

SUSTAINABLE IOWA LAND TRUST

SILT

PROTECTING LAND TO GROW HEALTHY FOOD



2022 SILT Annual Report

SILT Protected 2 New Farms in 2022
**Thanks to generous land
owners and you!**

Phoenix Farm, Iowa City, 63 acres protected by SILT

In the spirit of nurturing sustainable agriculture and ensuring a brighter future for Iowa, the Sustainable Iowa Land Trust (SILT) proudly announces the acquisition of two unique and generous donations in 2022: the Nut Farm and Hart-Vogt Acreage.

SILT Secures Visionary

The Nut Farm A Legacy of Nature and Inclusivity

Kent and Leisa Walker, the founders of the Nut Farm, embraced the vision of creating a haven for their son Sam and others associated with a local special needs nonprofit. This 60-acre gem, nestled on the outskirts of Ottumwa just 30 minutes from Fairfield, stands as a testament to their commitment to sustainable food production and community engagement.

The Walkers, along with caretaker Daryle Kaiser, have cultivated nearly 5 acres with paw paws and chestnuts, while dedicating additional acres to prairie restoration, fostering soil health, and inviting pollinators. Windbreaks of poplars and hazelnuts adorn the landscape, dancing behind a solar array at the entrance.

In a remarkable gesture, Kent Walker deeded the property to SILT, ensuring a permanent commitment to sustainability. The donation comes with the stipulation that Daryle can continue to live on-site, infusing new energy into the farm. Daryle has already revitalized a walnut husker, inviting the community to partake in its use. First Resources, a local nonprofit, plans to involve clients in harvesting and selling produce from the Nut Farm.

Kent's vision is rooted in a desire to leave the world a better place, reflecting a love for nature, Iowa's landscapes, and a passion for cultivating the land sustainably. The Nut Farm, a former family farm, now stands as an embodiment of sustainable agricultural practices, conservation, and community engagement. Thank you, Kent and Leisa for this incredible gift.

Thanks to you, our valued supporters, SILT can accept this exceptionally generous donation and ensure its preservation for future generations.



ABOVE: Chestnut trees on Nut Farm
RIGHT: Entrance to Nut Farm

Part Two Donations in 2022

Gary and Derith's Sustainable Oasis A Flexible and Visionary Gift



Gary Hart and Derith Vogt bestowed SILT with a picturesque 10-acre farm, elegantly weaving together a renovated farmhouse and various outbuildings from Derith's horse-showing career. Situated just half an hour east of Cedar Rapids, this oasis is a true testament to their commitment to preserving a piece of Iowa's rural charm.

While SILT endeavors to maintain the land for sustainable table food production, Gary and Derith's gift comes with the flexibility to sell the property at its highest value if surrounding circumstances impede sustainable farming due to its size. This visionary approach ensures SILT can make the best decisions for the community and the organization in the future.

Gary's journey, from growing up on a medium-sized farm in Wayne County to finding a place in the country, resonates with a commitment to preserving the land's integrity. Derith, originally from Houston, Texas, decided to make Iowa her home after attending Iowa State University. Their farm, once part of a larger property, has transformed into a haven for wildlife, native grasses, and prairie flowers.

The couple's decision to donate to SILT stemmed from a shared vision for a sustainable future. Despite challenges in finding interested family or friends to inherit the property, Gary and Derith's outreach to SILT resulted in a perfect match. SILT's recognition of the potential for small-scale sustainable farming on their property, along with their commitment to the collective power of individual contributions, resonated with the couple's ethos. A heartfelt thank you to Gary Hart and Derith Vogt for your incredible donation.

ABOVE: Hart-Vogt Acreage

Both the Nut Farm and the Sustainable Oasis embody SILT's mission to protect Iowa's working farms, support sustainable agriculture, and foster community-based farming. These visionary donations not only ensure the preservation of these irreplaceable landscapes, but also protect clean water and wildlife, and contribute to a more sustainable and resilient Iowa for future generations.

Because of you, our cherished supporters, SILT can graciously accept this exceptionally generous donation and is well-positioned to steward this property.

New Farmers on Luzum Heritage Farm

Getting New Farmers on the Land — Thanks to YOU!

Because of your continued support, SILT is delighted to introduce the latest additions to our farming family, Ethan and Carly Zierke, the proud co-owners of Sweet Season Farm. These passionate farmers are the newest tenants at Luzum Heritage Farm, bringing their commitment to organic agriculture and sustainable farming practices to our community.

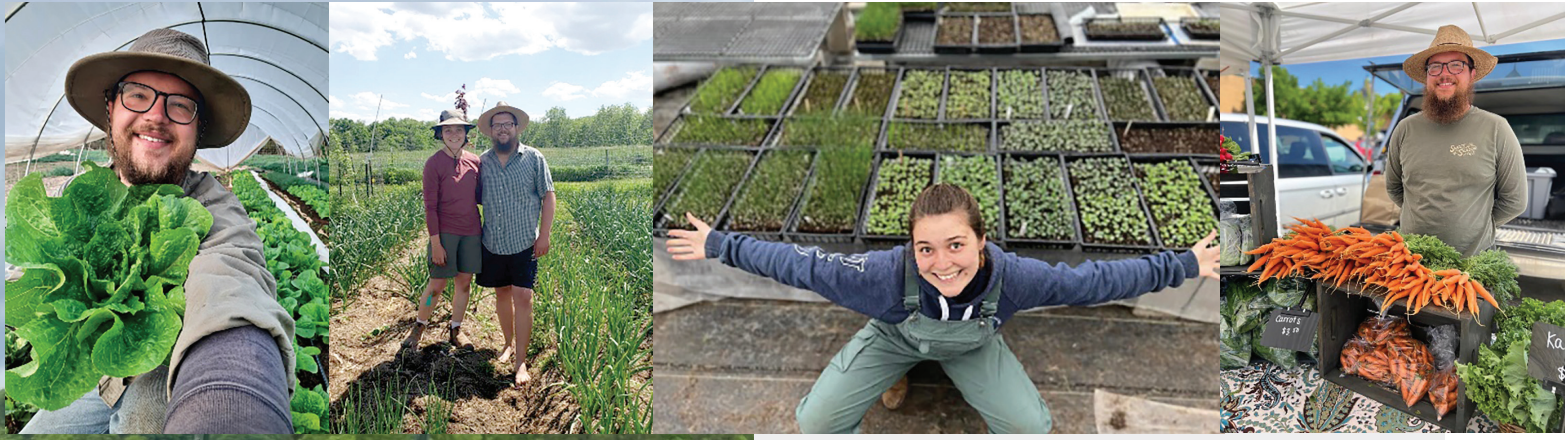
Hailing from Iowa City and Marquette, Iowa, respectively, Ethan and Carly have set out on a mission to cultivate 30 different types of certified organic vegetables. Their produce reaches the community through various channels, including a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, the Decorah Farmers Market, Oneota Community Co-Op, Iowa Food Hub, and several local restaurants.

At the heart of their farming philosophy is sustainability. Ethan and Carly firmly believe in the power of agriculture to create positive environmental and community change. Their dedication to sustainable farming methods is a testament to their commitment to the health of the planet, both now and for generations to come.

As they embark on this new chapter, Ethan and Carly look forward to establishing deep roots in Northeast Iowa, planting perennials, residing on-farm, and eventually introducing livestock to their operation.

Choosing a SILT farm was a natural decision for Ethan and Carly. Their previous experience on an incubator farm near Decorah provided valuable support during their initial year, but long-term access to land and housing was essential for their farm's





growth. Because of your support, SILT's unique structure, offering permanent land access and the opportunity to build equity in their forever farm, provided the ideal solution.

With training at Echollective Farm in Iowa and the Organic Farm School in Washington State, Ethan and Carly bring a wealth of experience to their new venture. Their strong foundation in managing a vegetable farm, coupled with insights into pastured animal husbandry, positions them for success.

Currently, as they prepare the SILT farm's growing space by planting cover crops to nurture the soil and reduce weed pressure, Ethan and Carly are excited to fully embrace farming on the SILT property by 2024.

Their love for growing greens, including salad mixes, head lettuce, and specialty blends, is palpable. Each year brings new favorites, with a previous standout being eggplant—a crop they eagerly anticipate cultivating more of in the future.

Reflecting on their journey, Ethan and Carly highlight the importance of building a supportive network. Surrounding themselves with experienced mentors and fellow farmers has significantly accelerated their learning curve and contributed to their long-term success.

We extend a warm welcome to Sweet Season Farm and eagerly anticipate the flourishing of their farm under Ethan and Carly's dedicated and sustainable practices. With your support, we will continue to help more new farmers just like Ethan and Carly. Stay tuned for updates on their exciting endeavors as part of the SILT community!

ABOVE: Carly and Ethan Zierke with their produce
LEFT: Carly Zierke

SILT Milestones

2022 in Review

As we bid farewell to 2022, we celebrate the collective achievements and growth of the Sustainable Iowa Land Trust (SILT). This past year marked a significant stride forward in our mission to protect and preserve valuable Iowa farmland. Your support made it all possible! Here's a snapshot of our accomplishments:

TOTAL ACRES PROTECTED

Thanks to you, at the close of 2022, SILT proudly safeguarded a total of **1,200 acres of vital Iowa farmland**. This not only represents a commitment to sustainable agriculture but also solidifies our impact on land conservation.



Anderson Prairie

NEWLY PROTECTED ACRES

Of the 1,200 acres, **70 acres were added to our protected lands in the year 2022**.

These additional acres are a testament to your generosity, the ongoing dedication of our community, and the continuous expansion of our protected landscapes.



Bee Haven

FARMS UNDER SILT'S CARE

Because of you, the SILT family has grown to encompass a diverse range of farmland. Currently, we protect and nurture a **total of 16 farms**. Each farm under SILT's care contributes to the larger tapestry of sustainable land use in Iowa. Without the generosity of you, our devoted donors, protecting these farms would not have been possible. Thank you immensely!



Grade A Gardens

Breanna Horsey Takes the Helm at SILT as New Executive Director



As 2022 drew to a close, SILT marked the end of an era with the retirement of Suzan Erem, the co-founder and first executive director. Stepping into Suzan's shoes in March 2023, Breanna Horsey became SILT's fresh face as the new Executive Director.

Suzan bid farewell, reflecting on SILT's growth pains and the board's steadfast commitment to the organization's mission. Her optimism for SILT's future was evident, envisioning Iowa as a hub for sustainable farming, healthy children, and clean rivers, contributing to a thriving economy.

Breanna Horsey, with a background in environmental science and organizational leadership, took charge as the new Executive Director. Her previous success at Storm Lake United demonstrated her ability to foster economic development and business growth in a diverse community.

The SILT Board, seeking a dynamic leader to build on Suzan's legacy, engaged in a strategic hiring process led by the Employment Resource Group. Breanna, standing out as the top candidate, brought passion and skills essential for SILT's next phase of growth.

The Board President, emphasizing the strategic nature of the hiring process, highlighted Breanna's background and commitment to SILT's mission. The decision to appoint Breanna was solidified by her passion for SILT's cause and her role as a servant-leader.

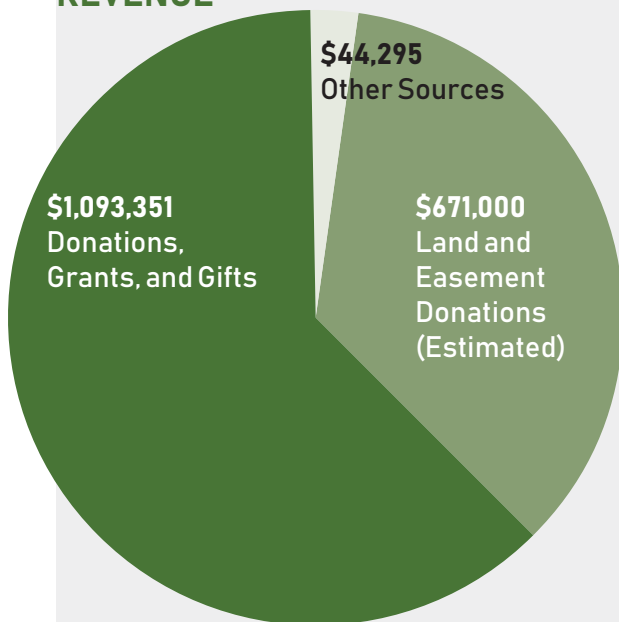
Breanna, in a letter to the SILT community, expressed excitement, gratitude, and dedication to preserving Iowa land for sustainable farming. Acknowledging Suzan's contributions, she outlined her vision for SILT's growth while maintaining its strong foundation.

As SILT embraces this new chapter under Breanna's leadership, the organization remains focused on protecting Iowa farmland, supporting sustainable agriculture, and fostering community-based farming. The SILT community eagerly anticipates positive changes and growth with Breanna Horsey at the helm.

SILT Financial Snapshot — Year 2022

At SILT, financial transparency is a core value. These numbers represent not just financial transactions but tangible steps toward realizing our vision of a sustainable and protected Iowa. We express our gratitude to our supporters, partners, and dedicated team for making these achievements possible. Together, we continue to cultivate a legacy of responsible land stewardship. Thank you!

REVENUE



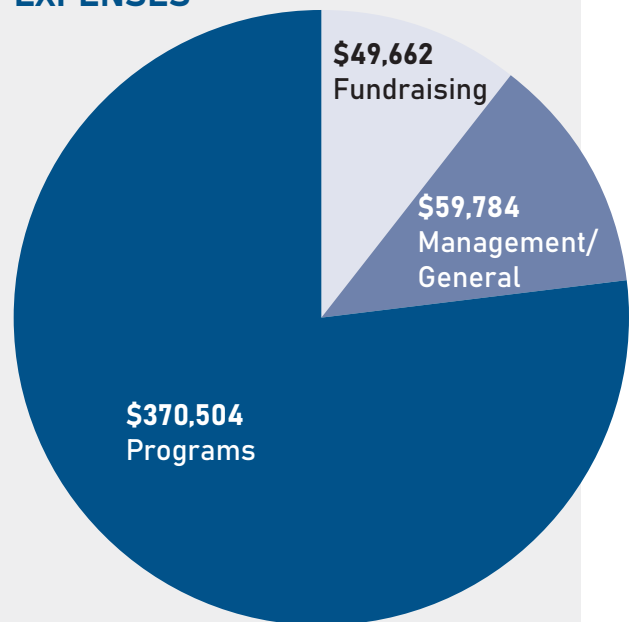
DONATIONS, GRANTS, AND GIFTS

Our community's generous support has fueled SILT's mission, contributing a substantial \$1,093,351 towards sustainable land preservation.

LAND AND EASEMENT DONATIONS

The estimated value of land and easement donations stands at an impressive \$671,000. These contributions play a vital role in expanding our reach and impact.

EXPENSES



EXPENSE ALLOCATION PROGRAMS: \$370,504

Channeling resources directly into our core programs ensures a tangible and lasting impact on sustainable land use.

MANAGEMENT/GENERAL: \$59,784

Supporting the essential operational framework that sustains our mission and vision.

FUNDRAISING: \$49,662

Investing in fundraising initiatives to secure the financial foundation necessary for future endeavors.



Preserve Your Legacy: Protect

In the heart of Iowa, where the soil tells stories of generations past, the Sustainable Iowa Land Trust (SILT) invites landowners to embark on a journey of preservation and sustainability. Whether your roots run deep in the Iowa farmland or you're a new steward of the soil, SILT offers a unique opportunity to protect and nurture the land for the future.

Contact Us Today to Get Started
Contact SILT today to start the conversation about protecting your land, and share this opportunity with fellow landowners who might be interested. Together, we can build a resilient and sustainable future for Iowa's farmland.

CONSERVATION LEGACY

SILT is more than a land trust; it's a guardian of Iowa's conservation legacy. Choosing to protect your land with SILT ensures that the essence of Iowa's rich agricultural heritage endures, creating a lasting impact for generations to come.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

SILT is committed to championing sustainable farming practices. When you protect your land with us, you become a partner in a vision that prioritizes environmental health, community well-being, and responsible land use. Your land becomes a testament to the possibility of harmonizing agricultural productivity with ecological balance.

PERMANENT LAND ACCESS

SILT's unique structure provides permanent land access for farmers dedicated to sustainable practices. By protecting your land with SILT, you create a lasting opportunity for farmers to cultivate the land responsibly, ensuring its productivity while preserving its natural equilibrium.

FINANCIAL BENEFITS

Beyond the intrinsic rewards, protecting your land with SILT can offer financial benefits. From potential tax advantages to long-term equity building, SILT's model takes into account the economic considerations of land protection. It's an investment in the future that aligns with both your values and financial goals.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

SILT fosters a vibrant community of landowners, farmers, and supporters who share a passion for sustainable agriculture. Joining SILT opens the door to a network of like-minded individuals, creating opportunities for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and community building.

Preserve your legacy, cultivate sustainability, and join us in safeguarding the essence of Iowa's farmland. Contact SILT today to start the conversation about protecting your land, and share this opportunity with fellow landowners who might be interested. Together, we can build a resilient and sustainable future for Iowa's farmland.



Protect Your Land with SILT

Make a Gift to SILT in Your Will or Trust

Please ensure that your help continues by making a gift to the Sustainable Iowa Land Trust in your will. Your assets remain in your control during your lifetime. You can modify your gift if circumstances change at any time. You are in charge and can make your gift unrestricted or direct it to a specific program.

If you have provided for the Sustainable Iowa Land Trust in your estate plans, please let us know. If not, please let us show you how you can. Please contact Executive Director Breanna Horsey at (319) 800-8108, breanna@silt.org or by mail at Sustainable Iowa Land Trust, PO Box 306, 101 W. Main Street, West Branch, IA 52358.

You can also name the Sustainable Iowa Land Trust as the first, second, or final beneficiary for part or all of the proceeds from IRAs, insurance policies, wills, or any other estate-planning documents. Thank you!

Become a Monthly Donor

Are you looking for an easy, efficient way to support the Sustainable Iowa Land Trust (SILT)? Monthly giving is easy, time saving, budget-friendly, and convenient for you, and provides SILT with a reliable source of income that we can depend on. **Your support will go even further; it's easy and free and will help SILT save thousands of dollars annually!**

Because there is less administration work and costs, more of your tax-deductible donation goes towards our mission. Your regular support contributes to the longevity of SILT. Plus, it's easy to edit or cancel your monthly donation at any time.

Become a monthly donor today at <https://silt.org/donate/> or email Sophie Sheeder at sophie@silt.org or call (319) 800-8108. Thank you for your ongoing support!

As you consider the profound impact of protecting your land with SILT, we encourage you to share your story. Your experience can be a beacon for others in your network, inspiring fellow landowners to explore the benefits of sustainable land use. Together, we can shape a landscape where Iowa's agricultural heritage thrives for generations to come.

SILT is a 501c3 nonprofit organization. Your contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

What is a Conservation Easement?

The most common way we help landowners protect their farmland is with a tool called a "conservation easement." A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement that allows a landowner to permanently protect their farm as a farm, while retaining ownership and the ability to sell or pass on to heirs. Conservation easements are perpetual. Future owners of the land are held to the terms of the agreement and the Sustainable Iowa Land Trust is responsible for permanently monitoring and enforcing the terms. A conservation easement is an effective tool to keep your land in conservation and farming no matter who owns it in the future. A conservation easement does NOT open your land to the public. Land protected with a conservation easement is still your land and no one has the right to access it without your permission. A future farmstead can be built into the agreement if there isn't one there already. The conservation easement can be tailored to the wishes of the landowners, such as allowing sustainable forestry or running an ag-related business. The conservation easement may apply to all or a portion of the property. Donors may receive an income tax deduction and possible estate tax benefits. We advise landowners to consult with their tax attorney.

SILT BOARD MEMBERS

Guiding Our Sustainable Vision

As we transition into the new year, SILT extends heartfelt gratitude to our 2023 Board President, Les Beck, for his dedicated service and leadership. Les has played a pivotal role in steering SILT through a year of growth and progress. His commitment to our mission has been instrumental, and we express our sincere appreciation for his contributions.

Looking ahead, we are thrilled to welcome Joe Henry as our 2024 Board President. Joe brings a wealth of experience and a passion for sustainable land use to his new role. As we embark on the next phase of our journey, Joe's leadership is sure to guide SILT towards continued success.

Additionally, SILT is excited to introduce three new board members joining our esteemed team:

Sheila Knoploh-Odole (Des Moines): Sheila's diverse background and commitment to community development make her a valuable addition to our board. Her insights and expertise will contribute significantly to SILT's mission.

Leland Freie (Cedar Rapids): Leland's dedication to sustainable practices aligns perfectly with SILT's vision. His experience and passion for environmental stewardship make him a valuable asset to our organization.

Hannah Breckbill (Decorah): With a strong foundation in sustainable agriculture, Hannah brings a unique perspective to the SILT board. Her advocacy for responsible land use will further enrich our efforts.

As we welcome new members, we also bid farewell to Lyle Luzum, who served on the board for an impressive six years. Lyle's commitment and contributions have left a lasting impact on SILT. We express our deepest gratitude for his years of service and wish him the very best in his future endeavors.

With a dynamic and dedicated board, SILT is poised for continued growth and success. We look forward to the collaborative efforts of our board members, both outgoing and incoming, as we strive to create a lasting legacy of sustainable land use in Iowa. Thank you to each board member for their commitment to SILT's mission.





SILT 2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Les Beck
President

Joe Enriquez Henry
Vice President

Mary Ellen Miller
Treasurer

Gina McAndrews
Secretary

Stuart Valentine
Fairfield

Darrow Center
Cedar Rapids

Lora Fraracci
Des Moines

Matthew Gilbert
Waterloo

Lyle Luzum
Decorah

Maggie McQuown
Red Oak

John Norris
West Des Moines

Sheila Knoploh-Odole
Des Moines

Leland Freie
Cedar Rapids

Hannah Breckbill
Decorah

THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE PARTNERS

Donald C Brace Foundation

USDA

11th Hour Project

Benson & Hepker Design

TheConceptWorks

1% for the Planet

Albert Lea Seed

Vortex Digital Business Solutions

YOUR SILT TEAM

Breanna Horsey
Executive Director

Jennifer Beltran
Operations Manager

Alexis Huddleston
Farm Coordinator

Kya Farag
Farm Coordinator Assistant

Daryl Parker
Eastern Iowa Land Scout

Zach Cassidy
Central Iowa Land Scout

Sophie Sheeder
Events and Communications
Coordinator

THANK YOU

As we reflect on these achievements, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to our supporters, landowners, and partners. It is through your commitment and shared vision that SILT continues to thrive, cultivating a legacy of responsible land stewardship for generations to come. Here's to a future where the roots of sustainable agriculture run deep, thanks to the collective efforts of the SILT community.

LEFT: Phoenix Farm, Iowa City, 63 acres protected by SILT



silt.org



SILT
PO Box 306
101 Main St.
West Branch, IA 52358
319.800.8108
info@silt.org

Please share this magazine!