

Gearing Up for a Tilth Alliance Regional Representatives Network

Kate Nagle-Caraluzzo, Tilth Alliance

We are excited to announce the formation of a regional representative network at Tilth Alliance. This network will serve to strengthen the year-round, grassroots presence of the organization in communities across the state, thereby better serving and supporting Washington's food and farm community.

From the home office in Seattle, staff currently organizes and implements statewide programming including the annual Tilth Conference, Farm Walks, one-day universities, FarmLink, *Tilth Producers Quarterly* and more. While core office staff plays a critical role in bringing all of these programs to life, in a state as large and diverse as Washington it can be a challenge for staff to stay in close touch with the intricacies of our many unique agricultural communities. We nevertheless recognize a strong need for more locally- and regionally-focused activities that foster member-to-member networking, education and information sharing. This summer we are making the move to bring on board eight regional representatives (see map) who can act as catalysts, coordinating activities within and across regions to provide stronger linkages between Tilth Alliance members statewide.

How Will this Work?

First and foremost, regional representatives will be individuals who are immersed in their communities – who know the ins and outs of the farm and food systems of the region and who can help to build and foster the Tilth Alliance community. Not full-time Tilth Alliance staff, regional representatives will be folks who are already fully active and engaged in other ways, who can add networking with the Tilth Alliance community into their existing routine. They will attend events on behalf of Tilth Alliance, coordinate local networking events, and generally increase public awareness of and support for the mission and activities of Tilth Alliance. With their help, staff will be able to create stronger programs better suited to regional priorities. Regional representatives will also be able to engage with a broader segment of the community than the organization has in the past, bringing Tilth Alliance more prominence and relevance regionally, and helping us all to engage more fully in the farm and food system across the state.

We are now accepting applications to fill these vital roles! Do you know someone who might be a perfect fit? Or is that YOU? Head over to tilthalliance.org for more information.

The Regions



Why these regions? With 39 counties spanning a state as diverse as Washington, there are a lot of different ways that regions could be configured, and it wasn't immediately obvious what structure would work best for the Tilth Alliance

community. Do we organize by crops and growing regions? By markets and foodsheds? Do we take into account geographic divides, roads or waterways?

In the end, we arrived at a structure that is primarily based on geographical bounds and population centers, with the hope that this will most readily support the regional representatives' roles traversing and organizing events across their regions. These regions are only a starting point, and we expect to see a natural evolution that reacts to the needs of the communities. All regional events and activities supported by this new network will be open to our community-at-large, and we encourage you to participate whenever and wherever makes the most sense for you!