gardeners to explore their relationship to land, and specifically how race and other identities shape and inform the way we each relate to land.

I'd like to help coordinate and, if appropriate, facilitate a panel discussion featuring a diverse group of panelists who are willing to tell their stories of relationship to land, and dive into how their identities have shaped this relationship. Panelists could include a variety of farmers and gardeners who can bring different perspectives on connection and relationship to land (for example: a land-owner, a community gardener, someone farming in a collective or collaborative) and offer some practices for folks who are looking to deepen their connection to land. As original inhabitants, the Indigenous perspective is critical to this discussion. The goal for this workshop is to bring together a diverse group who can share their stories and perspectives to inspire workshop participants (who may also share their stories and relationship to land) to make the space and time to consider their relationship to land. This would hopefully be a starting point for participants to build intentionality around their relationship to land and farming as a tool for building a more racially just system that centers relationship. Through the history of agriculture and development of capitalism in this country, I believe the stories of those who are most connected to land have been lost and/or erased. The goal of this workshop would be to lift up these stories. I imagine the workshop with the following format, and also open to other thoughts on how this could play out:

1. 3-4 panelists, 10-15 minutes each to share their story of relationship to land (30-45 minutes)
2. Participants divide into small groups to begin telling their stories of relationship to land and thinking about the way their identities shape this relationship. Participants can also begin to share and brainstorm practices for deepening their connection to land (15-20 minutes)
3. Full group discussion/Q&A with panelists (20-30 minutes)

Intended audience

Please tell us which audiences your session is geared towards

The intended audience for this workshop would be anyone who works on the land and is interested in exploring their relationship to land. This workshop would be for farmers and gardeners of all levels.

*Please describe how your session is relevant to advancement of sustainable and just farm and food systems in the 12state NESAWG region (found at nesawg.org/about). * Responses limited to 1500 characters but do not feel you need to go on for that long - brevity is appreciated!*

My hope is that the space created in this workshop and the stories that are shared will help farmers and gardeners get curious (if they are not already) about how their identity has shaped the way they relate to land and leave wanting to deepen this relationship and holding some practices to do so. I believe that in a just and sustainable farm and food system, it is critical for farmers to understand their relationship with land as being built around reciprocity. I want this workshop and conversation to lift up farmers and gardeners who are modeling reciprocity with the land, seeing themselves connected to the land in a way that serves something greater than themselves and modeling practices for deepening connection to land. I want this workshop to highlight these stories as a tool to help shift the mindsets of those who might be, with or without knowing it, building their relationship with land around extraction.

It is also my hope that by bringing together a group of people who are interested in discussing this together, there is the opportunity to build networks and connections between farmers and gardeners who will share their stories and practices and “harness the power that exists in our multi-sector regional network.” We can imagine together the way that we might work to name

and shift our relationships to land so that we are actively building a more just system through practices that deepen connection and/or reconnect us to land.

*In addition to our programming focused explicitly on Race and Equity issues in food systems, we look for sessions that touch on equity issues in some way. Please describe how your session relates to equity issues, using our Race and Equity prompts (found at bit.ly/REPrompts) as a reference. * Responses limited to 1500 characters but do not feel you need to go on for that long brevity is appreciated!*

As a white person who grew up with the structures of white supremacy and capitalism teaching me to understand myself as separate from the land and environment around me, it has been a gift to dive into the history of agriculture in the U.S. and begin to see through this disconnection and resist this force by deepening my relationship to land and learning not to see myself as separate from it.

I believe that it is possible to resist white supremacist systems of domination by examining and deepening our relationship to land. How can space like this workshop in which we lift up the stories and practices of those who model a reciprocal relationship with land help to shift the dial toward this type relationship being the new mainstream narrative/status quo? An equitable food system will grow from a place of deepening connection—connection to each other, connection to the land, and connection to the food we eat. I am certain that so many incredible farmers and gardeners are already modeling this and, if they are willing, can share practices that would help others to begin deepening their connections. I can imagine the power of transformation that could come from giving all farmers and gardeners the tools and space and invitation and permission to connect with the land.

APPENDIX F: PRACTICES

Practices I have developed as a result of this work:

- Practice gratitude that is grounded in truth telling.
- Act from a place of love and care for well-being before anything else. Know that this can sometimes involve difficult conversations with people who have been taught to undervalue love.
- Notice when actions and decisions are motivated by money, and/or by the potential for individual gains that do not take into account the well-being of all involved. Question this and model alternatives. Show up with the mindset “We are all on the same team.”
- Surround myself with sources of wisdom and knowledge that encourage connection to place, body, heart, and community. Establish routine for including this learning and practice everyday in the morning with coffee or tea.
- See and name power dynamics. Work to spread out power and redistribute resources in a way that seeds conditions for all life to thrive.
- Check in frequently with how my body feels and reacts. Check in with those around me about how their body feels. Make checking in with the body part of work culture. Understand the wholeness of the body to include the physical, mental, and spiritual.
- Reach out to people whose work inspires me. Make an effort to know them and provide feedback on the ways their work inspires me. Remember that relationships can begin from this place.

APPENDIX G: JOURNAL EXCERPTS AND OUTCOME MAPPING

On December 15th, 2018 I wrote the following in my Capstone Learning Tracking Document:

“I am thinking a lot about the way that I am expecting this project to change me over the course of this year. I am identifying a fear that as I work through this project I will need to leave my job farming, in search of the ability to farm in a way that is more aligned with my core values. I am hoping that over the course of this project that will begin to feel less scary. That I will grow more comfortable with that idea. At the moment it is scary to me both because I cannot fully imagine what I would do instead, or how I would find work that fully aligns with my values and make money doing it, and the thought of continuing to do work that does not fully align with my values is also scary. I am holding the need to track the evolution of this fear through the course of this project, with a goal of tipping the scale more toward excitement and away from paralyzing fear. How can love lead the way through this transformation?”

The following is a journal excerpt from June 5th, 2019:

“And this is not to minimize the value of working hard, but to bring in the space to believe that we can work hard with love and relationship as central to our work. If I can believe and embody this, how is it that this being gives permission or provides an invitation for other white farmers to embody this? The power in shifting collective consciousness in this way is fully nourishing, energizing, and physically exhilarating. How to ‘have reverence for that which gives us life’ and by actively doing this and being this, how does this engage those around me, make space for them to get on board and build collective energy and excitement in this way. In the past few weeks so many dots have connected for me to get to this place. And it feels so exciting!”

The following is an excerpt from the Peer Coaching Group Journal document, from December 9th, 2018:

“My burning question is changing from how to dismantle racism in the food system (which seems like a really lofty task). I want to break it down a bit. I need to take steps. On the one hand it is feeling really specific to be asking these questions just about the food system. On the other hand, it feels so relevant to explore dismantling racism in the context of the food system because that is the field that I am so excited about. I have been finding though, that since I started this project, I have been having really meaningful conversations about race with people who I would not expect to have those conversations, and with language and concepts and perspective to stand on that I did not have before. I ended up in a really sweet conversation at Thanksgiving about race, and the impact of structural racism that I never would have imagined happening before. I am eager to get into Robin DiAngelo’s book about White Fragility, working with the concept that not talking about race perpetuates racism. Through the work of this program I have been pushing myself to talk about race more, in all sorts of spaces, not necessarily only in the context of this project.

I started a book club with leaders of the National Young Farmers Coalition to read *Farming While Black*. There were over 30 people interested in joining the group. I have moved from feeling somewhat isolated and embarrassed about this work to feeling more open and inspired and empowered to talk about these things, knowing that there are other folks who also want to be having these conversations. The process of setting up the book club was valuable to me—to realize that there are people all over the country who want to have these conversations. I am scared and excited about facilitating this. How can I put into practice, embody, the leadership practices that I have been cultivating in this program to create a safe space to have these conversations. I am lifted up by uncovering so much awesome work being done by farmers of color, so inspired by the resilience demonstrated here, and sad that this work gets shadowed by

the work of white folks who are often first to be recognized or heard or advertised. So much has changed for me since just taking the time to acknowledge the history of our current food system, and lean into learning more, from that place of history. Asking myself, how am I complicit in perpetuating the effects of this history, and more importantly, what can I do in my work to change the dialog, and honor the past while changing the future.”

Outcome Mapping Document

**For reference: the changes I expect to see, would like to see, and would love to see were written on April 15th, 2019. The corresponding table illustrating Progress Markers, Changes I am tracking, and Reflections was completed on June 8th, 2019.*

Changes I **expect to see** from exploring and engaging my research question (6-12 weeks)

- Movement through stages of my own personal racial identity development, as it relates to my work in food and farming
- Active listening for the ways in which racism is or is not talked about in circles of farmers and food systems people in my community
- Deepening relationships with farmers and food systems people in my community through conversation around race and whiteness
- Ability to spot my own racial detours and blind spots

Changes I **would like to see** from continued, sustained engagement with my research question (3-6 months)

- Invite conversations and learning about the deep history and foundation of agriculture in the US, and the inequities that persist in agriculture today as a result
- Openness to connect with the past so as to show up more fully as a farmer in the present
- Ability to speak with strength about the core purpose of this project and this work

Changes I **would love to see** from wrapping up my project and moving beyond the timeline of this program (6 months - 1 year)

- Attract others interested in the intersection of racial equity and agriculture as accountability buddies, thinking partners, and collaborators
- Enhanced awareness of joy and love as central to this work
- Generation of practices and community to continue doing this work

Activities	Changes I'm tracking/what's happening	Reflection/notes on changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Invited conversations with others in my community → Awareness of race, racial dynamics and power dynamics in spaces I occupy, developing ability to notice when race is not talked about → Seeking relationship, connections with others = show up at events, convene conversations → Workshop proposal to NESAWG → <i>Dawnland</i> movie screening → Slam Stand #3 → Searching for personal ancestry information to connect to my family history → Lots of journaling and reflection on how to center love, transition from a system that centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Changes in comfort talking about this work—improves with practice; goals and intentions are crystallizing for me as my inquiry develops and I continue to engage resources/attend events/have conversation → Uncovering models of white people engaged in anti-racism work gives me permission to dive deeper, keep learning, crystallize my values → Beginning to understand the way I have been conditioned to disconnect, finding connection so as to overcome this → Project now has an arc/story that I can tell about the emergence of my learning - makes it easier to talk about than at earlier stages when I still felt unclear about the purpose of this work → Drawn to this work in a way that asks me to re-align my priorities and make changes in my professional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Shift in my interests and priorities → Deeper connection to past and future and understanding of my role in connecting the past, present, and future → Building excitement and enthusiasm about the possibilities, about asking the questions that will lead to change → Observing and learning about practices for connection, tracking a desire to bring rigor toward developing my own practices to connect → Thinking toward next steps—how to move resources to communities of color → Recognizing the tension of telling my story of discovering whiteness as both potentially tender and painful for people of color <i>and</i> as a necessary invitation to other white people to understand and interrogate whiteness → How to lift up models in this work in order to exemplify alternatives to being

<p>extraction toward a culture of care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Considering how to center love at work, how to “have reverence for that which gives us life” → Still working on articulating my specific practices → Slowly building community of others in this work 	<p>life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Growing understanding of whiteness and whiteness as a tool to divide → Working to center connection, both physical and spiritual → Greater comfort reaching out to others modeling this work to connect and collaborate - slowly building community of accountability buddies → Initially seeking creation of a tool to tell my story of this work (article, blog) but now focused on myself as the tool through embodying my values → Recognizing a blurred line between project and life - project is surfacing in my central values to live by 	<p>complicit in an oppressive system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Seeking a path that honors my gifts and provides an invitation to others to bring their gifts to building food systems rooted in love and care
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APPENDIX H: SLAM STAND FEEDBACK

Feedback from Slam Stand 1, November 28, 2018

<i>Feedback Giver</i>	<i>Feedback</i>
Jennifer Lentfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the word “farmer” mean to you? What did that word mean to you when you were young and how were those ideas formed? Were people around you farmers? How do you see the term now and how did it become part of your identity? (Hint: Perhaps it’s always been a changing/evolving role in your life.) • See other examples of white folks stumbling through, such as Mark Bittman very publicly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ https://newfoodeconomy.org/young-black-farmers-mark-bittman-land-reform/ ○ https://pagesix.com/2017/12/11/food-writer-mark-bittman-issues-apology-after-farming-comments/ ○ https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/26/opinion/farming-organic-nature-movement.html • To ground you throughout this inquiry: Everybody eats.
Sharon Bridgforth	<p>https://americanstudies.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Keyword%20Coalition_Readings.pdf</p> <p>https://combaheerivercollective.weebly.com/ https://www.chimamanda.com/book/we-should-all-be-feminists/ https://vimeo.com/78945479</p> <p>Question: What are you doing to prepare for what you will risk and lose as you do this? (+1 from Jennifer)</p> <p>A Book: “The Warmth of Other Suns” by Isabel Wilkerson</p>
Kelly Clark Keefe	<p>I am wondering how you are thinking about the ways in which you intend to explore what is a largely autobiographical kind of question... is it going to be a reflective process? Are you going to engage others in a dialogue or will you keep a dream journal... variety of approaches and techniques... curious about direction your exploration takes... how are you holding a lot of the framing concepts that you use like “woman” and “white” and how you are going to complicate those as a person who has a certain positionality as a White woman, especially as you are bringing that into relationship with notions of dismantling bias and racism... how are you going to work with those terms so they don’t become too universal in a way... also the extent to which socioeconomic status might end up being another slice of how you think about and walk with this complicated question around farming?</p>
Danyelle OHara	<p>I think it’s a great project and I just want to offer and I experience that there is real excitement about having wandered into this path... your excitement is palpable and</p>

	<p>there is also the shame... “I can’t believe I didn’t know this” element... we start where we start... it’s a beautiful and awesome thing that you are in it... I encourage you to stay in that space... that’s where the really good energy is...</p> <p>It might be interesting to explore land/farm/food work in other regions, like the south. https://earthseedlandcoop.org/about/, https://dukeendowment.org/file/1885, http://www.federationsoutherncoop.com/, https://openforestry.org/sflr/</p>
Connor Stedman	<p>Great question, a couple of thoughts... I am going to put a few offered book resources in the document related to the role of enslaved African people in building food systems and cuisines in the Americas... back stories related to the question you are asking...</p> <p>Michael Twitty - <i>The Cooking Gene</i> Judith Carney - <i>In the Shadow of Slavery</i>; and, <i>Black Rice</i></p> <p>Decolonization is not a metaphor... read and/or read again... related to that I would invite an exploration of “in working to move out of the perpetrator role, is there another position to move into other than the savior role”</p> <p>What does this question look like through the lens of Sayra’s work on Nanopolitics?</p>

Feedback from Slam Stand 2, March 20, 2019

<i>Feedback Giver</i>	<i>Feedback</i>
Vini	<p>Have you heard about Castanea Fellowship? Heal Food Alliance? Also, consider books and articles by Raj Patel. And the powerful international social movement of peasants - La Via Campesina and their approaches to multiracial collaboration.</p> <p>International sphere doing a better job at the intersections of racial justice and food justice - important to see this as a model, not just look within the US</p> <p>Castanea - supporting the next generation of food sovereignty with depth of racial justice analysis; connect with this on your next project phase</p>
Mohamad	<p>Food Solutions New England http://www.foodsolutionsne.org/</p> <p>What would it be like to bring the intentions for centering love and joy right in there with that real nuanced, micro-scale noticing of patterns of power, privilege and difference... balancing the both/and of a sharp systemic analysis with love and compassion at all scales.</p> <p>Nuanced noticing with racial justice lens. What would it be like to pull the love piece into this noticing, on this micro-level? This brings an analysis piece into this. All about othering and belonging.</p>

Emil	<p>Curious to hear more about your learnings about whiteness, in your own experience of yourself and in the systems/spaces you occupy. Anything that has been surprising about it or particularly sticky?</p> <p>Humility that you are approaching this journey around whiteness and the ways it operates on many levels</p> <p>In following your ideals toward talking about this stuff, would be curious to hear you sharing the learnings about whiteness</p>
Zac	<p>Questions (transcribed from video): When you said that the organization you work for was a white organization, that caught my attention. I think you meant it is comprised of white people, but is it possibly also a white organization (the organization itself). What might whiteness be on an organizational or structural or, value, world based level, and what are the implications of that?</p> <p>Orientation toward joy is notable, because many times white people are coming from a place of shame, or guilt. Have you been encountering this in your work or in yourself? How have you been working with/ dealing with this? Probably many of the people you work with didn't get into organic farming to deal with structural and systemic racism, so what are the reactions when you're at a conference and you're bringing this up?</p>

Feedback from Slam Stand 3, June 13, 2019

Although Slam Stand 3 was not officially part of the MLS requirements for the Capstone Project, my advisor Scott Nine encouraged me to use this as a practice for checking-in and identifying anything that was missing from my project at this point. I shared a video of my 5-minute project update with Scott, who provided verbal feedback over the phone, and my friend and colleague Cristy Chung, who provided the following written feedback via email:

Reactions, Reflections & Questions from Cristy Chung:

- I love how clear and strong you are and I love hearing about the path that you have taken and are on.
- The place that made me pause and kind of made my heart hurt is when you say "your story should not be valuable..." Your story is an important one to tell as you are learning to "restory" the history that you grew up with because you are white and it could really

help other white people. It's reminding me about the 4Rs/4Ds (attached) that I share one time with our group. There is a webinar *Locating Oneself* that includes this if you are interested and it is described in a "healing cookbook" that I was part of creating (p20)

- Weaving together a world without violence: A collection of principles, practices and recipes for healing [resource referenced in Appendix B of this report, p. 26]
- Curious about your audience - it seems like white folks who are farming or interested in farming... If that is the case then how would that be harmful to POC? Is there a way to name the responsibility you feel and have as a white person doing this work or in the telling of the story? When you think about sharing your story with POCs what would you want them to hear? There is an important piece of work for white folks to do with each other around healing from whiteness that is not the work of POCs.
- What is the invitation to white folks? Here's what I heard:
 - learning about racism and whiteness and resisting whiteness
 - caring for the land, self and each other as an act of resistance
 - understanding the role that capitalism plays in farming in this country and resisting
 - what else?
- What does resistance and/or interrupting habits of whiteness and White Supremacy look like in farming?
- What are the practices that you want to invite white people who are farming into?
- Your level of comfort and strength in talking directly about whiteness is super important for other white folks to see, hear, feel and learn from. What helped you get comfortable with learning and talking about racism and whiteness? Are there habits that you have had

to interrupt? What practices are you using to find strength and stay grounded? What if you get triggered? What do you do?

- How does the historical context of racism in the food system manifest in your everyday work?
- Is there a role that healing might play in the work you are doing? What would that be, look like and feel like?
- *What is my role as a white farmer? to What does it look like to farm in a way that rejects white supremacy that recognizes the harms of whiteness and resists them?* I love how your inquiry has shifted and I wonder if there is room for envisioning the future that is not just about resistance.
- *"Lead with love and care at the center and this practice as a form of resistance"* Would love to hear more about what this looks like.

APPENDIX I: EXCERPTS OF FEEDBACK FROM MY COMMUNITY

The following are selections gathered from written communication. Verbal communications were not recorded, but also provided important feedback and encouragement to continue the practice of conversation and collaboration at the intersection of race and agriculture.

“I love what you write about the history of farming, Megan - your intellect, your passion, your commitment to truth and justice, the beauty of your spirit -- are embedded in your words. I am paying attention, you are educating me.”

-Written communication, 5/5/19

“You're the best and I so value our time together. You are an old soul with so much wisdom to share and I appreciate it so much.”

-Email communication, 6/21/19

“I love what you are up to and love getting to be part of it. Thank you so very much for including me. Your level of comfort and strength in talking directly about whiteness is super important for other white folks to see, hear, feel and learn from.”

-Email communication in response to video of Slam Stand 3, 6/13/19

“It was really great to meet you too! Thanks so much for sharing the video. I haven't seen or heard about it so I'll check it out this week and get back to you. And look forward to staying in touch!”

-Email communication received from a co-participant at the Uprooting Racism in the Food System Training at Soul Fire Farm in response to my sharing a resource, 6/27/19

“It was so great being with all of you thoughtful ladies last night. Thank you!!!”

“Agreed! So grateful to gather and share. Thanks for organizing, Meg. Already looking forward to the next one!”

“It was great to meet you too and I’m excited to hear more about your program and path as well. I’m hosting my first documentary potluck club next weekend!”

-Email communications received after hosting a potluck, film screening and discussion in my community, June 2019

“Dear Ms. Browning,

Thank you for taking the time to write this note, for your kind words and for being a Race/Related subscriber.

It’s interesting that you should write to me. This week I’m meeting with some of my colleagues on the Cooking desk to talk about a collaboration. I forwarded your note to one of the editors.

Right now we’re planning to focus on the world of black chefs across America. If you have additional thoughts you would like to share, please let me know.

Thanks again!”

-Email response from editor of Race/Related, a New York Times email listserv, 5/18/19

APPENDIX J: FSNE NETWORK LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE APPLICATION

Application for Food Solutions New England (FSNE) Network Leadership Institute submitted in May 2019, and accepted in June 2019.

Please share your top 3 reasons for wanting to participate in the Network Leadership Institute.

1. Join an existing network of leaders in New England who are collaborating on visioning the future of food with a focus on racial equity.
2. Learn from others in the New England food system with perspectives and experience that differ from mine in order to broaden my personal and professional community. In turn offer my experience, knowledge, perspective and privilege to this community.
3. Get to know the FSNE model of community and network building as a model for community organizing around food, justice and continued viability of a food system.

What do you hope to gain from the Institute?

I have been farming for eight years in New England, in mostly white communities, and looking for ways to actively be in solidarity with people whose stories are disappeared by systems of oppression in this country, and to lift up these voices and perspectives. I am getting to know the privileges that I have been afforded by my white identity, and figuring out what it looks and feels like to make social change and racial justice central to farming and food systems work. I hope to grow my capacity to engage with racism and injustice that is present in our food system today, and build relationships with a team of leaders all working together on visioning the future of the food system in our communities.

How do you see your work connecting to the broader FSNE network?

I am looking for support in holding myself accountable to this work and hoping in turn to give that support to others. I see the relationships built in this network of leaders as a means to practice reciprocity of accountability with folks beyond my immediate community and further into the region. I bring my perspective as a farmer in Vermont, and hope to be part of a web of connections across the region that can work collaboratively to leverage change.

How does your work reflect a commitment to the values of the FSNE network (including Democratic Empowerment, Racial Equity and Dignity for All, Sustainability, and Trust)?

I am committed to deepening my learning by engaging in workshops, conferences and events that provide opportunities to practice my values, which align very closely with those of the FSNE network.

Democratic Empowerment

In my volunteer work with the Vermont Chapter of the National Young Farmers Coalition (VYFC), I help to organize young farmers in the state to serve as a collective voice for their needs. VYFC works to build social community as a step toward resource sharing as well as build relationships with our state congressional leaders to share our stories and bring about change in agricultural policy in our state. Ultimately our goal is to remove barriers for young farmers to engage in farming as a viable career in Vermont, a goal that has democratic empowerment at its core.

Racial Equity and Dignity for All

In my graduate work for UVM, I am exploring the role that I can play as a white farmer in disrupting patterns of racism in the food system. Through this work I have learned about the history of injustice in the US food system, and the ways this history continues to play out today

in marginalizing the people whose land and labor built up the wealth of this country and the agricultural system we live in today. As part of this work I have attended workshops, trainings, and conferences exploring these themes and am committed to building relationships through this work that hold me accountable to resisting the system of white supremacy and building a future that holds racial equity as a central value.

Sustainability and Trust

In all areas of my life, both personally and professionally, I am building a broad understanding of sustainability as a driver for how we form relationships, honor the past, and work together toward a new future. I believe that it is only when we begin to shift our mindset toward understanding that what is best for ourselves as individuals is best for the whole of humanity, that we are able to shift toward a truly sustainable way forward. This transition will take trust, love, and commitment to doing work that can unravel the white supremacist system.

What particular areas of expertise or skills would you bring to the Institute?

I bring love, joy, and humor. I bring an intimate knowledge of the food system as I understand it from working in agriculture in New England for the past eight years. I bring openness to learning more, and building relationships across difference. I bring high-level logistics and organizational skills, built up over four years of coordinating a conference for farmers, gardeners, and food enthusiasts in Vermont. I bring my network and relationships with farmers and food systems folks throughout Vermont. I bring my perspective as a young farmer, and motivation to keep farming a viable career path for young people. I bring a background in theater arts and performance. I bring a balance of understanding both urban and rural environments, having grown up in New York City and lived in New England since graduating college. I bring a strong work ethic and years of experience working collaboratively and in community with others, from

growing up as a camper and then counselor at sleepaway summer camp, to managing farm crews. I bring my white privilege, and my responsibility to leverage this privilege for making radical change.

Please share anything else you would like us to consider about your application.

One of the most illuminating parts of my work over the past few years as I come to understand whiteness and work to disrupt racism in the food system, is the necessity of being in community with others doing this work. As I sought out existing groups and people to collaborate with in New England, I was thrilled to find FSNE as an organization with whom my values align so closely that is actively cultivating a community for having these important conversations. It would be an honor and a privilege to participate in this network, and it is my hope that this application reflects my commitment to bringing all that I have to this work.