

Nutwood Farm: a regenerative investment

This list of REGENERATIVE ECONOMY CORE VALUES AND KEY QUESTIONS was developed by Regenerative Finance in partnership with Movement Generation and the Climate Justice Alliance to guide decisions on where to invest and how to evaluate the success of our investments.

1. Builds Community Wealth

How does this investment move capital from large institutions and/or the federal government to many smaller institutions and localities? Does it support the creation of pathways where impacted communities can begin generating their own wealth through productive capital?

Nutwood Farm is a small local diversified farm that is rooted in the hilltown community, committed to sourcing tools, services, and inputs from other local businesses and being civically engaged in the town of Cummington. By demonstrating the economic viability of growing nut crops in our region, Nutwood Farm will open pathways for other local farms to form producer cooperatives and supply new entrepreneurs with the products to develop additional nut-based food, energy, and craft businesses.

2. Shifts Economic Control

How will this investment contribute to the success of the overall project? How will the workers benefit from the investment? Are you willing to hand over your decision-making power as an investor to the workers of the project?

Nutwood Farm is family-owned by first-generation farmers. We have chosen to farm because we believe it is the best investment we can make in our community, our local food system, and for future generations. Given the current barriers to small-scale agriculture, your investment will make it possible for us to realize our full vision of living rich, meaningful lives in a way that most benefits the people, land, and community we belong to.

3. Democratizes the Workplace

How does this investment increase worker rights, ownership, control, and democracy?

Nutwood Farm was conceived from the beginning as a community-centered farm and business. This means we will seek continuous input about how we can best serve and enhance our community. As our business expands, we are committed to offering fair, living wages for our workers in a democratic and collaborative spirit, and we intent to further explore the development of new grower partnerships and/or producer cooperatives to aggregate, process and value-add our nuts into marketable goods.

4. Drives Social Equity

How would this investment address current and historic oppression and exploitation based on racism, sexism, and other forms oppression?

Nutwood Farm is conscious of and sensitive to the long history of oppression and exploitation in agriculture, particularly in New England. As white farm-owners, we are invested in creating a farm model that responds to this violent history with holistic care for the earth and its inhabitants (including ourselves). By building soil, remaining accountable to our community, cultivating relationships with a diversity of people, and treating all our neighbors with dignity and respect, we hope to create a new narrative of history for this long abused place.

5. Advances Regenerative Ecological Economics

How does this investment support ecological resilience, reduce resource extraction and consumption, and restore traditional ways of life that keep communities intact?

Nutwood Farm strives to embody regenerative principles in every way. We are moving beyond sustainability to consider the ways that our impacts can have a regenerative effect on our local ecology, increasing the amount of carbon in the soil, the health of plants and pollinators, and the number and diversity of species in our environment. We recognize that the cycles practiced for centuries by indigenous peoples on this land have been broken, and we hope to find old and new ways to close the loops and restore right relationships between people, land and community.

6. Re-localizes Primary Production and Consumption

How does this investment support the development of local economies?

Nutwood Farm is guided by the principle of economic sufficiency, meaning that we are not seeking to profit endlessly off our land or neighbors. We intend to earn only what we need to live and farm sufficiently, and will support the people and businesses who are similarly committed to developing a strong, self-reliant, diverse, and sufficient local economy.

7. Strengthens the Public Sector

Does this investment move resources and power from the private sector to the public sphere? Where and how?

Nutwood Farm is currently under private stewardship, but we are eager to explore how we can reconceptualize and broaden land ownership to include and benefit more of our community. In addition to actively seeking the participation and partnership of a diversity of people, we are seeking ways to use our acquired knowledge and resources to empower people to do similar work in their own communities, as well as break apart the concentrations of private wealth and property that have long undermined equity and opportunity in our society.

8. Builds Movements and Power

How does this investment connect directly to social movement initiatives and grassroots organizing? Does it create opportunities to build across multiple sectors with a transformative vision?

Nutwood Farm is located within a much larger movement to re-imagine the possibilities of our life and times. We feel connected to intersectional grassroots movements for social, racial, environmental, and economic justice, and understand that our localized work on our farm is just one among many pathways to engage in this broader work. We see many opportunities in the future to collaborate with these movements by offering space, food, and nourishment of a deeper kind to strengthen and support collective action for transformative change.

9. Retains Culture and Tradition

How does this investment support the culture and tradition of the community served by the project? How does this investment contribute to reparations for land and/or labor that has been stolen and/or destroyed by capitalism, colonialism, genocide, and slavery in the community in which it is rooted?

Nutwood Farm is openly exploring appropriate ways to honor the older culture and traditions of our community, both pre- and post-colonialism. In part, we view regenerative perennial agriculture as one form of reparations for the earth itself, as a way of giving back more (in soil and diversity) than we take. We are also seeking guidance on ways that we can reconsecrate this place and offer reparations to the people whose ancestors' lands were stolen and communities destroyed by our ancestors.

10. Restores Indigenous Sovereignty and Promotes Decolonization

Does this project support the returning of land to people indigenous to that land? Does this project support sovereignty of indigenous people on their land? Does it protect sacred sites or honor long-held ways of life and relationship with land? Is the project lead by people native to the land it occupies? Or if not, how are indigenous people involved in or affected by the project?

Nutwood Farm is not currently involved with any indigenous organizations nor undertaking to return land to indigenous peoples. We want to better understand what an appropriate relationship with indigenous peoples might look like and how we can more actively support their sovereignty. We are committed to developing and demonstrating right relationship to the earth by seeing humans as embedded in rather than above the earth and other beings, and we hope to offer our experiences and this place to others to share and/or cultivate their own relationship with the land and the earth.

11. Restores Right Relationship within Ourselves and with Our Communities

How does this project help us heal from the extractive and exploitative values of capitalism and profits over people? What kind of relationship do you want to have to this project and those people/communities involved in it? What about the project inspires you? What other kinds of contributions could you make beyond this investment?

Nutwood Farm is both our refuge and our response to the world. We have not been able to accept the compromises of capitalism and endless economic growth/exploitation, and we are devoted to finding and proving that there is another way to live. We are choosing to do this here, in the place we call home, in order to redefine and reclaim what is possible for our community with the right skills, commitments, and relationships, and people alongside us. By rooting into place, we also know that our choices will have profound and tangible reverberations around the world, because we are already interconnected in vast and unexplainable ways. Instead of insulating ourselves from our actions, we want to fully integrate our language, values, and work to offer a robust, fulfilling, and inspiring alternative to the dominant social and economic systems of our times. We welcome the wholehearted participation of anyone who also finds themselves along this path, and hope to learn from and grow with you as we rediscover our potential to be positive, integrated forces in and upon the earth.