



GROWING REGIONAL
FIBER SYSTEMS
WORLDWIDE



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fiber•shed:

Strategic geographical landscape that provides the resources for and connectivity to our natural textile resource base

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In a world overcome by increased individualism and isolation, I am reminded every day of the power and necessity of community — amongst one another and amongst the ecology in which we live and rely on. All of our basic needs — food, shelter, water, medicine, clothing — are deeply interconnected with the larger natural world that we live in (and from which we are not separate). However, as the world continues to rely heavily on fossil fuel derivatives, and moves away from natural sources, these interconnected relationships become more distant from our daily lives and direct experiences. We have become *reliant on* oil extraction instead of being in *relationship with* the natural systems that support us.

Over the past year, I’ve had the honor of working with artisans, farmers and mill-owners from around the world who are tirelessly rebuilding regional textile industries and communities based in natural fiber and dye production. Most importantly they are building communities based in relationship — relationship with the micro and macrobiology in the soil, with the plants and animals generating fibers and dyes on the land, with the people tending to that land, and with the web of creators and artisans turning raw fiber into beautiful textiles that can (eventually) safely return back to the soil.

These communities are forming their own region-specific fibersheds,(re)creating regional textile systems rooted in connection and rebuilding material cultures that center: Relationship over commodification. Regionalization over globalization. Decentralized systems over centralized corporate-run systems. Regenerative, circular economies over exploitative, linear economies. Biological harmony over ecological degradation.

Through these regional, decentralized, circular textile systems, we are building resilience to climate change and supply chain disruptions. We are envisioning textile systems that are equitable, fair, and regenerative.

Right now in Western Massachusetts, sewers are crafting clothing from textiles produced within a 100-mile radius. In Montana, skilled spinners are creating yarn from the fleece of locally raised sheep. In Denmark, gorgeous yarn is being dyed naturally for sale at local markets. And in Puerto Rico, field studies are underway to determine the best way to grow cotton and dye plants while enriching local soils.

These collections of artisans, fiber producers, small-scale manufacturers, and dyers are all a part of a unique fibershed within their regions. These Affiliate Fibersheds **are the fibershed movement**.

To date, we have 58 and growing Fibershed Affiliates around the world, actively working in their home communities at every level of the soil-to-soil textile model. 19 of their stories are depicted in this first edition of our Threading Resilience zine, and I hope you feel as inspired and hopeful as I do when I read about the work that is happening.



Lexi Fujii
Fibershed Affiliate Network Coordinator

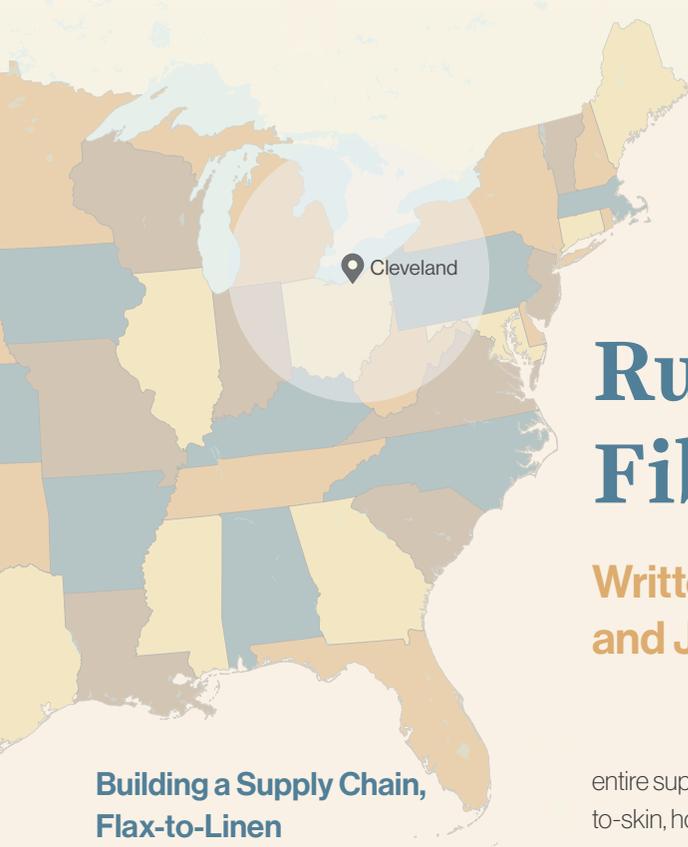
P.s. If you live in a community of one of our Fibershed Affiliate organizations, I encourage you to reach out, connect, and see where it may lead you...



A Note from Fibershed's Executive Director

Fibershed is a noun...and not just the name of an organization. It's a strategic geography that gives definition to a textile culture. It is where natural fibers and dyes are grown and where communities exchange knowledge and expertise. The network of Fibershed Affiliates, that now span the globe, are living, working and continuously defining the capacity of these strategic geographies. Our local materials are so often overlooked in the face of rapid fire global commodity growing and milling systems. It takes the slowing down and careful attending to one's land base and community relationships to nurture one's Fibershed, and these affiliate communities do this work, day in and day out. We work as a global community through the practice of tending, farming, ranching, spinning, weaving, dyeing, knitting, felting, wearing, caring, mending, composting and so on. Each step of the process of making our second skin is done in unique and place based ways, and we learn from each other. It's uncanny how similar our triumphs and challenges are — which gives us hope that if we continue to collaborate and organize, we will find ways to continue to uplift and establish our soil-to-skin systems. It is a pleasure and such an honor to participate in this tapestry of placed based leaders, all of whom have a unique and inspiring story to tell. I hope you enjoy this Zine and all the wisdom shared within.

– Rebecca Burgess



Rust Belt Fibershed

Written by Sarah Pottle
and Jessalyn Boeke

Building a Supply Chain, Flax-to-Linen

The Rust Belt Fibershed spans a radius of 250 miles outside of Cleveland, Ohio—including major cities such as Detroit, MI, Cincinnati, OH, Columbus, OH, Cleveland, OH, Pittsburgh, PA, and Buffalo, NY. We are a part of two major watersheds- the Lake Erie Watershed and the Mississippi River Basin. The industrial history of our area is rife with extraction and pollution, but as much of our steel industry has gone overseas in recent decades, Rust Belt Fibershed wants to replace that degenerative industrial repudiation with a Regenerative Textile System. We believe that Rust Belt Linen could be a large part of that future, with the

entire supply chain of flax-to-linen, from soil-to-skin, housed within this fibershed.

2019: The Rust Belt Fibershed grew an acre of the Natalie variety of flax at Frayed Knot Farm, a regenerative flower farm, in Newbury, OH. The intention was to learn the basics: how does flax grow? How do we process flax? What infrastructure is needed? A community of volunteers helped at four different events: composting, seeding, harvesting, and processing. Because of a micro-grant from Fibershed, we were able to capture the over-a-year-long process with a 5-minute documentary-style film, created by Thomas Sawyer, which can be found on [our website](#).



Community harvesting flax at Frayed Knot Farm in Newbury, OH.

2020: Our second year we used the leftover Natalie seed from 2019 and planted 1/10 of an acre at Frayed Knot Farm. We refined our growing process, took extensive notes, and donated a lot of the processed project to our One Year One Outfit participants in 2021.

2021: This was our first year of a decentralized community-grow program. The seed was divided among 15 different home garden plots of all sizes, in 10 different cities, all collectively growing over an acre of flax. The intention was to get conversations going in different pockets of our fibershed about where our clothing comes from. This was also a seed-saving educational project, where we held conversations on the politics and benefits of seed saving. Participants reserved 10% of their plots beyond the fiber harvest to collect the seed for the 2022 season.



Community Flax Processing Day in Medina, OH.



Community Flax Spin-In at Praxis Fiber Studio in Cleveland, OH.



Flax Strick from Rust Belt Linen Project and processed by a One Year One Outfit participant in Medina, OH.

2022: This is the second year of the decentralized community-grow program with the Linore seed. We utilized both saved seed from the 2021 harvest and newly purchased seed from Fibrevolution. We currently have 33 different plots, spanning every corner of our fibershed, with participants from four different states (Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York). We are collectively growing over two acres of flax for artisan, hand-scale linen production. As we continue to build community, to create awareness around the origin of our clothing, and to supply local makers with hand-processed flax fiber to showcase proof of concept, this year we are also working on blending trials with industrial spinning of flax tow and alpaca with America's Natural Fiberworks. We have also included researchers from both Kent State University and University of Michigan to conduct seed trials for possible future crop rotation trials. Our volunteers are also tracking data points (planting dates, germination rates, irrigation, first flower dates, etc.) as well as physical soil samples and dried and processed flax samples to submit to Rust Belt Fibershed. These plots are public facing, with an informational sign and a QR code to encourage participation in the conversation, and include learning institutions such as community gardens, schools, libraries, historical museums, art museums, and college campuses. We will be creating garments and textiles with this linen to demonstrate not only the skill of

our community, but also the possibility and viability for the future of Rust Belt Linen, as we hope to continue funding and expansion of this project in future seasons.

Currently our hand-scale processing of flax is far too labor intensive and expensive to clothe our general population. In order to make linen accessible, we are looking for support to build the industry and employment capacity. Because there are currently no regional-scale flax processing facilities in the United States, we see this as a groundbreaking opportunity to take an incredible asset of our region and rewrite how the Rust Belt does industry, making textiles while supporting the whole production chain in collaborative workspaces and regenerative ecosystems.



One of 10 Rust Belt Linen plots in Ann Arbor, MI



Flax growing in front of Joseph White's house in Buffalo, New York, looking beautiful just in time for the Community Garden tour.



Children pulling flax at the Moon Township Library near Pittsburgh, PA.

Rust Belt Fibershed & Water

The Great Lakes are the world's largest freshwater system, and The Rust Belt Fibershed is housed within four of the five Great Lakes' watersheds. Water from our farms and cities within our bioregion flows into Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, Lake Erie, and Lake Ontario. The other half of the Rust Belt Fibershed feeds the Mississippi River drainage basin, the second largest river basin in the world. Because of the direct impact our bioregion has on both fresh and salt water ecology, we believe that we have a great responsibility to incorporate water preservation and restoration as we work with consumers, brands, and future textile industry innovators.

We are just getting started with this work and welcome all forms of collaboration that might help regenerate these exceptional aquatic ecosystems.



Residents standing on a dune cliff overlooking Lake Michigan.

Fibershed Nederland



In June 2022, Fibershed Netherlands took part in the State of Fashion biennale in Arnhem, Netherlands. With the central theme Ways of Caring, the biennale explored different ways to make the fashion industry more sustainable and caring.

The presentation of Fibershed took place in the historic Sonsbeek park, where we created the installation 'Recovery Garden'

together with the local fashion designer Sjaak Hullekes and the Indian Oshadi Collective.

The Recovery Garden is a space for reconnecting our clothes with nature. The public is invited to slow down, participate in workshops and engage in conversations around the topic of natural textile dyeing.



The programme offered by Fibershed Netherlands included two parts...

A kaleidoscope of color, powered by nature.

Textiles and clothing should not be at the expense of people and the planet. The sector has caused a lot of damage, but can also contribute to its recovery and restoration. Fibershed Netherlands aims to raise awareness for the urgency to invest in the development of a wider range and variety of biodegradable materials, as an alternative to harmful synthetic textiles. In addition, investments must also be made in harmless,

biological dyes and dyeing methods. The video presentation, A kaleidoscope of Color, shines a light on the damage that synthetic dyes cause to people and the environment globally. But above all, the video shows the wealth of color nature has to offer and how different dye methods are already successfully applied by many.

The presentation features contributions from international Fibershed members from around the world including: Botanical Colors, Talu.earth and The Wild Dyery and many more. The video and a full list of contributors can be viewed on our website: fibershed.nl/a-kaleidoscope-of-color-powered-by-nature



Fibershed's Soil-to-Soil circle was given a central place in the Recovery Garden to emphasize that the textile and clothing industry can have a positive impact on biodiversity, healthy soil and social inclusion. In addition, producing more locally will also help all to reconnect with the different stakeholders involved, strengthening mutual respect and encouraging new collaborations.



Goede Gespreksstof / Let's Talk About This

The State of Fashion biennale also provided the stage for the launch of the interactive education campaign Goede-Gespreksstof (Dutch for "Good Conversation Material").

Few take into account the origin of the clothing they wear, which raw materials are used and by whom and under what circumstances clothing is made. The relationship between the producers, the makers and wearers of the clothing is all but lost.

With this campaign Fibershed Netherlands wants to raise awareness for the origin and the impact of our clothes. By asking questions, sharing insights and giving tips, we hope to spark conversations on this topic and to boost the appreciation for the clothes we wear.

Everyone can contribute to this campaign by joining in the conversation around the origin, use and future of our clothes. Follow [Fibershed.nl](https://fibershed.nl) on social media [@fibershed.nl](https://twitter.com/fibershed.nl), and share your thoughts using [#LetsTalkAboutThis](https://twitter.com/LetsTalkAboutThis)

Crowdfunding!

In co-creation with participants of their regional network, Fibershed Netherlands is publishing a book to give teens more insights in the present, past and future of the textile and clothing industry in the Netherlands. The publication aims to grow the knowledge on the origin of the clothes they wear, as well as offering a new fresh perspective on the exciting job opportunities the sector has to offer for the future generation. For this Fibershed Netherlands has launched a crowdfunding on our website: www.fibershed.nl/donate



Out of Sight (Not) Out of Mind

In the context of State of Fashion, and in collaboration with Focus and Good Brand Guru, Fibershed Netherlands also initiated the screening of the documentary **The True Cost**, followed by a panel discussion with local entrepreneurs investing in new business models for the fashion industry around the question: "Can producing clothing closer to home help mitigate the social and environmental damage caused throughout the fashion value chain?" The panelists in this discussion have been

direct witnesses to the rise of fast fashion. They experienced the rapidly increasing pressure from the global market to produce ever faster and in larger runs, at ever lower prices. In the past decade, they each opted for radical change, using their experience and skills to create a positive impact through their work. Martine Nieuwenhuis, facilitated a candid conversation on how each of them are shaping this new fashion system. Starting



Photo of panelist on stage, left to right: Xander Slager, Nicci Kol, Reina Ovinge, Stijntje Jaspers and moderator, Martine Nieuwenhuis.

from materials that can be grown or produced locally, offering better insights in the labor intensive production process from raw material to yarn, to garment. (eg. Reina Ovinge for The Knitwit Stable). Or by putting the people at the center of the organization to emphasize the skills and time needed to design and manufacture clothing. (eg Xander Slager for Amsterdam fashion Label New Optimist).

On the other hand, as a small region, the Netherlands will remain dependent on imported raw materials in the foreseeable future. This offers opportunities for international companies to invest in the very beginning of the value chain and to build a close relationship with farmers and share the risk, responsibilities and development from seed-to-shelf (eg. Niccy Kol for Raddis Cotton).

These experienced professionals all emphasize: it all comes down to redefining the relationships between all stakeholders in the farm-to-fashion value chain.

Stijntje Jaspers states:
“We need to redefine the fashion system. The current textile and clothing industry is causing enormous damage, while it can also make a positive contribution.”

We need to look for new business models that take into account the interests of all stakeholders, including nature. To make this work, we need to work on this together!”

It was a successful first public event for Fibershed Netherlands.

We look back on valuable collaborations within our team:

Stijntje • Martine • Ingeborg
 Sophie • Jennifer

And with our valued event partners:

State of Fashion biennale • Sjaak Hullekes • Oshadi Collective
 Focus Filmtheater • The members of Fibershed Netherlands who showed their enthusiasm and support for the launch of the movement in our region!

FIBERSHED Nederland

LET'S TALK ABOUT THIS!

GOEDE GESPREKS STOF

GROND TOT GARDEROBE NATUURLIJK

MOET HET NIEUWE NORMAAL WORDEN!

Wil jij ook een wereld zonder textielafval? Imagine a world without textile waste!

@fibershed.nl
 #GoedeGespreksstof
 #LetsTalkAboutThis

FARM TO FASHION

verwerkers van vezels & kleurstoffen
 fiber and dye processing

ontwerpers & makers
 designing and making

ruilen, delen
 Reuse
 repareer
 Repair
 verrijken
 Refurbish
 Recycle

verkopers & dragers
 selling and wearing

verwerkers van organisch afval tot compost
 composting of organic waste

CO2-opslag in bodem en gewassen
 carbonsink in soil and crops

boeren van plant & dier
 farming and growing

FIBERSHED
 GROND TOT GARDEROBE
 Nederland

HEROVERWEGEN RETHINK VERMINDEREN REDUCE REGENEREN REGENERATE

Learn more about Fibershed Netherlands at fibershed.nl and follow them on [@fibershed.nl](https://www.instagram.com/fibershed.nl)

GOEDE GESPREKSSTOF
 LET'S TALK ABOUT THIS

Wij zijn ook een wereld zonder textielafval, waarin alles wat we maken en dragen weer als voeding terug in de bodem ingaat!

Help us put the value and importance of natural fibers and clothing back on the agenda so that the Dutch textile industry can grow and flourish!

Let's talk about the origin and future of what we wear and how to better care for our textiles and clothing!

Together we close the circle from Farm-to-Fashion!

HER JIJ JE KLEDINGLAFEL...
 HAVE YOU LOOKED AT YOUR CLOTHING LABEL YET?

HOEVEEL VERSCHILLENDE MATERIALEN STAAN ER...
 WHAT MATERIALS IS ON YOUR CLOTHING LABEL?

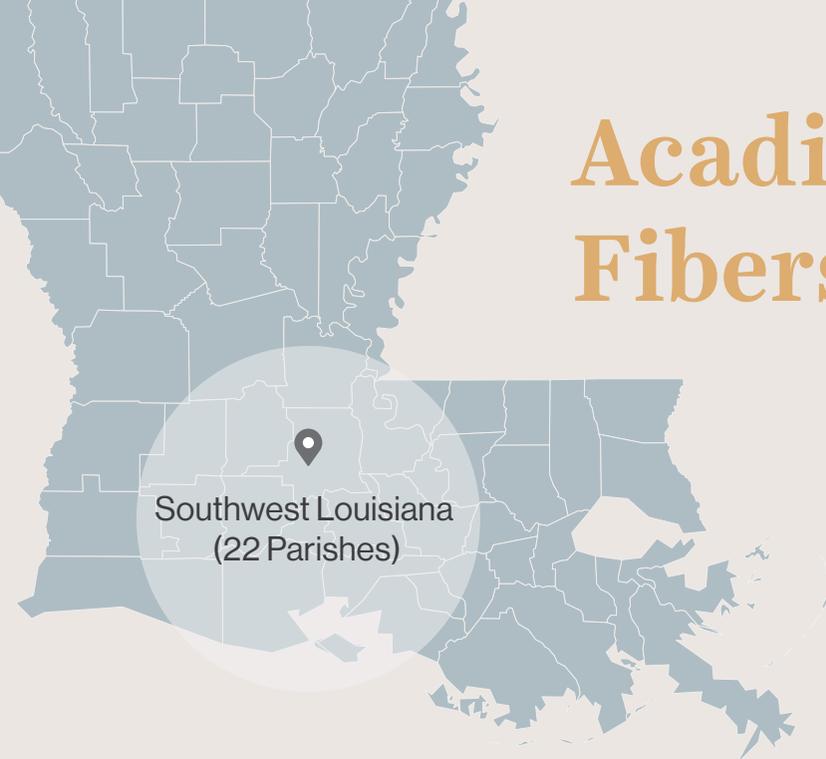
HOE ZORG JE DAT JOUW KLEDING MOET BLIJFT EN...
 HOW DO YOU ENSURE THAT YOUR CLOTHES REMAIN BEAUTIFUL AND LAST A LONG TIME?

WAAR LET JIJ OP ALS JE KLEDING KOOPT?
 HOW DO YOU CHOOSE YOUR CLOTHES?

GOEDE GESPREKSSTOF

Help us grow together!
 Help us grow together!
 Help us grow together!

FIBERSHED Nederland
www.fibershed.nl



Acadiana Fibershed

Southwest Louisiana
(22 Parishes)

As the Deep South's only fibershed affiliate, the Acadiana Fibershed encompasses the state of Louisiana with its heart in the 22 parishes of Acadiana. The region's unique landscape of flat lowlands hosts a number native and eco-variety fibers, including wool from Gulf Coast native sheep, and significantly, Acadian Brown Cotton.

Acadian Brown Cotton was the original inspiration for our project. It has a long history of independent growing, hand spinning and weaving that runs deep in the Cajun heritage. This heirloom seed nearly died out along with the Acadian spinning and weaving tradition, and what began in 2017 as a project focused on preservation has grown into a devoted

community of producers, hand spinners and weavers.

Our objective over the past year — funded by the Fibershed Micro-grant — was to develop new ways to reach a broader audience both within our state and beyond. Inspired by oral histories and generational knowledge, we set out to develop an ongoing video series documenting the journey of Acadian Brown Cotton yarn. The goal was to document the journey of Acadian Brown Cotton from planting and harvesting through the process of hand spinning and weaving. We planned to share the content across a variety of digital platforms to target a range of audiences and age groups. We also worked to promote

engagement through hosting our annual community event for our growers. Finally, we continued to explore scaling the spinning of Acadian Brown Cotton using a Belfast Mini Mill in nearby Florida.

As we set out to embark on the project in late summer 2021, we were met with significant challenges. Hurricane Ida made landfall on August 29 and was the second most damaging hurricane to hit Louisiana. This had a major impact, destroying crops and devastating communities. COVID also continued to disrupt travel plans and delay in-person interviews.

As we gained momentum, Acadiana Fibershed Co-coordinator Darcy Fabre traveled throughout our fibershed capturing footage, with each interview informing our path forward as we engaged with our community. To date we've performed three interviews and we plan to continue the project in the coming year. Every individual on our team comes from

a different background and was attracted to varying aspects of Acadian Brown Cotton and the Acadiana Fibershed. In each interview, the interviewee shares their personal and cultural history, their connection with Acadian Brown Cotton, and their hopes for the future.

This project has provided us with valuable insight both on the process of filming and on the needs of our region. We learned of a resurgence of spinners and weavers in our area along with greater demand for more in-depth instructional content to encourage new growers and producers. By delving deeper into the existing resources of our fibershed, we're also able to explore opportunities for expansion.

As an ongoing series, we intend to continue the project as an educational tool for our community. We hope to recruit new members and engage people in our region in the effort to build an equitable and climate beneficial textile supply chain in Louisiana.



“Hi, I’m Randon Dufrene with Bosco Cotton Farm and Fiber. I am from a small fishing community just south of New Orleans called Jean Laffitte, Louisiana. I’m a sixth-generation commercial fisherman and moved to Lafayette for work. My wife is from Mire, Louisiana. We farm at her homeplace where she’s from. We have two acres out there where my father-in-law and mother-in-law live and that’s where we are here with our cotton patch... I think it’s important for our area and for the people to just give it a shot. Just teach your children how to grow vegetables... We teach our kids how to eat healthy, teach our kids how to grow their own food, and now I’m teaching my children how to grow their own fiber and maybe even make some clothes one day for themselves or for others. We’re going to change the world one row at a time.”



Randon Dufrene

“My name is Suzanne Chaillot Breaux and I was born in Crowley, Louisiana.

I am a sixth-generation Acadian. I’ve been weaving, you know, seriously since I was twelve. At first, I’d weave brown cotton, then I’d weave dog hair, then I’d weave my own hair. It was so awesome just creating this fabric. It’s the act of creation. It’s a God-given ability to create and to be able to see it and to manifest a piece of cloth in front of your eyes. It’s great! I love it because it’s so rhythmic. It’s like sitting on a beach... here it comes, there it goes, here it comes, there it goes. It is so relaxing, you could almost lower your blood pressure by weaving. It’s just become such a peaceful, peaceful craft. You can meditate, you can just really just get into that rhythm of weaving and all is well in the world. This is a craft that will never go away... never. And what’s important is that it has to stay sustainable here in Louisiana because this is a unique tradition. Louisiana’s crafts, food, music [are] like none other, and we need to keep it that way.”



Suzanne Chaillot Breaux

Acadiana Fibershed

To learn more about the Acadiana Fibershed, visit: www.acadianbrowncotton.com and follow them on Instagram @acadianbrowncotton



Fibershed DACH

How a dozen dedicated women in Germany, Austria and Switzerland have started to promote textile production from local fibres

Our journey started in winter 2021. We founded Fibershed DACH — short for Germany, Austria and Switzerland — to promote the regional production of textiles and home goods from local fibres and to connect alpine farmers, big-city designers, traditional manufacturers and a new generation of craftspeople. On our website, we bring together land stewards, designers, producers and textile artists in an open source network — with free access for anyone interested in the fibershed idea.

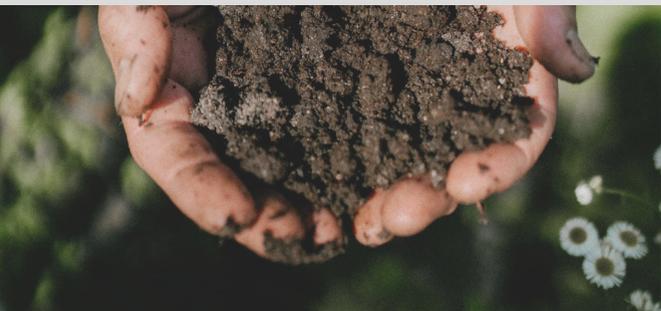


We have formed material-specific groups for wool, bast fibers and leather, and are in touch with the most important stakeholders and research projects throughout Europe. We meet regularly in the digital space to exchange information and to plan future projects. What unites us is the common desire to change the textile industry for the better.

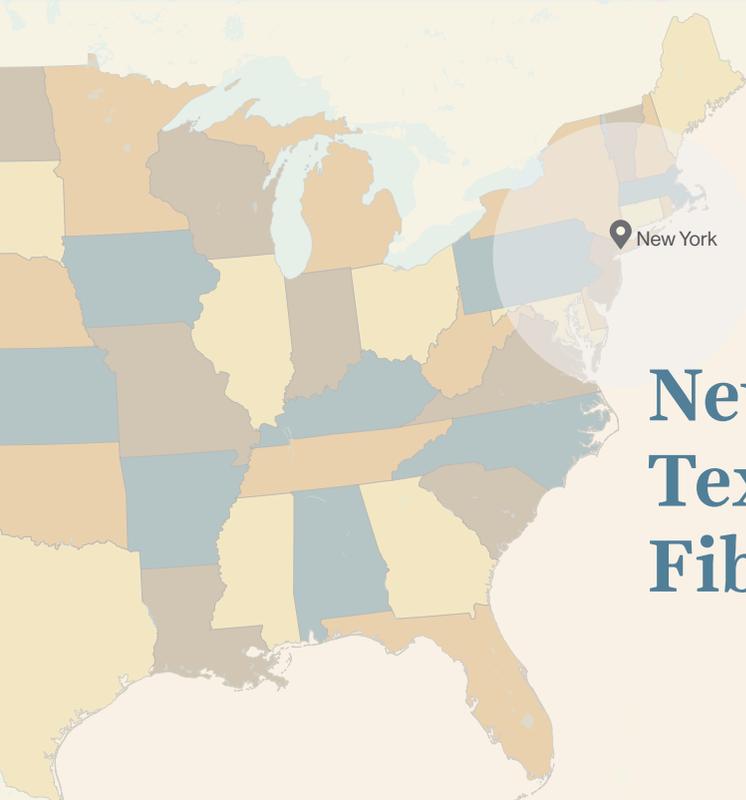
Timeless design and aesthetics are key for us because we want to be attractive for contemporary designers and art colleges. We would like to show that sustainable, local production and sophisticated design are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, we see the visual design of our website, of our other communication channels and of future products as a key factor to our success.

What our research has shown is that local supply chains may or may not work depending on the material. While local production is possible for leather, we are far from having a regional bast fiber production chain — despite the historical tradition. But even if the picture varies depending on the material, we sense a similar development for all plant and animal fibres: towards local, transparent production. Through our work in networking, education and research, we hope to reach, educate and empower as many people as possible.

In the coming months we plan to invest our time primarily in building our community and becoming more visible. Our team has a lot of knowledge and skills in various fields and is networked in the industry. We want to use this expertise to make it available to others and actively contribute to the sustainability dialogue in the textile industry. **We are really looking forward to the journey ahead of us!**



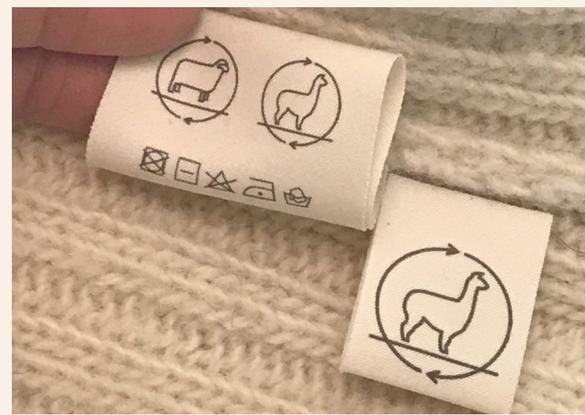
If you are interested in learning more about Fibershed DACH, visit their website www.fibershed-dach.org and follow them on Instagram [@fibershed.dach](https://www.instagram.com/fibershed.dach)



New York Textile Lab Fibershed

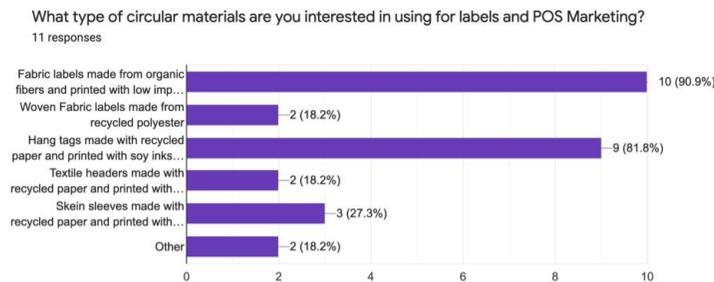
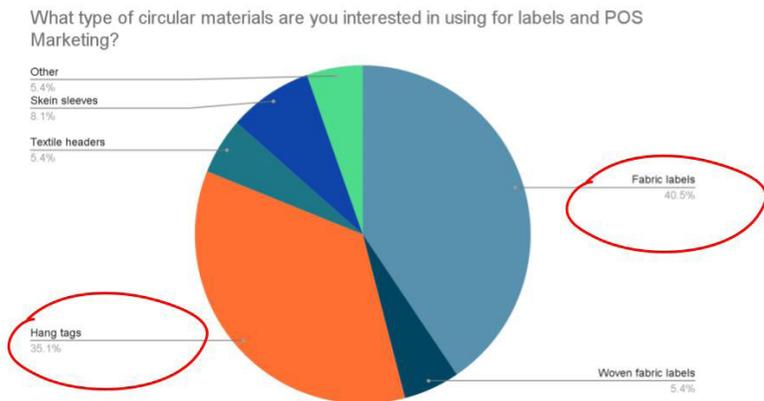
Over the past few years, our New York Textile (NY) Lab Fibershed has been growing a Carbon Farm Network — an interdependent group of designers and farmers organized around the important mission of Carbon Farming. Since launching our Carbon Farm Network, we've been able to grow the number of farms transitioning to climate beneficial practices and increase our machine grade yarn development that serves an emerging population of NYC designers who are interested in sourcing Climate Beneficial™ materials from our bioregion.

This year, funded by Fibershed's micro-grant program, our team was able to develop a Carbon Farm Marketing Kit, consisting of hangtags and cloth labels that aid the designers and farmers in our network when they sell their products. Our Carbon Farm Marketing Kit brings visibility to the deep value of climate beneficial practices through branding and marketing narratives. This year's funding also enabled us to work with the Pace University Food and Beverage Law Clinic to incorporate our Carbon Farm Network into a purchasing cooperative. These marketing tools provide a deliverable for participants in our cooperative and help to ensure that designers and farmers are using the Climate Beneficial™ verification appropriately and responsibly.



Developing the Carbon Farm Marketing Kit

Our team collected information from designers and farmers who are currently using or are transitioning to climate beneficial fiber development. We created and disseminated a survey that asked questions about what products they are selling, how they might use labels and other POS marketing tools, as well as preferences for types of circular materials that address zero to low waste production for tags and labels.



New York Textile Lab Fibershed

We then researched existing solutions as well as sustainable materials to use for the designs. Our team went through an iterative design process and created multiple options for both hang tag and cloth label designs. To narrow down our designed choices, we reached out to a select few designers and farmers and asked for feedback on both the hang tag and label designs. We found participants' comments very valuable in forming our final selections for the tags and labels.



Our team is currently disseminating the labels and tags that we produced with the grant funding to the designers and farmers who are in our Carbon Farm Network. There are currently five independent brands who are participating in purchasing carbon farmed fiber, and two more have reached out to join our collective this year. We also intend to move forward with Carbon Farm Plans for 2-3 more farms in 2022-23. In the future we will have a digital application to help us coordinate our fiber purchasing and the cooperative development of Climate Beneficial™ yarns and textile products.

To learn more about New York Textile Lab Fibershed and their Carbon Farm Network, check out their website www.newyorktextilelab.com and follow them on Instagram [@nytextilelab](https://www.instagram.com/nytextilelab)



Puerto Rico Fibershed



We are very excited and grateful to have joined the Fibershed Affiliate Program this year. Our vision is to develop a regenerative fiber and dye network throughout the archipelago of Puerto Rico. At the moment, we are on a very early stage working on mapping current dynamics related to the textile industry and identifying people that may be interested in joining our community project.

We are focusing our work on educating

about the impact and potential of working with local raw materials within a soil to soil framework. Envisioning this implies a paradigm shift because we can say almost 99% of the materials used for art and design purposes are imported. It may not be easy, but we are committed and truly believe in our vision.

We are combining our educational efforts through workshops with research and development projects in collaboration with one of our local producers, Trama. Through these projects we are studying ways of growing cotton fibers and dye plants including a variety of flowers and indigo. In addition, we are investigating the potential of working with waste wool with which we have made so far prototypes of hand-spun and natural dyed skeins for knitting, embroidery and darning.

To learn more about Puerto Rico Fibershed, you can follow them on Instagram [@puertoricofibershed](https://www.instagram.com/puertoricofibershed)



En Español

Estamos muy emocionados y agradecidos de habernos podido unir al Programa de Afiliados de Fibershed este año.

Nuestra visión es establecer una red textil regenerativa que conecte el archipiélago de Puerto Rico. Actualmente, estamos en una etapa inicial identificando las redes y dinámicas actuales vinculadas a la industria textil e identificando a las personas que quieran formar parte de este proyecto comunitario.

En esta etapa inicial, estamos enfocando nuestro trabajo en educar sobre el impacto y potencial de trabajar con materia prima local bajo el modelo circular del suelo al suelo. Hablar sobre estas temáticas y nuestra visión implica comenzar a dismantlar paradigmas. Podemos afirmar que cerca de un 99% de los materiales que se utilizan para propósitos de arte, diseño o artesanía son importados.

Comenzar esta transformación no es un trabajo sencillo, pero estamos comprometidos y creemos en ello.

Estamos combinando nuestras iniciativas educativas a través de talleres con proyectos de investigación y desarrollo en colaboración con uno de nuestros productores locales, Trama. Estos proyectos están enfocados en estudiar alternativas para crecer fibra de algodón y plantas tintóreas incluyendo una variedad de flores e índigo. Además, estamos explorando el potencial de trabajar con lana descartada con la cual hemos podido desarrollar prototipos de madejas hiladas a mano y teñidas con fuentes naturales para tejer, remendar y bordar.

Para saber más sobre Puerto Rico Fibershed, puedes seguirlos en Instagram [@puertoricofibershed](https://www.instagram.com/puertoricofibershed)



Pennsylvania Fibershed

📍 Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Fibershed is housed under All Together Now PA, a non-profit who's mission is to unite Pennsylvania's rural and urban communities to build just, regenerative, and resilient regional economies that are self-reliant in basic needs, in order to increase community wealth and equity, reduce and sequester carbons, and prepare for climate change.

Growing Pennsylvania's Clothing & Textile Supply Chain

By Leslie Davidson, Operations Manager, All Together Now PA

Jordan and Nicole Haddad, brother/sister duo of Philly based slow fashion brand, Lobo Mau, met Dave and Heidi Cook, co-owners of the eco-friendly textile mill, Tuscarora Mills, about one year ago during one of All Together Now PA's monthly Clothing & Textile Coalition meetings. This introduction, initiated by coalition leader, Rachel Higgins,

was exactly what Jordan and Nicole had been searching for — mills that could manufacture their textiles locally in PA.

"I contacted Dave and Heidi after one of our coalition meetings during a time when none of our suppliers were answering their phones," says Jordan, Lobo Mau CEO and Co-owner. "Due to supply chain disruptions caused by the pandemic, it was virtually impossible to source materials, even within



the US, but luckily we were able to procure deadstock cotton from Tuscarora Mills' which we used to make masks."

"Sourcing materials locally has always been a dream of ours." Jordan continues, "We had wanted to work with local mills for a long time, but didn't have the relationships until joining All Together Now's Clothing & Textile Coalition."

This new relationship between the two Pennsylvania based businesses eventually led to the production of Lobo Mau's Spring 2022 collection, which launched on Saturday, March 12, 2022, and features sustainable home decor, a first for the fashion brand.

"Every year we try to up our game in sustainability. Our new goal is to become more circular. I wanted to design quilt-free home decor"

says Nicole, Designer and Co-Owner.

Their new collection, manufactured entirely in Pennsylvania, includes up-cycled furniture made with hemp/organic cotton from Tuscarora Mills and upholstered by Jen Tiberi as well as other home items such as tufted recycled wool rugs hand made by Land of Plenty, zero waste pillows stuffed with shredded Lobo Mau textile (a case study with University of Delaware's Design Researcher Kelly Cobb) handmade ceramic lamps crafted by Centerpeak, and new original women's, men's, and plus size clothing styles made from organic USA cotton, also sourced from Tuscarora Mills.





“Overconsumption and waste is a major problem, and I didn’t want to be another contributor,” says Jordan. “By expanding into home decor, we are able to close the loop by down-cycling our production remnants; using this shred to stuff pillows, as well as up-cycle things that already existed in the world — like furniture, deadstock fabric, and recycled wool.”

This important connection between values-aligned PA small businesses is just one example of the amazing work Clothing & Textile Coalition leader, Rachel Higgins, has been tirelessly facilitating. In February, after many months of research, Rachel

launched the first part of the clothing and textile supply chain map on the All Together Now PA website, a project partially funded by Fibershed, a nationwide nonprofit organization whose mission is to develop regional fiber systems that build soil & protect the health of our biosphere. The map is a free resource for businesses in the industry who would like to easily find other small farmers and businesses to source their materials from in and around PA. And thanks to Rachel’s dedication and hard work, as of June 2021, All Together Now PA became the first official Fibershed Affiliate for the State of Pennsylvania.

Additionally, in collaboration with Keystone Development Center, the coalition is investigating the potential to form co-ops or other ways in which we can support fiber farmers in the region.

When asked why she is so focused on connecting local farmers and businesses in PA, Higgins had an easy answer:

“There are a lot of people with incredible skills in our area who are not being paid what they deserve. It’s important we support local entrepreneurs and help each other to succeed. Local supply chains allow transparency in how workers are treated and if they are paid living wages.”

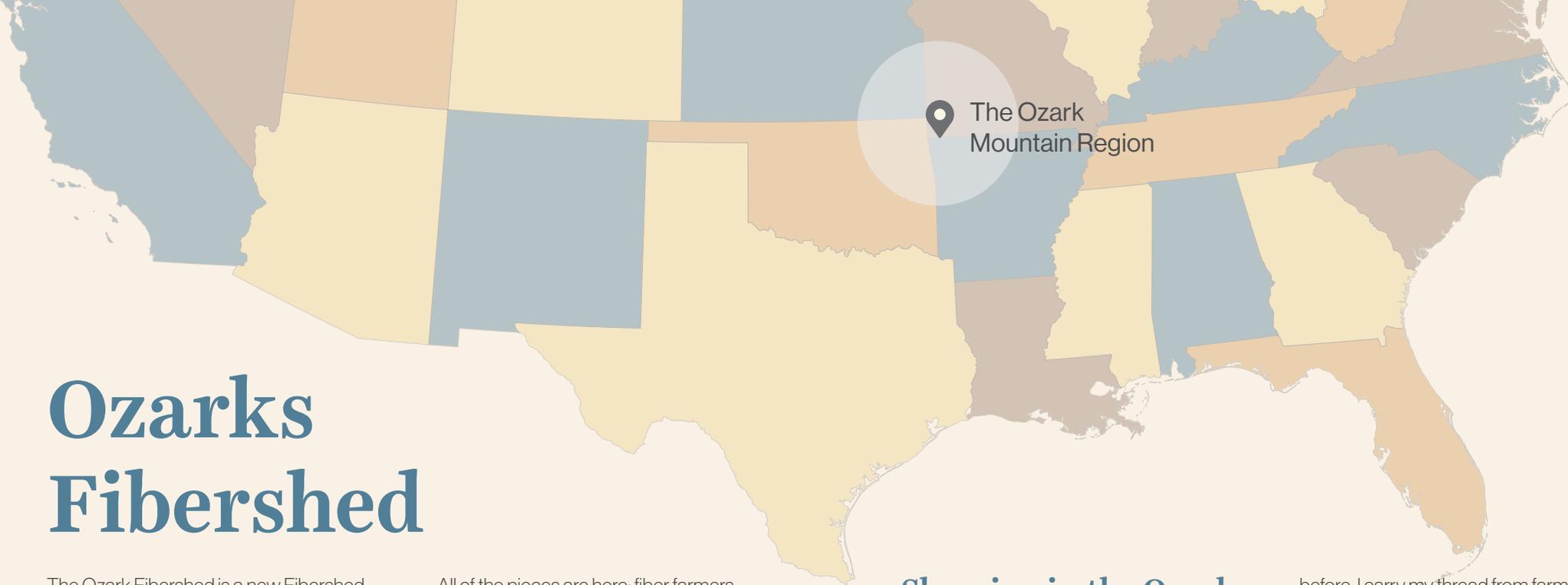
Judy Wicks, Founder of All Together Now PA, piggybacks Higgin’s sentiment, adding, “Building local supply chains that produce

our basic needs close to home moves power and wealth from outside corporations to our own communities, increasing regional self-reliance and resiliency.”

You can shop Lobo Mau’s new collection online at Lobomau.com and at its flagship brick and mortar, Lobo Mau Flagship, located at 700 S 6th St., Philadelphia 19147. One-of-a-kind up-cycled furniture pieces can be shopped at The Modern Republic at 1600 W Girard Ave, Philadelphia, PA.

To learn more about Pennsylvania (PA) Fibershed and All Together Now’s Clothing & Textile Coalition, you can visit alltogethernowpa.org and follow them on Instagram [@alltogethernowpa](https://www.instagram.com/alltogethernowpa)





Ozarks Fibershed

The Ozark Fibershed is a new Fibershed affiliate excited to engage in regional, national, and global fiber systems conversations. Our region is rich with fiber traditions and practitioners but lacks connection across stakeholders. Sheep farmers have more wool than they know what to do with, spinners are buying wool elsewhere, and regional brands are sourcing wool internationally. An older generation is mourning the impending death of their crafts, while a younger generation is scouring the internet for craft content that exists predominantly in the minds of people within miles of them. Many of our craft traditions, along with our culture's appreciation for textiles, are fading due to a lack of interaction between stakeholders across professions and generations.

All of the pieces are here: fiber farmers, spinners, weavers, knitters, designers, brands, retailers, a research university, and resources for arts and culture development. We believe there is great opportunity for a rich fiber system in the Ozarks. We are excited to merge and expand networks within our regional fiber system to transform the way our community understands and interacts with textiles. We hope to use our first year to grow and share our regional network with fiber stakeholders and to develop public interest in our regional fiber system.

— **Abby Hollis and Lindi Phillips, Co-organizers of the Ozark Fibershed**

Shearing in the Ozarks: Becoming a Keeper of a Place's Memory

By **Lindi Phillips**

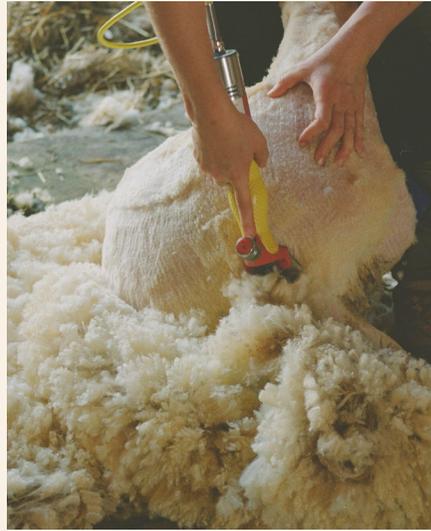
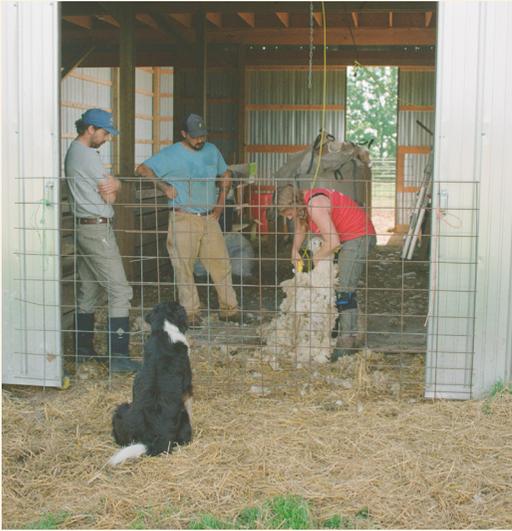
I didn't expect to like it. I expected, at best, to learn how to survive it. I hoped my back wouldn't break, mostly. But here I am, three months after shearing school, clipping my way across a county sorely in need of shearers.

This summer has found me deep in Ozark hollers, beating the back roads of Oklahoma, swearing and sweating in every manner of barn and shed, sniffing out swimming holes after a long day's work, and feeling everywhere at home in a way I have not quite experienced

before. I carry my thread from farm to farm, weaving on my mental warp a new knowledge of who has what and where, who bought their stock from whom, why so-and-so chose to do things that way, and where this might all be headed.

I never realized how a good shearer can become a keeper of a place's agricultural memory, and I imagine it'll be a lifetime's work to live into that.

The Ozark Fibershed is in one way newborn, organizationally speaking, but is in another as old as these many hills. It isn't so much a new idea as it is a reclamation of a deep tradition. Ozark farms, with their rugged terrain, poor



soils, and hard scrabble proprietors, used to turn out hardy flocks of wool sheep. These days, producers in our area have all but given up on wool sheep in favor of the meat breeds. I can't blame them, but I hope that as our local

fiber economy wakes up, stretches, and puts on some new clothes, they might reconsider. I'll be answering my phone when they do.

Follow us on social [@ozarkfibershed](#)





Chesapeake Fibershed

Sustainable Cloth Challenge: Farm to Home to Closet

Written for Chesapeake Fibershed by
Kerstin Zurbrigg

Illustrations by Nicolas Stebbins

In the tradition of living gently with the planet, in the spirit of connecting to your landscape and to the people, plants and animals living within our fibershed, this year we created an invitation to join in a year of making together, to form and hold the space in which to honor the traditions of slow and sustainable cloth and to inspire,

explore and support new directions in textile design, sources and relationships.

Farm to Home to Closet, provides opportunities to tie fibershed aspirations, and those of the slow fashion movement, to community generated research in three distinct yet overlapping streams. The challenge works in support of community and individual research, towards innovations on all levels, thoughtful making, open discussions, and in the end, documentation of the personal journeys taken. This is a community endeavor towards a collection of stories that will help make many aspects of our fibershed visible.

In keeping with the geographic identity of our fibershed, as a fibershed whose boundaries are defined by its watershed, we designed our Sustainable Cloth challenge to metaphorically reflect our geographic identity in connection to our meandering and powerful waterways.

The various streams of our challenge:

Ox-Bow: Embrace Our Place

An ox-bow lake occurs when a moving stream follows its own bend. Sometimes a path can be made with such a strong curve that there is no place to go but to come full circle. The ox-bow responds to its place and yet makes a gesture all of its own. Go this

direction and see what you can craft from your place — in the end what will be the form or design of your personal journey?

Embrace our place is a stream in which we take a deeper dive into what is truly local. Here participants are invited to gather materials in a closed or full circle, and to share all that is learned from the creative choices made.

Embrace this research stream if you are ready to glean from what is available: work with all local fibers, natural dyes, and local talent to create your textile item. This is your opportunity to celebrate and acknowledge the rich resources and capacities available in our immediate surroundings.



An ox-bow

Meander: Re-envision Our Resources

A **meander** threads its way through a landscape, shaping and shaped by what it encounters. What can you re-make from what is found, discarded? What new life can you bring to forgotten textiles and how will you incorporate elements of what is local into this picture? Follow this direction and become the re-designer, the inventor whilst responding to what you encounter and incorporating what you may need for your upcycled vision/design from what is available locally.

Re-envision our resources is an invitation to thrift, re-use and re-make.

Extending the life of our existing textiles plays an important role in reducing global textile waste. Take a deep dive into clothing restoration through the artistic and time-honored practices of mending and repurposing. Re-envision a new life for our existing textiles. Keeping textiles free of landfills and non-polluting is a slow fashion goal. Share your stories through documentation of where and how the original cloth was sourced and made. Describe how your practices create a new path towards extension and sustainability of that cloth. Envision this research to highlight the materials and methods used to extend the life of cloth. Re-envision naturally!



A meander

Delta: Borrow Across Boundaries

A **delta** is the place where tributaries, streams and rivers continue on their path to meet in strength as a fan or network of branches that reach a larger body of water. This is the place in which resources connect local to global—or to our nearest neighbors. We have the resources to create from within our bioregion, and yet we may lack some key elements or have reasons to connect to projects from afar. What can we find and shape from our place and how will we make choices to source from our extended sustainable community?

Borrow across boundaries is a stream in which local meets the regional, or rather a wider access point to resources. This is the stream that we come to when we do not have the resources we need on a local level.



A delta

Sometimes growth requires compromise and the help of neighbors. We may need to extend our boundaries in order to source ecologically and ethically sustainable materials. Research identifies the components and materials needed to complete an apparel or household item and where we need to reach across our boundaries of the Chesapeake Fibershed to find them.

In this stream we work with a combination of what we can source locally and fill the gaps by working with materials from outside of our fibershed. Charting our decisions is part of all of the projects but essential here as it helps us see the gaps and places for future development in our region.

Many of us have gone down these streams in some form or another, exploring locally farmed textiles, raising sheep, and growing natural dye plants, yet this is our opportunity

to share and grow our resources together; to form a community of makers and to inspire and learn from each other. It is an opportunity to explore the earth healing aspects of making with conscious intent, and to make a change in the pattern of both how and what fibers and dyes we use.



Hand woven alpaca rug in process.



Completed hand woven alpaca rug.

Sustainable Cloth, was inspired by so many Fibershed Affiliate projects — Southern California Fibershed Slow and Local, Rust Belt Fibershed One Year, One Outfit, Nicki Colls' Fibershed project, and by the Rebecca Burgess' 150-mile wardrobe challenge which has inspired the birth of the Fibershed movement. In all of these community endeavors we see the opportunity for community cloth challenges to become the means for conversations around practical earth and people based sustainability, regenerative practices and as the tool for engagement in developing the infrastructure for positive change.

This year's Sustainable Cloth Challenge will close with a celebration on October 23, 2022, at Shepherd's Hey Farm, and with an online book thereafter. To learn more about Chesapeake Fibershed and their Sustainable Cloth Challenge, visit chesapeakefibershed.com and follow them on instagram [@chesapeakefibershed](https://www.instagram.com/chesapeakefibershed)



Swatches of hand spun, hand woven cloth for challenge garment.

North West England Fibreshed



North West England



Justine Aldersey-Williams & Patrick Grant underneath the Homegrown Homespun banner. Photo: Cathy Wright

The Homegrown Homespun Project

Written by Justine Aldersey-Williams

In March 2020, I founded the North West England Fibreshed just as the Covid-19 pandemic started. I had been a natural textile dyer and teacher for almost a decade, having returned to my earlier degree subject after a child-induced career tangent as a yoga teacher. I was concerned for my children's future on a quickly degenerating planet, but the addition of a global health crisis and restrictions on teaching in person offered the opportunity to throw myself into the research needed to become a voluntary Fibreshed affiliate.

During various breaks in social distancing rules, I managed to get out into my region to meet textile creatives with a specialism in natural fibres and dyes. What I predominantly found was a rich wool culture and in particular, women with an enormous amount of commitment to locally reared fibre. Their barrier in adhering to Fibreshed principles was evident when it came to the dyes being used. Weavers for example required cone dyeing facilities and the commercial dye houses only used fossil fuel derived colours at the time.

Wool was a new world to me as a surface pattern designer specialising in teaching small-scale cloth dyeing, so I wondered how I could best serve this community and tackle the most pressing issues, while utilising my skills.



Justine's naturally dyed wool samples and recipes upscaled to commercial production. Photos: Justine Aldersey-Williams & Andrew Stephenson

During the same few months, I expanded my dye garden by taking on an allotment and began growing and processing flax. While taking my own textile practice back to the soil, I began learning more about regenerative textiles with Fibreshed and enthusiastically sharing research with a friend in the fashion industry who had been a champion of regional manufacturing and sustainable fashion for many years.

That friend was Patrick Grant, founder of multiple clothing enterprises and a judge on the BBC's, 'The Great British Sewing Bee'. He'd done a TEDTalk, 'Why we should all feel uncomfortable in our clothes' so was interested in the potential benefits of regeneratively grown textile crops, not just economically and socially but ecologically too. I thought his influence could help raise awareness of the Fibreshed cause while bringing his sustainability work literally down to earth, so set about convincing him to collaborate.

In August, 2020 Patrick agreed and we set an intention to grow jeans from flax and woad, hoping to incentivise the reintroduction of textile crops into the British agricultural system while creating some mid-scale facilities to make those crops viable for farmers.

I had recently persuaded a synthetic dye factory to trial madder (red) and weld (yellow) plant dyes which helped bring one of my

NWEF member's knitwear brands to market but getting non-soluble indigo through a cone dyeing machine was still problematic. So my rationale was that by collaborating on this ambitious project and tackling the lack of natural dye and linen facilities, we'd benefit both the textile and agricultural industries.

Having a full spectrum of plant dye alternatives available at an appropriate scale would then open up opportunities for synthetic dyers to begin transitioning to renewable colours, thus enabling my NWEF members to work towards Fibershed verification. Encouraging farmers to grow textile crops regeneratively in the process would mean more carbon being drawn out of our overheated atmosphere and back into our depleted soils — a win win!



The Homegrown Homespun site before and after. A previously intimidating area that had been used for rough sleeping and fly-tipping was transformed into an outdoor classroom for the community. Photos: Justine Aldersey-Williams



We did it! We grew a field of flax in Blackburn! Photo: Bea Davidson

In December 2020, we invited cultural development programme SuperSlow Way who run the British Textile Biennial to join our collaboration and director Laurie Peake named our project 'Homegrown Homespun'. SuperSlow Way work with communities within the former heartland of the British textile industry along the Leeds-Liverpool canal in East Lancashire, which has suffered economic deprivation since offshoring. Experimenting with carbon farming principles on disused urban land meant 'learning by doing' with novice growers in a region where regeneration was needed most rather than working directly with the expertise of a rural organic or regenerative farmer. Our volunteers have worked tirelessly, planting, weeding and harvesting on challenging terrain in place of the synthetic herbicides, pesticides, and mechanisation most farmers rely upon.

Being showcased by the British Textile Biennial created two phases and deadlines.

In phase 1, from April to October 2021, with a team of volunteers and textile artisans we grew, processed, spun, dyed and wove a piece of indigo linen denim by hand – the first time this had been done in at least 100 years! It wasn't the full pair of jeans we'd envisaged but if anything the process of constantly editing our expectations subject to changing circumstances taught us some of the lessons of regenerative practice; humility, patience and coming into right relationship with our ecosystem. The cloth we grew was embroidered with a trouser leg pattern piece to illustrate how close we got to our initial aim.

Thanks to Climate Action Funding, we're now in phase 2, from Oct 21 – Oct 23, and are working on the upscale of production in order to bring a line of indigo linen jeans to market via Patrick's social enterprise, Community Clothing.

The term “humility” comes from the Latin word *humilitas*, a noun related to the adjective *humilis*, which may be translated as “humble”, but also as “grounded”, or “from the earth”, since it derives from *humus* (earth).

Over summer '21 we'd shared the pre-industrial textile skills we'd be needing with volunteers who helped make our Homegrown Homespun banner. This really brought home to me how crucial these so-called niche hobbies really are.

It was so valuable highlighting how textile crafts connect farming to fashion and people to natural materials. Textile education is crucial if we're to reshore our industry and raise awareness amongst consumers about

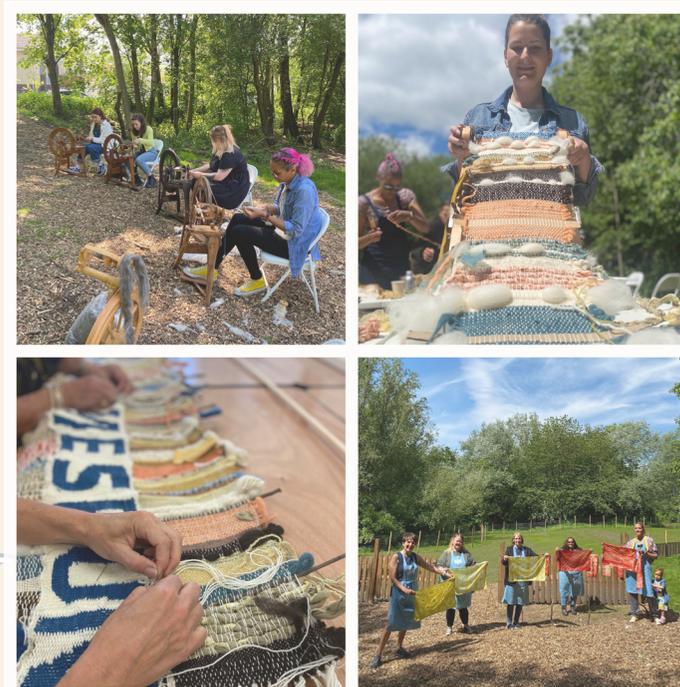
the difference between renewable and non-renewable materials. The Pre-Industrial crafts of hand spinning, weaving and natural dyeing offer an insight into an era when humanity lived in closer connection with the natural environment. Practicing them builds a relationship with and reverence for nature while invoking ancestral muscle memory that connects us to a time when people had more time. This feels inherently good and creates gentle opportunities to discuss the otherwise heavy topics of climate change and fast fashion, in a creative, hopeful way.

three were most precious - although it's a close draw with the day I led a lie-down meditation amongst our flowering flax! As a teacher, it was a pleasure for me to take people foraging around the site looking for plants to add into our red and yellow 'grand tients' as we transformed old white bedsheets into coloured fabric yarn and with the help of Lazy Kate Textiles, turned remnants and wool fluff into our community banner.

From our harvest on 13th August we had just 6 weeks to get ready for the Biennial in October when we'd be showcasing the results of our efforts. We were advocating regenerative, slow fashion and textiles, yet had a great opportunity to raise awareness of these ideals by rushing to meet the exciting deadline of the British Textile Biennial – which we did, with a few edits and sleepless nights!

“Through making we transform matter, and in turn matter transforms us.” – Satish Kumar

Of the many days I've spent in this field these



The hand spinning, natural dyeing, weaving and sewing of the Homegrown Homespun banner, made in 3 days during the summer half term, 2021. Photos: Bea Davidson & Justine Aldersey-Williams



Justine, Patrick and Co-director of Superslow Way, Jenny Rutter with volunteers under the Homegrown Homespun banner. Photo: Bea Davidson



Scutched, spun, dyed and woven in 6 weeks! Photos featuring Simon Cooper from Flaxland, Justine's indigo thumb holding our Homegrown Home spun linen yarn and weavers Kirsty MacDougall and Sally Holditch, by Bea Davidson, Brigitte Kaltenbacher, Justine Aldersey-Williams and Shelley Tomkinson

The cloth has an unexpected lustre that's almost golden in sunlight and this makes the natural indigo shimmer beautifully. We were all surprised by the luxurious drape once the loom state piece had been beetled and everyone who's seen it has been enchanted by its provenance! The love and hopes of so many are woven into this humble fabric, and

we believe it epitomises the beautiful struggle of all those involved who are committed to 'being the change'.

This year we've extended our flax, woad and Japanese indigo crops and we've just harvested our 2022 flax. We have a Masters by Research student assessing the

'triple bottom line sustainability' of building a regenerative textile system and a local primary school growing with us where the teachers will be writing schemes of work around the topic in the next academic curriculum starting this September.

Excitingly, I recently met a synthetic dyer who'd worked with woad when he was an apprentice 20 years ago and now owns a factory just a few hundred yards away from our field! It was a huge thrill to see the indigo paste I'd grown at my allotment dye linen in his machine and hopefully he'll considering dedicating a space within his facility to natural dyes in future, which would be my NWEF dream come true!

In terms of linen processing, we've been very kindly offered some for free by a large facility just 60 miles from the English coast in Northern France. So, bar this we're on track to bring a line of indigo linen jeans to market via Partick's social enterprise Community Clothing, that have been grown, dyed and sewn within a 1 mile radius by October 2023! There will be compromises to be made in terms of some Fibreshed principles no doubt, but in the transition from a degenerative to regenerative planet that is to be expected and I'll continue to document this honestly on the [NWEF website](#).

I'm not entirely sure jumping in the deep end with eco-anxiety fuelled passion was the



FIELD (left): Justine, Patrick and Laurie at the Homegrown Homespun field, Higher Audley St, Blackburn on planting day, April 23rd 2021. FABRIC (right): Justine, Patrick and Laurie holding the indigo linen cloth at the Homegrown Homespun exhibition at Blackburn Museum on 30th October 2021. Photos: Bea Davidson & Zara Shetima



The front and back of our Homegrown Homespun, indigo linen cloth showing the unexpected iridescence of the blue and gold due to the natural lustre of linen. Photo: Justine Aldersey-Williams

right thing to do when starting this Fibreshed but in the absence of a roadmap to somewhere none of us have been, I hope I've been of service to the cause. Certainly, a lot of awareness has been raised from the many interviews I've done for magazines, panels, TV and radio but although the majority of this adventure has been incredible, it hasn't been easy.

I really don't know if we'll be successful in our quest, and I've surrendered to the uncertainty. What I've learnt during the last 2 years is that those involved with Fibreshed or environmental activism, stand at the threshold of hope and heartbreak — between how things are and how they could be. This is where the hell of witnessing the destruction of the Earth can be seen and felt in devastating contrast to the



Naturally dyed linen trials at a commercial dye house, June 2022. Photo: Justine Aldersey-Williams



potential heaven of a regenerated planet. For those able to hold the vision of hope, the compromises that are inevitable as we transition can feel unbearable yet hold the liminal vision and difficult feelings we must as that friction is the driving force of the positive change we wish to see.

“Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.”
 – Arundhati Roy





Southeast
New England

Southeastern New England Fibershed

Written by Amy DuFault

The Southeastern New England Fibershed comprises Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Our mission is to create a regional fibershed that unites fiber to finished product. From farmer to processor, from financing to cut and sew, we are connecting the dots of the supply chain to bring production back to reinvigorate a once-thriving New England textile industry. We base our geographic radius on the historical textile processing centers of New Bedford, MA, and Providence, RI, both of which have extensive remaining infrastructure, and cover both states with an approximately 100-mile radius.

You might ask, how on earth did a project on wastewater's impacts on natural dye plant growth and color come into being. It all started with a visit to a Cape Cod Air Force base and what looked like an X-Files set...

Month's ago I was interviewed by Brian Baumgaertel, Massachusetts Alternative Septic System Test Center (MASSTC) Director, I/A Tracking Program Administrator and Americorps on their podcast, "One Drop Leads To Another," on the impact of the fashion and textile industry on water. MASSTC is the nation's premier third-party testing and research facility for innovative/alternative onsite septic treatment technologies. (They are also that perfect X-Files-like set on an Air Force Base.)

In addition to a background as a seasoned journalist in sustainable fashion, my full time job is Sustainability Director of Botanical Colors. As the the #1 dye supplier in the U.S., we work with farmers worldwide and are increasing our collaborations with natural dye farmers in the U.S. When I say "collaborations," I mean we are working with natural dye farmers who can provide raw

dye materials to us through organic and regenerative farming practices. Think indigo, madder root, walnut, Osage orange sawdust, black hollyhocks, marigolds and coreopsis (but the list is growing).

Kathy Hattori, the founder and President of Botanical Colors and I talk a lot about water and the future of farming. I mentioned during the interview that it would be interesting to try growing plants at MASSTC with wastewater and everyone's eyes lit up. The next day I saw a big seed order on the Botanical Colors's site and knew there was officially work to do.



Bryan Horsley, MASSTC Site Operator (featured in many of these pictures), began growing seeds indoors late winter/early spring and we even tried growing them with waste wool from a small, local farm owned by Heidi Pleso. Interesting, but not notable in terms of how strong and quickly the seedlings grew.

When the weather got warmer, Bryan revived a hydroponics system at MASSTC and we put the indigo seedlings as well as madder and Hopi Sunflowers officially in wastewater. The rate at which they have grown is mind-blowing. We had to move them recently into buckets as the root systems were clogging the hydroponics!



Persicaria tinctoria hydroponically grown



Clean up crew for the new plot: Alice Sowa (Southeastern New England Fibershed volunteer), AmeriCorps member Travis Kornegay, Finn Horsley (coolest helper ever) and his dad, MASSTC Site Operator Bryan Horsley

We now have a system where we first move them into a bucket, water with wastewater and let the first shockwave hit before we put them in the ground in another area we recently created. The new plot is fed by lightly filtered wastewater, is set on a timer and comes out of PVC pipes.

We just came up with an idea to create filters for the intake pipes using waste wool from the Coonamessett Farm so I just zip tied that on, brought in new soil, and transplanted four madder plants and we have five Hopi Sunflower plants that look like they are weathering the move. Madder takes three years before the root is ready to harvest so we hope they are able to thrive in this area for a few years.

We will be planting some Red Dye Amaranth next and have "control plants" not being grown with wastewater so that we can work with a scientist at MASSTC to see just what's in the leaves and flowers that might be impacting color. Stay tuned!



New madder plants transplanted from the hydroponics into wastewater fed soil

Our intention with this project was and still is, to experiment with using the nutrients in wastewater to grow a variety of plants that can be used to make natural dyes.

Bryan says:

"I hope this project will help demonstrate the value of nutrients in our wastewater and that what we consider 'waste' is actually a resource that can readily be used for practical purposes like growing healthy and useful plants, beautiful flowers and making natural dyes."

I also see this as a means to alert people to the issue of our habitual wasting of valuable nutrients via our sinks, showers and toilets and the unnecessary pollution of clean water in the process. Change is necessary to achieve sustainability in our water, waste and nutrient systems and I hope this can contribute to that need."

I couldn't agree more and hope this project continues to inform ways U.S. natural dye farmers might hydroponically grow dye flowers year-round using their own wastewater. As we see climate changing and



Please email me at amytropolis@gmail.com to ask any questions or to join me!

To learn more about the Southeastern New England Fibershed, visit senefibershed.org and follow them on Instagram [@senewenglandfibershed](https://www.instagram.com/senewenglandfibershed).

drought becoming the norm, Bryan and I also hope we can find ways to, as he said above, stop the wasting of nutrient rich water farmers could use in a number of ways. Though we are co-growing these flowers with food which is also thriving wildly, the jury is out whether you would want to eat the food grown with wastewater but the flowers? Now that's another thing.

Fibershed Finland



Flax processing and spinning the traditional way

Written by Leena Pesu

It was in the middle of a rare heat wave in our northern country of Finland that eight women gathered in the vicinity of a 100 year old flour mill with the aspiration to learn how to process flax into linen yarn using traditional methods. This was the first fiber processing course organized by Fibershed



Töllö mill turns 100 years old this year

Finland, with other courses in plans as we get our activities properly kicked off.

Some of us had grown our own flax, while others used materials provided by the organizers. One participant had found a treasure in her barn: flax harvested and retted by her grandmother nearly a century ago! As the saying goes: "wool turns into soil, but flax turns into gold", hence flax had not suffered from the long storage and was still good for processing.

Flax was cultivated in each and every farm in Finland in the old days, and there is an abundance of related stories and traditions which our teacher shared with us during the two days. A girl was not allowed to get

married, for instance, before she could properly spin linen! Lucky for us, some of these traditions are forgotten now, but there are still people that can teach us the skills, like our wonderful teacher Kirsi Kostamo. Also traditional tools are still to be found in the attics for processing.

During two days we learned to break, scutch, hackle and spin flax into linen. Even with no earlier spinning experience, each and every one of us managed to produce at least a little bit of yarn, even if it was coarse in the beginning. The experience increased the appreciation of the earlier generations that had to do this to produce garments and other textiles for their households, and sparked an interest in this noble fiber. Organizing a course like this is also a good tool for communicating about our fibershed.

To learn more about Fibershed Finland, visit their website fibershedfinland.fi and follow them on Instagram [@fibershed_finland](https://www.instagram.com/fibershed_finland)





Western Massachusetts Fibershed

Written by Michelle Parrish

Western Massachusetts Fibershed became an affiliate in 2018. Our mission is to create a thriving, sustainable regional fiber economy by strengthening connections between fiber farmers, spinning mills, weavers, artisans, designers, and consumers. Thus far, our primary focus has been a local woolen cloth project. We've been honored to receive two Fibershed micro-grants in 2018 and 2020 to support this work.

Our first run of locally woolen cloth was sourced, spun, and woven within a 50-mile radius, thanks to the existing infrastructure and expertise that we're fortunate to have in our fibershed. Assets include many sheep farmers, experienced shearers, the machinery and know-how of the worker-

owners at Green Mountain Spinnery in Putney, VT, and the skills of Peggy Hart of Bedfellows Blankets in Shelburne Falls, MA, who uses industrial Crompton and Knowles looms. Our first run of cloth was sewn into a collection of garments, shoes, caps, and bags by ten local designers. We exhibited the collection at The Hitchcock Center for the Environment Nov. 2019–Jan. 2020. The designers utilized low- or zero-waste design



A few of the garments and accessories at the exhibition Fibershed: Woven Together at the Hitchcock Center for the Environment, Amherst, MA, 2019-2020

to produce functional pieces, offering an inspiring glimpse of what a New England farm-to-closet wardrobe can look like. Some of these pieces were also featured with New York Textile Lab's Carbon Farm Network pieces in the exhibit "Local and Landmade" at Hancock Shaker Village in Pittsfield, MA, in 2021.

The second run of cloth was also supported by a micro-grant. We had several goals:

1. Bring down the costs so that we could sell the cloth at a more accessible retail price. The costs of our first run were \$95/yard because of the small quantity of wool we started with (80lbs. which produced 40 yards of cloth).
2. Use wool that would otherwise not go into textile production, whether from meat flocks or small flocks without a direct-marketing plan of their own. We hoped that using this wool to create beautiful products would help create a higher value for this underutilized resource.
3. Create a wider range of products in order to reach different audiences, i.e., blankets and yarns.

Going from fleece to fabric is not accomplished within one calendar year but it has a natural rhythm, so we decided to call our process of creating woolen cloth a "production cycle." We are currently finishing our third production cycle and beginning our fourth. The knitting yarns from the third production cycle are available for sale at a local yarn shop, Northampton Wools, or directly from us. The new cloth will be woven by the end of July 2022, and the fleeces that we collected and skirted for the next run are at the mill. For the fourth production cycle we are excited to team up with UMass Amherst to include their clip of Polled Dorsets.

Initially we believed that we would create prototype cloth and garments that could be reproduced, but it became obvious as the project evolved that each run of cloth would be unique. We embrace this variety rather than view it as a problem!

Moving forward, we will continue our woolen fabric project and build upon it. With a higher volume of wool (about 200 lbs. per cycle) and better price bracket at the mill, the cloth in our second production cycle was priced at \$75/yard. This still places the yardage out of reach of many designers since each step of the process adds labor and cost to the final product. While some designers have bought our cloth, many people buy it planning to sew their own garments. A local fabric store, Swanson's Fabrics, has hosted two pop-up events for us. We look

forward to collaborating with Swanson's and other skilled sewers to offer education and information about handwoven cloth. The more people who are equipped to sew with locally produced woolen cloth, the better!

We initially envisioned our fibershed encompassing a 100-mile radius centered in Greenfield, MA, including the Berkshires and Southern Vermont. We quickly discovered that this overlaps with several other fibersheds in our region, and that collaborating with these other fibersheds is essential! Over the past few years we have met with and collaborated on events and projects with regional affiliates including Connecticut, Southeastern New England,

NY Textile Lab, Hudson Valley Textile Project, LocalFiber, Vermont, and Northern New England. Together we are working to build a regional supply chain, and we're excited to expand these relationships.

We also want to develop our supply chain directory of fiber producers, mill services, designers, artisans, retail outlets, upcyclers, and fiber recycling or composting opportunities. We've gotten started but we still have a long way to go. Lastly, a fibershed needs more than woolen cloth! We hope to grow our network and our capacity to take on other projects, including natural dyes, flax, and value-added waste wool products.



Shearing sheep at Leyden Glen Farm. Photo credit Samantha Wood 2021



Skirting fleeces outdoors during the pandemic. Skirting means removing all the undesirable parts of the fleece before it's sent to the mill to be washed, picked, carded, and spun.

To learn more about Western Massachusetts Fibershed, visit their website at www.westernmassfibershed.org, follow them on Facebook @[Western Mass Fibershed](https://www.facebook.com/WesternMassFibershed) and Instagram @[westernmassfibershed](https://www.instagram.com/westernmassfibershed), or reach out to them at westernmassfibershed@gmail.com



Carding machine at Green Mountain Spinnery Putney, VT. Green Mountain Spinnery uses a woolen spinning system.



Pencil roving ready to add twist at Green Mountain Spinnery. After the fiber is washed, picked, and carded, it is divided into thin sections before twist is added to create the yarns.



Singles and plied yarns from our third production cycle.



Peggy Hart of Bedfellows Blankets, Shelburne Falls, MA. The warp is wound with single yarns, threads are drawn through the heddles, and the warp is tied onto the loom before weaving.



Designers dividing the cloth from our first production cycle (Anna Gilbert Duvenek, Leonore Alaniz, Katie Cavacco, Nur Tiven, Gretchen Laise, 2019)



Katie Cavaco with three bolts of our cloth at Swanson's Fabrics, Turners Falls, MA



More than one pattern can be woven on the same warp, then we cut apart and re-roll each section (Gretchen Laise, Katie Cavacco, Peggy Hart).



In our second production cycle, Peggy wove two patterns of throws on the same warp as the yardage.



Peggy's looms have a weaving width up to about 7 feet, perfect for yardage and blankets



Fiberhouse Collective Fibershed

Collaborating with Kudzu: From Vine to Cloth

In our monthly Invasive Fiber Study group, in partnership with Kudzu Culture, we collaborate with regional 'invasive' (or highly abundant) plants from kudzu to japanese knotweed. We want to rewrite the narrative and reframe these collaborators as partners, rather than nemeses. Over

the past two years we have been spinning, naturally dyeing, weaving, and making paper with the leaves and vines of the tangled web of kudzu that creeps its way across Western North Carolina.

This August we will be hosting our second annual Vine to Cloth Kudzu Camp with our study group co-host, Kudzu Culture. There is a rich history of textile creation with kudzu in Japan, but when kudzu was brought over to the USA in the early twentieth century, the fiber processing techniques did not travel with the creeping vine. However, southern Appalachia has its own storied past growing and processing flax to linen. We take inspiration from the kudzu fiber processing techniques used in Japan to create sacred kuzu-fu (translating to kudzu cloth), while integrating the tools used in flax processing that are readily available at antique shops and through fiber friends in our fibershed.

The best time to forage for kudzu vines for

fiber is late summer into early fall, when the first year of growth is not yet woody. This woody vine is great for basketry, though. A pencil thickness is a good guide for vine thickness. You can strip the leaves and save them for animal fodder or make a beautiful light green paper from the co-product. Our goal as a collective has been to wild harvest large quantities throughout the summer from our sloping site in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Fiberhouse Collective is located on occupied land at the heart of an old growth kudzu stand — a patch spanning over three acres. We hope to use our site as a framework and case study for others with kudzu growing on the land they steward or in a neighboring area. You do not need to spray your kudzu, it won't eradicate it anyway. It's best to live amongst it. Work with it. Dig up the roots for medicine and starch, let your fiber animals graze on its protein rich goodness, ret the vines to uncover a lustrous fiber well worth the harvest and processing time. You

can create a management plan that can actually benefit from a weed with such a bad reputation here in the south.

We have also been making a sturdy yet delicate paper with the core or leaves remaining after the fiber processing stages are complete. We hope this will eventually serve as packaging and packing materials for our kudzu cloth, kudzu yarn, and kudzu homegoods.

The possibilities are as abundant as the plant itself.

See you in the weeds, Nica Rabinowitz

To learn more about Fibershed Collective and their work with kudzu, visit www.fiberhousecollective.com and follow them on Instagram [@fiberhousecollective](https://www.instagram.com/fiberhousecollective)





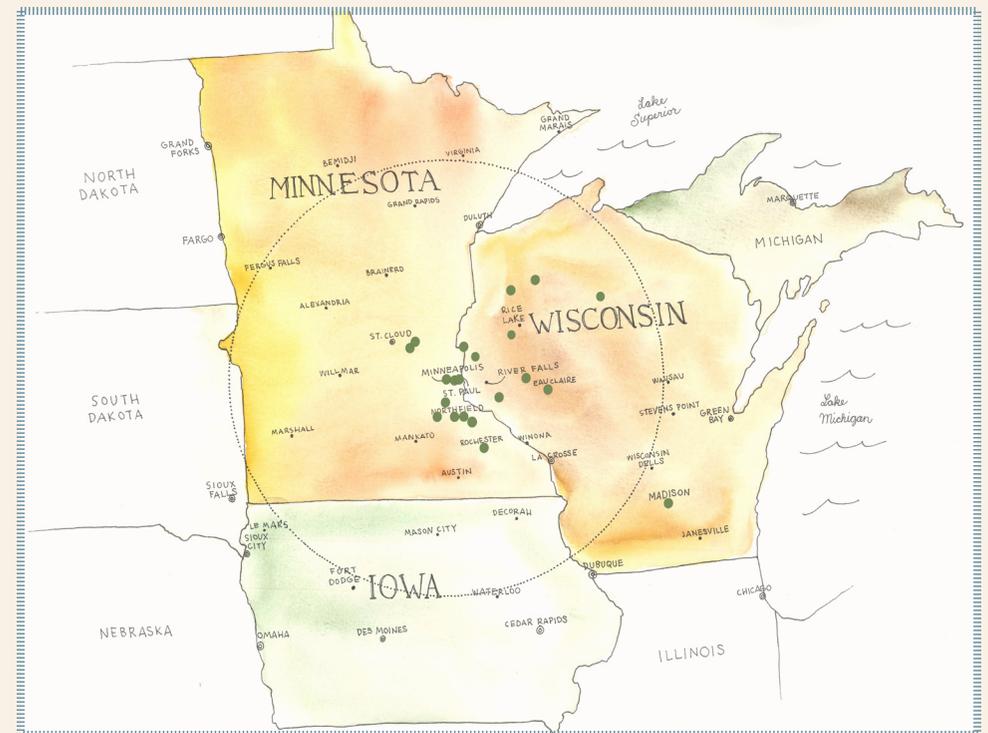
Three Rivers Fibershed

Named after the Mississippi, Minnesota, and St. Croix rivers, the Three Rivers Fibershed (TRF) works to develop strong, community-centered textile systems that build soil health and enhance stewardship within a 175 mile radius of Minneapolis, Minnesota. TRF's work utilizes communal power to provide accessible textile education through sliding scale classes, equitable engagement and opportunities for community members to contribute to their local fibershed through projects like the One Year One Outfit and Soil to Sock challenge, and via a 'Steward' program that fosters meaningful relationships and improves the health of TRF's bioregion.

The Steward program is a membership-based network of shepherds, plant-based fiber and dye farmers, foragers, natural dyers, artists, makers, designers, fiber millers, shearers, and retailers living and working within TRF's strategic geography. The Steward program serves as a way for all members of a local fiber community to have equal access to resources and

opportunities for connection with individuals working towards place-based textile stewardship. Each Steward approaches agricultural stewardship from a unique place, as TRF believes stewardship should be rooted in a non-prescriptive, decolonized relationship to the land. At their core, TRF is an organization that values abundance over scarcity and welcomes any and all to join in the creation of a thriving local textile economy. To illustrate where TRF's growing Steward community is located, green dots have been added to this illustrated map of TRF's 175 mile radius.

To learn more about the Three Rivers Fibershed, check out their website www.threeriversfibershed.com and follow them on Instagram [@threeriversfibershed](https://www.instagram.com/threeriversfibershed)



Inland Empire Fibershed



Inland Empire,
California

Written by Mary Hurley

Welcome to the Inland Empire SoCal Fibershed! We are a group of fiber producers and artists who share the common goal of supporting our local, regional, and worldwide fiber communities. Our fibershed covers a vast geographic area including San Bernardino, Riverside, and High Desert communities. The total square miles covered is approximately 50,000 square miles (SB 20,105, RS 7,208, HD ~21,000). The geography ranges from below sea level to a high point of 11,503 feet Mount San Gorgonio. We have verdant valleys filled with citrus and avocado groves, vineyards and farmlands, mountains with towering peaks, forested lakes, and wildlife, urban areas, and a sizable portion of the Sonoran Desert. Along with the rest of the world we face a growing climate crisis, drought, and fire risks. We are committed to education and activism around these issues.

The Inland Empire Fibershed has many fiber producers including sheep, alpaca, llama, goat, camel, bison, as well as cotton and hemp. We have multiple guilds covering all the fiber arts: weaving, spinning, dyeing, knitting, felting, and others. There are, at last count, fourteen museums and galleries which feature the fiber arts and support our local producers and artists. Given this wealth of diversity and interest we have many opportunities for our fibershed to grow and diversify.

We became a Fibershed affiliate in 2014 and have had many projects and interests:

- Monthly meetups of local producers and artists to share educational programs, community, and workshops. We have hosted meetups of weaving, natural dyes, acid dyes, felting/nuno felting, knitting, fleece processing, and other related topics.
- Community education at the Grove K-12 Montessori farm school with 8-week courses on shearing, processing, and producing product from their school sheep.
- Yearly community education day, in conjunction with Inland Empire Handweavers Guild, at the San Bernardino County Museum fiber exploration day.
- Ongoing educational days at the Redlands Conservancy farm including conservation, natural habitat, natural dyeing, weaving with native grasses, spinning, and weaving.
- We have just been approved for our REACH (Redlands Eco Arts Community Home) garden project in one of our local parks. This will feature native planting, water management utilizing the adjacent community duck ponds, native dye plants, native grasses for weaving and papermaking, as well as artist in resident programs. This will be an ongoing collaboration between our parks department, Redlands Arts Association, and Inland Empire Fibershed. We look forward to showing the transformation of this unutilized space.



Development of a 40-acre events center in conjunction with a local nonprofit organization that will feature several venues including a fiber arts studio with space for fiber processing, dyeing, weaving, and other classes. This project has a several year plan and we hope to be able to open the fiber arts studio in the next 5 years as infrastructure is available.

Fiber Artist Market LLC was started at the beginning of the pandemic when fiber festivals and livestock shows were shut down. The Inland Empire Fibershed folks quickly put their heads together and pivoted from a plan for a local based website to sell fleeces, to a universal free website open to all fiber producers and artists to help sustain them during this time. We have had over 400 producers and artists join during that time and have been able to distribute over a quarter of a million dollars directly back to small producers and artists allowing them to stay in business until local markets re-opened. We are continuing to support the marketplace as events unfold around the world. Development of our 501c3 Non-Profit status which has taken a back seat during the pandemic, but we hope to re-ignite our efforts at our quarterly board meeting next month.

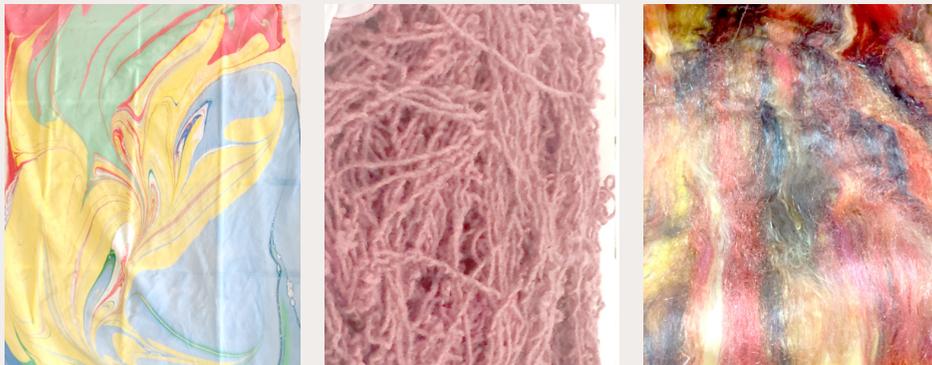
We obtained a large grant from ESRI for an ArcGIS mapping project with the assistance of Fibershed.org as our 501c3 partner. This grant will allow us to develop a sophisticated public map of the fibersheds, producers, mills, festivals/shows, dye gardens, watersheds, geographic information, and much more. We want this to be a valuable interactive map for the whole fiber community. We expect the project to be available for publication by May of 2023.

The future of fiber is in our next generations. We actively support our FFA/4H and other farm families in growing their fiber business through education, grants, internships, livestock shows, and mentorships.

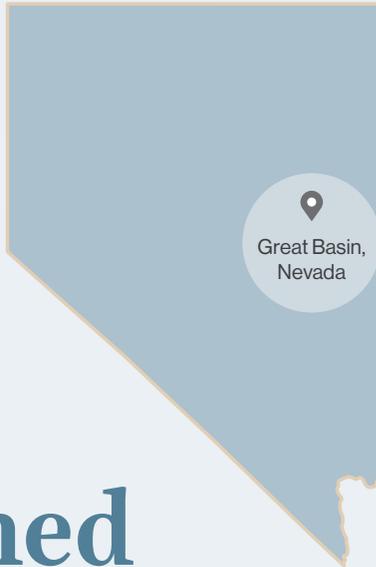


Individual members have many more projects that we will report on as they are shared with us. We are committed to getting out to meet as many of our regions producers, artists, and associated organizations as we can.

We invite anyone who wishes to know more, be involved, or join us in our endeavors to reach us at: contact@fiberartistmarket.com or on Facebook [@fiberartistmarketllc](https://www.facebook.com/fiberartistmarketllc)



Great Basin Fibershed



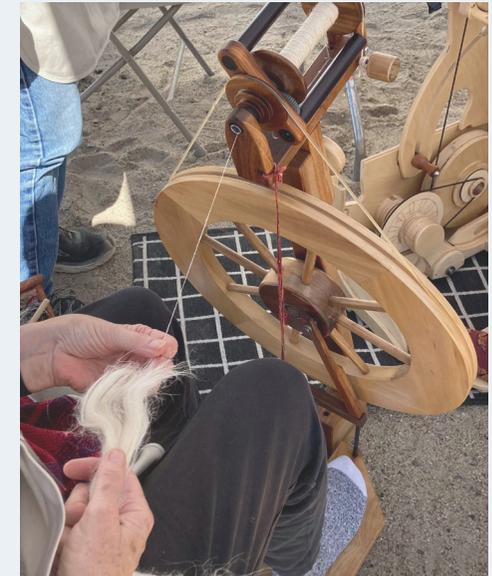
**Hemp by Hand
Great Basin Fibershed
October 3-4, 2021, Fallon, NV**

What was Hemp by Hand?

Hemp by Hand was a two day workshop to explore cottage processing of fresh industrial hemp stalks. Day 1 focused on processing for textile production, while Day 2 focused on its potential use for basketry and rope-making. It was hosted at Western States Hemp in Fallon, NV.



Workshop instructor Stephenie Gaustad began Day 1 with a review of hemp's structure. The inner hurd and outer resin layers make hand processing of hemp tricky!



In the morning of Day 1, we experimented with hand processing fresh stalks that had been steamed. We tried peeling by hand, with a knife, and more to access the inner fibers. In the afternoon, participants had the opportunity to spin commercially processed sliver.



Cordage twined from fresh hemp on Day 2.



Hemp stalks in the fields at Western States Hemp. These stalks were grown using regenerative ag. Sheep hate the oils in hemp, so they leave the plants alone and just eat the weeds!



On Day 2, with lots of experience in processing fresh plant materials, the basket-weavers were eager to jump in!

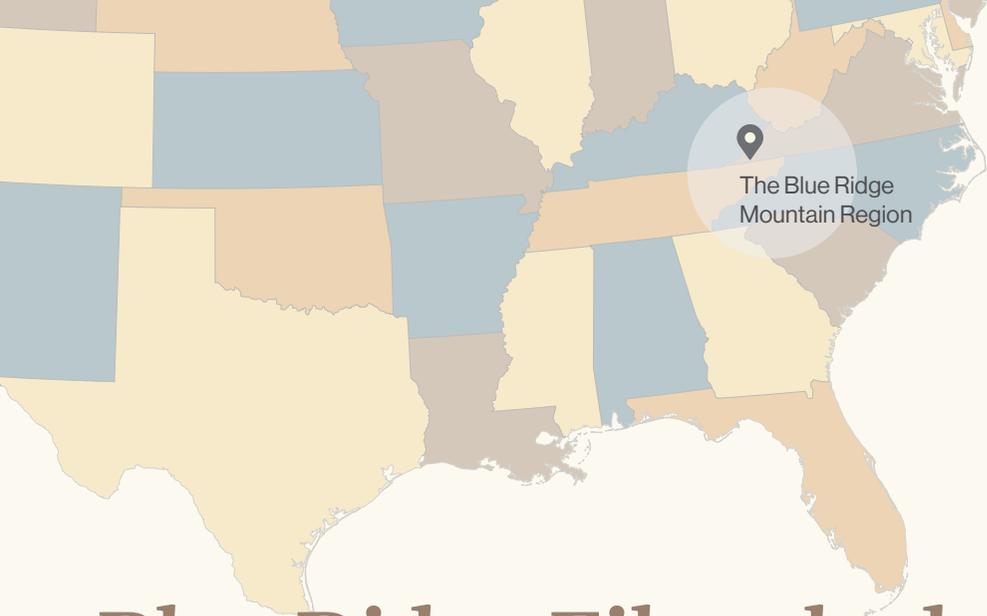


Outcomes and What Comes Next?

Overall, we learned a lot about processing hemp for textile use through our two-day workshop. Most agreed that this plant had great potential as a source of local fiber, but felt the time and labor needed to get to the fiber would prevent them from using it. Currently, we are exploring options to purchase a mobile decorticator, which would greatly speed the process and allow us to more easily access and use the staple fibers, which could then be spun or woven into baskets by our local guilds.

To learn more about the Great Basin Fibershed, please visit greatbasinfibershed.org and follow them on Instagram [@greatbasinfibershed](https://www.instagram.com/greatbasinfibershed)





The Blue Ridge Mountain Region

Blue Ridge Fibershed

The Blue Ridge Blankets Project

In late autumn of 2021, our fiber arts non-profit Local Cloth, located in Asheville, NC and part of the Blue Ridge Fibershed, embarked on a new project, inspired by a long-held dream: The Blue Ridge Blankets Project. Our mission: to connect fiber farmers, processors, dyers and weavers together, to produce locally sourced and crafted blankets in Western North Carolina. Proceeds from the blanket sales will go back into the project, enabling us to pay for the processing and weaving of next year's clip. Farmers will benefit as the market for their fiber increases. Dyers and weavers will benefit from fair compensation for their talents. Consumers will benefit from the ability to purchase beautiful locally sourced

products. The Blue Ridge Fibershed will benefit from the opportunity to showcase a vibrant fiber economy. The textile industry once thrived in our region. Mills dominated the landscape, including the famous Biltmore Industries, known locally as Homespun Shops, one of the largest producers of handwoven wool in the world, for the better part of a century. We have a rich history of textile excellence in our fibershed, and it's time to revitalize our fiber economy.

With grant support from The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina, we charted the course for one year. First, a sample run of blankets: collect fiber, process the fiber into yarn, dye the yarn, design the blankets, weave the blankets. Then, repeat the steps at a larger scale for the main

blanket run, with blankets ready for purchase by December 2022. As of summer 2022, however, we find ourselves only a quarter of the way through the process, with twists and turns along the way, and our project arcing into another year. What was once a one year project is now a two year project, with updated plans to have blankets ready by December 2023. Such it is with slow fashion. Creating local blankets is a long, multi-faceted endeavor. Each step of the process demands its own time, from farmer to mill to artist. We have also discovered gaps in the supply chain, slowing us further. Mills, we have learned, are one of the biggest gaps. Where are the mills? In NC, there are only a handful. In our fibershed, at the start of the project there were two, and now, just half a year later, there is one. With more fiber processing still ahead of us, we've had to set our eyes on mills beyond our region. We simply have no choice. And this leaves us wondering: who wants to start a mill in our fibershed?

As phase one of our project draws to a close, we are wrapping up the production of sample blankets for potential retailers, and setting the stage for our main blanket run. The first round of sample blankets, made with our Blue Ridge Blend (fine wool, alpaca, mohair), is on the looms at Warren Wilson College. Our second round of sample blankets (pure Shetland) is next up, and in the hands of weavers at Haywood Community College. Then, we are on to the main blanket run and

the next round of fiber is off to be processed, dyed, designed, and woven. We have many people to thank for being part of this project: the farmers that welcomed us into their barns and homes, the skirting crew that worked long hours around the table, Two Roots Fiber Mill that took on our project despite a full schedule, our in-house Natural Dye Interest Group that dyed our Blue Ridge Blend skeins so beautifully with indigo, madder, weld and walnut, and the designers and weavers that are making magic on the looms. This project has brought talented folks together from all over the fibershed, with new relationships being forged and community created. These blankets will be storied, and we are capturing the stories along the way. A year from now, if all goes as planned, we will be on the brink of having the blankets in hand, at last. But for now, one step at a time.

A big shout out to participating farms:

Black Thorn Farm • Cherry Mountain Farm
Curly Cover Farm • Good Fibrations
Jasperwood Farm • Jehovah Raah Farm
Last Penny Farm Alpacas • Myco Rhizing Farm • Princess Ridge Farm • Sourwood Fiber Farm • Two Roots Alpacas and Fiber Mill • Venezia Dream Farm • Windy Hill Alpaca Farm • Windy Wool Windings

To learn more about the Blue Ridge Mountain Fibershed, you can visit localcloth.org and follow them on Instagram @localclothinc



Goats at Good Fibrations



Judi and Trish skirting Shetland at Curly Cove Farm



Izzy at Venezia Dream Farm



Shetland ewe at Jehovah Raah Farm



83 Farm visit + skirting party



Two Roots Fiber Mill: Drying Fiber



Two Roots Fiber Mill: Processing fiber



Natural Dye Group preps skeins for dyeing



Rainbow of our naturally dyed Blue Ridge Blend



Eileen and Melanie at the Design Meet-



Weaving samples with the madder dyed yarn



Weaving samples with the indigo dyed yarn

Fibershed Ireland

Liadain Aiken Knitwear x Moy Hill Farm: A case study in the future of local Irish textiles

Written By Malú Colorín of Fibershed Ireland

Although only a few months old, Fibershed Ireland has been received with very open arms by the local fibre community, who for a very long time have struggled with a few of the common problems that most of the global Fibershed affiliates also face. Some of these issues include a fragmentation in the local fibre value chain, resulting in lack of communication between farmers, spinners, weavers, dyers, designers and brands. A big concern in Ireland is that sheep farmers are not making any profit from their fleeces and, in fact, shearing actually tends to cost them money. On the other hand, Irish designers and crafters are avid to include more local materials in their creations, but struggle to find them.



At Fibershed Ireland, we're working to establish a supportive network to facilitate a regenerative fibre system based on local fibre, local dyes and local labour. A great case study for the kind of relationships and collaborations we want to help cultivate is the Liadain Aiken Knitwear & Moy Hill Farm 'Farm to Yarn Collaboration'. Although this partnership sparked organically between the two parties involved, even before Fibershed Ireland existed, we've had the pleasure of witnessing the process and supporting the second iteration of this beautiful local yarn co-creation.

It all started in 2020, when Sally and Fergal Smith, who own and run Moy Hill Farm, contacted knitwear designer Liadain Aiken to ask if she was interested in using the fleeces of their Jacob sheep. They had

recently acquired a small flock who were in desperate need of shearing, but had no idea about how to get the wool processed into yarn. The Smiths run Moy Hill Farm as a regenerative operation, growing vegetables that are mostly sold around their local community. Their herd of Jacob sheep and Dexter cows are grazed following the Savory Institute's holistic model: they are rotated daily around various different small paddocks for access to the freshest and more nutrient-dense pastures. "Holistic management involves a careful balance of planning, while also staying flexible and very observant of what the animals' needs actually are. I love observing my cows and my sheep and



learning from them every day", says Fergal Smith. All with the added benefit of helping the soil quality improve.

It's almost hard to imagine that only a few decades ago, the world-famous Irish Aran jumper was made from local fibre, yet today the scouring, carding and spinning of wool is such a mystery to the people who tend the sheep and our famous jumpers are made from merino imported from Australia or New Zealand. But things are starting to change and we're slowly remembering, which makes it such an exciting time to be starting a Fibershed affiliate in Ireland.

Liadain was delighted to take on the challenge: for a while she had been dreaming of working with yarn spun from Irish animals, so this was perfect! Unfortunately turning the fleeces of the now shorn sheep into yarn was difficult and very slow to do in Ireland, so Liadain decided to invite yarn designer Diarmuid Commins to join the ship she now found herself at the helm of. Diarmuid, who for a very long time ran S Twist yarn, sorted,





graded, scoured and dried the Moy Hill wool before sending it off to his partners in Portugal for spinning.

A few months later, the beautiful light brown-grey 2 ply Aran weight yarn was back from Portugal, ready for Liadain to start experimenting with. "It turned out to be much softer than I had expected it would be!", told us Liadain the first time we met with her to talk about Fibreshed Ireland. "It probably won't make for a next-to-skin garment, but it could be worn as outerwear, with a shirt underneath." The first garment that she started swatching for and designing is a sleeveless jumper with a classic round neck for Fergal, the man whose sheep grew the fibre. He loves the idea of wearing something that was grown in his own farm and can't wait for Liadain to finish hand-knitting the vest.

This year, the 'Farm to Yarn Collaboration'

continues, with a few changes. Fergal's flock has grown to 34 sheep, some of which are now a Jacob/Zwartbles mix. Unlike the first iteration, this time the wool was skirted and sorted by Liadain and Fergal themselves, with instructions, help and support from other members of our Fibreshed, including felt artist Christina Keawwantha, wool expert Sandra King, mill owner Jess Kavanagh and natural dyer Malú Colorín. Liadain is especially proud of the fact that this year's yarn will actually be spun within our shores. Jess Kavanagh from Olann Mills has joined in this collaboration and will be scouring and spinning the Moy Hill wool in her mini mill in the early autumn.



We're very excited to see how this project will evolve and flourish over the coming years and will be using this case study as a blueprint to base our own work as facilitators of collaboration and networking between



the various stakeholders in our local fibre systems. Liadain Aiken is already a very involved member of our Fibreshed and there are many more designers who, like her, have a thirst to work with fibres that have been grown in this Land. The potential to bring together fibre farmers and designers in this island is huge, and with the right processing methods and facilities there is no doubt in our minds that the Irish textile ecosystem can once again bloom and flourish, helping improve soil health along the way.



To learn more about Fibreshed Ireland, follow them on Instagram at [@fibreshed_ireland](https://www.instagram.com/fibreshed_ireland) or email fibreshed.ireland@gmail.com

Fibershed's Micro-Grant Program

Micro-Grant Program

Every year we disseminate seed funding to Fibershed Affiliate organizations through our Micro-Grant Program in order to grow and uplift diverse community-based, bioregional fiber and dye initiatives around the world. Each Fibershed Affiliate micro-grant project generates necessary and impactful outcomes in their home communities in order to actualize regional, soil-to-soil textile systems.

Micro-grant projects range from:

- Mapping local fiber and dye supply chains,
- Developing fibershed yarns, cloth and other textile prototypes,
- Encouraging artisans, designers, and community members to create textiles from regional natural fibers,
- Building carbon farm networks to encourage climate beneficial agriculture practices and market incentives,
- Trialing seeds of plant-based fibers throughout microclimates within their regions,
- And many more!

Many of the projects highlighted in the previous pages are partially or fully funded by this program, and we continuously hear how necessary these micro-grants are to building the foundation they need to illustrate the possibility of the fibershed model in their regions, lay the groundwork for re-building local supply chains, and connect with community members, organizational partners, and government entities.



GROWING REGIONAL
FIBER SYSTEMS
WORLDWIDE

As the fibershed movement spreads to regions across the world, so does the need to grow grassroots capacity in key ways amongst our affiliates that will rebuild whole textile systems throughout the US and beyond. In order to support this growing movement, we must financially support more of these incredible initiatives.

That's where you come in.

We're asking for donations to the Threading Resilience fundraiser until September 15. Every dollar donated will be **matched by Fibershed up to \$50,000**. Micro-grants will be distributed to Affiliates in mid-October, and we'll be thrilled to share some of their projects with you.

To make a donation please visit:

fibershed.org/donate-threading-resilience

Through our Affiliate Program, our vision to strengthen an international system of diverse textiles communities that directly enhance regional economies for the purpose of generating permanent and lasting systems of localized fiber production, is actualized. Fibershed is supporting 57 and growing affiliate fibersheds around the world to catalyze regenerative soil-to-soil textile systems in their own regions, while supporting material culture behavioral shifts, advocating for policy change, building supply chains that mitigate the effects of climate change, and supporting the dwindling small and mid-scale textile manufacturing around the world.

Fibershed Affiliates

For more information on each fibershed, visit our Affiliate Directory on our website www.fibershed.org/affiliate-directory.

UNITED STATES

Acadiana Fibershed

[Lafayette, Louisiana](#)

22 parishes in southwest Louisiana

Blue Ridge Mountains Fibershed

[Asheville, North Carolina](#)

100 mile radius encompassing the mountains of Western North Carolina and parts of Appalachian East Tennessee, upstate South Carolina and North Georgia

Central Appalachia Fibershed

[Morgantown, West Virginia](#)

150 mile radius which includes all of West Virginia, and the surrounding counties from PA, MD, VA, KY, OH

Chesapeake Fibershed

[Washington, DC](#)

120 mile radius following the Chesapeake Watershed

Connecticut Fibershed

[Canterbury, Connecticut](#)

200 mile radius

Fiberhouse Collective Fibershed

[Western North Carolina](#)

Great Basin Fibershed

[The state of Nevada](#)

Great Lakes Fibershed

[Detroit, Michigan](#)

250 mile radius

Heartland Threads Fibershed

[13 counties in SW Wisconsin and 3 counties in NW Illinois](#)

High Desert Fibershed – California

[Cedarwill, Nevada](#)

100 mile radius, Northeast California, Southern Oregon, Reno, Nevada

High Desert Fibershed – Utah

[Salt Lake City, Utah](#)

250 mile radius

Inland Empire of Southern California Fibershed

[Redlands, California](#)

75 mile radius

Kaw Point Fibershed

[Kansas City, Missouri](#)

150 mile radius, Eastern Kansas and Western Missouri, surrounding the confluence of the Kansas and Missouri Rivers in Kansas City

Miami Valley Fibershed

[Dayton, Ohio](#)

Southern Ohio

Montana Fibershed

[The state of Montana](#)

New York Textile Lab Fibershed

[New York, New York](#)

300 mile radius from New York City

New Jersey Fibershed

[The state of New Jersey](#)

Northern Minnesota Fibershed

[Bemidji, Minnesota](#)

200 mile radius

Northern New England Fibershed

[The states of New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont](#)

Ozark Fibershed

[The Ozark Mountain region](#)

Northern Arkansas, Southern Missouri, Northeast Oklahoma, and Southeast Kansas

Pacific Northwest Fibershed

[Portland, Oregon](#)

300 mile radius

Pennsylvania Fibershed

[The state of Pennsylvania](#)

Including 50 miles of the border

Piedmont Fibershed

[Durham, North Carolina](#)

200 mile radius

Prairie Threads Fibershed

[Yavapai County in Central Arizona](#)

Rust Belt Fibershed

[Cleveland, Ohio](#)

250 mile radius

Southeastern New England Fibershed

[Providence, Rhode Island and New Bedford, Massachusetts](#)

100 mile radius

Southeast Ohio Fibershed

[Southeast Ohio](#)

South of I-70, east of US-23, and bordered by the Ohio River on the east and south

Southern Appalachia Fibershed

[Knoxville, Tennessee](#)

250 mile radius encompassing parts of North Alabama, Georgia, Western North Carolina, and Kentucky

Southern California Fibershed

[San Luis Obispo to San Diego](#)

Southern Indiana Fibershed

[French Lick, Indiana](#)

250 mile radius, including the state of Indiana

Three Rivers Fibershed

[Minneapolis, Minnesota](#)

175 mile radius

Vashon Fibershed

[Vashon Island, Washington](#)

Island and Puget Sound counties

Western Massachusetts Fibershed

[Connecticut River Valley and Berkshires](#)

100 mile radius

Western Slope Colorado

[Colorado](#)

West of the Continental Divide

INTERNATIONAL**Dansk Fibershed**

[Denmark](#)

Fibershed Belgium

[Belgium](#)

Fibershed DACH

[Switzerland, Germany, Austria](#)

Fibershed España

[The Spanish regions of Castile la Mancha and Eztramadura](#)

Fibershed Finland

[Finland](#)

Fibershed Nederland

[The Netherlands](#)

Fibershed Québec

[Québec, Canada](#)

Fibershed Sri Lanka

[Sri Lanka](#)

Fibershed Ireland

[The island of Ireland](#)

Encompassing Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland

Fibershed Scotland

[Scotland](#)

Kootenay Fibershed

[Kootenays, Canada](#)

West and East

Nordenfjeldske Fibershed

[Norway](#)

North West England Fibershed

[Covering Merseyside, Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, West Yorkshire, and Cumbria](#)

Pembina Fibershed

[Manitoba, Canada](#)

200 mile radius of the Pembina River Valley

Prairie Fibershed

[Province of Saskatchewan](#)

Prakriti Fibershed

[Tamil Nadu, India](#)

15 kilometer radius of Erode

Puerto Rico Fibershed

[Puerto Rico archipelago](#)

South West England Fibershed

[Bristol, United Kingdom](#)

South East England Fibershed

[Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Surrey, East and West Sussex, Hampshire, Kent, Medway and London](#)

Sunshine Coast Fibershed

[Sunshine Coast, BC, Canada](#)

100 miles of coastline from Port Mellon to Lund, BC

Upper Canada Fibershed

[Toronto, Canada](#)

250 km radius

Vancouver Fibershed

[Vancouver, BC](#)

300 kilometer radius of the downtown core

Vancouver Island Fibershed

[Vancouver Island, Canada](#)

150 mile radius

Wales Fibershed

[Wales](#)



FIBERSHED