

transitionfidalgo.org



TRANSITION FIDALGO

ANNUAL REPORT

2023

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Our Mission

Our mission is to spur local responses to climate change that strengthen our community and help heal the planet. TF urges a move away from fossil fuels through decreasing energy demand, increasing efficiency, supporting renewable energy, and fostering the local production of food, energy, and goods.

We envision a world where humanity has drastically reduced its reliance on fossil fuels, living wisely and well within planetary limits.

What We Do

Transition Fidalgo is a 501(c)(3), non-profit, community-driven organization. We sponsor events to help Fidalgo Island and the surrounding area become a resilient, close-knit, and caring community, able to sustain itself and thrive. We focus on creating opportunities to help move our community toward a positive, low-carbon future.



Let us acknowledge we reside on the ancestral lands and waters of the Coast Salish people who have called this place home since time immemorial and let us honor inherent, aboriginal and treaty rights that have been passed down from generation to generation.

Transition Fidalgo is based on Fidalgo Island, the traditional territories of Samish, Swinomish, Upper Skagit, Lummi, Sauk-Suiattle, and The Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group.

We feel honored to learn from and commit to finding avenues to support Indigenous voices and interests.

Message from Our Board President

I am proud to have finished my third year as the Transition Fidalgo President. 2023 has been a significant year of success for Transition Fidalgo. We have reached many milestones to help our community become more resilient in face of continued global warming issues. Here are some of our notable achievements:

Transition Fidalgo just completed our fifth year of studying the health of the Anacortes Community Forest Lands. This has been a major project involving many volunteers who are collecting data on how our forest lands are adapting to the much longer, hotter summers than historically recorded.



Bud Anderson, Board President, at a Fix-It Day

Extensive data on soil moisture and how this affects tree mortality is being studied. There seems to be a connection between warmer weather, tree species decay, and the topography of the land. All these factors are under technical review. We are looking forward to detailed reports in the future after more data is collected and analyzed.

Hiring our first Program Coordinator!

Transition Fidalgo has hired a Program Coordinator for the first time in our history. Initially, Transition Fidalgo made a two-year commitment for a half-time position to enhance our outreach and improve our effectiveness in the community. Kelsey Kittleson was selected to fill this position and Transition Fidalgo is pleased with her knowledge base, expertise, enthusiasm, and "Team" approach to problem-solving. Additionally, Kelsey is working closely with the Anacortes High School Green Club and has supported their major fundraiser of shopping bag manufacturing and selling this winter. The Anacortes Green Club is currently developing an exciting project for a hydroponic greenhouse and we look forward to supporting this project.

Fix-It-Days continues to be a popular program as we enter our 12th year of volunteer support to our community. Transition Fidalgo has been awarded our first grant ever from the Washington Department of Ecology to improve our outreach with this program which we will be doing in 2024.

Program Updates

The Anacortes Middle School Garden continues to thrive after we assisted the school in constructing a large greenhouse on campus last year. Transition volunteers continue to work with the students, and support the garden during the summer.

Share the Bounty continues to provide free food to local citizens. We put out three food stands in the community each summer and supply fresh vegetables.

In 2023 we awarded a \$2,000 Scholarship to a local graduate from Anacortes High School. This award was given to a graduating student who demonstrated leadership skills in school and supported Transition Fidalgo's mission, vision, and values. We plan on continuing to award scholarships in the future.

Personal Reflections

It is my pleasure to work with our entire Board and many local residents to promote our goals of Transition Fidalgo. The Mission, Vision, and Values of Transition Fidalgo continue to align with my personal thoughts of helping our community create a sustainable future. Climate change is not new; however, the effects of climate change are now being felt by everyone on the planet.

Recently I researched Edward Teller and found an early warning of this potential problem. Teller gave a talk at a symposium organized by the American Petroleum Institute and the Columbia Graduate School of Business for the centennial of the American oil industry. Note that Edward was Director of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, chaired the committee that founded the Space Sciences Laboratory at Berkeley, and was a professor of physics at the University of California, Berkeley.

My research on Edward Teller stated that he was one of the first prominent people to raise the danger of climate change driven by the burning of fossil fuels. At an address to the membership of the American Chemical Society in December 1957, Teller warned that the large amount of carbon-based fuel that had been burned since the mid-19th century was increasing the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which would "act in the same way as a greenhouse and will raise the temperature at the surface." Additionally, he stated that "the energy resources of the past must be supplemented...to prevent a greenhouse effect." Teller's scientific knowledge in 1957 and his vision of the future has proven to be accurate. It is now up to us to follow his scientific advice and provide renewable resources to sustain a viable planet.

Bud Anderson

Bud Anderson

President Transition Fidalgo 2022-2024

Board of Directors



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Board Vice President



Warren Carr
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Phoebe Barnard
Board Member



Peter Heffelfinger
Board Member



Rich Bergner
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Sequoia Ferrel
Board Member



Roger Fuller
Board Member

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Jack Hartt
Administrative Assistant



Kelsey Kittleson
Program Coordinator



Megan Broadie
*Forest Monitoring
Data Manager*

New Additions to Our Team



Kelsey Kittleson
Program Coordinator

Kelsey (She/hers) joined Transition Fidalgo in Spring 2023 as our Program Coordinator. She holds a BA in Environmental Studies from Western Washington University's College of the Environment and has a background in environmental education and program management. Kelsey also works for another environmental non-profit, The Madrona Institute. Previously, she managed the San Juan Islands Youth Conservation Corps program, engaging local youth in outdoor field projects and experiential learning. Kelsey lives in Anacortes and has a deep sense of place and connection to this region. Kelsey is deeply committed to pursuing climate resilience through community collaboration, youth engagement, and localized solutions while utilizing an environmental justice lens.



Megan Broadie
Forest Monitoring Data Manager

Megan (She/hers) joined Transition Fidalgo as the Forest Monitoring Data Manager in the summer of 2023. She joined Transition Fidalgo after completing her master's in Geospatial Science at the University of Colorado in Denver and moving back to her native Washington. Megan has an undergraduate degree from Western Washington University in Management Information Systems. She also works for Island County as the GIS manager and has previously worked in other branches of local and federal government. Megan is located in Anacortes and enjoys the beauty that the area has to offer. She frequently visits the ACFL to take in the wildlife and dense forest landscape. She is passionate about conservation and climate research to better understand how we can best protect our forests.



Peter Heffelfinger
Board Member

Peter (He/him) joined Transition Fidalgo as a Board member in Spring 2023. He holds an English degree and taught in New England before relocating to Anacortes in 1973. With expertise as a Master Gardener and extensive involvement in local organizations and projects, including roles in oral history projects, museum curation, and directing the Lincoln Theatre. Peter is deeply rooted in the community, volunteering for various initiatives like Garden-to-Kitchen classes, monitoring invasive species as a Salish Sea Steward, Anacortes Arts Festival, and OARS.



GARDEN TO KITCHEN PROGRAM

Anacortes Middle School

Written by Laurie Sherman & Warren Carr

New year, new drip watering system!

As our summers grow hotter and longer, the need for efficient watering methods becomes a priority. Rather than hand watering the Greenhouse and some 50 raised beds, we found a solution provided by one of our members, Taft Perry! She rose to the occasion and used her considerable skill to bless us with an energy-saving drip watering design. This design allowed us to apply for and receive a grant from the Anacortes Schools Foundation (ASF). While technically it's not that difficult to install a drip system, the scale and scope of digging gave us pause. Again this ignited a positive solution.

We reached out to Anacortes High School's Green Club and the Junior Business Leaders of America for some help. To support the clubs for their efforts, we asked for extra funding from ASF, to "hire" the clubs for their service and add to their coffers. They answered the call and over a weekend in May, a powerful partnership of students and TF volunteers convened to complete the project!



"Teams of high school students, along with their club advisors, worked for 2 days to see the project to completion. Besides helping with digging, they were quick to grasp the techniques of sealing pipes and linking hoses and super fun to work with! We are looking forward to collaborating on more projects with them. The drip system has served us well; it saves time, and precious water, provides consistent watering on timers, and makes for much healthier, happier, bigger plants!"

- Laurie Sherman, G2K Project Lead

Students at our middle school are learning to care for a garden and grow food for our community!

The last 2 years we've had the great pleasure to work with AMS teacher Molly Robbins, who keeps the students engaged and excited about the whole process. The classroom has 6 fully stocked cooking stations and the students work together to create delicious food. During the school year, TF volunteers work with students weekly to guide them in the many skills involved with gardening. Students take responsibility for mowing, weeding, composting, seed blocking, transplanting, harvesting and eating fresh organic food from their own garden. Carrots and Sorrel were favorite "grazing foods" this year, along with the ever popular Russian kale. YES, RAW KALE!



Compost crew!

In addition to getting their hands in the dirt, students help with repairs and work on upkeep and construction of new projects. In the fall we built 3 very large, deep, wooden planter boxes for use inside the Greenhouse. Students unloaded wood, swung hammers, mastered drills and saws and constructed three sizable raised beds to grow fresh food much of the year. Funds for this greenhouse improvement were awarded by a generous grant from the Anacortes Rotary Club.



Left and below: students building the boxes



Looking Ahead

Currently, we are seeking grant money to support the expansion of this program. It takes several hours a week of volunteer time to organize and coordinate people to make this project a success.

We have had 3 very successful years and hope we can continue growing the garden footprint in Anacortes. Every school has a garden but very few are in use. Imagine the reward if each school is growing. Every child in Anacortes would experience a sense of accomplishment and know the value of the harvest. Each summer the expanded garden footprint would provide a source of food security for our island.



In the meantime, we plan to fill out the AMS Garden Project to include an after-school Garden Club. Through the club, we can do creative projects like flower bouquets, wreath making, and braiding garlic, the sky is the limit! The club will be able to take their creations to market to help fund future club initiatives. And the students will be able to take ownership by representing their project to the community at large.



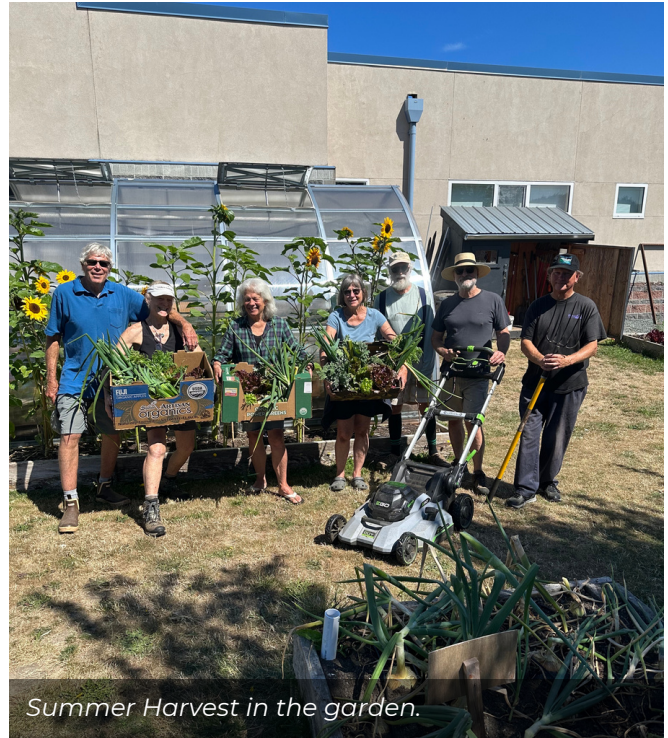
Volunteers Needed!

Doesn't this look like a blast?!

If you'd like to support students' self-reliance and community giving, JOIN US!

From September - June: we work with 7th and 8th graders in small groups, 1 day a week, for 1-3 hours depending on your availability. **Summer:** From mid-June through August, when students are away, we need help with watering and harvesting (for the free Share-the-Bounty stands) with occasional planting and weeding.

The time required is minimal and flexible based on your schedule. We would love your help! Please contact us if interested in volunteering.



Summer Harvest in the garden.



Garden plant identification!

We deeply appreciate the continued support of this Garden Project from our business partners and local organizations!

Our HUGE thanks to:

ACE Hardware
Sebos Hardware
Sunland Topsoil
Christianson's Nursery
Frontier Building Supplies
Sign Dog
Skagit Salvage
Anacortes Rotary Club
Anacortes Schools Foundation





FIX-IT DAYS

Repair & Restore Events

Written by Kelsey Kittleson

Giving broken items new life

2023 was a successful year for Fix-it days. We held quarterly events at the Anacortes Farmers Market and held our first-ever event at the Mount Vernon Community Library.

We are very excited to announce that Fix-It days will be expanding significantly in 2024 as Transition Fidalgo was awarded a large grant from the Department of Ecology. Stay tuned for more details!

Our commitment to supporting the local community remains steadfast as we continue to offer accessible repair services and divert fixable items from the landfill.



Volunteers fix a lamp at the Mount Vernon Library

93

**Items Fixed,
Sharpened, and
Mended**

9

**Dedicated
volunteers**

\$1,052.25

raised





SHARE THE BOUNTY

Community Produce Stands

Written by Evelyn Adams

Sharing our bounty!

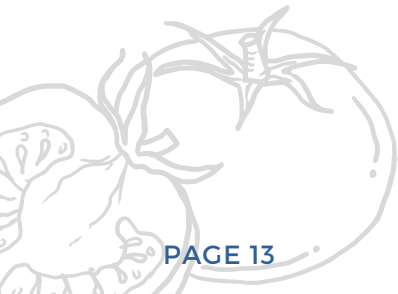
Our colorful Share-the-Bounty stands returned for a fourth summer to their posts at the Anacortes Library, Harbor House, and Senior Center. Those looking for free garden goodies helped themselves to home-grown food and flowers donated by generous local gardeners and by our good friends at the Anacortes Middle School Garden.

Many thank-yous came our way for this communal sharing!

Hand-crafted by volunteers, decorated by local artists, and regularly monitored by volunteers, the stands have the double benefit of reducing food waste as well as strengthening the community by providing access to free healthy, home-grown food.



A full Share the Bounty Box





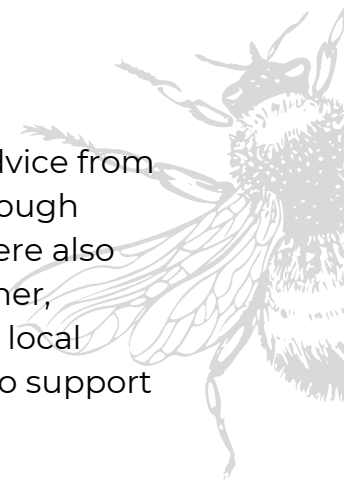
FIDALGO GROWS

Community Blog

Written by Evelyn Adams

Voices of Gardening Experts

In this fourth year of “Fidalgo Grows”, our blog bloomed with expert advice from Peter Heffelfinger and Julia Frisbie, local gardeners who guided us through setbacks to successes with humor, wisdom, and helpful photos. We were also delighted to add Linda Zielinski to the blog. A longtime Fidalgo gardener, chicken maven and uke instructor, Linda has a new feather in her cap: local ambassador for the Xerces Society. Her lively posts help us learn how to support the oh-so-important pollinators in our gardens.



A wealth of posts are available on our website >> ‘Learn’ >> ‘Garden Blog’ where you can easily scroll through and learn the dos and don’ts of gardening on Fidalgo.

Learn about a "yard chard" that never quits, how to help plants thrive in drought, "sex in the garden", crops that will survive the winter, and more. Just dig in! Into both the blog and the soil.

“Please plant a garden, even if you’re not sure which way is the right way. Encourage lots of different plants to grow in it. And then help your neighbors do the same. And then let’s lobby the city to preserve existing green spaces and transform easements into polycultures. And on and on, until every square inch of this island is too beloved to despoil.... By acknowledging that everything we create is part of a living ecosystem, we discover both responsibility and belonging.”

- Julia Frisbie



DEEP RESILIENCE CIRCLES

Sparking Inner Resilience

Written by Evelyn Adams

Practices to develop and maintain emotional resiliency

Transition groups strive to grow resilience on two fronts: outer (reducing fossil-fuel reliance, restoring the natural world, sharpening life skills, growing community connections) and inner (fostering mental and emotional fortitude, connection to Self, to each other, to the Earth).

These are daunting days, with multiple crises upending the world as we've known it. For those who long to find a community in which they can safely share their fear, anger, and grief, the Circles allow us to give difficult feelings the attention they deserve. Because it's only through honoring and processing our pain that we can use it to fuel life-affirming action.

The six-session Circles include practices to develop and maintain emotional resiliency, as well as homework to help us navigate a journey that involves both overwhelming loss and transformative opportunity. Groups are led by Eileen Templin, a licensed psychotherapist who volunteers her time.

"In challenging times, a supportive community is one of our greatest assets. And, for personal resilience, fully facing our predicament and our emotions is of utmost importance. Despite our natural resistance, there is great value in doing this."

- Eileen Templin



THE PATHFINDER

Monthly Newsletter

Written by Evelyn Adams

Navigating the climate crisis

Compiled, edited, and written by Evelyn Adams, *The Pathfinder* dives into the climate and biodiversity crises. While it refuses to soft-pedal the unraveling of our world, respecting the reader's ability to handle hard info, The Pathfinder gives equal weight to the many good things that are rising in response, as well as how to face challenges that can easily feel overwhelming.

The monthly newsletter offers reflections and guidance from those learning to navigate a world of unimaginable loss, exploring questions we all need to ask ourselves in times such as these, including:

- What paths of service should we pursue in a time of collapse?
- How do we hasten a paradigm shift from a worldview of human supremacy and separation to one that fosters a loving coexistence with Earth?
- How do we care for ourselves and each other as things fall apart, and where do we find our hope and our joy now?

Join us on the pivotal journey of our time!

What people are saying...

"Your Pathfinder was extraordinarily powerful. The Reflection was touching, heartfelt, and beautifully written, actually poetic! The "what we need to know" had my stomach clenched and filled me with a deep sadness. And, I'm so grateful that you are telling the truth that we do need to know! Thank you!!!"

"You are faithful to point to the path that leads to better lives, while also faithfully recording the path we are on. ...Your Pathfinder offers joy, between the lines, in showing us the work ahead."



FOREST MONITORING

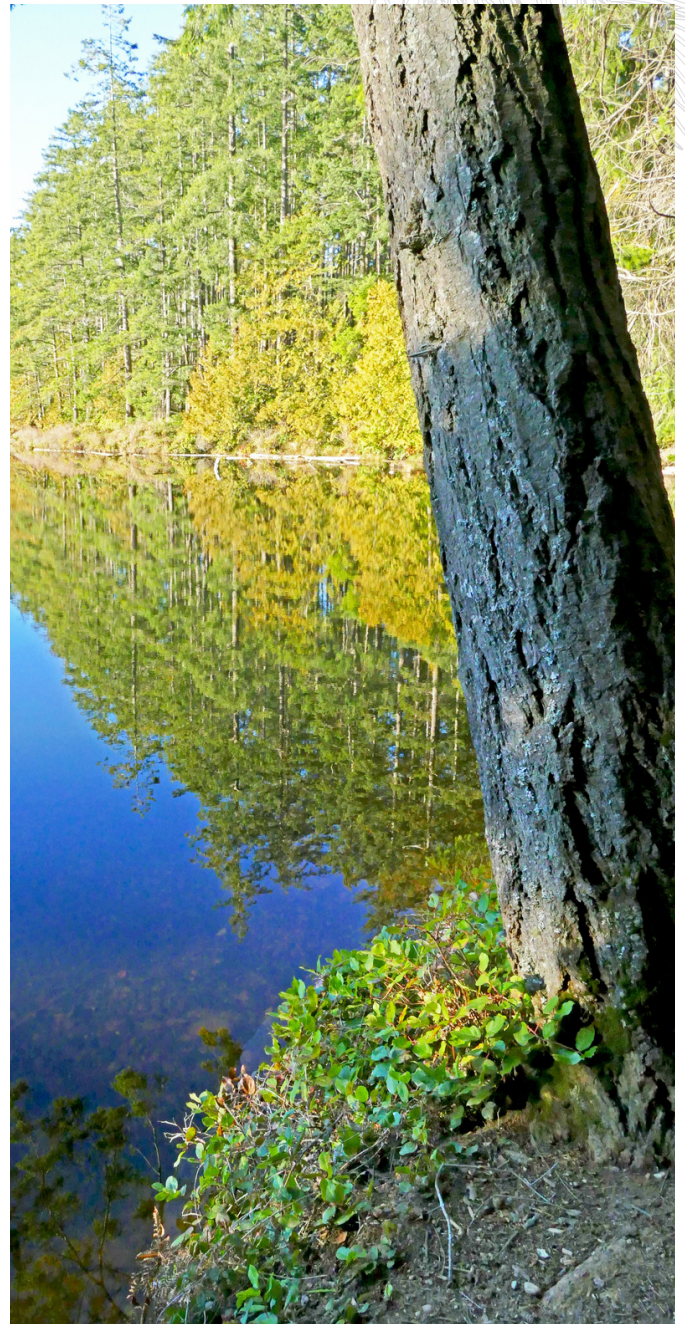
Anacortes Community Forest Lands

Written by Eric Shen

Supporting the ACFL

Our forests are critical to all of us on so many levels. Forest ecosystems clean the air, filter water supplies, control floods and erosion, sustain biodiversity, and provide opportunities for recreation, education, and cultural enrichment. Perhaps the most important service is the ability to remove CO₂ from the atmosphere, which has become critical in the fight to maintain a survivable future. Removal of CO₂ through photosynthesis is one of a very few proven methods known to perform this beneficial service without creating negative side effects.

Understanding the health of our forests and causes of stress is the first step in establishing a plan to maintain the health and vigor of the ecosystems that make up a forest. In 2019, Transition Fidalgo, in partnership with the City of Anacortes, initiated a monitoring program to evaluate the current health of the forest ecosystem and to establish long-term surveys of these ecosystems. There has always been a desire to conduct such a monitoring program; the observed stress from hot temperatures and the long drought period in 2015/16 provided the impetus for Transition Fidalgo to launch the ACFL Forest Monitoring Program.



Our Goals

The monitoring program has 3 primary goals, which guide our 7 projects in how surveys are conducted and what questions need to be answered:

1. Conduct a long-term monitoring program that provides an overall assessment of the health of ACFL terrestrial and aquatic systems over time.
2. Provide an opportunity for community members to develop a deeper understanding of the forest covering Fidalgo Island through hands-on participation in the monitoring program.
3. Provide City managers and advising boards with data to make decisions about the use and management of the ACFL



A volunteer measures a tree

This year's forest monitoring annual report (on our website) focused on what was observed in 2023 and talks about results where there is enough information to form an opinion. The Forest Stewards worked to link their observations with information gathered from sister projects, such as the weather/climate project and the soil moisture project, to start to understand what stressors are affecting the forest ecosystems.

In addition to our survey activities, the forest monitoring program works to keep our volunteers informed of current forest science and what our projects are learning. A number of articles that discuss forest ecology, weather trends, soil moisture, etc. were featured in our Forest Stewards newsletters. In April, a great presentation on forest ecology by Roger Fuller talked about the relationships between forest species, both large and small, plant and animal.

Thank you to our Volunteers

Transition Fidalgo gives all our Forest Stewards a big thank you for your years of dedicated work in conducting these surveys. Some of you have been going out to do your observations monthly and even as frequently as a couple of times a week. It is your diligence that has produced the observations and early conclusions we see in this annual report. For a full list of volunteers, please reference our 2023 ACFL Monitoring Annual Report.



YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS

Supporting the Next Generation

Written by Bud Anderson & Kelsey Kittleson

Future Climate Stewards

In 2023, we awarded \$2,000 to Noah Dunham (He/him). Noah grew up in Anacortes and is actively involved in his community through various extracurriculars, including being involved with AHS Green Club leadership. Noah is currently studying Mathematics at Whitworth University. We wish him luck in his journey!

Transition Fidalgo will offer up to \$1,000 in scholarship(s) in 2024 to a deserving local graduating student or students. This will be our eighth year of being able to support local students who have demonstrated environmental awareness in our community. The award goes to students who have been active in a leadership role working with fellow students to promote programs that emphasize sustainability. In 2023, we awarded the maximum distribution of \$2,000 to an AHS graduating senior.

All scholarship money comes from TF membership donations specifically designated for these scholarships. Applications are available on our website.

Noah and family smile with Warren Carr, TF board member.





FIDALGO SEED SHARE

Free Seed at the Anacortes Library

Written by Sequoia Ferrel

Saving Seed

The Fidalgo Seed Share, through the dedication of many volunteers, had a grand opening at our host location inside the Anacortes Public Library on January 28, 2023 (National Seed Swap Day) that was very well attended. During our first season, we put more than 1900 packets of seed out into local gardens. Some of our seed packets have originated from commercial seed packets and much of it has come from local gardeners who have been growing vegetables and flowers in their gardens and saving and selecting seed for hardiness in our bio-region.



“Our goal is to help build a more resilient community food system through the practice of saving and sharing seeds.

“Additionally, we aim to increase the number of gardeners and farmers who recognize the importance of having local control of our seed supply.

“This will ensure the security that comes with it, encouraging more to join us in becoming seed savers for the seed library.”

- Sequoia Ferrel, Transition Fidalgo Board Member

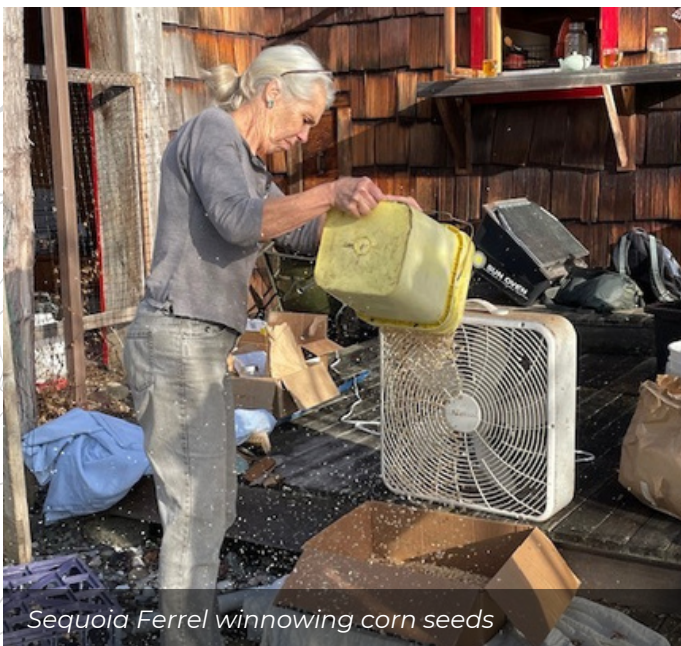
Sharing and saving seeds, growing plants to feed ourselves and support local pollinators ... it all helps to grow a future our children will thank us for!

We also had a booth at the Anacortes Farmers Market in early May at which we distributed free seeds and garden plants. On the educational front we had a presentation at the library on March 29. Sequoia Ferrel and Jan Hersey talked about the seed library, and Linda Zielinski presented on local pollinators. On May 4th, master gardener Dixie Mitchell gave a talk on "Seed Saving for the Pacific Northwest Gardener". September 2023 also saw the beginnings of a seed garden take shape on land donated for that purpose on Gaia Rising Farm on Guemes Island, thanks to more awesome volunteers!



Gathering at Gaia Rising Farm

We established a small plot (that has the possibility of being enlarged in the future) by covering the sod with a compost mix, that is now ready for spring planting in 2024. We are ready to hook up the water storage tank that was purchased for this purpose and to begin our strategic planning. Gardening starts with seeds! And saving seeds to ensure supply as well as a diversity of plants adapted to local growing conditions is a vital part of a strong community food system.



Sequoia Ferrel winnowing corn seeds

Seed-saving is also fun, frugal and fulfilling. Gardeners learn about seeds and their stories, become more self-reliant, and, by helping develop seeds specific to our soils and climate, help increase the resilience of our local food supply. Sharing and saving seeds, growing plants to feed ourselves and support local pollinators ... it all helps to grow a future our children will thank us for!

FINANCIAL REPORT

From our Treasurer

Written by Warren Carr

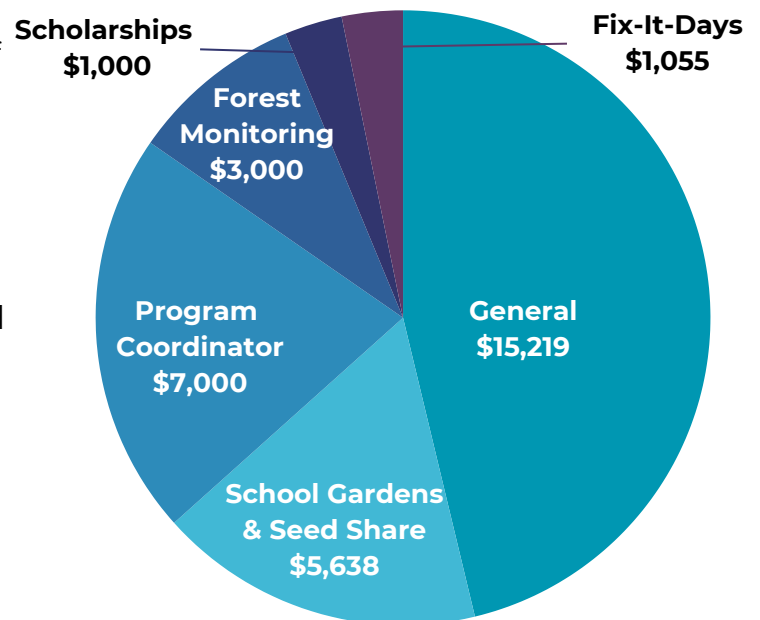
If you have read through other sections of this Annual Report, you know that we were very successful with our accomplishments in 2023. Monitoring the health of the ACFL, building food-related projects, granting scholarships, and encouraging the repair economy received much of our financial support. In addition to project costs, we hired a part-time project coordinator to help expand the many things we do.

When we approved the budget for 2023, we anticipated an operating loss of \$12,650. Because of our strong financial position, we planned to use our reserves to accomplish the many things we do. When the year wrapped up, we were just \$2K short of our Revenue goal, but our actual expenses were almost \$8K lower than we budgeted, reducing our net operating loss to \$6799 (an improvement of \$5860 over projected).

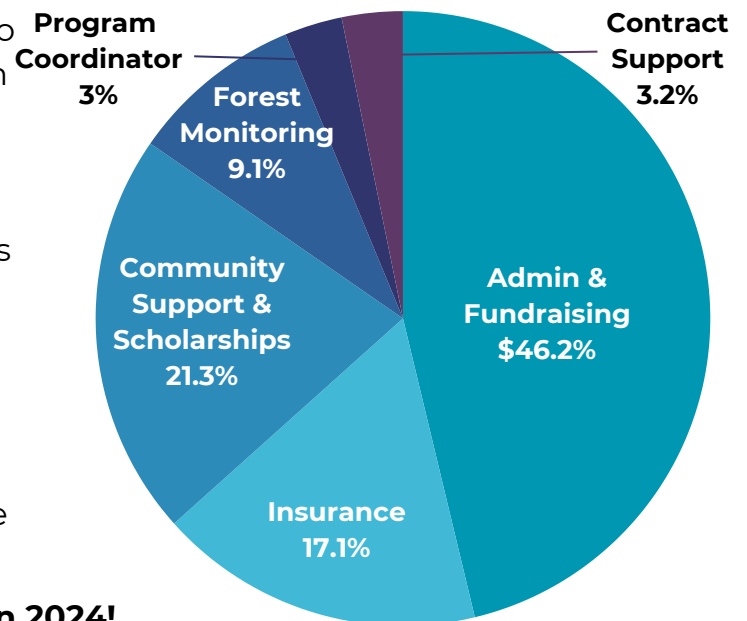
As we proceed into 2024, we remain in a healthy financial position but still anticipate deficit spending, something we hope to reverse in 2025.

Thank you for your continued support in 2024!

Total Donations for 2023: \$32,912



Total Expenses for 2023: \$39,711



Thank You to our Donors



Your generous donations fuel this work, we could not do this without you.

Barbara Cooper
Becky Vavrosky
Betty Kuehn
Bob Anderson
Brian & Linda Wetcher
Bud Anderson
Carol Havens & Vince Streano
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