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# Stories from the Homefront 2030

*The promising legacy of the Headwaters Community Food & Water Bill*

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*Working in partnership with nature remains the tried and proven strategy for yielding abundant sources of food and clean water, and nurturing communities*

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## **Leadership: The catalyst that set the direction for where we are today**



Today, communities in rural and urban landscapes across Minnesota are celebrating the success of the great Pollinator Landscape Revival. This is one of several events scheduled throughout the year to acknowledge the strategic victories in the state's campaign to combat and win the climate challenge.

These celebrations are the direct result of leadership decisions taken in 2021. That year months of persistent drought conditions, devastating forest fires combined with unpredictable weather patterns motivated leaders to take action to ensure that communities would be prepared to manage climate emergencies.

Leaders agreed that it was important that every community in Minnesota be prepared to meet the demands of climate together.

No one could control the weather or the changing climate, but it was agreed with a shared vision, good planning and leadership, communities could face the challenge together.

It is impossible to overstate the significance of their decision to combat and win the battle with climate. *This act of faith became a catalyst for everything that followed*- especially the crucial decision to create an economy designed to work in partnership with nature to meet the demands of food, water, and climate.

Working in partnership with nature was not a new concept. In fact, it was a tried and proven strategy for creating abundant sources of food, yielding clean water and nurturing communities with examples dating back thousands of years.

With investments of public dollars from the [Headwaters Community Food and Water Bill \(HF1332/SF1580\)](#), the state launched a robust stewardship economy to employ thousands of people to operate a locally adapted, source to table food web economy and restore native habitats and water systems. Urban and rural community members embraced the opportunities offered by the stewardship economy defined by the set of complementary [Community Care Programs](#).

As those programs began to reshape the landscape, a team of researchers and story tellers reported the defining features of the resilient communities we are celebrating today.

They are featured in **Stories from the Homefront**.



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## Stories from the Homefront

### The Flight of the Bumble Bee

*(with apologies to beloved composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov)*

Of all the remarkable stories in the series, my favorite recounts the revival of pollinator habitats.



In 2021, large regions of the state particularly in rural landscapes pollinators could not find food.

The combination of destruction of native habitats and application of toxic fertilizers and pesticides for industrial crop production had eliminated food sources for pollinators. Consequently, pollinator populations in rural areas declined significantly even as their populations increased in urban areas as small urban gardens became havens for bees and butterflies.

### Pollinator Landscapes Program

The Pollinator Landscapes Program (PLP) launched an ambitious plan to restore habitats and map pollinator activities in every region of the state. Landscaping teams were deployed to work with farmers, and landowners to establish and maintain a network of pollinator habitats. Every habitat was assigned a team including scientists to track and record populations with a mapping program the scientists code-named ‘The Flight of the Bumblebee’.



The records revealed astonishing results. Stories from the field showed that within two seasons of planting, pollinator populations had begun to return to rural landscapes.

Scientists mapping their activities observed the return of other animals as well. In little under a decade, with careful management of the landscapes, the network of ecosystems created by the PLP has transformed millions of acres previously planted for industrial crops with plans in the works for the final remaining acres.

The success of the PLP was possible only because a cohort of farmers came together and agreed to become members of the food web economy created by the [Headwaters Community Food and Water Bill \(HF1332/SF1580\)](#). The significance of their decision to participate and work collaboratively must be noted. Even with the resources to support their decision, it was a big step for farmers to leave industrial production to join the regenerative food web system. Farmers had to form a network and support each other. This proved effective. Farmers and their communities are now connected by the food web economy that provides a living for its members and sustainable

sources of food for rural and urban communities. Public dollars invested in the food web recirculate in the community to its enduring benefit.

### **Farmland Transformed to Healthy Ecosystems**

Collectively, the transformed farms have become a rich habitat for pollinators, food production and carbon sequestration. The transformation of these landscapes is captured in a collection of stunning photographs taken from both a bird's eye view and at ground level. Every beneficial change to soil and water health is recorded and evaluated to meet long term goals.

Landscapes easily identified a decade ago as conventional farms by the endless rows of monocrops now feature a diversity of native plants, trees, and cultivated crops. Freed from dependence on industrial scale production, farmers have been able to offer land to new farmers and farmer cooperatives.



### **Local Capacity Year Round**

While the Pollinator Landscape Program was reshaping former industrial farms, it also offered urban and rural farmers who already cultivated fruits and vegetables and pastured raised meat with resources to increase their capacity to provide food year-round for local communities.

Local farmers now plan to grow crops specifically to be eaten in season and for preservation. Crops designated to be preserved are delivered to urban and rural community kitchens where employees preserve thousands of pounds of local produce for the award-winning “Summer in a Jar” program.



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*Rural and urban communities have established sister cities and counties. These partnerships are mutually beneficial and offer an environment for identifying and meeting immediate and long term needs and prepare for potential emergencies.*

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## Revived Habitats for Pollinators and Communities

With resources provided for the food web economy, farmers have planted pollinator landscapes and added beehives to their operations, hired more employees at a living wage to meet goals for increased production and host onsite research projects.



As the pollinator program revived habitats for a wealth of insects and animals, the dedicated resources have helped revive rural human populations as well. Rural communities are welcoming new members arriving to work in the food web economy.

Our government responded by investing in vital services like clinics, hospitals, childcare and broadband.

Urban communities now employ thousands to operate the food web economy to supply, preserve, prepare, store, research and deliver food in every neighborhood. Rural and urban communities have established sister cities and counties. These partnerships are mutually beneficial and offer an environment for identifying and meeting immediate and long term needs and prepare for potential emergencies.

## Neighborhood Commons

The Neighborhood Commons is a vital destination for purchasing food, offering employment, learning opportunities, and a welcoming environment to gather community.



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*Every story from the home front reveals our collective power to heal our lands and nourish our communities today and for future generations*

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Prior to 2021 sovereign tribal communities in the state began to organize food sovereignty programs and provide rights for nature-including rights for manoomin (wildrice). With public investments provided for the food web economy, they were able to increase their capacity to revive pre-colonial food systems for the benefit of their communities. The traditional knowledge, skills, foods, and methods of preservation generated by indigenous communities have proved invaluable to leaders working in the food web economy.



### **Healing Lands and Nourishing Communities Together**

The Pollinator Landscape Revival is undoubtedly a story of landscape transformation to provide food for pollinators and for people, but it is also a story of communities embracing a promising future and mobilizing to shape that future by caring for one another and their shared home.

Every story from the home front reveals our collective power to heal our lands and nourish our communities today and for future generations.

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In 2021, [MN350 Action](#) created a [campaign to advance the Headwaters Community Food & Water Bill](#) as a just climate solution.