



**Green Lands**  
**Blue Waters**

# Voices From Our Network

## The Civic Scientists

The next generation of continuous living cover (CLC) researchers reflect on the current moment in history and reimagine the future.

### Reflections on Agricultural Diversity

Heidi Reitmeier  
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#### **My vision towards agricultural resiliency and sustainability.**

I am a white, rural Midwesterner working in science. In the big picture of our world, where we are constantly striving toward scientific improvements for agricultural challenges, I understand that many in, for example, the Midwestern United States, have significant agricultural resources to meet the world's demands against the pressures of a changing climate. Other areas of the world are not as resource-rich as my corner of the world. My vision entails the inclusion of any and every culture to have an active, empowered role in addressing the grand agricultural and environmental challenges that may face us all over the future decades. We cannot solve Earth's complex problems in small-minded ways; the world needs to address systemic issues in order to enact real change.

#### **My grappling to find wholeness in agriculture and conservation.**

The grappling, or struggling, I have with our current conservation attempts in agriculture is that I sense that these attempts are made

from a narrow-minded perspective based in historically European roots. This perspective appears to dominate and permeate the mainstream scientific community. We can extend beyond our Euro-centric limitations that are and have been self-imposed for such a long time. There is a bias within science that is skewed by "whiteness." There is not wholeness yet in our fields of study.

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The grappling to find justice must press forward toward eliminating such bias. Also, as climate changes across the globe, across innumerable borders, we must work together across differences for countries to solve these international problems. The world's climate response through agriculture must, therefore, know no borders.

## **The inextricable link between land and human ethics.**

An incredibly strong force connects lands and humans. When one suffers, the other can suffer also. One of my courses, Lands and Humans in World Cultures, highly impressed upon me this important understanding. I recall from this course, as my comprehension culminated toward the end of the semester, that the marginalization of people tends to occur toward marginalized lands. When the quality of agricultural land is poor, it no doubt creates poor quality of life for those people living on

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that land and farming it. After learning to visualize this link, I can see, now more than ever, that lands and humans both deserve respect and dignity. Agricultural systems across the world ought to incorporate this critical focus into every application possible

My hope begins with myself and with anyone else I see also taking each step forward in this direction toward equity in agriculture.

## **My scientific career's responsibility to contribute to global justice.**

As agricultural and environmental issues spread in complexity across borders, racial and other tensions will need to be actively addressed, and new ways of authentically collaborating across differences will need to be learned. I work as a soil scientist supporting the agricultural community, and I also want to work with consideration of the diversity of people around me. Maximizing agricultural output, minimizing the impact on the planet's resources, and minimizing human suffering in the process are all values I have. I believe that many others share these values. So, please take a stand with me! Acknowledging the historical damage and promoting justice in our agricultural advances can and should be core to our collective vision moving forward.



## **Heidi Reitmeier    University of Minnesota**

*Heidi Reitmeier is a master's student in the Land and Atmospheric Science Program through the Department of Soil, Water, and Climate at the University of Minnesota (Twin Cities). While finishing her master's program, she is also a soils researcher at the Northwest Research and Outreach Center in Crookston, MN, with Dr. Lindsay Pease. Reitmeier does research in soil and water quality as well as in agricultural nutrient management. This research links with her master's project, which involves collecting farm management data for testing and updating the current MN Phosphorus Index model. In addition to Reitmeier's academic and professional life, she has an undergraduate background in horticultural and environmental sciences from the University of Minnesota (Crookston).*