



2018

END-OF-YEAR REPORT



Partnerships Make it Possible

Dear friends,

It's been an exciting year at Gathering Ground. The community spirit in the vineyard and orchard has been inspiring. We hosted Island students as well as volunteers and guests from around Wisconsin to help us plant, prune, and celebrate sustainable agriculture.

We are also thankful to the agricultural companies that believe in our mission and chose to partner with us through donation of organic sprays, tree tubes, bird netting, soil tests and consultations. Please take a look at the partner section of our annual report to learn more--they have helped us tremendously as we transitioned the vineyard to an organic management system.

Gathering Ground seeks to identify disease resistant, fruiting trees, shrubs, and vines that can be grown effectively here on Washington Island without a lot of inputs like pesticides and fungicides for home growers and would-be commercial growers here on the island. We hope that this research will enrich the island's food culture and agriculture potential.

To do this work, we need partners. Please consider a donation to help us buy the varieties of fruit trees and shrubs that we wish to trial in our orchards as well as a tractor at least 40 horsepower to operate machinery essential for maintaining our vineyards and orchards. An anonymous donor has pledged \$8,000 as a triple matching grant for each donation we receive before December 31. That means every dollar you give will become three. Your tax-deductible donations can be sent to 1402 Mountain Road, Washington Island, WI, 54246. THANK YOU!

We are also excited to announce that we will start a pilot composting program on the Island. Households will be able drop off compostables at Gathering Ground and with the help of the Island students, we will turn it into rich soil for growing storage crops for the school!

For our internship program, we are seeking people to host college-age interns for 2 to 6 weeks in June and July. If you would like to partner with us, please contact us.

Cheers,

Russell Rolffs, Board President & Farm Manager



With the funds we raise this year, we will:

- Acquire the farm equipment we need to maintain the orchard and vineyard.
- Grow and improve our summer internship program.
- Expand our orchard and vineyard to include more disease resistant cultivars, including Itasca grapes, Asian pears, chestnut seedlings, blueberries and more.
- Continue our Potluck and Talk series with more special guests.
- Begin a pilot composting program for the Island.
- Partner with the school by providing curriculum support and opportunities for hands-on learning at Gathering Ground.

**Triple your gift! Give before
Dec 31, 2018. THANK YOU!**

Send checks to:
1402 Mountain Road
Washington Island, WI 54246

Make checks out to
Gathering Ground.

**All donations are tax
deductible.**



*The best time to plant
a tree is 30 years ago.
The second best time to
plant a tree is now.*

”





Our second year

A place where people gather together to celebrate, learn about & practice regenerative agriculture.





March-May // Pruning

Our new low impact management of the vineyard has meant a new pruning style -- to allow more air flow through the vines to decrease the chance for molds and mildews. We had expert help from Madison Extension as well as seventh grade class from the Viroqua Waldorf School and local volunteers from the Island and Peninsula came as well. From the prunings, we made wreaths and sarments (for adding flavor to the grill).



May - June // Planting

We planted apple and chestnut trees with community volunteers and Island school grades K-4. We also hosted a composting workshop and started the Farmers Market every wednesday evening and Saturday morning!



July-August // Tending

We had our first class of summer interns. Together with Farm Manager, Russell, they tended the vineyard and the orchard. The biggest project was pruning the vines in a new style that will aide in organic management. Intern Nathan also shared at our July Potluck and Talk about his community conversations about starting a community-school garden with the Island School.

MARCH - JUNE
**PRUNING
SEASON**

SNIP SNIP SNIP









September // Dinner in the Vineyard

A beautiful 5 course meal enjoyed by 50 guests in the vineyard, accompanied by the musical renditions of Al and Sue Schubert. The event raised more than \$4,500 with most of the courses donated by local restaurants and artisans. We are grateful to all the guests for celebrating with us; to Anne and Myles Dannhausen for organizing and whipping up culinary delights, and the volunteers who made the event so beautiful! We are also grateful to the sun for choosing to shine on us!



Oct-Dec // Soil Tests & Planning!

Midwestern Bioag donated soil tests that helped us understand why the Northern vineyard isn't thriving. The soil is too acidic! With a pH of 5 - 5.5, a rare occurrence in Door County, the soil is better suited for blueberries and other acid-loving plants. We are planning a planting plan that will include more disease resistant grapes, blueberries, and more! Stay tuned to learn more.





DINNER IN THE VINEYARD

SEPT 1, 2018



Thank you to everyone who made this event possible!

- Hotel Washington & Studio
- Island Cafe & Bread Company
- Island Edibles
- RP's Pasta
- Door County Farm Dinners
- Roots Inn & Kitchen
- Brews on the Rock
- Island Orchard Cider
- Door County Love Artisan Granola
- DC Chocolate Design
- Parallel 44 Vineyard & Winery
- Al & Sue Schubert



This year we hosted two Potlucks & Talks. In July, on a rainy indoor potluck, our intern Nathan shared about his experience on the island & about his community conversations about starting a school garden.

In August, we partnered with the ANC to bring Krista Lutzke, Kari Hagenow, Annie Deutsch, from DC Soil & Water, DCIST, & UW-Extension, to speak about invasive species in Door County.

In addition, we hosted a potluck in conjunction with the Literary Festival's "Dear Water" Creative Laboratory, which brought together writers and readers to consider their relationship with water.



OUR PARTNERS

2018

THIS YEAR WE WERE PLEASED TO BE JOINED ON THE JOURNEY OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE BY THESE AMAZING PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS



Plantra's innovative tree tubes are saving our young orchard from deer predation, with a donation of 50 tree tubes and stakes this year and 50 next year. Plantra has also donated bird-netting which will help save our future grape harvests! This gift is a game-changer for our vineyard.



Island Harvest donated the use of their tractor. This generous donation allowed us to mow and spray.



Tim & Julie Lyons

Beyond the initial donation of the land, this year the Lyons donated a airblast sprayer. This piece of equipment allows us to spray the vineyard for pests and mildews. The Lyons support continues to be crucial!



Midwestern Bio helps farmers improve their farms by improving the soils. They donated their extensive soil testing services to us to help us plan our plantings. They have also pledged to donate fertilizers for next years' plantings.



Certis donated Cueva, an organic spray that helped us fend off molds and mildews. This year there was very little damage from these pressures.



Valent donated Pyganic, an organic spray that helped us fend off rose schaffers, our vineyards most harmful pest.



stumptomedia

Our deep appreciation to Dusan Harminc of Stumptown Media for making a video that captures the beauty and spirit of everything we hope GG is.



A special thank you to our intern Nathan who applied to 4imprint grant program. And thank you to 4imprint for choosing Gathering Ground to receive a grant of customized signage!



Marrone Bio donated Stargus, an organic spray that helped us fend off molds and mildews. There was very little damage from these pressures this year.



The Internship

from Intern Nathan Ochocinski

I am so grateful that I was able to spend this last summer interning with Gathering Ground on Washington Island. One of my favorite parts of the internship was seeing the strong sense of community on the island and how everyone is willing to lend a helping hand. The farmers markets were a great time with getting to meet members of the community and seeing the produce and products that all come from the island. Going into the internship not having any experience with working in a vineyard allowed me to learn a lot throughout the summer in viticulture from pruning vines, sustainable practices and overall maintenance and care for vineyards. One of my favorite things on the island was getting to kayak in Washington Harbor and to Rock Island."

In 2018, our interns helped in the vineyard, learning about the pressures of organic management in the Midwest. They also helped us move forward on goals to communicate with the Island community through an article in the newspaper about rose chafers & community conversation about starting a community garden. In the coming year, we are planning to expand the internship with a more robust curriculum and more ways to participate in the Island community.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

We look forward to seeing you in 2019!

Stay connected!
Sign up for our newsletter. Follow us on
Facebook & Instagram



Vision Statement: Cultivate and inspire ecologically-minded agriculture and partnership with land and people.

Mission Statement: Gathering Ground educates youth and adults in sustainable agriculture and promotes economic development through agriculture, to strengthen the health of individuals, the Washington Island community, and the environment.

**Donations can be sent to 1402 Mountain Road
Washington Island, WI 54246**

Gathering Ground is a 501(c)3

