



Marshall Webb's Earth Day 2028 Challenge

DEMONSTRATING AND INSPIRING CLIMATE ACTION AT SHELBURNE FARMS

“Our rapidly warming planet, accompanied by the increasing intensity of natural disasters, is telling us that we must act now to save it...What kind of world will we create over the next 50 years, and how will Shelburne Farms most effectively contribute to creating that world?”

— Marshall Webb, Earth Day Musings 2022

A co-founder of the nonprofit at Shelburne Farms in 1972, Marshall Webb worked for over five decades at the farm until his untimely passing in August 2022. Protecting the environment has always been at the core of the organization's mission and for Marshall it was a deep personal commitment. In his last role as Drawdown Coordinator, Marshall was leading the implementation of the Board of Directors' **commitment to make Shelburne Farms carbon negative—capturing more carbon in its trees and soils than its buildings and operations emit**. We are now more determined than ever to meet this Challenge by Earth Day April 22, 2028, which would have been Marshall's 80th birthday.

Meeting the Challenge will involve climate action education, or as Marshall said: “Turning Anxiety into Action”. As a unique educational institution, Shelburne Farms has the responsibility and opportunity to offer transformative learning experiences that will inform and inspire campus visitors,

educators, and young people, weaving in active, hopeful responses to our climate crisis. Our Climate Resiliency Fellowship is just one example, and the reach is amplified with our leadership in global Education for Sustainability networks.

Meeting the Earth Day Challenge—Marshall's last wish for his legacy at Shelburne Farms—is critical to advancing our mission. The farm's land, buildings, and operations must be aligned to the goal, and the learning continually integrated back into campus education programs.

Drawdown: The point in the future when levels of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere stop climbing and start to steadily decline, thereby stopping catastrophic climate change—as quickly, safely, and equitably as possible.



Climate Action at Shelburne Farms

“This is our last act,” Marshall said in a recent talk at Wesleyan University, not just to demonstrate solutions, but to spark the cultural shift required to respond to climate change.

For the confused consumer who is tempted to give up on thinking about necessary life changes, for the teacher who wants to inspire students to be good planetary citizens and introduced to the subject in an age appropriate way, for the farmer who wants to see carbon sequestration in action, Shelburne Farms can be an inspiration.

We are working toward a day when every pound of cheddar cheese is beyond net zero emissions, the pancakes guests eat for breakfast are covered in carbon negative maple syrup, and students, educators and visitors experience buildings that are fossil-fuel-free.

PHASE 1

\$1 MILLION TARGET BY APRIL 22, 2023

Phase 1 is well underway with over \$600,000 raised. Reaching our target will allow us to prioritize, design and develop the overall plan and take several key steps to bring Shelburne Farms to drawdown, including these highlights:

At the dairy: We are experimenting with covering our manure pits with biochar to control greenhouse gas emissions.

In the buildings: We have begun weatherization and converting the farm’s heating supply from oil and propane to renewable fuel systems. In Phase 2 all campus facilities will have a combination of technologies such as heat pumps, solar arrays, and high efficiency stoves using wood from the farm.

In the soil: Anyone who knew Marshall knew of his passion for biochar, which is one way to permanently sequester carbon in soil. We are carrying out an assessment for producing biochar at the farm, including providing heat for buildings.

Through our networks: We are learning with others who are acting on climate at their own farms and campuses, through exchanges and strategic partnerships.

PHASE 2

FUNDRAISING GOAL TO BE SET AFTER PHASE 1 COMPLETED

By Earth Day April 22, 2023, we will share our plans and funding target for the next five years to fully implement specific actions that will make Shelburne Farms carbon-negative by 2028 and enhance and expand our climate education and community engagement programs.

Get Involved!

We’d love to hear from you as we build a community and global network around the Earth Day 2028 Challenge to honor Marshall’s legacy.

Learn more about Climate Action at Shelburne Farms
shelburnefarms.org/about/climate-action, or contact
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To make a charitable contribution:
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