



ORIGINS RECLAIMED, INC.

Theory of Change

A Ten-Year Framework for Regenerative Community Infrastructure
2026 — 2036 and beyond

We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors. We borrow it from our children.

Origins Reclaimed exists to build the infrastructure of a different kind of economy — one organized around abundance, reciprocity, and permanent stewardship of the commons rather than extraction, speculation, and disposability. We are a registered Florida nonprofit operating across Florida, South Carolina, and North Carolina, working at the intersection of land justice, food sovereignty, ecological restoration, and cooperative economics.

This document describes our theory of how change happens, what we are building to make it happen, and what it will take to get there — across a ten-year arc that honors both the urgency of the human need and the biological reality of the systems we are cultivating.

The Problem We Are Solving

Across the United States, the basic necessities of a dignified life — stable housing, nutritious food, clean water, healthy land — have been progressively enclosed within market systems that price them beyond reach for a growing majority of people. This is not an accident of scarcity. It is the predictable result of treating commons as commodities.

Housing costs in Florida have increased by more than 50% since 2020, driven not by population need but by speculative investment. Agricultural land is being consumed by development at rates that outpace any realistic restoration timeline. Food deserts persist in communities surrounded by land that could grow abundance. Small farmers who want to transition away from chemical-dependent conventional agriculture lack the

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practical support to do so without financial ruin. Pollinator populations, whose ecological labor underlies all food production, are collapsing under the pressure of monoculture and pesticide regimes.

These are not separate problems. They share a common root: an economic framework that values land and living systems for what can be extracted from them rather than for what they sustain. The consequences cascade — from soil health to community health, from individual housing precarity to generational wealth gaps, from ecological fragmentation to the loss of the knowledge systems that once maintained abundance without depletion.

What is needed is not charity directed at the symptoms. What is needed is infrastructure that addresses the structure — permanent, replicable, community-governed systems that restore the relationship between people and land on fundamentally different terms.

The Biological Imperative for Immediate Investment

A food forest planted in 2026 feeds communities in 2036. The same forest planted in 2028 feeds them in 2038. Ecological compounding means early investment carries disproportionate long-term return — and every year of delay is a year added permanently to the back end of the maturation curve.

Origins Reclaimed's model is grounded in syntropic agroforestry — succession-based, biomass-driven food production that mirrors the structural logic of natural forest systems. This is among the most productive, resilient, and regenerative food production methodologies available, particularly in Florida's climate. It is also, by biological necessity, a long-term investment.

Syntropic food forests mature across distinct phases. Pioneer and nitrogen-fixing species establish soil biology in Years 1-3. Sub-canopy fruit and nut species begin producing in Years 3-5. Upper canopy closes and system self-regulation increases through Years 6-8. Peak early productivity arrives in Years 9-15, with mature systems continuing to increase in abundance and ecological complexity for decades beyond.

This timeline is not a weakness to be minimized. It is the argument for urgency. Organizations and communities that invest now in syntropic land systems will be harvesting abundance — measurable, documented, replicable abundance — while those who waited are still in their pioneer phase. The compounding logic of ecological

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systems rewards early commitment in exactly the way that extractive financial systems reward early capital. Origins Reclaimed is asking funders to plant trees whose shade and fruit will outlast any single grant cycle, and to understand that this permanence is precisely what makes the investment matter.

Our Theory of Change

Structural problems require structural solutions. We build the infrastructure of a different economy at the scale where it can be demonstrated, then replicate it at the scale where it can matter.

Origins Reclaimed operates on a straightforward theory: lasting systemic change begins with demonstrated alternatives, not with advocacy for abstract ideals. The most powerful argument for a different way of organizing land, food, and community is a place where it already works — where people are housed affordably and permanently, where food is grown regeneratively and distributed cooperatively, where ecological health and community health reinforce each other, and where the governance is genuinely democratic.

Our theory has four interlocking premises:

- Demonstration precedes replication. A working model at community scale is more persuasive to funders, policymakers, and neighboring communities than any proposal, however well-argued. We build demonstration sites first, document their outcomes rigorously, and then invest in making those models forkable.
- Integration multiplies impact. Housing permanence, food sovereignty, ecological restoration, and cooperative economics are not separate program areas — they are dimensions of the same transformation. A community land trust that also grows food, protects pollinators, and is governed cooperatively by its residents creates outcomes that no single-focus intervention can produce.
- Replication requires connective tissue. The reason most successful community initiatives remain isolated is that the knowledge, governance structures, legal templates, and organizational relationships that made them work are not packaged for transfer. Origins Reclaimed treats replication infrastructure as a core deliverable, not an afterthought.
- Self-sufficiency is a design requirement, not an aspiration. A movement that depends indefinitely on philanthropic goodwill has not solved the problem. Our

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model is designed from the outset so that cooperative economic activity on trust land generates the revenue that sustains and expands the work — transitioning from grant dependency to genuine organizational resilience across the ten-year arc.

What We Are Building

Origins Reclaimed's program model integrates seven interdependent tracks, each of which addresses a distinct dimension of the commons restoration challenge while reinforcing the others.

1. Community Land Trusts for Housing Equity

Community land trusts permanently remove residential land from speculative markets by placing it in nonprofit stewardship under long-term ground leases. Residents purchase homes — building equity and stability — while the trust retains land ownership, ensuring permanent affordability for successive generations of residents. We are developing CLT housing frameworks modeled on established precedents including the Burlington Community Land Trust and Florida's own Bright Community Trust, adapted for the specific housing pressures of our target communities in North Central and Central Florida.

2. Conservation Land Trusts and Pollinator Corridors

We pursue conservation land trust designations for ecologically significant parcels, with particular emphasis on creating and connecting pollinator habitat corridors across fragmented agricultural and suburban landscapes. Florida's native pollinator populations are under severe pressure; their recovery is inseparable from the food system resilience we are building. We are developing partnerships with Alachua Conservation Trust and pursuing USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service funding channels for this work.

3. Syntropic Food Forestry Demonstration Sites

Syntropic agroforestry represents one of the most promising pathways to soil restoration and food abundance available in Florida's climate. We are establishing demonstration sites in partnership with the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, documenting outcomes with academic rigor across the full maturation arc,

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and publishing results as open-source replication resources for communities across the state and region.

4. Suburban Landscape Conversion

Florida's existing Florida-Friendly Landscaping statute limits HOA authority over native and water-conserving plantings — a legal foundation that Origins Reclaimed is leveraging to partner with HOA communities, institutional campuses, schools, hospitals, and faith communities to convert conventional lawn-dominated landscapes into productive syntropic systems. Each conversion is simultaneously a demonstration, a food production site, and a community education opportunity.

5. Small Farmer Transition to Regenerative Practice

Many small and mid-scale Florida farmers recognize the unsustainability of input-dependent conventional agriculture but lack practical support to transition without financial risk. Origins Reclaimed is developing peer-based transition cohorts — connecting farmers undertaking regenerative transitions with each other, with agronomic knowledge, and with cooperative market access — in partnership with UF/IFAS extension infrastructure already trusted by farming communities across every Florida county.

6. Cooperative Distribution Networks

Food sovereignty requires not only production but distribution. We are developing cooperative distribution infrastructure that connects syntropic producers — from demonstration sites to transitioning small farms to converted suburban gardens — with food desert communities, institutional buyers, and cooperative retail outlets. The cooperative structure ensures that the value generated by distribution flows back to producers and communities rather than to extractive intermediaries.

7. Whole Health Community Systems

Underlying all six program tracks is a commitment to whole health — the understanding that housing stability, food access, ecological connection, economic participation, and community governance are not separate dimensions of wellbeing but inseparable ones. Origins Reclaimed's model is designed to address all of them in relationship, creating communities where health is the default condition rather than a resource that must be individually purchased.

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Organizational Model: The Nonprofit-Cooperative Federation

Origins Reclaimed operates as a nonprofit land steward whose primary function is to hold land permanently in trust and provide the governance infrastructure, legal templates, and institutional relationships that allow cooperative economic activity to flourish on that land. The nonprofit and the cooperatives it incubates are distinct legal entities with complementary functions.

How the model works:

Origins Reclaimed (nonprofit) holds land in permanent trust, provides governance frameworks, secures institutional partnerships, and administers grant funding.

Cooperative entities — housing cooperatives, food production cooperatives, distribution cooperatives — are organized as separate democratic member-owned organizations that lease land from the trust under long-term agreements.

Cooperative revenue covers operational costs for both the cooperatives and, increasingly, the nonprofit itself — funding the replication and expansion of the model without indefinite grant dependency.

The result is a federated structure in which permanent land stewardship and democratic cooperative economics reinforce each other — the land secures the cooperatives, and the cooperatives sustain the land trust.

This model draws on proven precedents: the Mondragon cooperative federation in the Basque Country, the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative in Boston, the Burlington Community Land Trust, and the Bay Area worker cooperative ecosystem — all of which demonstrate that cooperative economics on stable land produces outcomes that neither market nor charity alone can achieve.

Phase 1: The Three-Node Demonstration Model

Origins Reclaimed's board of directors is distributed across three states — Florida, South Carolina, and North Carolina — a geographic structure we are activating as a strategic asset. Phase 1 activates one founding demonstration nucleus in each state simultaneously, creating a multi-site proof of concept that demonstrates replicability

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across different climates, regulatory environments, and community contexts from the outset.

Three simultaneous nodes rather than one sequential rollout serves several strategic purposes: it proves replicability before replication is claimed, distributes organizational risk, generates comparative ecological data across climate and soil contexts, and demonstrates multi-state capacity to funders evaluating national program potential.

The Florida node, anchored in North Central Florida in the Alachua-Marion County corridor, is the organizational home and most developed. It prioritizes the UF/IFAS research partnership, the CLT housing framework, and syntropic food forestry demonstration in a region experiencing acute housing pressure and significant available agricultural land. The South Carolina and North Carolina nodes will be developed by their respective board members in partnership with local allied organizations, adapting the core model to local conditions while contributing to the shared replication toolkit.

Ten-Year Roadmap

The following roadmap integrates ecological and organizational milestones, recognizing that the biological and institutional timelines are inseparable. Funding secured now determines when communities begin eating from these systems — and that calculation is not recoverable.

| Phase | Timeline | Ecological milestones | Organizational milestones | Capital required |
|------------------------|-----------|---|--|---|
| 1: Root Setting | Years 1–2 | Land secured and assessed. Pioneer species, nitrogen fixers, and ground covers planted. Soil remediation underway. Pollinator habitat corridors designed and initial plantings established. | Governance finalized. Three-node activation. UF/IFAS research partnership established. CLT legal framework drafted. First farmer transition cohort enrolled. Institutional partnerships with Alachua Conservation Trust and FL CLT Institute formalized. | \$150,000 — land access, legal infrastructure, node coordination, research partnership setup, pioneer plantings |

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| 2: First Canopy | Years 3–5 | Shrub and sub-canopy layers establishing. First harvests from pioneer and fast-producing species. Soil biology measurably improving. Pollinator corridor connectivity demonstrated. Farmer transition plots completing first full regenerative cycles. | First CLT housing unit complete and occupied. First cooperative entity legally formed and operating. Replication toolkit in first draft. Suburban conversion partnerships active in at least two HOA or institutional communities. Cooperative revenue beginning. | \$400,000 — land acquisition or long-term lease, cooperative formation, housing development, farmer support program, suburban conversion pilots |
| 3: Canopy Closure | Years 6–8 | Upper canopy closing. Food forest system approaching ecological self-regulation. Biomass accumulation accelerating soil regeneration. Diversity and yield increasing annually. Documented outcomes publishable as peer-reviewed research. | Additional nodes replicating across three states. Cooperative revenue covering 50%+ of operational costs. Replication toolkit published as open-source resource. Model adopted by allied organizations in at least two additional states. Endowment seeding begins. | \$800,000 — replication support, additional land, cooperative capitalization, communications and open-source toolkit development |
| 4: Early Abundance | Years 9–10 | Food forest entering peak early productivity. Multiple canopy layers producing simultaneously. Ecosystem services — carbon sequestration, water retention, biodiversity — fully measurable and documented. Model providing irrefutable proof of concept. | Federated cooperative structure self-sustaining at 80%+ cost recovery. Six or more nodes active. Organizational endowment established. Origins Reclaimed functioning as national replication resource for integrated CLT-cooperative-syntropic model. | \$500,000 bridge — transition from grant dependency to cooperative revenue, endowment capitalization |

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| Horizon: Peak Productivity | Years 10–20+ | Mature syntropic food forest systems at full productive capacity. Self-sustaining ecological abundance requiring minimal inputs. Permanent community food sovereignty established on trust land in perpetuity. | Origins Reclaimed's founding investment fully expressed. Communities permanently housed, fed, and ecologically connected. The model's long arc vindicated — and still producing. | Self-sustaining cooperative revenue. Grant funding transitioning entirely to replication support for new communities. |
|---|-----------------|--|--|---|

Total capital requirements across the full ten-year arc are approximately \$1.85 million in philanthropic and grant funding, with cooperative revenue beginning to offset operational costs meaningfully in Year 4 and covering 80% or more by Year 10. This trajectory is modeled on comparable cooperative-CLT federations that achieved operational self-sufficiency within seven to ten years of founding.

Beyond Year 10, the model is designed to be self-sustaining through cooperative revenue, with Origins Reclaimed functioning primarily as a replication resource and governance backbone for an expanding federation of community-governed land and food systems.

Partnership and Funding Strategy

Origins Reclaimed's funding strategy is deliberately diversified across five channels to reduce dependency on any single source and to match each channel's strengths to the appropriate program area.

Federal and USDA Grants

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program funding is the primary target for conservation land trust and pollinator corridor work. USDA Rural Development cooperative development grants support cooperative formation and capitalization. We are positioning for the 2027 RCPP cycle through our developing partnership with Alachua Conservation Trust, who administers existing NRCS grants in our target geography.

Florida State Programs

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Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services programs support farmer transition and agroforestry demonstration work. Florida Housing Finance Corporation affordable housing programs support CLT housing development. The Florida Community Land Trust Institute provides governance resources and funder introductions specific to the state context.

National Foundations

Mission-aligned national foundations whose program areas intersect with Origins Reclaimed's integrated model include Chorus Foundation (economic democracy), Kresge Foundation (community development and food systems), Surdna Foundation (sustainable environments and strong local economies), and Patagonia Environmental Grants (conservation and regenerative agriculture). Our integrated model — which cuts across program silos that most foundations fund separately — is positioned as a distinctive opportunity for funders seeking cross-cutting systems impact.

Cooperative Development Capital

The National Cooperative Bank, the Shared Capital Cooperative, and the Cooperative Fund of New England all provide below-market financing for cooperative formation and capitalization. These are patient capital partners whose interests align with our cooperative development track and whose relationships we will cultivate through Year 2 in preparation for Phase 3 cooperative capitalization needs.

Individual Major Donors and Land Donors

Individuals whose resources, values, and connection to land align with Origins Reclaimed's mission represent a cultivation priority, particularly for land donation. A single donated parcel of modest acreage in the North Central Florida corridor could eliminate a significant portion of the Phase 1 capital requirement and accelerate the entire ecological timeline — compressing years from the maturation curve and beginning the biological clock immediately. We are developing a dedicated land donor program as a distinct strand of our development strategy.

Measuring What Matters

Origins Reclaimed is committed to rigorous outcome documentation — both because the UF/IFAS research partnership requires it and because replication depends on it. Our evaluation framework measures across four dimensions:

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- Land health: soil organic matter, water retention, biodiversity indices, pollinator population indicators, and chemical input reduction on transitioning farm parcels — tracked annually against baseline measurements established at first planting.
- Community health: housing stability and affordability for CLT residents, food access improvements in served communities, economic participation in cooperative enterprises, and resident-reported wellbeing.
- Economic sustainability: cooperative revenue generation, cost recovery ratios, member equity accumulation, and the trajectory toward operational self-sufficiency across the ten-year arc.
- Replication: number of additional nodes in development, organizations adopting our governance templates, and communities engaged with our open-source toolkit across the expanding federation.

Annual impact reports will be published publicly on originsreclaimed.org and shared with all funders and partners. We treat transparency not as a compliance requirement but as a core expression of the cooperative values we are modeling.

Why Origins Reclaimed, Why Now

The conditions that made the extractive land economy seem permanent and inevitable are visibly fraying. Housing unaffordability has reached a political threshold where even conventional institutions are looking for structural alternatives. The ecological costs of industrial agriculture are no longer deniable. The cooperative and commons governance traditions that offer the most durable alternatives have decades of proof behind them and are ready to scale.

What has been missing is not the vision, the precedent, or even the will. What has been missing is the connective tissue — organizations capable of integrating the housing permanence, food sovereignty, ecological restoration, and cooperative economics threads into a coherent model and making that model replicable at speed.

Origins Reclaimed is built to be that connective tissue. We are six months old, legally constituted, governed by a board spanning three states, and already in conversation with the institutional partners whose collaboration will accelerate our work. We are building from a foundation of genuine organizational credibility toward a demonstration that can change what seems possible.

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And we are asking for investment now — not because the vision is urgent in the abstract, but because the trees we plant this year will be feeding communities in a decade, and the trees we do not plant this year never will.

This is infrastructure for freedom — built to last, designed to replicate, and rooted in the conviction that the commons, properly governed, is the most abundant and resilient economic form humans have ever known.

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