



**SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS
AGRICULTURAL PARTNERSHIP**

PO Box 80625
South Dartmouth, MA 02748
www.semamonline.org



THE PLOWSHARE

SEMAM'S PRINT NEWSLETTER FALL 2019

SAVE THE DATES

SEMAM ANNUAL MEETING
THURSDAY NOVEMBER 21, 2019
5:30PM - 8:00PM
GROUNDWORK CO-WORKING SPACE
1213 PURCHASE ST. NEW BEDFORD, MA

AGRICULTURE & FOOD CONFERENCE
SUNDAY FEBRUARY 23, 2020
9:00AM - 5:00PM
BRISTOL COUNTY AGRICULTURAL H.S.
135 CENTER ST. DIGHTON, MA

REGISTER AT SEMAPONLINE.ORG/EVENTS

SUPPORT THE WORK OF SEMAM WITH A GIFT!



**YES! I'D LIKE TO SUPPORT
SEMAM WITH A GIFT OF: \$ _____**

Please enclose a check or visit semamonline.org/donate
SEMAM is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

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SEMAM
P.O. BOX 80625
S. DARTMOUTH, MA 02748

YOUR NAME: _____ **EMAIL:** _____

FARM OR BUSINESS: _____ **PHONE:** _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

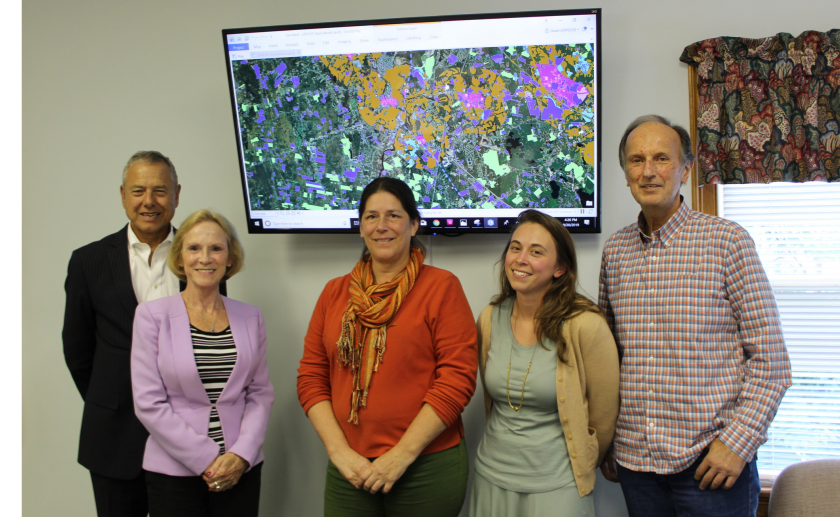
SOUTHCOAST RAIL & FARMLAND A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR:

A long-held promise to the Southcoast is finally being realized. Southcoast Rail, a project to restore commuter rail service between the South Coast to Boston, has both the funding and the permitting to complete the venture - after almost 30 years of anticipation between planning and project delays. The land for the stations has been purchased. Repairs and upgrades on the tracks and culverts are underway, and construction on the first stations will begin as early as 2021. The project has quickly transitioned from nearly forgotten to near reality.

New Bedford to South Station in 90 minutes is a marvelous thought compared to the ghastly traffic driving to and from Boston. We will see the many benefits to our communities around the region with this project: access to more and higher paying jobs, a shorter, more affordable, and more environmentally-friendly commute, and the economic benefit of new MBTA stations for our local businesses and institutions. There is a clear and apparent downside, however. With South Coast Rail comes higher land prices and an increased development pressure on nearby farmland.

This isn't new information but the start and stop nature of the project has, to some extent, made us numb to the urgency. While the focus of the State's final Environmental Impact Statement thoroughly covered the environmental aspects in the immediate area of the railway construction, little attention has been given to the project's impacts on our farms and farmland. Large undeveloped farm parcels near MBTA stations are ideal from a developers prospective - flat, easy to build on, and often with a price-per-acre compelling for speculators.

As the immediacy of the South Coast Rail project became apparent, SEMAM reached out to Westport State Representative Paul Schmid. Paul helped us pull together a meeting with Southcoast Rail Project



From left to right: Paul Schmid, Jean Fox, Karen Schwalbe, Helen Zinacavage, and Bill Napolitano standing beneath SRPEDD's Southcoast Rail farmland protection mapping tool.

Manager Jean Fox, and Bill Napolitano, our long-time Environmental Program Director at the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD). SRPEDD's immense experience in the region quickly put real data to our concerns about which areas are a priority for agricultural preservation. With the help of SRPEDD's Senior Comprehensive Planner Helen Zinacavage, we now have a gorgeous and informative GIS map of priority land. Our next steps will be to coordinate with farmers, Agricultural Commissions, Planning Boards, nonprofits, and funders to focus on long-term protection and conservation of farm parcels around the new Southcoast Rail MBTA stations. SEMAM is now poised to provide tools for assessing farmland protection priorities and help to make connections to farmland preservation funding sources.

The Southcoast has incredibly productive farmland and is an irreplaceable resource for our future food security. Partnerships matter - the work of protecting farmland will require a community-wide effort. It is a critical time to protect our farmland from piece by piece development. We have much more work to do.

Sincerely,
Karen Schwalbe
SEMAM Executive Director

HELP JUMPSTART THIS IMPORTANT WORK: MAKE A DONATION ON THE BACK OF THIS PAGE



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MEET THE SEMAP BOARD

ASHLEY BRISTER

After 5 years as owner and operator of Ashley's Produce, one of the "agriprenuerial businesses" at Round the Bend Farm in South Dartmouth, Ashley Brister made the transition in the Fall of 2018 to Sharing the Harvest Community Farm (STH), a program of the Dartmouth YMCA. As Farm Director of STH Ashley is thrilled to be able to combine her interests in outdoor education and ecological farming systems with her passion for community engagement and fighting food insecurity. At STH, Ashley manages and engages an incredible community of volunteers of all ages who are responsible for growing between 60,000 and 90,000 pounds of produce each year for local hunger relief efforts.



Sharing the Harvest Community Farm was established in 2006 as a grassroots effort to fight hunger and help feed our neighbors in need. 100% of the produce and cage-free eggs produced on the farm are donated to 20 local hunger relief programs throughout the Southcoast region through a partnership with the United Way of Greater New Bedford Hunger Commission who deliver the produce and eggs. The fields at STH also serve as an outdoor classroom for learners of all ages. Working in partnership with local school systems, universities and a thriving summer camp program, STH provides young people the opportunity to meaningfully engage in their local food system while teaching them the importance of community service.

SEMAP STRATEGIC PLANNING

ANNUAL MEETING, NOVEMBER 21ST

Join us for a celebration of SEMAP's accomplishments this year, networking with farmers and local food allies from across the region, and a presentation of awards for individuals key to the success of local agriculture in Southeastern Massachusetts in 2019.

This year we will be doing a special interactive dot survey to help identify what SEMAP's strategic priorities should be in 2020 and beyond. What challenges facing our local food system are most important to you? What challenges are most important to our region? We'd love to hear your thoughts and have you join us for this special event as we continue to develop our long-term strategy, and focus in on those issues where we can drive success for the region.

Our 2019 Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday November 21, 2019 from 5:30-8:00pm at Groundwork, 1213 Purchase St, New Bedford, MA. There is ample on-street parking in the area. Additionally, the corner of Purchase & Maxfield Streets is on SRTA's New Bedford Bus Routes 2 & 4. **Please RSVP at semaponline.org/events**

TIE GRANT: THE WINNOW WIZARD

IVORY SILO FARM

At Ivory Silo Farm in Westport, Farmers Bill Braun and Dee Levanti grow open-pollinated varieties of vegetables, herbs, and flowers and produce their own seed for use on the farm. In 2018, SEMAP's TIE Grant program provided funding for the farm to purchase a Winnow Wizard, an innovative seed cleaning machine that uses a pressure differential across a series of perforated metal grates to create a steady, even, adjustable flow of air which is necessary to separate nonviable seeds and seed chaff from viable seeds. This tool allows Ivory Silo to more accurately clean seed of all types and increase their seed germination rate. Bill & Dee have also created a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization working to preserve, improve, and diversify place-based, climate-resilient seed for the public domain. If you are a farmer in the region that would like to improve your seed saving efforts, reach out to their nonprofit, the Freed Seed Federation, at freedseedfederation@gmail.com for assistance, and to request to use the wizard for farm's your seed saving work!

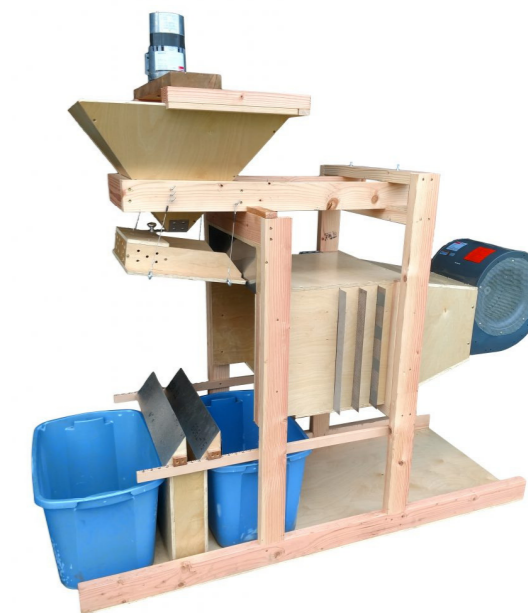


Photo courtesy of www.luterra.com

THE MACOMBER TURNIP

BY KENDRA MURRAY

If you're not local to the Westport or Dartmouth area, you may never have heard of the Macomber turnip, much less had a disagreement about the pronunciation of the root vegetable. This fall treat is truly delicious, but you might have to go on a journey to find one if you aren't local.

As the story goes, the Macomber Turnip was accidentally created by Adin and Elihu Macomber in 1876. That year, the brothers had planted rutabagas, large purple topped root veggies that are a cross between cabbage and turnips. The seeds were sown near a row of radishes, and with some cross pollination, the Macomber turnip was born. The turnip is quite sweet but, if eaten raw, you can definitely taste the bite from the radishes.

If you're not normally a turnip fan, the Macomber turnip is worth a try. It's sweeter and smoother, and can be prepared in a variety of ways. The turnips I've purchased are usually pretty substantially sized, so you often have enough veggie to experiment with a couple of different recipes, or enough for a potluck sized dish. The first couple of times that I had Macomber turnips, they were sliced and baked with a buttery and savory glaze.

Personally, I like to use them in recipes where one might otherwise use a potato, such as in pot pies or hearty stews. It's a great way to feature the veggie and introduce it to others without it overwhelming the whole dish. Head down to your South Coast farm stands this fall and make the Macomber turnip part of your fall and Thanksgiving spread!



Bill Braun's Macomber Turnip, photo by the Carrot Project

SEMAP is dedicated to preserving and expanding access to local food and sustainable farming in southeastern Massachusetts through research and education.