



**SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY
AND AFRICAN AMERICAN
LAND RETENTION NETWORK**



Welcome to October!

Each month, we share stories that connect land, legacy, and the communities who work tirelessly to keep African American landownership strong. From community cook-offs to thought leadership and new podcast episodes, this edition highlights the ways our network continues to cultivate resilience and celebrate heritage. Let's dive in!



Carrying the Legacy Forward

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about what it means to truly plan for the future, not just in a practical sense, but in a way that honors the legacy of those who came before us. For me, that reflection always leads back to Herrington Haven Farm, the land my family has cared for and cherished over the years.

This land holds stories, sacrifices, and dreams, all the things my father worked so hard to preserve. As successors, my family and I carry not just the responsibility of keeping the land, but the deeper calling to nurture it, protect it, and ensure it continues to serve our family and community for years to come.

At SFLR, this mission feels especially personal. We know how critical it is for African American landowners to have the knowledge and tools to safeguard their property and plan for the next generation. Because legacy isn't just about inheritance — it's about intention. It's about ensuring that the baton we pass is strong enough to be carried forward.

Warmly,
Bethaney



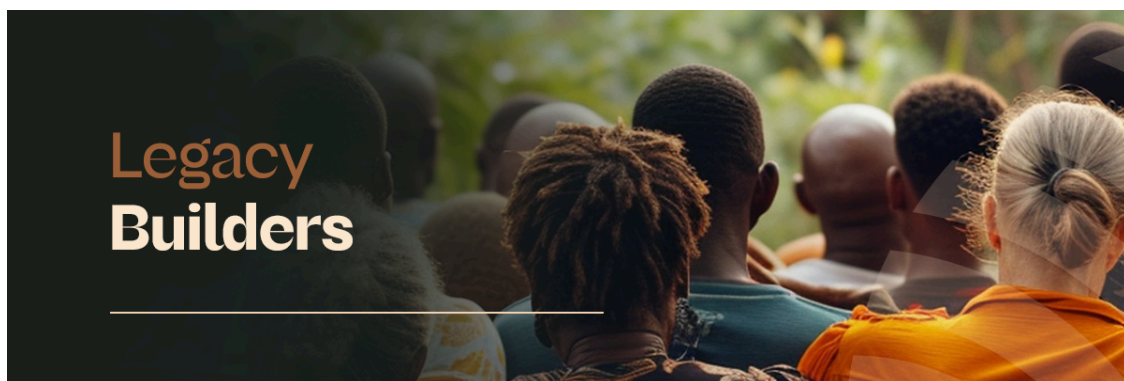
Planning for the Future: Estate Planning Awareness Week

October marks **Estate Planning Awareness Week**, a timely reminder of the importance of preparing for the future.

At SFLR, we know that estate planning goes far beyond paperwork, it's about protecting land, preserving family ties, and ensuring that future generations can continue to build wealth from the legacies passed down to them.

Without clear estate plans, many African American families risk losing their land to heirs' property challenges. That's why SFLR remains committed to providing the education, resources, and support families need to secure what they've worked so hard to build.

Estate planning is one of the most powerful tools we have to honor the past, protect the present, and invest in the future.



Meet SFLR's New Network Coordinator, Diamon Clark

We're excited to welcome Diamon Clark as SFLR's new Network Coordinator!

Diamon brings a wealth of experience and passion to our growing network.

She is an educator, ecologist, and community organizer with a degree in Environmental Science and certification as a Maryland Master Naturalist. For over a decade, she has designed and led environmental education, workforce development, and conservation programs centered on engaging African American youth and adults in Baltimore City.

Her work is rooted in a deep love for nature, a belief in the transformative power of environmental education, and a commitment to helping her community reconnect with the land. Through her efforts, she seeks to nurture and uplift a culture of land stewardship rooted in reciprocity, restoration, and respect for natural resources.

Please join us in giving Diamon a warm welcome to the SFLR family.



Cooking Up Legacy: The Winston County Self-Help Cooperative Host a Collard Green Cook-Off

Recently, the **Winston County Self-Help Cooperative** (WCSHC) hosted its very first *Collard Green Cook-Off*, paired with an engaging health information session. Jamika Leeks, a board-certified nurse practitioner, led a vital discussion on Diabetes awareness, highlighting the risks, prevention strategies, and lifestyle changes that can help protect families and communities. Her message was clear: by making healthier food choices, we can reduce the alarming rates of diabetes in Mississippi—where one in seven residents is affected.

Following the session, the community gathered for the cook-off, where Ms. Shelia and T'arie Todman aka Mama T went head-to-head in a flavorful collard showdown. Both dishes impressed the crowd, but in the end, Mama T took home the win with her savory, smoky turkey-seasoned greens.



The day was about more than food, it was about community, knowledge, and love infused in every bite. Looking ahead, WCSHC has announced that more cooking contests are on the horizon, inviting volunteers to bring their best greens recipes to the table. **Click below to read more.**

[Details on Collard Greens Cook-Off](#)



Highlighting Episode 8 of the Roots to Resilience Titled “Alabama Rising: A Family’s First Step into Farming”

This inspiring episode tells the story of how an accidental discovery sparked a new vision for farming in Alabama. Landowners Sheila Lewis Collins and Donnie Turner, alongside Deron Lacey, executive director at **LRLEAN**, share how they overcame land clearing challenges and leaned on SFLR’s support to begin building a farm that nourishes families and uplifts the region.

It’s a story of resilience, resourcefulness, and the power of community.

Listen now on: [Spotify](#), [Apple Podcast](#) and [Amazon Music](#)

[Learn more about Roots to Resilience Podcast](#)

Events On The Horizon



Arkansas Event: UAPB Small Farm Program

If you're in the Arkansas area, don't miss this exciting opportunity. **The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff's Small Farm Program** (UAPB) is hosting a full-day, hands-on event focused on high tunnel production and soil health management.

Date & Time: October 29, 2025 | 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Location: Lon Mann Cotton Research Station, 8 Lee Rd 214, Marianna, AR 72360

The program will include:

- An introduction to high tunnel production
- Soil health management in tunnels
- A grower resource panel
- Field demonstrations on fall/winter tunnel strategies, drip irrigation installation, and pest management techniques

The event is free of charge, runs all day, and includes lunch.

[Register here](#)

Roanoke Cooperative's 2025 Forest Landowner Conference

Roanoke Cooperative invites landowners to join their annual Forest Landowner Conference, a two-day gathering designed to build knowledge, share resources, and strengthen community connections.

Save the Date: October 22–23, 2025 | Event Center, Rocky Mount, NC

This year's conference will:

- Provide strategies for effective estate planning
- Connect landowners with technical assistance and programs offered by state forestry agencies, USDA, the timber industry, and conservation partners
- Create networking opportunities with fellow landowners and professionals in the field

Event Details:

- No registration fee
- Deadline to register: October 10 at 5 PM
- Limited hotel accommodations available for participants traveling 60+ miles

For questions or reservations, please contact Sherwynn Best or Whitney Jernigan at 252-539-4614.

[Register here](#)

Closing Reflections

Thank you for reading and being part of our SFLR family. Together, we're not just protecting legacies, we're building futures rooted in equity, sustainability, and self-determination.

With gratitude,
The SFLR Team

[Subscribe Here](#)

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