



NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL
THE EARTH'S BEST DEFENSE

Growing Green Awards

NRDC and Berkeley Food Institute Join to Host 2014 Growing Green Awards
2014 Growing Green Awards Winners

The 2014 Growing Green Awards honored an outstanding individual in each of the following four categories: Sustainable Food and Farm Educator, Sustainable Livestock Producer, Pollinator Protector, and Regional Food Leader.



SUSTAINABLE LIVESTOCK PRODUCER



Will Harris

[White Oak Pastures farm](#) / Bluffton, GA 

After decades of raising cattle on pastures purged by pesticides and finishing them on a diet of grain, hormones and antibiotics, Will Harris drastically changed his practices and converted to organic and grass-fed. His Southwest Georgia farm, White Oak Pastures, has been in Harris' family since 1866. Yet, by the mid-1990s, Harris started to rethink the conventional shortcuts he used to push his cows to the feedlot. Instead of applying toxic chemicals and synthetic fertilizers, Harris learned to prevent overgrazing, protect water resources, and generally promote soil health through intensive land management and rotational grazing. He went further, sending multiple species (five kinds of poultry, hogs, sheep and goats) through his fields in sequence to control weeds and



insects. Green pastures now nourish his animals, which in turn aerate and enrich the land with natural fertilizer. In order to respect his livestock from birth to death, Harris constructed a humane-kill abattoir on site (designed with help from Temple Grandin). He proved his business model is scalable, growing White Oak Pastures from a half million dollar enterprise to the largest organic certified farm in Georgia, taking in over \$25 million annually.

Read Will's blog post: [From Factory Farm to Grass-fed Moneymaker](#)

REGIONAL FOOD LEADER



Sibella Kraus

[Sustainable Agriculture Education \(SAGE\)](#) / Berkeley, CA

Sibella Kraus has long called upon cities to embrace the farms at their borders. It was Kraus' vision as founder of the Center for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture (CUESA) that gave rise to San Francisco's iconic Ferry Plaza Farmers' Market in 1992. Her articles and advocacy have been a driving force in the Bay Area food movement for decades. Today, as president of the non-profit organization SAGE (Sustainable Agriculture Education), Kraus continues to foster urban-rural linkages through the development of urban-edge Ag Parks and the production of agricultural resource assessments for regional planning efforts. A vibrant nexus of organic farm, education center and nature preserve, SAGE's Sunol Ag Park in Alameda County provides beginning and immigrant farmers with land access and urban dwellers with a connection to their food. Kraus is now spearheading another game-changing project to create an agriculture and conservation resource area within the 7,400-acre Coyote Valley, just south of San Jose—the region's largest and fastest growing city. She's determined to preserve the invaluable connections between farmer and consumer, urban hub and working landscape.

Read Sibella's blog post: [Investing in our "AgGems" for Regional Vitality](#)

POLLINATOR PROTECTOR



Orley "Chip" Taylor

[Monarch Watch](#) / Lawrence, KS -- University of Kansas

Since insect ecologist Chip Taylor founded Monarch Watch in 1992, the organization has enlisted thousands of citizens to protect the monarch butterfly from extinction. The butterfly's numbers have sunk to ten percent of what they were in 1996, largely because milkweed—the only food source for monarch larvae and where adults lay their eggs—has been wiped out by herbicides and the relentless expansion of corn and soy acres in the Midwest. Based out of the University of Kansas, Monarch Watch has enlisted hundreds of thousands of volunteers each year to track the butterfly's population and advocate for its protection. Now Taylor is on a crusade to plant new milkweed habitat through Monarch Watch's "Bring the Monarch Back" initiative. Beginning in 2005, the program has sent milkweed plugs to over 160,000 schools, parks and home gardens, creating vital fuel sources for butterflies on their migration path from Canada to Mexico. For Taylor, the monarch's decline signals a larger crisis affecting all pollinators, upon whom much of our food system and the food sources of so many animals depend.

Read Chip's blog post: [Bring Back the Monarchs!](#)



FOOD AND FARM EDUCATOR



John Reganold

[Washington State University](#) / Pullman, Washington

For Regents Professor John Reganold, the best classroom is a farm and the best textbook is a handful of dirt. In a career spanning more than three decades, Reganold is regarded as an internationally renowned soil scientist and one of Washington State University's most beloved teachers. He founded the first organic agriculture major in the United States and the nation's largest certified organic teaching farm at WSU. Backed by academic research from more than a 1000 farms on four continents, he has bravely called upon students, scientists and policy makers to reimagine conventional farming in America. Reganold has helped train the next generation of sustainability leaders, with over 4000 undergraduate students in his classes to date. He stands at the frontlines of an educational movement, determined to transition farmland away from toxic chemicals and the marks of erosion, toward healthy soils and sustainable, abundant harvests.

Read John's blog post: [Smart Soil: Transforming American Agriculture One Class at a Time](#)

Meet the 2014 Growing Green Awards Panel of Judges

NRDC is grateful to the following sustainable food leaders who served on the Growing Green Awards selection panel:



Gary Hirshberg is Chairman of the Board, Cofounder and former CE-Yo of Stonyfield Farm. He is also a founding partner and Chair of the Board of "Just Label It", a campaign to label genetically engineered foods.



Fred Kirschenmann serves as President of Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture in New York and as a Distinguished Fellow for the Leopold Center at Iowa State University.



Russ Kremer, the 2013 winner of the GGA's Food Producer Award, is the founder of the 52-member Ozark Mountain Pork Cooperative.



Kathleen Merrigan served as Deputy Secretary of Agriculture from 2009 to 2013, overseeing USDA's Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food program, among many other initiatives.

<http://www.nrdc.org/health/growinggreen.asp>

