

Participant Bios for the Session “Climate Stabilization: Soil, Food, & Farms” CCL North Wind Regional Conference, Lake Okoboji, IA, March 18, 2017

Panelist **George Boody** is Science and Special Projects Lead and was formerly Executive Director of the Land Stewardship Project (LSP) for 23 years. He co-directs interdisciplinary projects that measure and predict ecological and financial benefits from diversified farming systems and assists with federal and state policy initiatives. Under George’s leadership, LSP’s Monitoring Project convened scientists and farmers to measure and observe the impacts of farms transitioning to rotational grazing. He co-directs a current effort, the Chippewa 10% Project, which estimates changes to watershed-level ecosystem services brought about by diversifying farm fields. This effort engages farmers, assisting them to diversify corn and soybean fields by adopting continuous living cover to enhance stewardship and long-term profitability.

George states: “At the core of all our work are the values of stewardship, justice, democracy and health. With about 4000 primarily rural and farm household members, LSP wants to see more successful family farmers raising crops and livestock on the land in ways that improve soil health, store carbon in the soil, protect our water, and produce nutritious food for all.”

George has co-authored several peer-reviewed papers on agriculture, ecosystem services, and water quality. He received a Master's degree in Horticulture and Human Nutrition and a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from the University of Minnesota. George lives with his wife, Ann, in Minneapolis, where they garden, canoe, cross-country ski, and care for their grandchildren. He has deep roots in rural Minnesota, where his mother, a nurse, grew up on a farm, and his dad was a doctor.

Panelist **Donna Buell** is an attorney and organic farm owner living on Lake Okoboji, Iowa, where she serves as a member of the board of the Okoboji Protective Association, organized in 1905 to preserve and protect West Okoboji Lake. Donna grew up on the farm she now owns, and draws from her experiences tending the family’s crops and livestock throughout her life. Donna has the experience of transforming her Iowa family farm into organic and using prairie strip technology to capture soil loss and bring the natural biome back into her fields.

Donna states: “I am 56 years old, spending 40 of those years living in rural Iowa. I grew up on the farm that I now own. I am an attorney by profession and an environmental activist by passion. I served under the Vilsack administration on the Iowa Environmental Protection Commission, where I met Liz Garst. I spent the last 10 years working on climate issues as a member of the Sierra Club’s board of directors. Some of my proudest achievements in Sierra were instigating the upgrade of the Sierra Agriculture and Food Policy (first update in over 30 years) and helping to develop a landscape analysis for Sierra to soon join the climate/ food discussions.”

Panelist **Liz Garst** manages, for her family, four community banks and a large corn, soybean, and grass farm near Coon Rapids, Iowa. Her grandfather, Roswell Garst, was a famous agricultural innovator who hosted Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev in 1959. The family has long used soil conservation practices on its farms, and in recent years has experimented with cover crops, high-intensity grazing systems, and other new practices. In 2004 the Garst Family announced the formation of Whiterock Conservancy, a non-profit land trust to which the family is donating more than 5,000 acres to continue the tradition of trying to find a balance among agriculture, the environment, and public recreation. (See www.whiterockconservancy.org.)

Liz has a BA from Stanford, an MS in Agricultural Economics from Michigan State, and an MBA from Harvard. She has worked in the Peace Corps, for the World Bank, as Business Manager of the Garst Seed Company, and as a bank president. She currently serves on the boards of Whiterock Conservancy, Iowa Environmental Council, and the Coon Rapids Development Group. She has a long career in civic engagement on behalf of agriculture, the environment, rural development, and civil liberties.

Lake Okoboji native, world sailor, and CCL activist David Thoreson says, “Donna and Liz are two of the most knowledgeable farmers and conservationists I’ve ever met.”

Panel Moderator **RedHeart**, a resident of Red Wing, MN, states: “I have been on Earth for 68 Summers. The 2nd of 7 siblings, I grew up on a 60-cow dairy farm in Ottertail County Minnesota, where one of the common mantras was: *‘There is only so much topsoil. It took millions and millions of years to create it. It is currently eroding at a high rate, and as far as we know there is nothing we can do about it.’* Two years ago, I happened upon Allan Savory’s TED talk. Digging deeper, I was stunned and fascinated to learn many farmers/grazers were experiencing AN INCREASE IN TOPSOIL! As though an answer to an existential question, I have since become determined to prove to myself that creating topsoil works, and I am dedicated to demonstrate the same to others. I bought the 40 driftless grazing acres I’ve been hunting on for the past 7 years, and this winter I found an enthusiastic and knowledgeable young couple who shares the same dream. This first season we will pasture-raise 700 meat chickens, 400 meat rabbits, 15 goats and 5-7 beef steers – much of which is already pre-sold!

“I have emeritus licensing as an educator, psychologist, and investment real estate agent. I bring experience and love of sunshine, wind, farming, composting, food, bow-hunting, music, ballet, and more food. I own and manage a 24-hour group home for 14 adults, aided by a staff of 20. I am a transgendered human [no pronoun preference] and teacher of EarthWisdom teachings, which can be summarized as: *‘Everything is related to everything, and the human’s [unending] job is to develop a good relationship with all those things s/he encounters.’* The name ‘redheart’ means: *‘You have a red heart, and I have a red heart. We are all connected.’* It evokes the spiritual connection of unity. The name came to me during one of several EarthWisdom ceremonies held in Yucatan, Mexico. It is now my legal name.”

Lead Organizer **Stan Sattinger** is a volunteer climate activist with CCL and MN350 and works part-time performing energy assessments on commercial buildings under the RETAP program of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. As leader of the Environmental Justice Team of First Universalist Church of Minneapolis, he established the Carbon Sequestration News Group that sparked the idea of this workshop session.

Stan and wife Jerry moved to Minneapolis six years ago from Pittsburgh, PA, where Stan worked as a mechanical engineer for research and development divisions of Westinghouse Electric. While in Pittsburgh, he founded several non-profit organizations, including the Montour Trail Council, a premier Pennsylvania rails-to-trails citizens’ group; the Montour Run Watershed Association; and the Montour Railroad Historical Society.

Stan and Jerry have participated in several CCL national conventions in Washington, DC. They enjoy jazz and classical music, live theater, and movies together. Stan is a farmer of sorts, having grown up in the company of four Jersey cows in the Catskill Mountains of New York State. He holds a Bachelor’s degree in Mechanical Engineering from Georgia Tech and Master of Science degrees in engineering from Cornell University and MIT.