



ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



**FOUNDED BY THE
HANNAH GRIMES CENTER
FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP
AND THE KEENE SENTINEL**

Thank You for Supporting Rural Communities

Dear Radically Rural Community,

In 2018, the Hannah Grimes Center for Entrepreneurship and The Keene Sentinel first worked together to organize the Radically Rural Summit. The idea stemmed from CONNECT, an annual gathering of key supporters and graduates of Hannah Grimes programming that started 16 years ago; it's still a key part of our summit. The event reflected the radical power of simply bringing people together to “the common”; a place where those who were spread out doing innovative work could shape and share ideas.


Five years later, we now have year-round programming and an incredibly powerful and agile network of rural doers, thinkers, and supporters from all over the United States and beyond.

People often ask me, “Who is Radically Rural for?” It’s been hard to answer, but it came to me during a recent interview with a reporter: it’s for those of us whose heart rate goes up a bit when we hear about a need in our community or with a neighbor - and we can fill that need.

Here at Radically Rural, everything we do is driven by the deep desire to see all of us thrive. We know our experiences are connected and that when one of us succeeds, it benefits us all. Rural areas are the lungs of America and will be necessary to pioneer a way forward to keep our world sustainable, for the good of all.

In our 2022 keynote, our keynote speaker Chloe Maxmin challenged us that “kindness is the most radical way forward.” We agree and can’t wait to see where the next year of radically rural living brings us.

In reciprocity,



Julianna Dodson
Radically Rural Director

Mission & Vision

Mission:

Radically Rural builds powerful networks of passionate, engaged, innovative people willing to share ideas and resources and take action to strengthen their small communities across the country.



Vision:

Rural communities across the country will be working in harmony with the land and each other, creating vibrant and inviting communities through pragmatic, bold and innovative solutions to social, political and environmental problems. They will be highly valued for their aggregate contributions to our world and will feel pride in what makes them great.



Values

Positive Deviance: We find those who have identified unique and replicable solutions to the problems facing small communities and then elevate what is working.

Innovation: We foster innovation by creating an environment that is ripe for ideas to grow. Our annual summit and year-round experiences are unforgettable. They generate energy, excitement, and exposure to new ideas in order to keep rural communities on the cutting-edge.

The Common: Historically a public gathering space, we want Radically Rural to be a common platform through which rural people of all kinds can work together and engage in a free exchange of ideas—where “all flourishing is mutual” – Robin Wall Kimmerer.

History: We value the ideas, cultures, and dreams that came before and have nourished our rural realities today. We also acknowledge the history of inequities and oppression that brought us to today. Valuing our history helps us move into the future in a more radical way.

Genuine Inclusivity: We know that accurate representation of rural means diverse representation; our work is far more relevant and impactful when we bring all rural voices to the table.

Rural Empowerment: We know that each individual community has expert knowledge of both their needs and what makes them great; we strive to provide resources and connections to empower them.

Conscientiousness: We put great care into every aspect of our work. We strive to be intentional about how we handle all aspects of our work, including our relationships, funding, support, and time.

Reciprocity: Bringing balance and reciprocity to our relationships with the earth is what we know will bring lasting change. Rural communities are the sustainable communities of the future, and we will exhibit leadership in this new way forward.



The Team



Pictured from left to right:

Mary Ann Kristiansen (Co-founder)

Eileen Sarson (Volunteer Coordinator)

Emma Armstrong (Planning Team)

Talee Messenger (Connect Event Planner)

Julianna Dodson (Director)

Kitty Jerome (Planning Team)

Lillian Chase (Program Assistant)

Not pictured:

Terry Williams (Co-founder)

Julie Schoelzel (Planning Team)

Evgenia Eremina (Marketing & Tech Coordinator)

The Tracks



Track Leader: Terry Williams, The Keene Sentinel

Sessions focused on how news organizations can better serve communities that are split politically, innovative coverage of cops and courts, and ideas to make a better journalist.

Overall track rating: 8.5/10

"I got some great ideas for the reporting class I teach as well as some research ideas."



Track Leader: Sara Powell, Hannah Grimes Center & Chris Harris, Kansas Leadership Center

Sessions focused on how policy and adaptive leadership contribute to vibrant ecosystems

Overall track rating: 8.9/10

"LOVED how interactive it was- more sessions like these in the future please."



Track Leader: Todd Horner, Southwest Regional Planning Commission

Sessions focused on the walkability of small towns and the strengthening of communities.

Overall track rating: 8.6/10

"Best session I've attended at any conference. Bright, witty, and so full of practical solutions that can be implemented anywhere."



Track Leader: Julia Johnston, ChildKind International

Sessions focused on behavioral health, and the impact of housing on healthy communities.

Overall track rating: 8.8/10

"Gosh it was life changing. I am on fire to share what I learned. The panel was so compassionate, knowledgeable, and curious. Very impactful."



Track Leader: Rob Werner, League of Conservation Voters

Sessions focused on clean energy infrastructure, youth activism, and federal climate solutions.

Overall track rating: 7.2/10

"I appreciated hearing about a lot of the new federal resources coming down the line."



Track Leader: Bennee Hershon & Amanda Littleton, Cheshire County Conservation District

Sessions focused on grain sheds, youth activism, and inclusive outdoor recreation.

Overall track rating: 8.6/10

"LOVED the content - so important!"



Track Leader: Jessica Gelter, Arts Alive

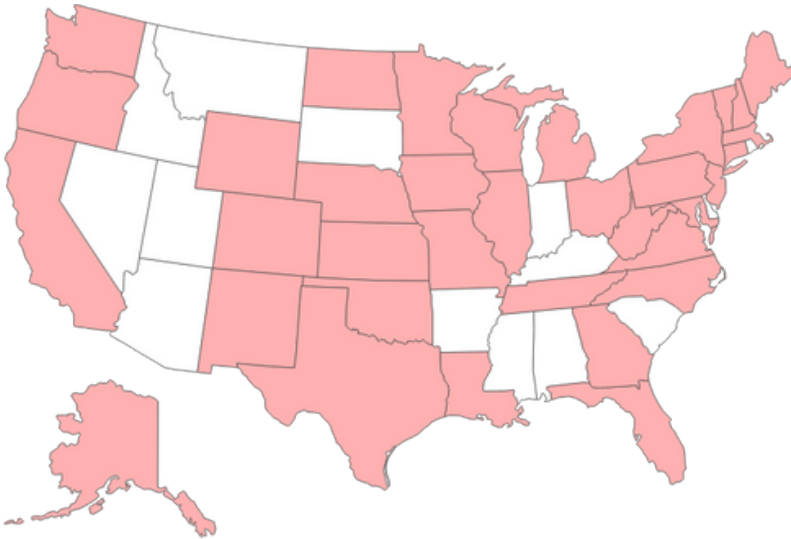
Sessions focused on rural design, BIPOC arts & culture communities, and songwriting.

Overall track rating: 8.3/10

"Wonderful eye-opening ways to authentically use data driven decisions to open up equitable pathways."

Our Reach

Over the past five years, Radically Rural has welcomed attendees from 48 states



In 2022, 569 people from 35 states plus DC & Canada attended Radically Rural's Annual Summit.

This year, Radically Rural expanded with year-round virtual programming, reaching even more rural folks! Radically Rural hosted nine virtual roundtables with eight partner organizations and more than 200 attendees.

Topics Included:

Growing Rural Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

Engaging Everyone: Accessibility as Sustainability

Rural Childcare

Welcoming and Supporting Newcomers to America in your Rural Community

PitchFork: A Fun, Friendly, Free Pitch Model

Open Mic Rural Story Hour

Discovering the Heart & Soul of Communities

Business Lab: A Freely Shared Business Model

Average Rating of the Roundtables this Year: 9/10

The Stats

50+ meetings with rural individuals from all over the country, connecting folks to resources, networks, and more

Seven in-person roundtable conversations at the annual summit

At least 12 mentions in the press

Two freely distributed guides for rural entrepreneurship

17 full-length hybrid sessions with over 80 speakers

Nine Livability SLAM presentations sharing models that are working in rural communities

12 monthly challenges shared on our newsletter & social media

Attendees rated the 2022 RR summit 9/10 overall

Special Projects



This year, Radically Rural worked with MONIFF to encourage national attendance at both events, including sponsorship of three independent films.

Song of Salt: An immersive glimpse into an isolated mining town on the outskirts of Death Valley

Rural Runners: A short film about RR's keynote speaker, Chloe Maxmin, and her bid to be the youngest woman in the Maine house of representatives.

Those People: A documentary film produced by Community Journalism track speaker, Peter Huoppi, about the New London Talent Show.

This year, Radically Rural took a special interest in fibershed, including sponsoring a local discussion about the community movement for local fiber organized by Mary Ewell of Locally Dressed and hosted at Stonewall Farm.



Radically Rural also organized a fibershed fashion show at the annual CONNECT dinner, where attendees were able to learn about the fibershed movement, talk to sustainable fashion experts, and see some of the clothes that make up this movement.



Special Projects Continued



Every year Radically Rural partners with Franklin Pierce's Fitzwater Center for Communication on news coverage of the summit.

Journalism students attend Radically Rural and produce news coverage of the first day's programs and activities. About a dozen student journalists cover all main and track sessions with stories and photos, compiling the entire content for a special newspaper that is distributed to all readers of The Keene Sentinel and attendees. Keynote speaker, Chloe Maxmin, was among those profiled.



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