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Front Cover: Two Buttes Reservoir, Baca County, CO
Back Cover: 2023 OC Orientation Retreat at Talon Point Retreat Center, Channing, TX
MESSAGE FROM OC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ogallala Commons undertakes both smaller and larger endeavors in pursuit of building more vibrant Great Plains communities. It is our desire to contribute as part of a larger team to realize a shared vision in our communities. In seeking to become the best partner that we can become - we have focused intentionally on building and developing our own team.

The strength of a team often hinges paradoxically on both the ways a team is the same and the ways they are different. A good team isn’t homogeneous, it isn’t filled with people who all look, think, and act the same - who have the same education, background, experiences, and perspectives. Nor can an effective team be filled with people who are entirely different and have nothing in common. Becoming an effective team requires coalescing around shared objectives and a shared vision; it involves joining others in a worthy pursuit. Often, it means struggling together to address challenges, obstacles, and setbacks. It means engaging in the hard work of learning from differing perspectives and considering alternative experiences; it means allowing the work itself and the common pursuit to change your mind, maybe even change you.

This happens by creating strong relationships and shared context; it requires taking ownership without taking possession. It is time-consuming and relationally intensive. Our team has dedicated itself to this work both as a part of our organizational team and in our shared work with you.

We look forward to continuing our work with you in your community throughout 2024 and beyond.

JOHN WITTLER
OC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Ogallala Commons is a nonprofit education and leadership organization that reinvigorates commonwealth to build vibrant Great Plains communities.

WHAT DOES OGALLALA COMMONS DO?

1) Weaving a Collaborative Network of Diverse Partners
A web of organizations, innovators, entrepreneurs, youth, elders, and community leaders.

2) Building an Educational Outreach
Conducting workshops and field days offering knowledge and resources to address critical needs of the region.

3) Fostering a Sense of Place
Promoting and celebrating community arts, regional cultures, and local histories.

4) Rebuilding Commonwealth to Sustain Land and People
Providing leadership to revitalize communities by reinvesting in the 12 Key Assets.

HOW WE DO IT...
Building coalitions is the foundation of our programming, as well as OC’s organizational Theory of Change. Supporting workforce development with local communities, pursuing regional strategies for strengthening our food systems and long-term community health, and pursuing natural resource stewardship initiatives with landowners and municipalities.

Our Theory of Action depicted in the accompanying Logic Model (and those for our programs on pages 9, 11, and 13) combines relational and educational drivers with physical and social infrastructure to create a synergistic confluence of energy, mission, and activity to impact systemic issues with community-driven solutions. We believe in gathering coalitions, building capacity, engaging with partners in shared work, and building infrastructure to facilitate progress toward meaningful short and long-term outcomes.
OC focuses on commonwealth as the foundation for all communities, both human and natural. Commonwealth consists of local & regional assets that must be preserved, enhanced, and invested in to generate sustainable resources. Every community has access to the 12 Key Assets regardless of its current economic and social conditions.

**GIFTS OF THE NATURAL WORLD & HUMAN SOCIETY**
that have monetary and non-monetary value in supporting life and well-being for both human and natural communities.

**WEALTH**
We inherit or create together which we desire to pass on, as undiminished and regenerative as possible, to our children and future generations.

**A SECTOR OF THE ECONOMY**
that complements, but is also distinct from the market and government sectors.

**COMMUNAL ASSETS**
that increase or decrease depending on management.

**ARTS & CULTURE**
The application of creativity to capture, memorialize, and express the beauty of a place, the emotions of the people, and to tell the stories of our past and present or to imagine our future.

**HEALTH**
The resources for physical, mental social, and spiritual wellness that exist in the community or region.

**SPIRITUALITY**
The web of relationships, connections, and practices that nurture the soul.

**SOIL & MINERAL CYCLE**
The ecological process that transforms, stores, and exchanges the nutrients/minerals necessary to support the overall life cycle.

**WATER CYCLE**
Civilization has always organized around water, we can’t live without it. The healthy functioning of the water cycle is essential for the future of our communities.

**WILDLIFE & NATURAL WORLD**
The living organisms that inhabit our region, the non-domesticated animals, plants, and insects that are native to our region.

**SENSE OF PLACE**
The features and experiences of our geography that define it as unique and uniquely our home.
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STEWARDING NATURAL RESOURCES PROGRAM

Ogallala Commons conducts conferences, field days, festivals, and roundtable meetings to educate students, land managers, and community stakeholders to value, restore, and conserve natural resource ecosystems.

OC Festival Faculty finishing a Water Festival in Canadian, TX.

A clutch of American Avocet eggs at a playa near Nazareth, TX.

Field Day attendees viewing a spring adjacent to Silver Lake near Pep, TX.

Elementary students getting a close encounter with a tiger salamander at OC’s Playa Classroom.

A large crowd gathered for OC’s Playa Field Day, starting out at the Civic Center in Hereford, TX.
Program Partners
REBUILDING LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS PROGRAM

Ogallala Commons has been educating agricultural producers and communities to reinvigorate regional food systems since 2010. Through summits, field days, bus tours, workshops, virtual gatherings, and social media campaigns, OC seeks to strengthen individual and collective relationships towards local food.

Permian Basin Foodshed Field Day at Flying Y Farms, Tarzan, TX.

Producer Visit at OC’s Local Food Summit in Mora, NM.

Locally grown produce is an essential element to OC events.

Picking up pinto beans grown in southeast Colorado for the Food Hub.

Students prepping the lunch for OC Farm-to-Institution Summit at AmTech Career Academy in Amarillo, TX.
Following our Logic Model, OC works with partners to reinvigorate regional foodsheds.

LONG TERM OUTCOMES
Consumption of regionally produced foods
Number of mid-market food system aggregators
Economic opportunity within the region
Community health outcomes

SHORT TERM OUTCOMES
Food access for local consumers
The viability of farmers and ranchers

ACTIVITIES
Community Education
Workshops
Summits
Tours
Promotion
Technical Assistance

INFRASTRUCTURE
Tool Library
Learning Center
Certificates
Technical Assistance
Food Hub

BUILD COALITIONS
Community members
Farmers and Ranchers
Food system partners
Community leaders
Institutions
Students

Rebuilding Local Food Systems Logic Model
Jacey Wideman interned for Main Street Dodge City to help build sustainable ecosystems for entrepreneurs in her community.

Local entrepreneur panelists share wisdom with youth business owners.

Phillips County middle schooler receives E-Fair investment.

Through our community-based internships and apprenticeships, as well as work with youth entrepreneurs in E-fairs and other workshops, OC assists our partners to offer work experience, skill-building, and career pathways. With nearly 700 unique internships hosted since our program began, and $18,000 invested in youth business in 2023 alone. Through the lens of the 12 Key Community Assets, OC’s goal is always to nurture opportunities for participants to stay in – or return to – their home communities and regions.
Intern alumni Jose, Sam, and Hannah share with peers about their experiences in Russell County internships.

Students in Pritchett, CO learned from their teachers, historians, and OC team about local career opportunities during a Commonwealth Academy.
OC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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OC 2024 BUDGET OVERVIEW

**INCOME**
- Workforce & Leader Development: $595,000
- Rebuilding Local Food Systems: $210,000
- Stewarding Natural Resources: $80,000
- Other: $40,000
- **Total Projected Income**: $925,000

**EXPENSES**
- Workforce & Leader Development: $486,000
- Rebuilding Local Food Systems: $204,000
- Stewarding Natural Resources: $71,000
- Other: $135,000
- **Total Projected Expenses**: $896,000

**BREAKDOWN OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES**
- Programming – 77%
- Management – 17%
- Fundraising – 6%

2022 Audited Financials