Making Allies for
HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES
The Making Allies for Healthier Communities partnership’s mission is to promote healthy communities by conserving quality farmland for local farmers to grow and sell fresh food to all of Milwaukee, especially our underserved neighbors and to improve water quality in the Milwaukee River Watershed and Lake Michigan. We advocate for land security for immigrant and beginning farmers and promote best farming practices to build healthy soils and ensure all people have access to good food and clean water.

The Making Allies pilot project seeks to encourage innovation and create a new model for community conservation. It is demonstrating how conservation can improve lives and communities, connect more people to land and freshwater resources close to home, and broaden and deepen support for land and freshwater conservation by engaging new and diverse audiences.

Four generations of the Dieringer family have farmed in Ozaukee County. Through a conservation easement with Ozaukee Washington Land Trust, their 250-acre farm will be farmland forever.
The legacy of natural resource conservation and preservation of open spaces in Wisconsin is entwined with our region’s strong agricultural background. Rolling farm fields, red barns and animals in pastures are the backdrop to the rural character that makes living in Wisconsin special. The farm families, agricultural businesses, and the community companies our agricultural businesses’ support are the backbone of our economy.

However, the conservation benefits of farmland – and rural character itself – is being eroded one acre at a time. Across the United States, 40 acres of farmland are lost every hour. According to the State of Wisconsin Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection, Wisconsin lost 100,000 acres of farmland each of the last two years. Once farms are bulldozed and paved over, that land is gone forever.

When worked with conservation in mind, farming promotes productive soils and helps to improve lake, river, and drinking water quality.

With ever-increasing development pressures, we are in a race against time to strike a balance for our region that includes working lands, family farms, and self-sustaining communities.
In 2015, Ozaukee Washington Land Trust asked the question: How can we use our mission of protecting land and water to serve a larger cause for our community?

To make for a more meaningful partnership, we sought out a community based nonprofit partner with deep ties to the immigrant farmer community in Milwaukee and Milwaukee’s racially inclusive, but underserved northwest side. We found that partner in the Fondy Food Center which brings a 100-year history in the community of providing neighbors good food at their farmer’s markets and securing farmland for new and immigrant farmers, especially Hmong farmers.

In partnership with The Land Trust Alliance, The Conservation Fund, Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, and with planning grants from The Greater Milwaukee Foundation and C.S. Mott Foundation we came together to form the Making Allies for Healthier Communities.

Since 2015, we’ve worked as a coalition to determine how we could best acquire land and secure long-term access to farmland. Through several summits, we came to better understand how to be equitable partners in a coalition, and at the same time understand the inherent privilege and inequity that has been tied to land access, land acquisition and food security. We have determined a revolving farmland conservation fund to acquire farmland to be sold to farmers is the best method to: **promote farmer sovereignty and economic success while protecting and improving water quality.**
In 2017, Allies were able to assist immigrant farmers from the Fondy Food Center to begin farming vegetables on one of our Ozaukee Washington Land Trust protected properties.
THREE STEPS TO FARM PROTECTION

Secure | Enhance | Sell to Farmers

Secure Farmland

The partners have identified a 60-acre farm that meets the goals of the Making Allies project in a number of important ways. The partners have contracted with the willing landowners of this farm to purchase the development rights underlying real estate value of the farmland, but we only have a few month remaining to fund raise our purchase price.

- The farm meets soil health and freshwater protection requirements.
- The property is in close proximity to Fondy’s farmers market, which is advantageous to the farmers who grow food to sell at the market.
- Many of these farmers have expressed their interest in eventually owning this property.
02 Enhance Farmland and Improve Farming Practices

- Best farm practices will be implemented on the farm to achieve the conservation requirements established by the NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program that is partially funding the purchase of development rights.
- OWLT will place a conservation easement on the property to ensure appropriate protections on the land in perpetuity.
- Add farm supporting infrastructure farmland, such as roads, irrigation.

03 Sell to Farmers

This project will leverage local and federal funds to permanently protect the agricultural and other natural resource values of the property.

- The farmland cost will be substantially reduced through the purchase of the development rights, via a conservation easement, better enabling the eventual purchase of the land by someone within Fondy’s farmers.
- The Making Allies partners are currently working to identify prospective farmer owners.
- Fondy would pursue implementation of biodynamic and organic practices in a manner that is culturally responsive to the farmers and the customers they serve.
- After approximately five years, one or more farmers from the Fondy network purchases the property.
MAKING ALLIES PHASE 1

BUDGET 2018-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Real estate purchase price</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program development and implementation, (staff acquisition costs personnel and benefits, fundraising, &amp; administration)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farmer assistance (interpreters, farmer legal &amp; financial resources)</td>
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<td>Attorney fees, survey, title work environmental review, other due diligence</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL BUDGET</strong></td>
<td><strong>$803,506</strong></td>
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<td><strong>FUNDING RECEIVED TO DATE</strong></td>
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<td><strong>REMAINING FUNDRAISING GOAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$328,506</strong></td>
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For more information on how you can support this innovative project please contact **Tom Stolp, Executive Director of Ozaukee Washington Land Trust** at tstolp@owlt.org or call 262-338-1794.
The Ozaukee Washington Land Trust (OWLT) works to protect open space threatened with development and turned these treasured places into 32 nature preserves, open to the public for outdoor recreation and restoring habitat for wildlife protection. OWLT has worked with private landowners to place over 55 conservation easements on privately held properties across Wisconsin, protecting the rural character and healthy soils of our communities.

Fondy Food Center’s (Fondy) mission is to connect Greater Milwaukee to local, fresh food – from farm to market to table – so that children learn better, adults live healthier, and communities celebrate cultural food traditions. Fondy accomplishes this mission by operating its farmers markets, a farm, and leading healthy food access initiatives across the region targeting low-income consumers. Fondy seeks to leverage this partnership so that it can develop more sustainable farmlands in areas closer to the community it serves, ultimately allowing it to establish more farmers markets in food-challenged neighborhoods.

Land Trust Alliance
To save the places people need and love by strengthening land conservation across America, the Alliance brings its more than 1,100-member land trusts together — and increases each one’s success. The Alliance advocates for the policies and incentives that it takes to save millions of acres every year and is the go-to source for training for people who work in conservation — so land trusts get more done.

Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) is represented by The Conservation Fund, which has been under contract with MMSD for over 15 years to implement MMSD’s land acquisition programs for natural flood management. The Greenseams® and Working Soils® Programs help prevent future flooding and water pollution while supporting and protecting MMSD’s structural flood management projects. To date, Greenseams® has protected nearly 3,700 acres in four counties of the Greater Milwaukee Region.

MMSD’s recently-launched Working Soils® Program aims to improve surface water quality and reduce flooding risks through permanent agricultural conservation easements and implementation of agricultural best management practices in the Milwaukee River Watershed.
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