



Yggdrasil Land Foundation (Yggdrasil), founded in 2001, is an innovative, national, organization whose mission is to catalyze the viability of biodynamic, organic, and sustainable farming for the security of food and the health of communities through land access and preservation, land renewal, and connectedness.

*Yggdrasil represents a new form of land preservation, the result of **three organizations working in association** to advance the viability of and access to biodynamic, organic, and sustainable, non-chemical farming and promote the renewal of the living earth as a foundation of community.*

A Supporting Organization

Yggdrasil is a collaborative supporting not-for-profit tax-exempt foundation to **RSF Social Finance (RSF)** located in San Francisco, CA; **Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association (BFGA)** located in Junction City, Oregon; and **Michael Fields Agricultural Institute (MFAI)** located in East Troy, WI. RSF manages the financial endowment and administrative aspects for Yggdrasil's lands. The BDA assists in locating farmers and other resources to manage the land, and the MFAI provides expertise in agricultural research, education and development of sustainable agricultural practices based on the needs of the land itself. Yggdrasil has received land since 2001 and manages the long-term leases to farmers and communities that practice biodynamic, organic and/or sustainable agricultural practices.



In Norse mythology, *Yggdrasil* means 'World Ash Tree'.

Methods for Farm Preservation & Conservation

Yggdrasil has worked collaboratively with private donors of land, state funding programs and foundations to preserve four farms in the United States. Yggdrasil promotes farm preservation through the following methods:

- Acquisition of land and conservation easements
- Donations of land and conservation easements
- Access to land through long-term farming lease agreements
- Promotion of farm and natural resource plans for transitioning conventional farms to biodynamic, organic and/or sustainable agricultural practices through work with MFAI and other specialists
- Promotion of preservation methods, land renewal and conservation programs

YLF's Protected Farms

Yggdrasil currently owns four farm properties- two in Wisconsin, one in California and one in New Hampshire. The farms are leased on a long-term basis to families and community groups that implement biodynamic and organic farming principles.

Walworth County, Wisconsin

KRUSEN GRASS FARMS

This 240-acre property is leased to the Krusenbaum Family which operates the farm and resides on the property. Alfrid and Sue Krusenbaum got started in the dairy business in 1990. Their goal was to build a successful family farm based on the principles of organic farming. Their main motivation to become organic was out of a certain stewardship ethic toward the soil, the earth, and ultimately, humanity. When the Krusenbaums first leased this



Rotational grazing herd at **Krusen Grass Farm**.

farm, they relatively new to dairying. As soon as they started to lease the farm, they began using biodynamic principles. The transformation was challenging but rewarding. Some of the most significant and noticeable changes in the Krusenbaum's farm can be seen in how they conduct land stewardship, crop production, and herd management. The Krusenbaums produce milk, meat and eggs. They graze 130 dairy cows, raise about 50 replacements/year and raise 30 steers/year as grass-fed beef in an intensively managed pasture based system. They produce dairy for

national distribution through Organic Valley, a Wisconsin Dairy cooperative. The property is also protected by a conservation easement held by the American Farmland Trust (AFT).

Mendocino County, California

FILIGREEN FARM

The second property is Filigreen Farm, an 87-acre farm located in the beautiful Anderson Valley in Boonville, California. This property was formerly an apple orchard owned by Buster and Velma Farrer for 63 years. They grew



One of many beautiful arched gardens at **Filigreen Farm.**

alfalfa, raised cattle, planted an apple orchard and had a summer garden. In the late 1980's the Farrers, unable to maintain the farm, sold the land and it was developed as a biodynamic apple orchard and raspberry plantation. Since then the property was passed through one more owner, but soon after the purchase, it was donated to Yggdrasil with an accompanying conservation easement held by the Anderson Valley Land Trust. Currently, it is being

redeveloped as a model diverse crop farm that has been landscaped to include ponds for water management and native plant species. In the future it will also house an environmental educational and farm intern training program.

Sullivan County, New Hampshire

TEMPLE-WILTON COMMUNITY FARM

The third property is the Temple-Wilton Community Farm.

Yggdrasil's relationship with the Temple-Wilton Community Farm, and its legal entity the Educational Community Farm, is distinguished from the other properties in that Yggdrasil serves as a charitable ownership vehicle and as a holder of land for public benefit. This public ownership relieved the farmers of the challenges of becoming a charitable corporation and provided a service of allowing them to raise the capital for land and equipment purchases. This ownership model also frees the farmer to generate income without



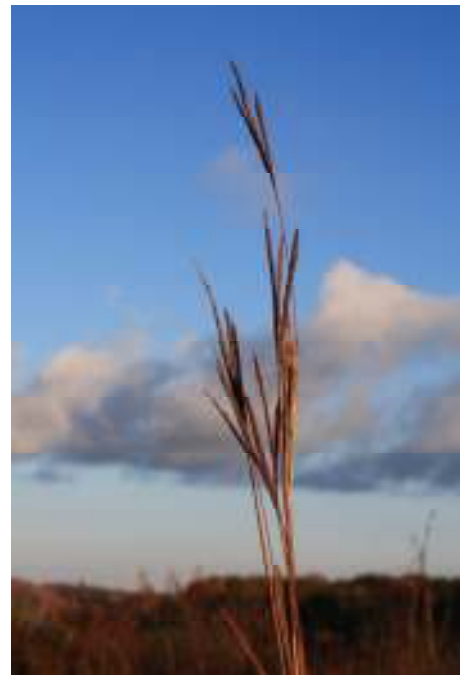
capital indebtedness and does not interfere with farm activities. The Temple-Wilton Community Farm helped to

raise funds for Yggdrasil, matched by the State of New Hampshire, to purchase the 50-acre tract of land that serves as an educational farm with a community supported agriculture (CSA) group and apprenticeship training program. The land is now leased long-term to the community farm.

The Temple-Wilton Community Farm started in 1986, with three farm families and a group of local individuals who wished to help establish and maintain a biodynamic farm to serve the needs of people in the Wilton, New Hampshire area. Currently, they provide a broad range of products for up to 110 households a year. The farm has 15 milking cows, a breeding bull, calves and heifers — a total of 32 head of cattle and 150 chickens. Additionally, they farm about five acres of vegetables each year. The Educational Community Farm property is further protected with deed restrictions through the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program, the agency which made a matching grant to purchase the land.

Conservation Easements As Conservation and Generational Security

Three of Yggdrasil's farms are further protected by voluntary deed restrictions through a legal agreement called a Conservation Easement, between the owner (Yggdrasil) and a non-profit or governmental agency. Local and national land trusts, and state agencies hold restrictions on Yggdrasil's lands to insure that we, as owner, and Yggdrasil's lessees preserve and steward the farm and its natural resources in perpetuity for its intended conservation use. These entities provide additional protection through regular monitoring and enforcement inspections to insure that the land's conservation features are protected in perpetuity. Conservation Easements serve to further protect Yggdrasil's land, but they can also be used with private landowners who desire to preserve specific conservation values of their property.



The value of an easement is determined by a professional appraiser. Conservation Easements can be purchased by land trusts or agencies, however they are more typically donated by a landowner. The 2008 Farm Bill extends the 2006 tax bill provisions through 2009, providing enhanced tax deductions for Conservation Easement donations based on an individual's adjusted gross income (AGI). A Conservation Easement donor can deduct 50% of their AGI for 15 years to deduct the easement's appraised value. These incentives have increased from 30% and 5 years prior to 2006. Easements also can reduce property taxes and real estate taxes. These additional tax incentives can help

families keep land in farming and conservation, while also benefitting future farm owners in purchasing affordable land.

Need for Farm Preservation

Now more than ever, the need for farm preservation and its directed sustainable use have become widely visible. The loss of more and more small family farms to large corporate farms is daunting, national health concerns are looming and access to affordable farms is becoming more and more difficult. The number of people interested in farming as a vocation is dwindling at a time when the retirement age of farmers is rising, along with increased demand for healthy local foods. Yggdrasil's success as a land foundation in providing innovative means for healthy stewardship of the land, making land available to farmers and communities, and making itself known to potential donors, is absolutely essential for the future of agriculture and the earth.

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