

# The Sarah Forslund Fund for Environmental Leadership

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November 15, 2021

Dear Friend,

“Unprecedented.”

Fires, Floods, Heat Domes plus the strong hurricanes, rain events, droughts and abnormal temperatures that have become more typical in the past 5-10 years. 2020 brought us COVID and this month the world crossed an unimaginable 5 million deaths. In 2021 the US and the world undeniably felt the real time impacts of climate change. This decade hasn't started out simply.



Yet it hasn't been all bad news. Participation in voting hit historic levels in 2020. COVID vaccines are available. And while the target is still not reached, the climate action tracker shows that we HAVE reduced emissions, demonstrating change is possible!

As I write, global leaders are debating their commitments to change our climate future at COP26 and hopefully feeling the pressure from advocates, but also from governmental leaders, even the UN Secretary General. *“Our planet is talking to us,” Mr. Guterres said. “We must listen, and we must act.”*

As with most challenges facing our world and communities, we all have a part.

Yes, we need global political & industry commitments and changes. Yes, we need state & local political & policy changes. Yes, we all can shift where we direct our money & time – from advocacy efforts, to making sure we vote, to what & where we purchase including food and of course including our donations.

At the Sarah Fund for Environmental Leadership, this year we prioritized climate & community building as they go hand in hand.

We continue to support **Green Corps**, where Sarah (and many others of us) got our start and training. They continue to be critical in developing the next generation of leaders.

**The California Climate and Agricultural Network** works to realize the powerful climate solutions offered by sustainable and organic agriculture. As a farmer myself, I see the untapped potential of regenerative agriculture. By working with nature, regenerative agriculture can **reverse climate change by revitalizing ecosystems** and restoring soils degraded by industrial farming. This group is working on policy and directly with farmers in one of the largest agricultural areas of the country.



**Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship** exists to connect the land with the people who use it. We were impressed by their inclusive approach described in [A Trail for Everyone](#) (worth a watch!) to help struggling communities strengthen their economies, retain and attract residents, create local jobs and engage youth, by curating spaces that encourage healthy, recreation-based lifestyles. The communities and land in which they work were devastated this summer by the Dixie Fire in California. One town, Greenville, was completely burned.



With clarity about climate change as the root cause of the magnitude of the fires, the floods, heat domes, local leaders asked, “When will science take precedence over politics so action can be taken against a dangerously warming planet, so more communities like Greenville aren’t lost?”

The answer to that question clearly needs to be now. In the face of these ever-increasing challenges, how do we stay motivated?

Hope is the answer from Jane Goodall. In her recent book she cites, “the amazing human intellect, the resilience of nature, the power of young people and the indomitable human spirit” as her inspiration.

I often think of my friend Sarah, and what advice/wisdom would she share with me at these trying times. Perhaps it would be a welcome dose of Midwestern empathy, tough love & practical next steps.

Certainly, she would subscribe to Greta Thunberg’s recent directive, “Hope is not passive. Hope is not blah blah blah. Hope is telling the truth. Hope is taking action.”

For those we’ve lost already, and young leaders spreading their wings, please join us and invest in the organizations, businesses & farms that are leading us towards a healthy climate and healthy communities.

Inspired by Sarah’s action-oriented determination and passions, the Sarah Forslund Fund will keep investing in organizations and campaigns engaged in bringing about critical environmental change. This year, due to your generous donations, we were able to increase grant amounts by 50%. We invite you to continue building upon Sarah’s legacy as part of your investment in our collective future.

Contributions to the Sarah Forslund Fund for Environmental Leadership can be made via check using the enclosed envelope. Alternatively, you may go online and view a short video, donate, and/or easily share the Fund’s message with others who may be interested and inspired: [www.sierrafund.org/sarah-forslund-fund/donate](http://www.sierrafund.org/sarah-forslund-fund/donate).

If Jane Goodall at 87 & Greta Thunberg at 18 can hold hope and be dedicated to action, so can we all.

With appreciation,

Laura Olsen  
*Sarah Forslund Fund Board Chair*  
*Regenerative Farmer, Green Mountain Girls Farm*  
*Green Corps '93 Alum*