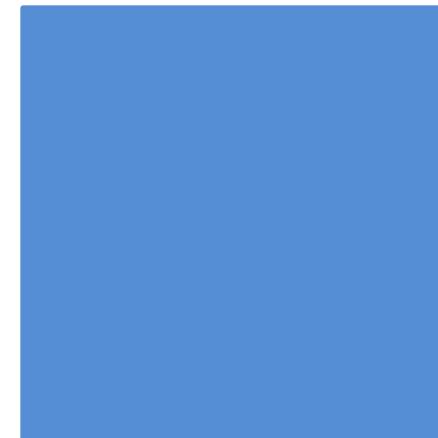
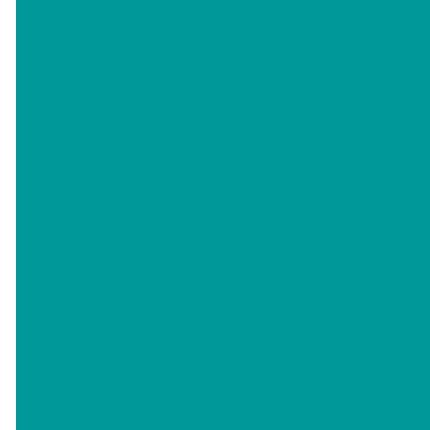


Headwaters Farm Business Incubator

*Cultivating Farms &
Future Stewards*



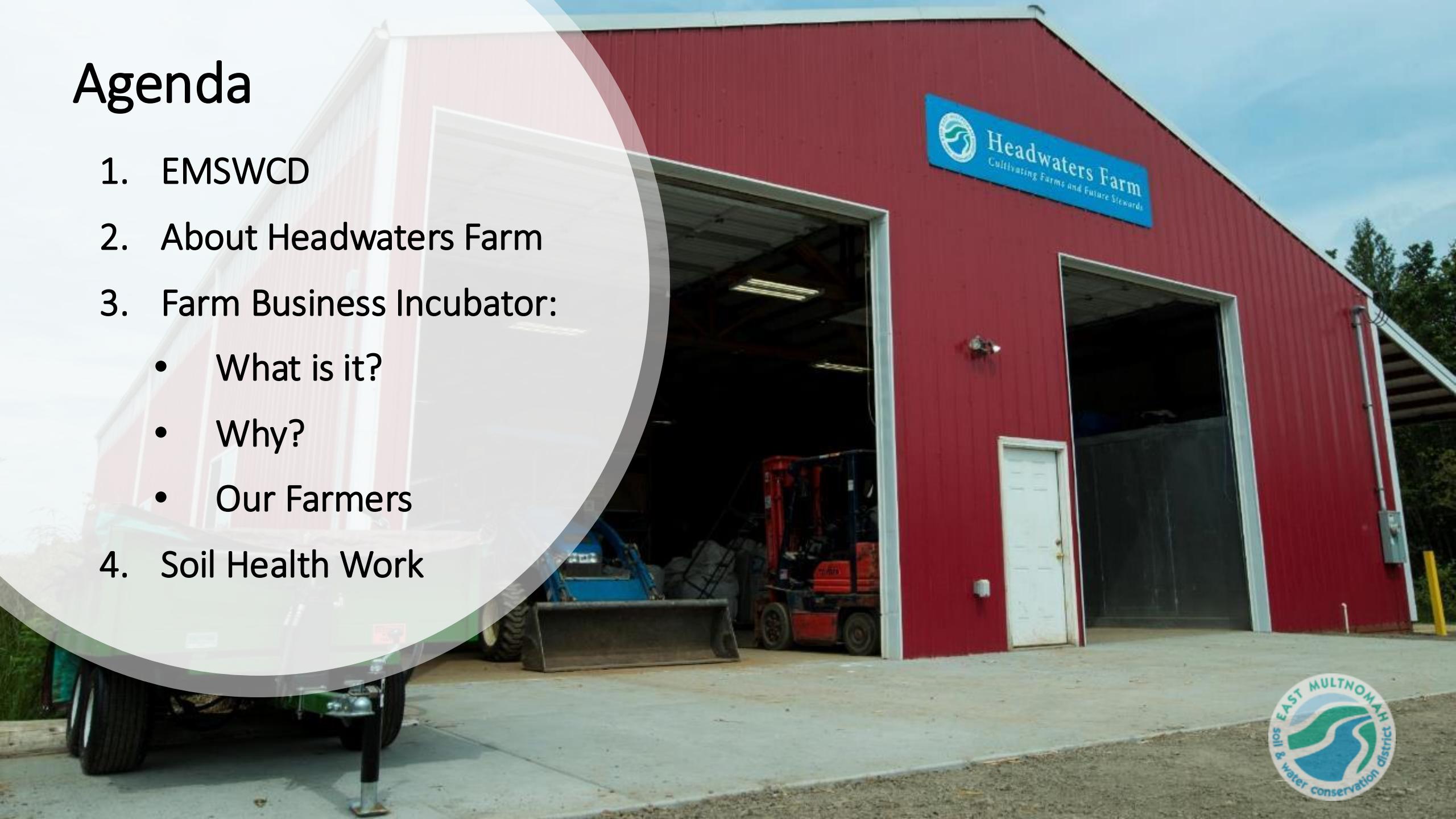
Rowan Steele

Headwaters Farm Program Manager
East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District
1/12/2026



Agenda

1. EMSWCD
2. About Headwaters Farm
3. Farm Business Incubator:
 - What is it?
 - Why?
 - Our Farmers
4. Soil Health Work



East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District



Rural Residents ▾ Urban Residents ▾ Farmers & Growers ▾ Community Grants ▾ Events ▾ About ▾

A large, semi-transparent blue rectangular overlay covers the left side of the main image. It contains the main headline and a descriptive paragraph.

We help people care for land and water.

We offer free workshops, expert advice, and practical support to grow and protect healthy yards, gardens, and farms across East Multnomah County.

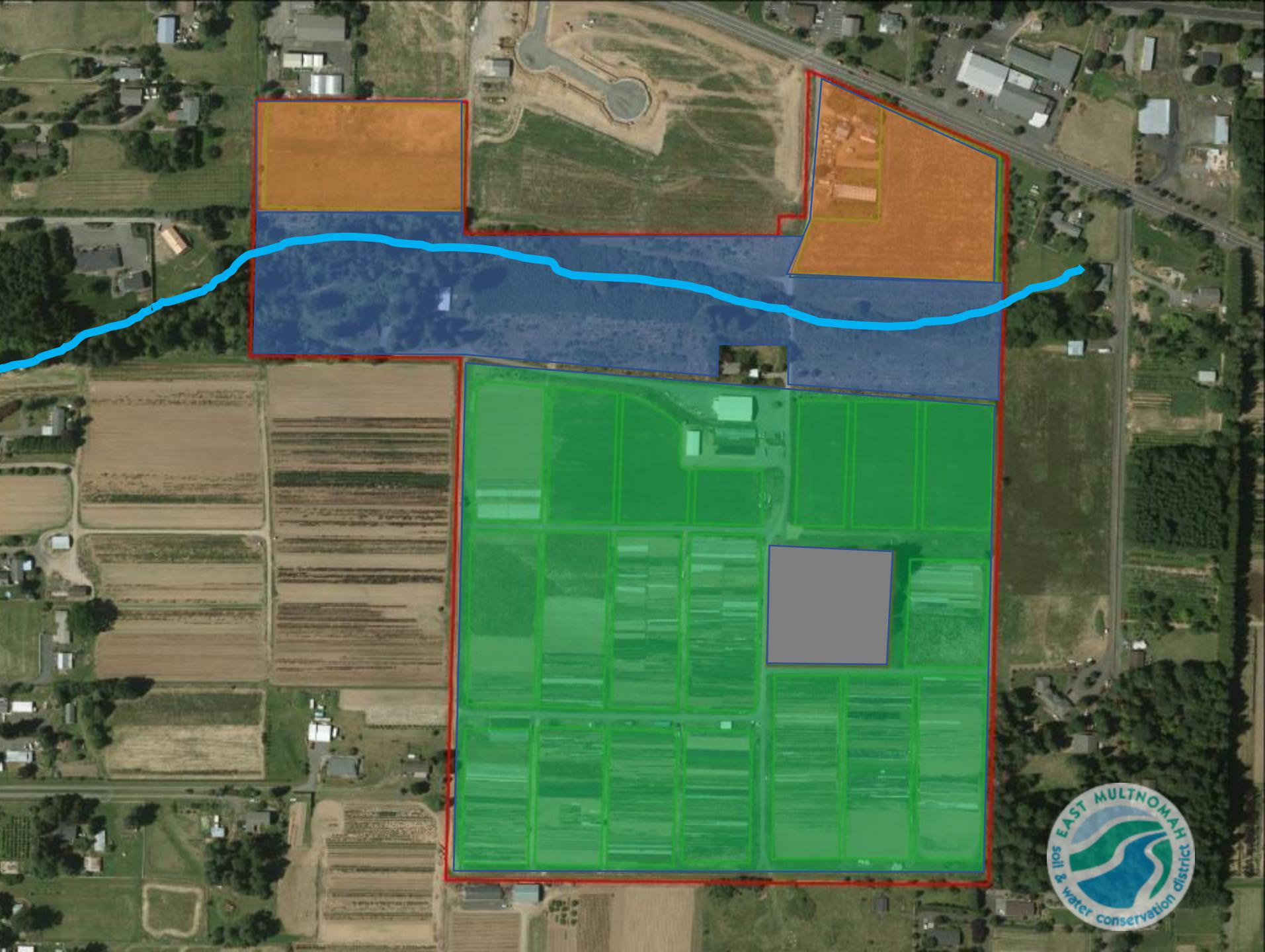
[LEARN MORE](#)



East Multnomah SWCD Service Boundaries



Headwaters Farm



At Headwaters Farm We...



1. Amplify Conservation Ag
2. Launch viable, conservation-oriented farm businesses

What is Farm Business Incubator?



*Land-based program designed to launch
viable, stewardship-minded farm businesses*



About Farm Incubators



Locations approximate. All map information, facts and figures
courtesy of the [National Incubator Farm Training Initiative](#).
<http://nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu/food-systems/national-incubator-farm-training-initiative>



How Headwaters Works

- Landlord/lessee
- 5-Yr Tenure
- Experienced Growers
- Direct-to-consumer, Right-Sized Farm
- Address barriers to new growers



Headwaters Lowering Barriers...

1. Cost of entry
2. Production & Business TA
3. Farm networks
4. Market access





Making farming affordable...

- Graduated land lease
- Equipment/facility rentals
- Purchase support for Equip/infrastructure



A photograph of two farmers in a field of tall green grass. One farmer, a man with a beard, is kneeling on the left, wearing a plaid shirt and blue jeans. The other farmer, a woman with long hair, is kneeling on the right, wearing a teal beanie, a plaid shirt, and blue jeans. They are both looking towards the right side of the frame. A white wheelbarrow is visible in the background. The background is a dense line of trees and bushes.

Technical Assistance...

- Soil Health
- Production Support
- Business development
 - outsourced
- Equipment trainings



Farm Networks and Community...

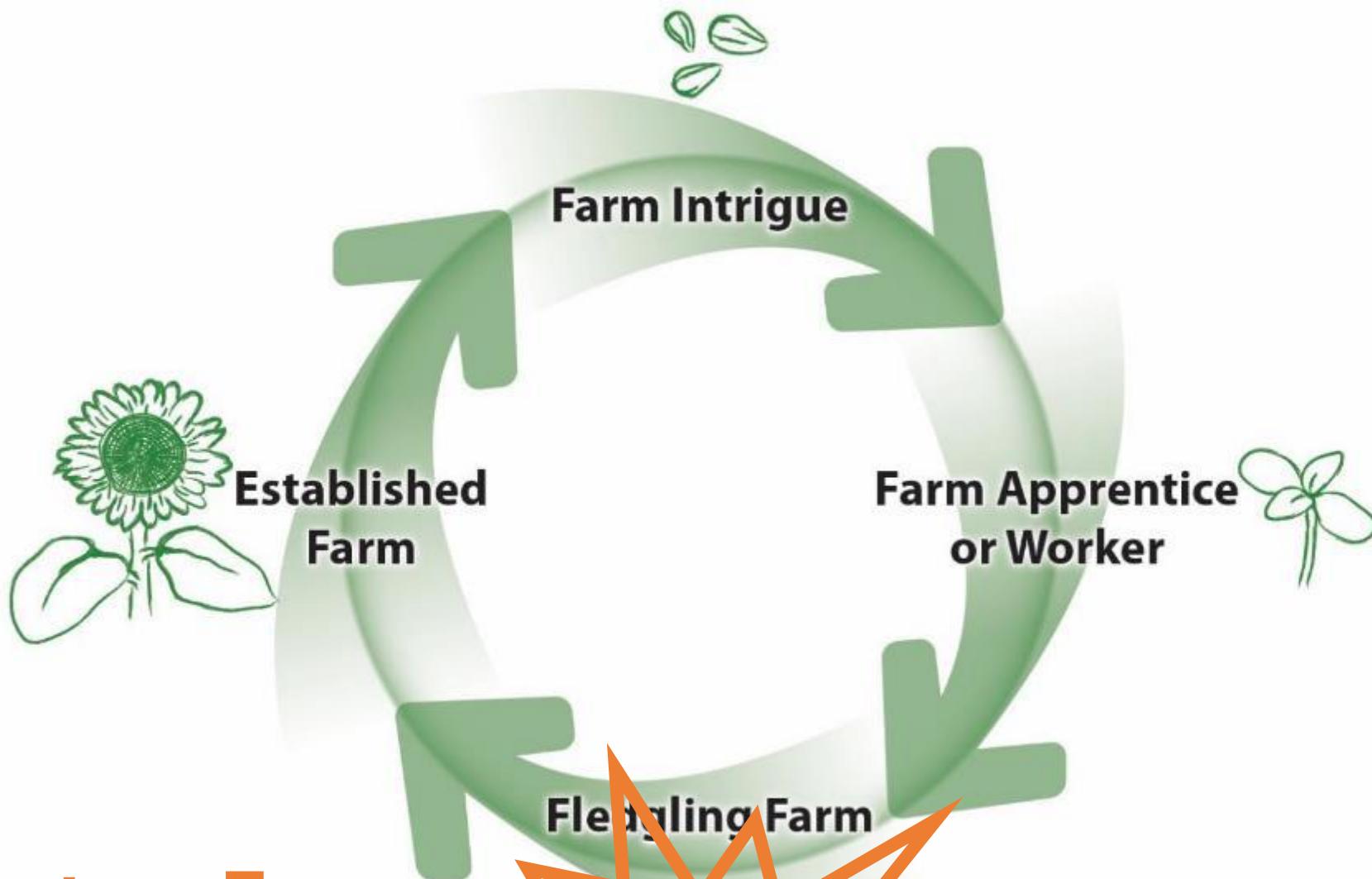
- Sharing resources
- Co-marketing
- Bulk purchasing
- Support network!



Market Development...

- Not a primary focus
- Portland Farmers Market Partnership
- Selling the “story” to customers & buyers





**Headwaters Farm
Business Incubator**



Why Headwaters?

- CDs work with Farmers
- Aging farmer demographics
- Newer farmers = long tenure of future land management
- **Conservation Project:**
 1. Ample supply of farms/farmers
 2. Keep local farmland active
 3. Make sure it is well stewarded



Headwaters

The Farmers...



- 45 Farms to date:
 - 14% immigrant/refugee
 - 27% BIPOC
 - 61% Female
- 2025 = 7 Farms
- 25 Graduate Farms:
 - 90% Still Farming
 - 70% “Serving District”
- Veg, flowers, herbs, native plants, starts, livestock

Questions?



Weeds & Soil Health



Headwaters Soil Health Initiative

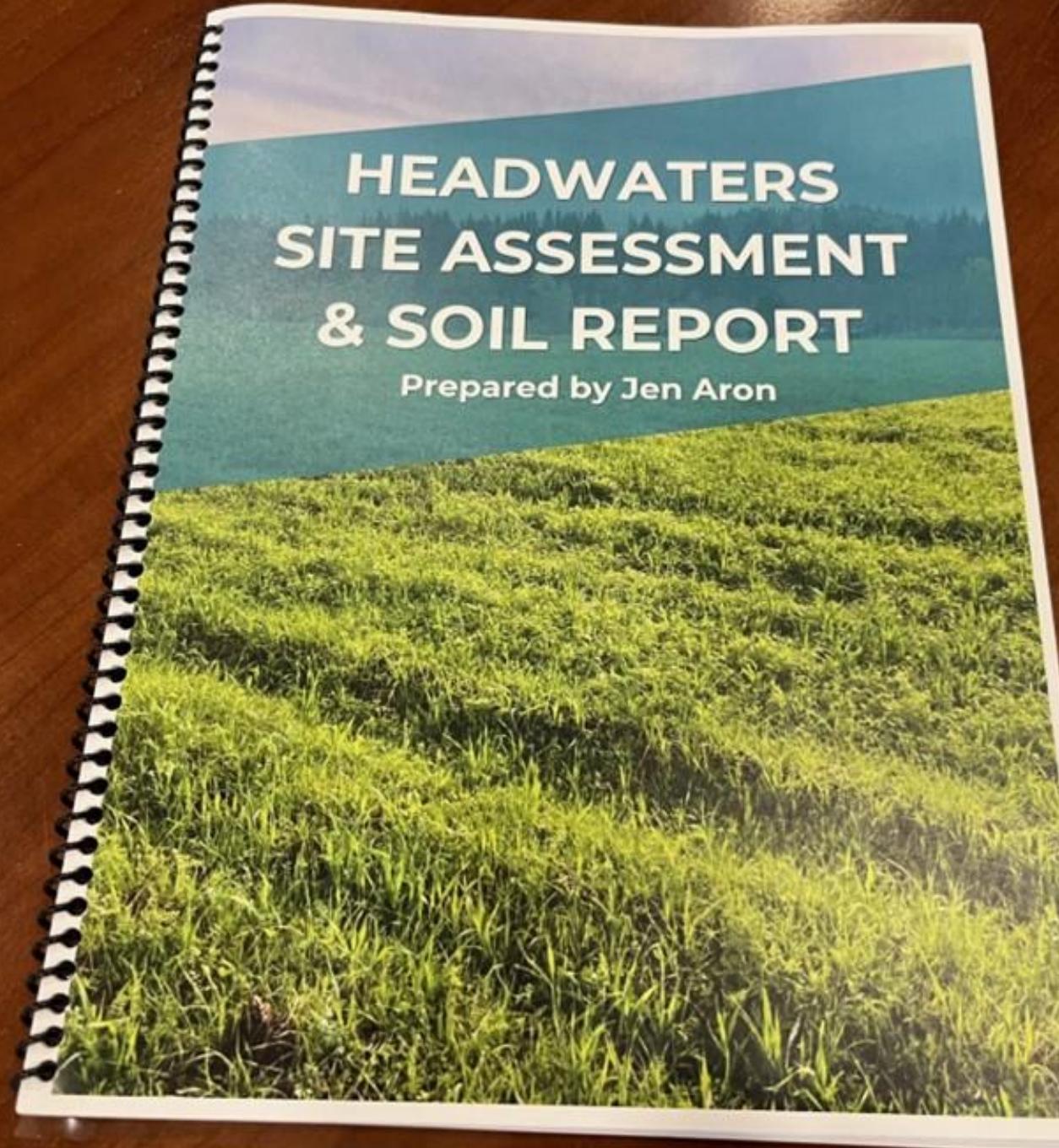
Soil Health =

The ability of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains life

--Dr. Shannon Cappellazzi

Headwaters Soil Health Initiative

- Started July, 2024
- Guided by Jen Aron, BRF
- Focused on four pillars:
 - Cover crops
 - Inoculants
 - Nutrient balancing
 - Optimized tillage



Headwaters Soil Health Initiative

Inoculants



Headwaters Soil Health Initiative

Nutrient Balancing



2023



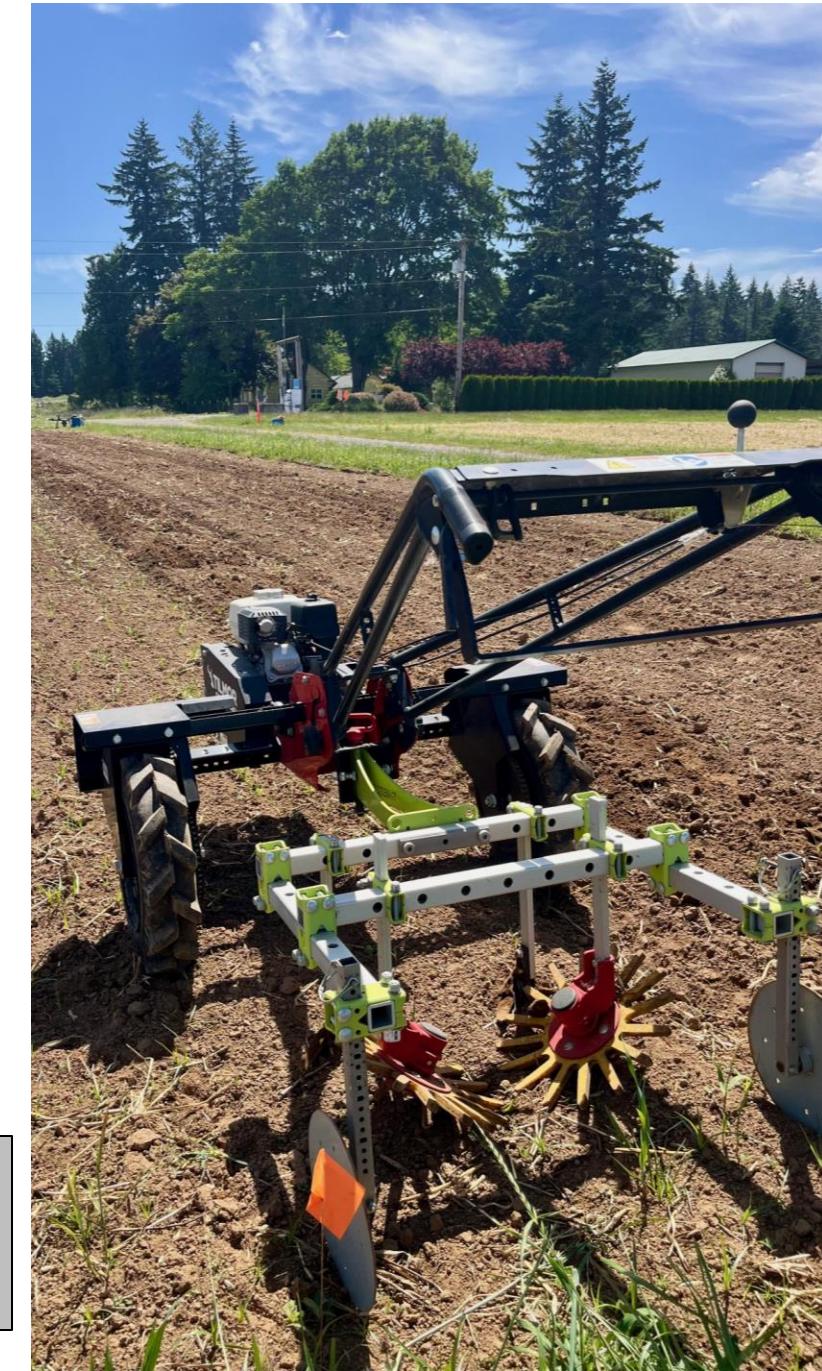
2025



**Field 2 VSA
Worst Conditions**

Field 2 Visual Soil Assessment – Worst Conditions on Farm

	2023	2025
Depth at 300psi	7.6"	17.5"
Rhizosheaths	None	Yes and mycelium
Nodules	None	Yes, small/sparse
Worms	2	19
Root depth	1.5"	3"



Questions?