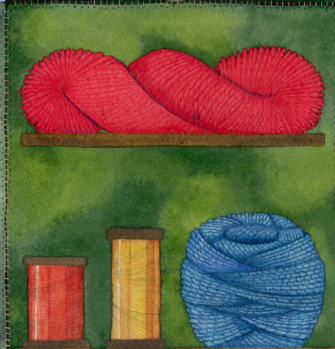
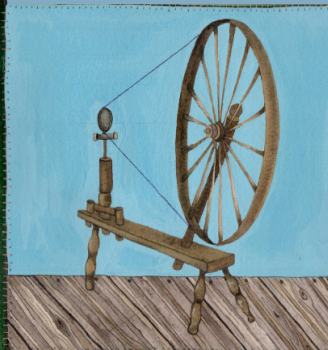




2023
Round
Table

SATURDAY,
MAY 20
8:30AM-4:30PM

SANBORN MILLS
FARM
7097 SANBORN RD.
LOUDON, NH



Artwork by Jenn Merrill

J. Merrill

NNE Fibershed Round Table and Design Challenge Micro Grant Final Reporting

Summary

The Northern New England Fibershed received the 2023 Microgrant from Fibershed Headquarters in order to implement a Round Table and Design Challenge within our region. The Round Table took place on May 20th at Sanborn Mills Farm in Loudon, New Hampshire which is the traditional ancestral homeland of the Abenaki, Pennacook and Wabanaki Peoples past and present. Lea Rossignol, Molly Bollick and Sara Goodman were the leads on this project but the help of the NNEF advisory board, which has over 30 members, was integral in the successful outcome of the event.

Within our fibershed, which includes Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont, there are many individuals and businesses who are interested in the work of our fibershed. The Round Table event was our way of bridging the gap between these individuals and businesses acting as a networking hub for the region. The goal of the Round Table was to help answer the question “how can we help?” to the farmers, the makers, the mills, and the individuals and businesses that support our regional fibershed. We hoped to be able to find gaps in infrastructure as well as the opportunities and challenges we face as a Fibershed within Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. Throughout our first year as an official Fibershed affiliate we identified specific topics that may be of interest to our community and we set out to address these topics in 8 different breakout sessions throughout the day. During the Round Table we announced our first design challenge which we are still currently accepting applications for. The goal of this design challenge is to allow individuals to create lasting relationships with their regional fibershed peers as well as use the power of storytelling to highlight the challenges and opportunities of creating a garment using only regional materials . We are welcoming individuals and collaborators to participate in a design challenge that includes wearable items, home goods and industrial uses for regional fiber. We hope this will allow folks to think outside the box in terms of what we believe to be the end use for our regional textiles. We plan to have a runway show at the culmination of the year-long challenge as well as a wandering art exhibit that will move from various art galleries throughout the tri-state region. We believe this will not only be a great way to connect and uplift our regional fibershed enthusiasts but also potentially engage a wider audience that

may not be particularly interested in regional textiles for clothing use. In addition we hope that by moving the submissions to various different art galleries throughout our regional fibershed we will be able to educate our communities about the opportunities and benefits of a regional textile economy.



Process

We started planning the Round Table in earnest in early 2022, even before we received the microgrant. The original date for the Round Table was supposed to be November 12th, 2022. In August we realized we still had a lot of work to do and decided to postpone until May of 2023. This was probably the best decision since we had really underestimated the amount of planning that would need to go into such an event. The above photo shows the volunteer advisory board RoundTable planning meeting we had at Sanborn Mills Farm on November 12th. This was the first time some of us had met in person after two years of zoom meetings. In September of 2022 we had most of our breakout sessions planned with about 2-3 individuals responsible for each session. The final breakout sessions were a Northern New England Mill Panel, Regional Textiles: Connecting Fiber Farmers to Local Name Brands, A Northern New England Producer Panel, The Future of Bast Fibers in New England, Animal Health, Fiber Quality, Skirting and Shearing, Young Fiber Farmers: Sustaining Local Wool Production, Collaborating & Supporting Craft Schools in New England, and Waste: Wool, Water, Textiles. Each breakout session

committee then went to work recruiting individuals and businesses for their panels and speakers for the sessions. We had representation from all three states throughout the event as well as some people from neighboring fibershed including the Southeast New England Fibershed (Amy Dufault) and NY Textile Lab (Laura Sansone). We had three sessions that had zoom components that we had to organize tech for which luckily went smoothly. We had a finance committee that came up with a great plan to get sponsors for the event to supplement any costs that the microgrant was not able to cover. This endeavor was very successful and we ended up raising over \$4000 in sponsorships. There were different sponsor levels that each came with different sets of perks. See addendum 1 for details. We also had a graphic design committee that helped to create the day's program which was given to each participant upon entry. See addendum 2 to view the program. Participants were also given three raffle tickets to place in jars for different raffle prizes that were donated by local craftspeople and businesses. The raffle tickets were used to create a fun networking game where you had to write the name of someone new you met on the back in order to use them. We had about 11 volunteers stay in the dorms at Sanborn Mills Farm on Friday evening where we were able to enjoy dinner together and figure out some last minute details. Each breakout session had a timekeeper, a video recorder and a moderator or two depending on the session. Sanborn Mills Farm's Chef, Kelly Fahey, made a delicious farm to table meal which was served in the middle of the day and allowed participants to have rich and engaging conversations about regional fiber systems. The volunteer advisory board spent a total of 9 months meeting twice a month on zoom for 1 hour each to plan the event, totaling 18 hours. Lea Rossignol also put in an approximate additional 40 hours of planning and Sara Goodman another 15 hours (both paid by Sanborn Mills Farm). The cost breakdown can be seen in addendum 3.



Round Table Audience

Project Outcomes

At the end of the day we had a wrap up where we asked everyone what they felt they learned from the day and what their plans for the future are. Those notes are in addendum 4. I believe these notes are telling of the success of the event. The overall consensus was that it was really important and special to have so many people from different parts of the region and different parts of the supply chain all in one place at one time talking about how to move the needle forward for regional fiber. The final reports show that we had 25 paid participants, 20 panelists, and 24 volunteers, totaling 69 people at the event.



Successes and Challenges

Overall the event was a huge success with participants eager to hear when the next event will take place. There has been some feedback from participants (mostly farmers) that it is very hard to get off of the farm for an entire day and that a virtual event may be better suited for those individuals. This is something we may look into for the future. However I hesitate to do so because of the energy that an in person event is capable of and also the technical knowledge needed to pull off such an event virtually. Some tips I would have for any other fibershed endeavoring to have a round table or similar like event is to start early (I would say at least a year out) and get as many volunteers as possible. The organization of those volunteers and delegation of tasks is also integral. I found myself scrambling trying to do as many tasks as possible because I knew I was one of the only ones getting paid for the work but the feedback that I got from some advisory board members is that they would have been happy if given more tasks to carry out. I would also suggest getting sponsors from local individuals and businesses. Not only is this a great way to supplement any costs that a microgrant couldn't cover but I also felt like the

businesses that were sponsors were really honored to be able to help out and happy to have the publicity as well.

Future Impact

A lot of time and effort was put into making this event happen and although the day was a success it is hard to quantify what exactly that success means. Only time will tell if we see meaningful connections take place or future actions pushed forward because of this event. We are discussing ideas for next year's microgrant and I think we are leaning towards something that is more tangible and quantifiable. I think this was a really great way to spend our first micro grant but moving forward I think we want to focus on projects that have a visible impact on the fiber systems within our area.

Addendum 1

Sponsorship Tiers and Email

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1McWRhee--r-IER3dvzSY8ZYc_DS1H0D0PJbEqOeFu88/edit?usp=sharing

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RpnHELazMKCdvYBs1x9vt8Nx-Rb428_Ji5y4O-PXlYs/edit?usp=sharing

Addendum 2

Program

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1IL-PtOIMFvT1957BwulXmEbTTh75i2LL?usp=drive_link

Addendum 3

Cost Breakdown

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1JafqzNJwYO4UYqrDJaFiF9VRo9kb4wOmLnRO-xqx9OU/edit?usp=sharing>

Addendum 4

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OwP2RURa6S5EWHb3B0yXTzXy2dgoM1nHrsCPnifQsps/edit?usp=sharing>

The Northern New England Fibershed Design Challenge



The Northern New England Fibershed Design Challenge Started in July of 2023 with rolling admissions until a few weeks before the end of the challenge in early August. There was a total of 18 registrants within that time period. The year-long challenge culminated in a Showcase on August 17th, 2024 at Sanborn Mills Farm in Loudon, New Hampshire. Eight participants submitted items into the final showcase. The hope with this first design challenge was to highlight opportunities and challenges within the textile infrastructure of our Northern New England Fibershed Region which encompasses Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Each entry was judged for the regionality of Materials, process, and product as well as on the narrative that explained their process. The Design Challenge Cohort was able to communicate through a dedicated Facebook group as well as scheduled zoom meetings for the designers to collaborate

and share their processes with each other. In lieu of a traveling showcase we were able to create posters with each submission's narrative and photos of the items that will be able to travel to various venue across the region. The Design Challenge submissions were judged by Lea Rossignol, Co-Founder of NNEF, Patty Williams from Aker Farm and Kathy Hattori from Botanical Colors.

The Rubric was as follows:

Material

The source of the raw material for the piece, including the main fiber and any fiber used for construction (sewing thread for example). Ideally all of the fiber used for the piece will be sourced from within the Northern New England Region and an effort should be made to design the piece taking regional material resources into consideration.

Process

Taking raw fiber material to a usable material for the final product. This reflects things such as spinning wool or bast fibers (by hand or at a mill), weaving or knitting, felting, sewing, and all other forms of constructing that contributed to the creation of your piece. Ideally, the entire process will be completed, start to finish, within the Northern New England Region an effort should be made to design the piece taking regional challenges into consideration.

Product

The finished piece (wearable, home, industrial, other) should embody the ethos of Fibershed in all aspects. In addition to beautiful aesthetics and a high level of craftsmanship, please consider these four main Fibershed concepts when designing and creating your piece: Regionality- how your piece tells a story about or relates to the Northern New England region Compostability- use of materials that can return to the soil and give back to the regional system at the end of its lifecycle Longevity- the use of high quality materials and a high level of craftsmanship means a longer life for the piece Zero waste design- the design considers use of fabric and construction materials to limit waste of materials in the process of creation

Narrative

The narrative is your opportunity to tell the story of the creation of your piece from start to finish. Ideally it will include how you came up with the concept for your design, clear descriptions of the steps taken to acquire regional materials (including names of regional sources

and businesses that were utilized), how the Fibershed concepts were considered and expressed, and the details of the process of making, including photos. It describes how challenges were navigated, highlights any issues and/or gaps in our regional infrastructure, and demonstrates thorough research and exhaustive efforts taken to complete the piece within the NNE Fibershed Region. If concessions were made in regional materials and/or processing, the narrative is your opportunity to clearly communicate reasons as to why, and how the challenges you faced reflect larger infrastructure issues in the region. The more detail the better when it comes to explaining the reasoning behind potentially using processing or materials outside of the region.

Outcome

Phyllis Marinoff won the grand prize for her linen table runner & napkins, Sara Goodman won second place for her three cashmere shawls, Theresa Walker won most creative for her Vera Vest, and Marion Dillon won most local for her Linen Jacket. More information including a short documentary by Britta McCarthy and the submission narrative posters can be found on our website [Design Challenge - Northern New England Fibershed](#).



DESIGN CHALLENGE SHOWCASE



**Saturday, August 17th @ 6 P.M.
Sanborn Mills Farm
Loudon, NH**

◆————◆
Come celebrate regional textiles and local
designers and learn about the gaps in our
current textile infrastructure!

◆————◆
Free to the public