



**GORGE  
GROWN**  
FOOD NETWORK

**GORGE GROWN FOOD NETWORK**  
**IMPACT REPORT**

**2025**



Dear Friends,

This year has tested the resilience of our region's food system. Economic pressures, shifting policies, and climate disruptions have come together to deepen food insecurity across the Gorge. Today, one in three of our neighbors worry about running out of food. Food banks are overwhelmed, farmers face labor shortages and market uncertainties, and vital programs supporting schools, Tribes, and small food businesses have been cut just as demand surges.

At Gorge Grown Food Network, we know these challenges cannot be addressed through any single program or quick fix. That's why we continue to embrace a holistic approach—empowering farmers and food businesses, advancing Tribal Food Sovereignty, expanding access to healthy food, and uniting partners to build a movement for food justice. Through these efforts, we help individuals reclaim agency, connection, and self-determination.

Years ago, when we asked what motivates people to care about local food, one message stood out across our diverse communities: "The Gorge was once self-reliant, and it could be again." Elders shared memories of community root cellars, abundant salmon in the rivers, and traditional ways of preserving food. These stories remind us that a thriving, local food system rooted in community care is not only part of our history - it is the foundation of our future.

Despite the immense challenges this year, I am deeply proud of the accomplishments of our dedicated team and partners, as detailed in the following impact report. Their commitment and creativity have made real progress towards manifesting our vision of a thriving local food system where food is produced with integrity and accessible to all.

Looking ahead, our mission is clear: to build resilience across our region and within Gorge Grown. This work is complex and demanding, but together—with donors, partners, advocates, volunteers, and the communities we serve—we are forging a food system grounded in justice, abundance, and belonging strong enough to not just to endure today's challenges, but to thrive beyond them.

In solidarity,

Sarah Sullivan, Executive Director



# MISSION

Our mission is to build an inclusive, resilient regional food system that improves the health and well-being of our community.

# VISION

We envision a healthy, self-sufficient, vibrant Columbia River Gorge where our food is produced with integrity and is valued, abundant, and accessible to all.

# VALUES

Collaboration · Integrity · Inclusivity  
Innovation · Justice

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a green, unripe fruit on a tree branch. The background is a clear blue sky. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

# OUR WORK

**Our work seeks to impact three key areas in order to build an inclusive, resilient regional food system.**

## **Build the supply of local food**

We must grow enough food locally with environmental and social integrity to meet regional demand. We work to ensure that local producers have access to land, equipment, infrastructure, financing, education, and support they need.

## **Increase access to local food for everyone**

Local food should be available and accessible to all. We work to bring affordable local food to everyone in our community.

## **Mobilize a thriving local food movement**

A regional food system requires leadership, partnership, and advocacy. We convene leaders and advance policies that support inclusive food systems, including land access, tribal food sovereignty, and regenerative farming practices.

# KEY MILESTONES IN 2025



**GORGE GLEANING:** 230 volunteers helped harvest 57,000 pounds of fresh produce that would have gone to waste.



**FOOD SECURITY COALITION:** Partners coordinated a quick emergency response to the pause in SNAP benefits across dozens of agencies.



**FARMERS MARKETS:** Our farmers markets brought \$1.6 million to the local economy.



**CROP TALKS:** 72 people representing 44 businesses or farms attended 6 educational farm tours.



**SNAP & SNAP MATCH:** We harnessed \$140,000 in funding to help families in need to buy food at farmers markets.



**FOOD BUSINESS INCUBATOR:** We provided 20 businesses with mini-grants to overcome barriers to success.



**TRIBAL FOOD SOVEREIGNTY:** We supported collaboration between tribal leaders and land owners to increase access to first foods and stewardship rights.



**FILL YOUR PANTRY:** We coordinated a one-day bulk buying market to bring an extra \$40,000 in sales to local farmers before winter.



**MERCADO DEL VALLE:** We increased vendor participation from 7 in 2024 to 21 in 2025.



**FARMERS MARKETS:** 75% of vendor businesses are owned or co-owned by women.

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## GORGE GLEANING

Through Gorge Gleaning, we harvest fresh fruits and vegetables that would normally go to waste from farms, orchards and backyard fruit trees. The produce we recover with our volunteers is donated to hunger relief groups across the Columbia Gorge.

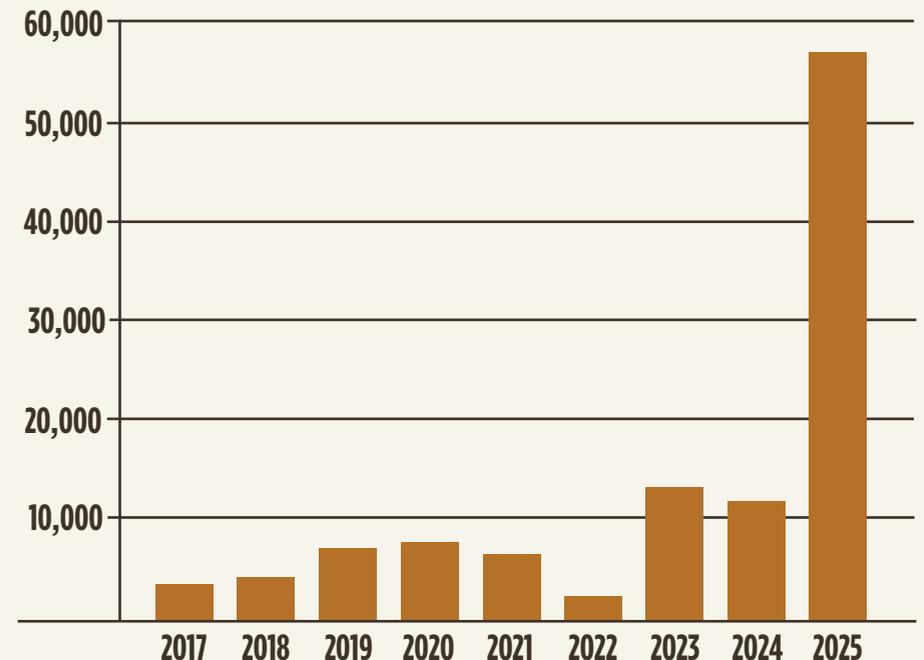


**In 2025 we gleaned more fresh produce than in all previous years combined!**

**57,000+** lbs of food rescued  
**230+** volunteers engaged  
**20,000+** community members served

Recovered produce was distributed across all 5 counties of the Columbia Gorge to organizations like Columbia Gorge Food Bank, Washington Gorge Action Programs, FISH Food Bank, Hood River Valley Adult Center, and Windy River Gleaners. We also shared the bounty of our region with the Warm Springs Reservation and Nutrition Inside, to serve schools and other institutions beyond the Gorge.

**Pounds of Produce Gleaned**



# TRIBAL FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Formed in 2019, the Columbia Gorge Tribal Food Sovereignty Initiative is an Indigenous-led effort—including members of the Warm Springs, Nez Perce, Yakama Nation, and Cayuse/Umatilla Tribes—to restore traditional foodways.

## Key successes include:

- Securing access to traditional lands through partnerships with local land trusts
- Hosting Indigenous-led food preservation workshops
- Integrating tribal food sovereignty into the regional Community Health Improvement Plan
- Supporting Indigenous producers through institutional food procurement, including wild salmon purchases

**"The salmon is sacred to our people. We have been in the Gorge since time immemorial so it has a special meaning."** - Buck Jones



Buck Jones is the Gorge Grown Board President and Co-Chair of the Tribal Food Sovereignty Committee.

Photo From Swanson Studio & Friends of the Columbia Gorge



In 2026, the initiative will engage the Native women-owned consulting firm, Old Growth Solutions, to lead a strategic planning process. This will include gathering community input, facilitating a retreat to deepen solidarity and identify collaborative projects to advance over the next two years.

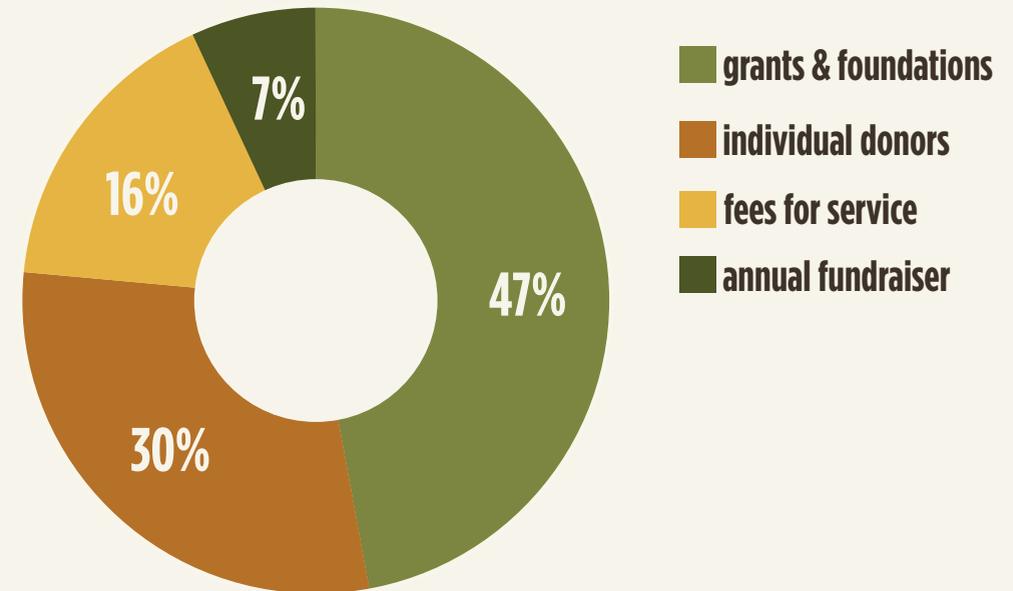
The process will prioritize cultural respect, trust-building, and inclusive decision-making to create a clear, indigenous-driven plan for advancing tribal food sovereignty.

This work is more than food access - it's a powerful reclaiming of culture, resilience, and self-determination to ensure Indigenous communities thrive for generations to come.



# FINANCIAL HEALTH

This year, our work was supported by a diverse mix of revenue sources. The chart below illustrates the balance of income streams that allowed us to sustain programs and respond to community needs.



## CROP TALKS

Crop Talks is a lively, hands-on series of farm-based learning and networking events designed to strengthen connections and peer learning among Columbia Gorge farmers and producers.

Held monthly from April through September, the program drew 72 participants from 48 farms, food businesses, and partner organizations in 2025. Our team coordinates Crop Talks in collaboration with Underwood Conservation District and with support from Oregon State University.

Together, these gatherings bring farmers into fields, orchards, and vineyard rows to exchange knowledge, celebrate regional diversity, and build a stronger, more connected agricultural community across the Gorge's remarkably varied landscapes.

**In 2025, we harnessed over \$140,000 for food-insecure families to buy groceries directly from local farmers through SNAP, SNAP Match, and other food access programs.**

**Make a donation to support our work at [www.gorgegrown.com/donate](http://www.gorgegrown.com/donate).**

Our mission is to build an inclusive,  
resilient regional food system that  
improves the health and well-being  
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**Support our work**  
**[www.gorgegrown.com](http://www.gorgegrown.com)**



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