

Living Energy Farm October 2024 Newsletter

Land Day 2024

We're celebrating our 14th Land Day on November 16, 2024 and you're invited! Festivities start at 2pm. There will be tours, performances, dinner, a corn pit for the kids, a bonfire (weather permitting) and more. See our website for the full schedule and more details. If you haven't been to LEF before, be aware that it's a half mile walk from the parking lot to our house. Come prepared for the weather, and bring a flashlight if you plan to stay until dark.

New Video explains Solar Heating, Cooking and Refrigeration Without Battery Storage

More and more, activists and observers are raising concerns about climate mitigation strategies predicated upon utility scale lithium battery storage. Lithium mines, and other extraction projects related to battery production, are already creating devastating human rights and environmental impacts around the world. At LEF, non-electric storage is a critical part of our microgrid. For years we've been teaching people that batteries are the most expensive and resource-intensive way to store energy. There are much cheaper, lower impact, and more effective ways to store renewable energy, which include thermal mass, insulation, pressurized water, and biogas.

Sam Butler is an organizer and media-maker from the DC area who has been helping us adapt our message to the broader climate movement. He produced [this video](#), which is being released today. It's about using non-electric storage for heating, cooking, refrigeration, and other loads. It includes footage from the DC Microgrids at LEF and Magnolia Collective. Check it out! Please share it with your networks, and watch it through till the end. Watching the video till the end will help it trend on YouTube, which means the video will reach more people.



Feel free to get in touch if you'd be interested in getting involved with media projects or using these appliances/systems. You can contact us at info@livingenergylights, or contact Sam at homes@sambutler.us and (202) 738-1041 for both LEF and media related work.

The Easy Reaper at the World Food Prize Conference in Iowa

As we go to press, the Easy Reaper is on display at the Borlaug International Dialogue in Des Moines Iowa, an event organized by the World Food Prize. This gathering includes heads of state, CEO's, academics, and other leaders in agriculture, international development, and resource management. The University of Missouri's Soybean Innovation Lab is sponsoring our presence at the conference, which aims to "integrate past wisdom, current innovations and the pressing needs of tomorrow, by leveraging agricultural technology to address contemporary challenges." It's a perfect venue for making connections with organizations and government programs that have the resources needed to get the Easy Reaper produced at scale.



Alexis and Kerry Clarke from the Soybean Innovation Lab with the Easy Reaper at the Borlaug Dialog.

Comings and Goings at LEF



Jenny, Chrissy and Harvey. Nika is SO excited to have kids to play with!

We're excited to have a family- Chrissy, Jenny and Harvey- joining us as new members of Living Energy Farm. They're from east Texas, where Chrissy has been homesteading off-the-grid on her family's land. After visiting us last summer, she decided that community was a better fit for her family than homesteading on their own. We're grateful for the new infusion of energy, enthusiasm, and dinosaur knowledge that they bring to LEF.

We're a little sad but also excited that John Milner, who has lived with us for three years, is transitioning to the Bay Branch. The Bay Branch is a forming community in Louisa, co-founded by Carrie (Debbie's sister and ex-LEFer). Their goal is to be off-the-grid with a DC Microgrid, and with John as a co-founder, it's probably going to happen! We're looking forward to helping this exciting new project come to fruition in

the coming years. Thankfully, John is going to stay involved with Living Energy Lights by continuing to help us with technology development, educational programs, and installations in the Caribbean.

Distributing DC Lighting and Charging Kits in North Carolina

Thanks so much to everyone who donated to our [crowdfunder supporting the distribution of DC lighting and charging kits](#) to victims of hurricane Helene. Veronica, who delivered the kits, sent back the following report:



Lucy receiving our kits at Celo Community.

I first visited Lucy (friend of LEF who is a solar installer) at Celo, who took 20 kits to distribute. Holding you in my heart as you and Celo work to recover. After, I went up the mountain to my dear friend Jim's place--- he is the founder of Southern Seed Legacy, and lost his barn/seed storage, and I worked the day with him to save what seeds we could- seeds that he's worked with Cherokee and other mountain folk to collect over the last 40 years, some of which now only exist with Jim. On my out of Burnsville, some leftover debris from road work gave me a flat tire, and I stopped at Fox Country Store, where I met a rescue volunteer--Russ, who is friends with Mel in Celo; Russ's family is in Buladean (which is particularly hard hit) and he was headed there for emergency relief and was able to take 5 kits for that community.

The next day I headed to a mutual aid hub in Haywood County, near a site of particular devastation near Clyde. The Pigeon Community Center, which is in normal times a Black-led youth center, is a central operating facility that's getting aid to the very remote and impassable hollers of the area. Chelsea, who is from this area and a social worker and social justice organizer, had reached out to me asking for any ideas or support for the rural folks out this way. I was able to drop 9 kits directly with her.

Finally, I took supplies and hot meals from the center out to remote areas that were particularly hit. There was a community of mostly Latinx folks in a trailer park by the river that were being supported by the Clyde Christian Fellowship-- their homes were entirely destroyed (some broken apart and still hanging in trees). They were living in tents on the land near where their homes had been. They were in tears with the hope of lights, and conveyed that even in normal times power is not consistent here. They took the remaining 8 kits for the 15 families there, and Chelsea will be following up with them to check in on the kits and their ongoing need/use.



Flood damage at one of the houses that received our kits

Thanks Veronica and everyone else who supported this project. Lucy will be returning to LEF in one week to help with a production run of Roxy Ovens, with the goal to bring cookers and other solar equipment back with her to Western NC. We're excited to see how our technology can continue to help communities in the mountains who clearly need better options for energy security.

*Living Energy Farm is a project to build a demonstration farm, community, and education center in Louisa County that uses no fossil fuels. For more information see our website www.livingenergyfarm.org, or contact us at livingenergyfarm@gmail.com or Living Energy Farm, 1022 Bibb Store Rd, Louisa VA, 23093. Donations to the Living Energy Farm Institute are tax deductible. **To make tax deductible donations, do not go to the Virginia Organizing website, go here instead: <https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/1388125>** Make sure to designate your donation for Living Energy Institute.*