

Long Spoon Collective Overview

Purpose and Vision

The Long Spoon Collective works to create a way of life that meets needs while nourishing the systems that sustain us.

We are responding to the intertwined problems of climate chaos, the economic inequality inherent in our globalized capitalist economic system, ecological devastation, and our spiritual alienation from the other members of earth's community.

We are not sure what the future holds: apocalyptic collapse, a slow decline as fossil fuels dwindle, or business as usual, with a small number of people using up an ever larger portion of the world's resources at the expense of the rest of the planet. Whichever scenario unfolds, we are working towards resilience and the paradigm shift we believe is urgently needed.

We are doing this for future generations so that human beings can learn to thrive without destroying the planet and the creatures on it.

This mission is the heart of what guides our work, but in more immediate, concrete terms, we are building infrastructure that can meet the needs of a large number of people around Saugerties in ways that don't rely on fossil fuels.

We understand that in doing the work of relocalizing our systems of energy, food, transportation, shelter, economic exchange, and health care to prepare for the changes ahead, we need to deepen our perception of our interconnection with all life as well as our sense of connection to the place where we live, the Hudson Valley.

As individuals we work to change our habits; as a community we recognize that what we can accomplish together is exponentially greater than what we can do alone. We believe the power of community can provide the greatest leverage for large-scale societal change.

Strategies

We are using several strategies to establish this non-exploitive, localized infrastructure:

First, we are facilitating a network that shares resources (food, skills, tools, space, etc.). By spending time with interested community members talking, working, and sharing food and fun together, we can then come up with a plan for how we can all work together, creating a cloud of positive activity that helps those involved live more cooperatively and sustainably.

Second, we are working to develop larger plots of land into models of sustainable living. These pieces of land will:

- House and feed a core labor force, a group of individuals committed to working full time to meet the needs of the greater community.
- Act as a “living laboratory,” a center for intense experimentation in sustainable living. We hope to generate knowledge and experience that can be used to help the entire community.
- Provide a central space for educational programming focused on experiential learning to teach children and adults the skills needed to meet needs in ways that nourish the systems that sustain us.

Third, we are disentangling ourselves from the consumer economy that degrades the environment and reduces human interactions to transactional exchange. We’re moving towards a gift economy that asks, “What can I give?” rather than “What can I get?” In line with this strategy we don’t ask for payment for our work or the food we grow.

Long Term Goals

Over the course of the next five years we hope to:

- Establish a new food-growing infrastructure in this area that can provide households with free, organic, food grown without the use of fossil fuels.
- Further develop the network by helping individual households set up and maintain gardens, plant trees, build off grid infrastructure and housing, provide salvaged materials, teach skills, etc.
- Facilitate educational programs throughout the year on the primary plots of land while breaking ground on innovative ways to live more sustainably.

Short Term Goals

This year we are developing 2 plots of land into bases that will support a core labor force. On these sites we plan on:

- Establishing a 1/2 acre garden on each
- Building a processing kitchen, root cellar, and material storage areas
- Building off-grid, 4 season housing for our core members
- Raising chickens & bees
- Setting up a no-fossil fuel wood collection infrastructure

We are also working on other sites to:

- Complete a passive solar, rocket stove heated greenhouse for the upcoming growing season
- Maintain several existing gardens as well as start a new one for our staple crops
- Grow and improve our seed bank
- Continue to maintain a material, tool and labor share infrastructure

Our Foundational Story

An angel appeared to a pious rabbi in his dreams and granted him a wish. The old man decided to see what awaited him in the afterlife, so the angel first took him to Hell. It was a horrifying sight. A huge banquet table stretched out as far as the eye could see, laden with platters of the most delicious, sumptuous food imaginable. Yet the people seated around the table were emaciated and moaning in hunger because they all had long spoons splinted on both arms so they couldn't bend their elbows to eat.

Next the rabbi visited Heaven, where exactly the same scenario was repeated: the long table, the magnificent feast, and the same long spoons strapped to arms of the inhabitants. This time, though, the people were smiling and well nourished, because they were reaching across the table and feeding each other.

This story conveys the spirit of the Long Spoon Collective. Thank you for your interest in our work of building a more resilient and sustainable infrastructure for the children who will inherit our world.