



2024 AgriSummit Program Event Schedule Friday, March 8

8:00-8:30am - Registration Check-In/ Vendor Tables/ Farmers Market

8:30-9am – Welcome/ Opening Remarks

- Welcome to AgriSummit, Andrea Earley Coen, Executive Director, Guidestone Colorado
- Welcome Address, Kate Greenberg, CO Commissioner of Agriculture

9:15-10:15am – Workshops Sessions

I. Roadmap for Success: Local Food in Motion - Southwest Colorado Food Hub Connectivity

Location: Theater

Demand for local food is soaring, and while there are many small farms and ranches dedicated to growing food, one of the trickiest problems is how to aggregate and distribute that food in a way that is aligned with the values of a sustainable food system. But what is a Food Hub? What do they actually do? And how can food hubs play an integral role in bridging the gaps in our regional food system to get food from our small farms and ranches to people across the state? Five nonprofits and three food hubs are collaborating on solutions in a 3-year Food Hub Connectivity project funded by the USDA. In this session, we'll hear from Holly Conn, Executive Director of Mountain Roots Food Project in Gunnison, about the project's activities, progress, interim results, and direction, and get a closer look at the inner workings of a food hub from Al Stone and Nick Chambers from Valley Roots Food Hub.

Presenters: Holly Conn, Mountain Roots Food Project; Al Stone, Maria Karahalios & Nick Chambers, Valley Roots Food Hub

II. Stories of Land Access Successes and Challenges across Colorado

Location: Annex Room #1

In this session, facilitated by Colorado Land Link, we will hear from two Front Range farmers navigating access challenges: Benu Amun-Ra, current Land Access Advocacy Fellow with the National Young Farmers Coalition, and Helen Skiba of Artemis Flower Farm and the Treehouse Farm Collective. We'll delve into cooperative land access models for Colorado farmers and share stories of collaboration.

Presenters: Helen Skiba, Artemis Flowers; Benu Amun-Ra, S.A.C.R.Ed Eco-Center/ National Young Farmers Coalition. Facilitated by: Emma Lietz Bilecky, Guidestone

III. Partnering for Land & Water Conservation: Options for Landowners

Location: Annex Room #2

The Colorado Water Trust and Colorado Open Lands work statewide with landowners using private property rights to benefit their operations and the environment. A variety of market-based options and funding mechanisms exist to compensate landowners for protecting a property from development, from sharing water rights to benefit streams and other producers, and to assist with land tenure and other challenges. Tools range from short term to permanent agreements which are flexible to meet the custom needs of each landowner with varied geographies and challenges.

Presenters: Ben Lenth, Colorado Open Lands; Tony LaGreca, Colorado Water Trust

IV. The Value of Agritourism as Part of Your Business Plan

Location: Mezzanine

Tandy Key of Colorado Mountain Lavender in Cotopaxi, CO will share his farm's experience and tentative first steps in adding agritourism as a component of their business model. While their original business plan did not account for the potential benefits of agritourism, the opportunities soon became obvious. However, there are a whole host of issues and considerations that need to be weighed in determining if agritourism is something that would benefit your farm operation.

Presenter: Tandy Key, Colorado Mountain Lavender

10:25-11:25 – Workshop Sessions

I. Biochar for Soil Remediation, Municipal, Agricultural, and Climate Action on the Western Slope and Beyond

Location: Theater

Biochar is a soil amendment for sustainable agriculture. Its porous structure improves water retention, enhancing resiliency to drought. Additionally, biochar mitigates greenhouse gas emissions and fosters microbial activity, fostering a healthier soil ecosystem. Learn how to produce this eco-friendly amendment and how it contributes to long-term soil health and resilience.

Presenter: Ricardo Vasquez-Perales, Assistant Professor of Environment and Sustainability at the Clark Family School of Environment and Sustainability/ Director of the Sustainable and Resilient Communities Track in the Masters in Environmental Management

II. Simplify Your Farm Planning with Backcasting

Location: Annex Room #1

Let's start with your desired vision and outcomes for your farm or ranch operation and work backwards. This playfully strategic planning allows a more creative and simple process to unfold, uncovering key milestones and priorities thus reducing overwhelm. Whether you are planning your week, a project, or your 5 year strategic plan, backcasting can help you streamline that process. Participants from the Farm Vision Course will share examples of how they worked through this process in the workshop this week.

Facilitated by: Jen Visitacion, Moonstone Ventures Business & Leadership Coach, supporting leaders, organizations and businesses to design a more sustainable path forward and create positive change for our communities and environment.

III. Living Roots: Rhizosphere Science and Medicinal Crops that Work for You

Location: Annex Room #2

Medicinal plants offer growers/farmers a way to expand their revenue stream by entering the domestic medicinal herb supply chain - but medicinal plants provide so much more than income. This session will provide audience members with the compelling soil health and biodiversity benefits of incorporating medicinal crops into their production plans with examples of the cycles and relationships between roots, soil, plants, insects and, yes, market value.

Presenter: Amy Kousch, Mineral Roots Nursery

IV. TBD

11:30-12:20 - LUNCH, featuring local products and catered by KalamataPit Catering

12:20-1:15pm – Keynote Address: Occupations of Hope, Filled with Challenges, Changes and Courage

Location: Theater

Robert will speak to why he believes in Colorado agriculture and why that led him to take on this new position with CO Department of Agriculture, his life experiences as a multi-generational Colorado farmer and the importance of being adaptable, and the critical nature of water in Colorado and what his vision is for this new position.

Speaker: Robert Sakata, CO Ag Water Policy Advisor, CO Department of Agriculture/ Sakata Farms

1:20-2:20 – Workshop Sessions

I. Protectors to Providers

Location: Theater

This session highlights the Veterans to Farmers farmer training program. Taylor Drew and Rich Murphy will discuss how their programs gets veterans involved in agriculture. They will share their successes, how the V2F program impacts veterans, and touch on mental health and the challenges of getting more people involved with agriculture on a local scale.

Presenters: Taylor Drew and Rich Murphy, Veterans to Farmers

II. Soil Health in the Arid West

Location: Annex Room #1

Annie will share the results of soil testing and what we are learning about our local soils, how they function and what practices can support and improve them. She will also share forage data correlating minerals and metrics to soil health.

Presenter: Annie Overlin, Southern Regional Specialist, CSU Extension

III. Colorado Seed Farmers Adapting Seed To The Rockies

Location: Annex Room #2

In this panel, we'll hear from three Colorado-based seed companies adapting seed to high-elevation growing environments. Penn Parmenter of Miss Penn's Mountain Seeds, Laura Parker of High Desert Seed + Gardens, and Casey Piscura of Seed Peace. Come get inspired for the growing season ahead!

Presenters: Penn Parmenter, Miss Penn's Mountain Seeds; Laura Parker, High Desert Seed + Gardens; Casey Piscura, Seed Peace

2:30-3:30pm – Workshop Sessions

I. Federal, State, and Local Incentives for Rural Clean Energy

Location: Theater

Agricultural producers and rural small businesses can receive grants (50% cost share), rebates, tax credits, special financing, and free technical assistance from Colorado Department of Agriculture and Tri-State for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. Investments in these projects can increase economic resilience, improve profitability and sustainability, and modernize equipment.

Presenters: Sam Anderson, CO Department of Agriculture; Austin Kinzer, American Farmland Trust

II. Climate Smart Grazing Network of Western Livestock Producers

Location: Annex Room #1

Introducing the Western Grazing Network - an opportunity to implement and/or enhance climate smart livestock production practices with funding and technical support. Learn about the Western Grazing Network with hubs in CO, NM and AZ supporting conservation implementation, robust monitoring, and marketing pathways.

Presenter: Bre Owens, Western Grazing Network

III. Innovative Design and New Funds for Water Solutions on Small Farms

Location: Annex Room #2

In this session, Abram Rosenberg will share about water efficiency and conservation measures implemented in an original design made by his partner, Morgan Velasquez, for a solar and wind-powered hydronic greenhouse. This project was funded with the support of the LOR Foundation's Field Work Grant, which provides funding for farmers and ranchers to implement innovative water efficiency projects in rural areas of Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, and Wyoming. Abram will share about the successes and challenges he and his partner faced during this project and share their resources for funding that they received in 2023. These resources also provide new opportunities for interested farmers and ranchers pursuing innovative ideas for water conservation and more.

Presenter: Abe Rosenberg, Jack Rabbit Hollow Farm

3:30-5pm – Community Open House and Seed Swap

Location: Steamplant Ballroom

- Farmers Market
- Seed Swap w/ Salida Seed Library
- Libations Tastings: Woods Distillery, Dune View Distillery, and more to come!
- Live Music w/ The Whiskey Sweets

5-7pm - Post-Conference Social with Rocky Mountain Farmers Union

Continuing the networking opportunities at this post-conference gathering, held at the High Side! Bar & Grill, right next door to the Steamplant!

Location: High Side! Bar & Grill, 300 W Sackett Ave, Salida