Thursday, February 23rd

6:30 pm, Yellow Springs Library: Pre-conference Reading and Book-signing

Please join us for a signing of Didi Pershouse's new book, *The Ecology of Care: Medicine, Agriculture, Money, and the Quiet Power of Human and Microbial Communities*. Pershouse has a passion for close-knit communities, grazing cows, and soil restoration as solutions to much of what ails us. She founded the Center for Sustainable Medicine, and now works with the Soil Carbon Coalition, developing curriculum on soil health principles, systems landscape function, and community empowerment through mutual listening. The book explores her journey and shows us how we can reclaim the rich, "fertile" lives we are meant to have."

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Healthy Soils Symposium

All events are in MacGregor Hall at Antioch College

What’s the connection between healthy soils, a healthy climate, and healthy food? What do human and microbial communities have in common? Please join this gathering of extension agents, farmers, researchers, gardeners, academics and climate activists as we explore the importance of soil quality to human health and climate cooling. You'll learn from friends, neighbors, and visionary farmers and researchers the whys and hows of developing healthy soil at different scales--household, municipal, and farm fields.

Friday, February 24

8:30 Coffee and Registration

9:00 Roundtable Introductions

• Who is around the table? What are their experiences? What are they here to learn?

10:00 Presentations and Discussion (with break 11-11:15)

• Author and Educator Peter Bane will shed light on the link between healthy soils, restoration of water cycles, and cooling of the climate. Reducing carbon discharges to the atmosphere is needed but inadequate to address the scale and urgency of the climate crisis. Carbon drawdown and active cooling to blunt dangerous weather extremes are within our reach if we act now, and

• Author Didi Pershouse, of the Soil Carbon Challenge on the intersection of soil health, human health, and community resilience.

• Carbon Farmer David Brandt shares his family’s journey of building soil through cover-cropping and other regenerative practices.

1:00-2:00 Lunch from Current Cuisine, vegetarian options available.

2:00-5:00 Workshop and Roundtable Discussions on Regional Initiatives and Challenges
Saturday, February 25

8:30 Coffee and Registration

9:00 Keynote: Didi Pershouse of the Soil Carbon Coalition: Toward a ‘Fertile’ Model of Care

How does the life in soils influence public health and well-being? Why are soils at the center of successful civilizations? At a time when many people are feeling discouraged, author Didi Pershouse is hopeful. She sees signs of the emergence of a new "fertile" paradigm of care for people and the earth. This fertile model acknowledges the essential role of microorganisms in creating resilient communities and stable infrastructure.

She will show easy opportunities through land management to create communities that have:

- resiliency in the face of extreme weather events
- abundant clean water and nutrient dense food
- thriving local economies
- people with greater physical and mental health

Pershouse will demonstrate how we can work with the intelligence of complex self-organizing systems to reorient ourselves, and society, away from the "sterile" way we have practiced agriculture and medicine—killing off whatever we don't want—towards a healthy and productive collaboration with the systems around us.

10:00 Urban Landscapes

- Permaculture Teacher Peter Bane will help us explore how the greenscaping of cities demonstrates leadership on climate issues. We can cool the urban heat island, buffer against flood and drought, reduce pollution, conserve scarce investment dollars, and improve physical and psychological health. Repairing our biological infrastructure can make our cities desirable and humane places to live again.

- Sarah Hippensteel Hall, Manager of Watershed Partnerships for the Miami Conservancy District (MCD), discusses how thoughtful community land use planning and development are critical to protecting our community’s water. MCD is committed to preserving our region’s water and can help communities integrate water resource protection into their land use plans, zoning code, and subdivision regulations. Amending local codes and ordinances is an integral first step towards achieving a balance between natural resource protection and economic development.
11:00 Break

11:15 Finding Support and Measuring Progress

• Dr. Kim Landsbergen, Antioch College: Monitoring soil carbon changes through time requires a systematic approach, and some patience. What takes Nature many years to "bank" in the soil can be rapidly released through traditional agriculture. This session will cover soil sampling methods, interpreting results, and provide some context for expectations of soil carbon uptake.

• Eric Pawlowski Sustainable Agriculture Educator from OEFFA, will discuss the resources available to farmers and gardeners interested in the transition to organic.

• Didi Pershouse will describe the Soil Carbon Coalition's work empowering farmers and communities to be able to see, monitor, map, and share changes and success stories in soil health and landscape function through atlasbiowork.com.

12:30 Lunch and Tour of Antioch Farm:

• After lunch at McGregor, join Farm Manager Kat Christen, to learn about Antioch Farm's soil building methods including open-bin composting systems, vermicompost (worms!) and rotational grazing with poultry and sheep. Dress for the outdoors.

1:45 Farming for Healthy Soil

• Chad Bitler from Greenacres Farm will share his personal and professional journey with soil health. Greenacres farm in Cincinnati is a leader in practice and research in agricultural production methods that impact the health of our soils, and the nutritional quality of our food.

• Leslie Garcia and Doug Seibert from Peach Mountain Organics have been cover cropping for decades on their local vegetable farm. Learn what's worked, and how their practices have built their soil health and farm productivity.

2:45 Break

3:00 Homesteading Solutions

• Bob Huston, a local gardener, shares his decades-long tending of his soil as well as some of the tools that have enabled him to transform it.
• Sabrena Schweyer from Salisbury Schweyer on permaculture design solutions that build soil, and need little tending or watering

4:00 The Broader Context

*Attendees and Presenters discuss the broader context around healthy soils, including:*

• What’s happening on the national and international level?

• What are the policy constraints? Promising Practices?

• How do we move forward as a region?