



# Building More Resilient and Equitable Food Systems in Metropolitan Regions

**17th Annual Stinner Summit | November 13, 2023**

Happy Days Lodge ♦ Cuyahoga Valley National Park



# 2023 STINNER SUMMIT REPORT



*Deb Stinner surveys the room during morning introductions.*

## 2023 Stinner Summit

Monday, November 13th was the 17th Annual Stinner Summit, and the biggest ever! 107 participants came together at the Happy Days Lodge in Cuyahoga Valley National Park to discuss and formulate ideas for advancing urban food systems in Ohio. The summit was led by Dr. Douglas Jackson-Smith, director of Ohio State's Agroecosystem Management Program. This year's theme, **Building Resilient and Equitable Metropolitan Food Systems**, drew farmers, extension professionals, university faculty, and individuals from food banks and nonprofits to share ideas and resources.

Beginning the day with coffee and Deb Stinner's beloved cinnamon rolls, the group heard from participants in last year's funded project about their experiences as Stinner Youth Climate Ambassadors, exploring issues of climate resilience in Ohio's food system over the summer. The ambassadors highlighted the hands-on work they did on farms, as well as connections made with food justice organizations around the state. This was a pilot program, and recipients of last year's Stinner award hope to continue the ambassador program with other funding in future summers.



*Attendees develop a plan for a Training Workforce and Development Program.*



*Ben Stinner (above) possessed a rare ability to build relationships based on common interests. His vision, his passion, and his commitment to building healthy agroecosystems and communities have lived on through this annual gathering and the projects it fosters.*

## Small Group Work

The Stinner Ambassadors joined AMP staff to facilitate small-group discussions where participants identified pressing issues facing metropolitan food systems in Ohio and shared information about existing efforts and resources. Frequently mentioned topics included zoning issues related to development and aesthetic stigma against "messy" farms, a need for stronger social and physical infrastructure to support both farmers and consumers, the importance of building strong peer learning networks, and a desire for greater access to technical and information support for regenerative urban food production. A few subgroups also noted that different regions and communities in Ohio have very different needs, calling for a more localized approach to planning.

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After the groups shared a summary of their discussions, participants were asked to brainstorm and write down potential Stinner project ideas on sticky notes and place them on flip charts around the room. These notes were then clustered to create common themes for full group discussions before lunch.

Lunch was a delicious mix of vegetarian and non-vegetarian options from Spice Catering, a local restaurant and caterer based in Cleveland. Afterwards we reconvened and formed working groups to flesh out the top five clustered project ideas, forming working groups to draft a proposal for each theme. The initial proposals from each group are described **in the box to the right**. After some discussion and feedback from the room, each project working group had a few minutes to refine their proposal and determine a dollar amount to request from the Stinner Endowment Fund. The groups also were asked to name group member(s) who would be willing to help organize and lead the project if it were funded.

As the day wrapped up, participants voted for their favorite ideas with stickers, and offered “IOUs” to projects where they felt they could lend expertise, time, or resources. A plan for a forest garden and another for a “Hub” for sharing tools and resources merged with the SPARK group.

After considering both participant votes and IOUs the Stinner Endowment committee recommended providing \$20,000 this year to support the SPARK initiative to create regional Stinner-style meetings and launch micro-projects in Ohio’s urban centers. The goal is to identify and connect existing BIPOC and urban agriculture farmers and organizations, so they can learn from each other’s experiences and collaborate on projects that address local and/or regional challenges. SPARK won by a significant margin, with the runner-up being the Training and Workforce Development plan.

## 2023 Project Proposals

### SPARK Regional Projects

Support Stinner-style meetings in several urban hubs with existing BIPOC and/or urban farming organizations. Goals of the meetings are to Share Practical Agricultural Resources and Knowledge (SPARK), strengthen networking with farms and existing urban ag organizations and initiatives in each urban area. SPARK meetings could identify and launch localized initiatives to meet needs identified by regional participants.

### Training Workforce and Development Program

Provide workforce training, targeting employees under 18 as well as older veterans and prisoners reentering the workforce. Recruit farmers who need hands-on help in exchange for 8 weeks of training provided by local farms.

### Pilot Teen Impact Program

Work with Cleveland and Columbus area teens for to run a 6-week, 3-day paid internship program to provide access and exposure to food, community development, and empowerment through partnerships with interested local farms and with the Y.O.U program.

### Green Space in Linden Area

Co-create a community food forest garden to create a regenerative food and community hub. Leadership from existing non-profit Rooting Resilience.

### Farmer Resource Sharing

Create The Hub, a local urban farm cooperative in Columbus area centered around a shared wash and pack facility, also offering a compost exchange program, tool library, and network.



Left: Early voting on themes, Final project voting; Right: Participant discussion in-between small group work is an essential part of the Stinner Summit.



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## Next Steps

In December, the Stinner Summit Endowment Committee identified and met with potential leaders of each SPARK regional group to discuss questions like distribution of funds and leadership roles. Funds will be split between three regional groups (in the broader Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Columbus areas). Julialynn Walker (Bronzeville Farmers Market) and Celeste Treece (Ag Noire) are the fiscal coordinators. Other coordination committee members are Daronce Daniels, Timothy Lewis, Jada Williams, and Shema Roberts. Keep an eye on your inbox for information on how to get involved in the 2024 SPARK project!



*The SPARK group (left) and Hub groups (right) work to refine their project ideas.*

## Acknowledgments

**Artwork:** AdobeStock

**Poster and report design:** Cassy Brown and Meg Edwards

**Ben Stinner Endowment Advisory Committee:**

Casey Hoy, Larry Phelan, Deb Stinner

**Venue:** Happy Days Lodge in Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Peninsula, OH

**Caterer:** Spice Catering from Cleveland, OH

**Support:** The Stinner Summit is sponsored by The Ben Stinner Endowment; The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences Agroecosystem Management Program; and The Kellogg Foundation.



**2023 Stinner Summit Organizing Committee** (from left to right): Larry Phelan, Kevin Armstrong, Cassy Brown, Cheryl Fischnich, Deb Stinner, Casey Hoy, Douglas Jackson-Smith

*Thank you to all who attended this year's Stinner Summit and truly made this event a success!*

*We hope you will join us again in 2024.*