



SOCIAL CHANGE GROUPS RECONNECT AT OAEC

OAEC has long been a place for retreat, integrated learning and visioning for social movement groups working towards ecologically regenerative economy, culture and governance. This year, we were especially honored to host groups from around the country and globe, some gathering together again for the first time since the pandemic began. We are proud that so many chose OAEC as the place to do the tender work of reconnecting, reflecting and strategic planning in these challenging times.

In addition to many returning groups, we also welcomed some remarkable new organizations that are working at the forefront of social, environmental, labor and racial justice movements. Ensuring that the Center is available and accessible to these community-based, frontline groups remains one of OAEC's core commitments. This is made possible by our [Movement Building Retreat Fund](#), which enables us to offer a subsidized rate to many allied groups that otherwise could not come to OAEC.

Time and time again, we hear glowing feedback from retreat groups just how meaningful and inspiring it is to do their work in an environment surrounded by natural beauty and that demonstrates real-world solutions to pressing ecological issues. We hope to give people a transformative experience that elevates new ways of thinking and relating that will shape their vision and strategy for years to come.



***Break Free From Plastic** is a global movement to tackle the plastics pollution crisis across the whole plastics value chain from extraction to disposal. The #Breakfreefromplastic Global Team, **shown above**, met at OAEC this summer to plan their next campaign. OAEC Executive Director Dave Henson provided facilitation and strategy support as part of his long-standing collaboration with BFFP.*

MOVEMENT BUILDING AT OAEC IN 2022

Below are just some of the remarkable groups OAEC hosted and collaborated with this year.



Sustainable Economies Law Center, shown above, has been visiting OAEC for many years and we were excited to welcome them back this summer for their staff retreat! SELC cultivates a new legal landscape that supports community resilience and grassroots economic empowerment.

Rewilding California Convening - For the third time, OAEC, along with the Center for Biological Diversity and The Rewilding Institute, convened a Rewilding California meeting that brought together leading advocates and practitioners of rewilding in California to focus on the recovery of terrestrial and riverine species.

Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, US Team Retreat - GAIA's mission is to catalyze a global shift towards environmental justice by strengthening grassroots social movements that advance solutions to waste and pollution.

Indigenous Peoples Power Project, Staff Training - IP3 works to provide nonviolent direct action training, campaign strategy and community organizing tools to support Indigenous communities taking action in defense of their homelands.

Peak Plastic Foundation, Storyboarding Meeting - PPF, a fiscally sponsored project of OAEC, came in May 2022 to do a storyboarding and production planning meeting for their new film in development, tentatively titled *Goliath is Wobbling*.

Movement Generation, Just Transition Funder Training - OAEC's long-time partner, MG inspires and engages in transformative action towards the liberation and restoration of land, labor and culture. This year, MG led a four-day training for staff of philanthropic foundations to help them better support frontline groups in developing the 'just transition' to ecological and economic resilience in their communities.

California Green New Deal Coalition, Steering Committee Meeting - CGND is a coalition of community organizations, advocates, unions and allies across California who know that the future of our state and planet depends on rapidly transitioning to a clean energy economy with justice at its core.

The Cultural Conservancy, Board Meeting - TCC is a Native-led organization based in the Bay Area that protects and restores Indigenous cultures through the direct application of traditional knowledge and practices on ancestral lands. TCC is the steward of the newly established Heron Shadow, a land-based project near OAEC in West Sonoma County.

National Housing Law Project, Staff Retreat - NHLP's mission is to advance housing justice by strengthening and enforcing the rights of tenants, increasing housing opportunities for underserved communities, and preserving and expanding the nation's supply of safe and affordable homes.

Asian Refugees United, Puri Arts Retreat - Puri Arts' "Just City-Just Land" project uses body knowledge and art creation to hold space for deep reflection on wounds both suffered and inflicted through systemic oppression existing in Oakland's Asian communities.

Just Transition Alliance, UN Climate Conference Preparation Training - Environmental justice activists attended a pre-conference training at OAEC in preparation for the challenging political environment they will face when attending the UN Climate Change Conference 2022 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt.

Center for Environmental Health, Staff Training - CEH protects people from toxic chemicals by working with communities, consumers, workers, government and the private sector to demand and support business practices that are safe for public health and the environment.

INTEGRATED KITCHEN COMPOST SYSTEM

For the hundreds of retreat guests and visitors that come to OAEC each year, one of the most cherished parts of their stay is the incredible food. When groups or volunteers sit down for a meal, they are delighted by the bounty of color, flavor, and delicious organic, seasonal produce from our gardens. This year, our kitchen crew continued to grow with talented new chefs, infusing their rich knowledge of herbalism, wildcrafting, and local foods into OAEC's dining experience. The food at OAEC is also a window into our integrated food system that honors biodiversity, stewardship, seed saving and community.



photo by Tali Aiona

For decades, our chickens, goats, garden hot-heap compost piles and vermiculture (worm) bins were sufficient for processing our kitchen compost. However, as the number of retreat guests eating in our kitchen has grown, it became clear that we needed to find a solution to bring the kitchen and gardens back into balance. This summer, we installed a new aerobic, [continuous-flow composter](#) designed for commercial kitchens. OAEC will be one of the first demonstration sites for this model on the West Coast.

So far, we've been impressed with the results! Over the last four months we've processed around 4,000 pounds (155 5-gal buckets) of food scraps into high-quality, fluffy compost! The constant turning of this technology reduces the decomposition time from approximately nine months to only three to four months, allowing us to accumulate more compost in bulk. This will facilitate the [Mother Garden's](#) transition towards a "no dig" growing approach, which requires adding a thick 2" layer of compost on our beds each year.



Garden Manager Michelle Krieg turning the new composter.



BIG WINS IN SACRAMENTO FOR BEAVER!



Photo from the new [California Department of Fish and Wildlife website](#), which now includes links to the WATER Institute's resources like our publication, "[Beaver in California: Creating a Culture of Stewardship](#)."

After nearly 15 years of OAEC's Bring Back the Beaver Campaign's efforts to gather supporters around the benefits of beaver restoration, we are finally seeing some [major policy shifts](#) happening at the state level! This past year, OAEC's WATER Institute - with the help of Jennifer Fearing of Fearless Advocacy - led a big advocacy push with more than 100 conservation, agricultural, business and tribal partners, **shown below**, who came together to elevate beaver and process-based restoration as key nature-based climate smart solutions. We were thrilled that, in June, the state legislature passed Governor Gavin Newsom's budget proposal, ushering in a new Beaver Restoration Program at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).

This funding will enable CDFW to hire five permanent staff to prioritize beaver restoration projects and create a Beaver Management Plan, including proactive approaches to mitigate human-beaver conflict. After years of outreach and collaboration from OAEC and our allies, we couldn't be more grateful that CDFW is taking this leadership role in creating opportunities for nature's great engineers to thrive again.

Since the launch of this new program, there has been an explosion of news in major media outlets covering the ecological ingenuity of beaver to mitigate drought and other impacts associated with climate change.

Beaver made the front page of [The New York Times](#) and was featured in [The LA Times](#), [The Washington Post](#), [Mother Jones](#), [The Globe and Mail](#) and [The San Francisco Chronicle](#)!

Moving forward, OAEC will continue to collaborate with CDFW as they roll out their new Beaver Restoration Program. We will also continue to promote innovative co-existence strategies and to model restoration solutions - from ridgeline to river to reef - through collaborations with resource agencies, NGOs, landowners and California Tribes. As a co-founder of the newly-launched [California Process-Based Restoration Network](#), OAEC is excited to be working with such stellar partners to carry out this watershed-scale restoration revolution!



WILDLANDS PROGRAM

PARTNERS WITH NORTH BAY JOBS WITH JUSTICE

This year, OAEC and [North Bay Jobs with Justice](#) (NBjwJ) joined forces with workers from their Farmworker Justice Campaign on a number of ecological workforce development projects in fire mitigation and watershed restoration. NBjwJ is a growing, grassroots coalition of over thirty labor and community organizations fighting for economic and racial justice on the frontlines of the climate crisis. In light of increasing wildfires in Sonoma County, NBjwJ has been organizing with landworkers (“trabajadores de la tierra”) to ensure that they are fairly compensated and centralized as leaders whose hard work, heart and expertise make adaptation possible.

For one project, a crew of ten workers completed 41 acres of vegetation management at OAEC, funded by After the Fire and Gold Ridge RCD’s [North Bay Forest Improvement Program](#), while learning about holistic watershed stewardship. Another NBjwJ crew joined us for a wildlife habitat and waterway restoration project, supported by the Schwemm Family Foundation. The crew practiced process-based restoration techniques, reutilizing woody “slash” from fire fuels reduction to treat eroding gullies and reduce sediment downstream in the salmon-spawning waters of Dutch Bill Creek.

OAEC staff offered training in the field and hands-on education in Spanish, while workers shared their experiences working on the land, both here in Sonoma County and in their home communities of Mexico and Central America. One worker, Anayeli Guzman, noted that the collaboration offered “a different way of relating to the land” in contrast to the seasonal grape harvest at vineyards: “Especially for those like myself who work the land for a living, it feels good to be more connected, to actually be caring for the needs of the land.”



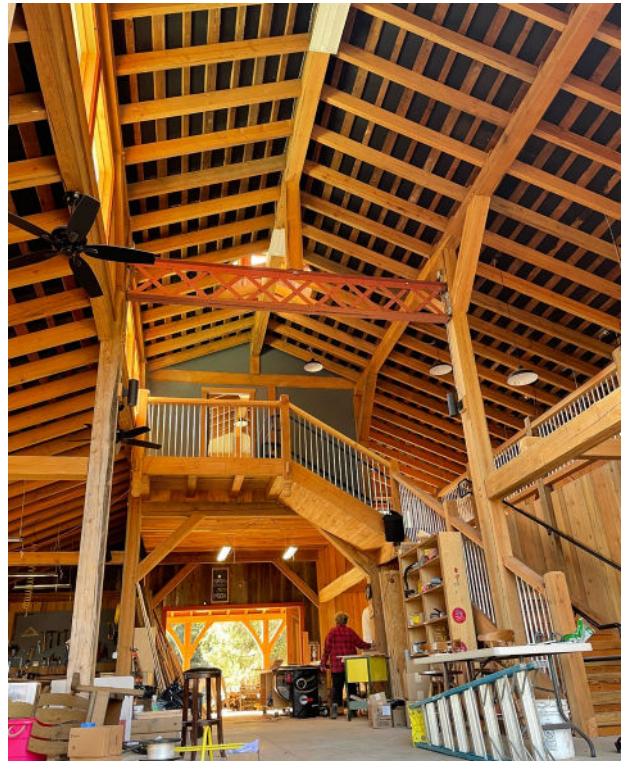
photo by Davida Sotelo Escobedo

Through workforce development opportunities, like this training at OAEC, North Bay Jobs with Justice is organizing with immigrant and Indigenous workers to create just jobs and living-wage career pathways in Sonoma County.

CELEBRATING COMPLETION OF NEW BARN

After a year of construction, we are excited to finally unveil OAEC's amazing new barn! Built in almost the same footprint and design of our old barn, which we lost in a fire in 2020, the recently-finished structure honors the legacy of this beloved space but with a few new bells and whistles.

For the rebuild, OAEC was generously gifted a number of reclaimed Douglas fir posts from the original Transbay Terminal in San Francisco, which we recycled and milled into the beams and rafters. Everything is held together with traditional old-school mortise and tenon joinery without nails or metal fasteners. The build was a special experience for our facilities team and intern cohort to learn the traditional art of timber frame construction and to be a part of such a unique project. We couldn't be happier with the space and can't wait to open the doors back up to our community!



CHAUTAUQUA RETURNS TO THE NORTH GARDEN STAGE



Since 2003, the [Chautauqua Revue](#) has been one of OAEC's most popular community celebrations. This September, after a two year break, revelers once again gathered for this one-of-a-kind variety show. The audience was so eager to return to this annual tradition that tickets sold out within two hours of going on sale! Journalistic theater sensation, Dan Hoyle, who delivered the opening monologue, returned to OAEC in November for a two-night run of his one-man show *Talk to Your People* as a fundraiser for OAEC's Movement Building Fund.

Shown left Chautauqua performer Unique Derique

NURSERY BEAUTY

This year, the Mother Garden Nursery stepped up its outreach in the most gorgeous ways! For years, we've been longing to showcase the award-winning photography of Nursery Manager Doug Gosling - this year we finally implemented an online searchable [plant catalogue](#) and launched the nursery's very own Instagram channel! We also produced a beautiful [promotional video](#) celebrating the Mother Garden's history of seed saving and sharing. Follow us [@oaec_nursery](#)

