

Soil Cycle



Annual Report

2021



SOIL CYCLE - 2021

2021 marked Soil Cycle's 4th year in operation and our humble beginnings could never have predicted where it would lead us today. This year allowed us to reach more people than ever before through our composting and educational outreach programs. With education at the forefront, we hosted over 500 students via field trips and service-learning days that brought new energy and enthusiasm to the compost yard. 2021 also brought a lot of change through the expansion of our staff, board of directors, products and programs.

One of the biggest changes we saw was the expansion of product sells and distribution. One of Soil Cycle's main driving principles is "value." We are continually asking ourselves how to best cultivate the highest value possible when it comes to our services and products - ultimately turning "trash" into treasure. This year, we refined our wormery, using food scraps to create high-quality worm castings, biochar blend, and compost tea.

Soil Cycle started as a grassroot effort amongst a handful of passionate individuals, but it is ready to become a rooted grassland, building upon its current foundation of community support. As Soil Cycle expands into the future, we hope to offer even more environmental education programs, produce more quality compost, offer purpose-driven employment, and continue to sequester carbon, which benefits our environment, community, and overall soil health. At this organizational tipping point, encouragement and support from our members and donors is critical for future success. We are incredibly grateful for all of the continued support Soil Cycle has received for its community involvement and regenerative efforts in the Missoula Valley.

Cheers, to many more years to come!!

-Caitlyn Lewis, Executive Director



OUR PROGRAMS

Organic Waste Collection

In 2018, food waste made up about 28% of Missoula's landfill. Food waste in landfills adds unnecessary methane emissions, a potent greenhouse gas, to our atmosphere. Soil Cycle was founded to address our local food waste issue - to do that, we needed to get to work on the ground level, collecting organic materials. Focused on zero-waste principles, Soil Cycle uses bicycles to collect organic "waste", mainly food scraps, from over 100 homes and 5 businesses. This year, Soil Cycle was able to add 2 electric bicycles to our fleet with the support of donations and grants which allows us to sustain bicycle-powered collections year-round.

We also dramatically increased our drop-off program, adding over 75 new drop-off members and a second location on the Northside. We recognize that local composting is a joint effort. Between Missoula Compost Collection and Soil Cycle, the organizations diverted about 1,525 tons from the landfill annually from 8-9% of Missoula's population.

"I appreciate how your organization works and love the idea that you ride around picking up people's waste."

-STEM summer camp "sister"



OUR PROGRAMS

Compost Creation

Addressing food waste diversion and increased methane emissions, is only half the battle. To achieve the greatest good, organic materials need to be properly returned to the Earth. Soil Cycle is dedicated to producing the highest quality compost possible with reclaimed organic materials. Soil Cycle staff and volunteers process over 1 ton of food waste each week using a multi-model composting approach. We currently use thermophilic, vermicompost, and an in-vessel system to process materials. This year, additional grant support allowed us to hire an operation assistant to help with this process.

This year, the University of Montana donated a 3 yard, in-vessel system, called the Earth Tub. With the addition of the Earth Tub, we were also able to expand and improve our compost operations, producing hundreds of bags of rich compost that were distributed back to members. Even though we were able to expand operations, the addition of organic materials coming in pushed us to capacity, marking a pivotal point for the organization.

**"Soil Cycle is a
playground for soil
lovers."**

-Soil Cycle supporter



OUR PROGRAMS

Environmental Education

Education is at the heart of the organization. Over the course of 2021, we dedicated more time towards educational efforts than ever before. While Soil Cycle made a few class and camp visits, most of our education and service learning happened at our demonstration garden and compost site. We worked with both private and public groups from the Boys Scouts of America to UM's PEAS farm student interns. Soil Cycle also attended several community events in hopes of cultivating local soil advocates.

One highlight from this year included our work with the Missoula International School 6th and 7th graders during monthly service-learning days. Students had the opportunity to directly build compost piles, bag compost for members, and try their hand at building new worm bins. Like this experience, Soil Cycle also worked with pre-teen girls interested in women-led STEM work, preschoolers interested in worms, and university students addressing climate issues.

"I learned that when food goes into the trash, it is bad for the Earth."

-Boys & Girls Club camp attendant



OUR PROGRAMS

Outreach & Products

Soil Cycle strives to create the highest value products from organic materials. Because of our educational mission, we are continually adopting new methods of composting and creating value-added products. For example, this year, we dove into the world of biochar. Using wood chips and scrap lumber from a local mill, we learned how to turn another waste product into a high-quality soil amendment. Not only did we get our biochar blend on store shelves, in 2021, we distributed our worm castings to 5 local nurseries and stores.

To best serve our mission, we try to pair education and outreach with our products as much as possible. This year, we taught a soil seminar at Caras Nursery and hosted a houseplant fundraiser with MUD, using recycled pots and our soil blends to bring plant propagations to life. We hope that our efforts go far beyond the products we sell, using funds to boost our onsite education program.

"My garden has never done this well, this early in the season. I love this magic dirt."

-Soil Cycle product user





ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH IN 2021

Food waste diverted from landfill

95,800 lbs.

CO₂ emissions reduced by using bicycles as transportation

1,800 lbs.

CO₂ sequestered by composting

98,000 lbs.

Soil Cycle members

221

Finished compost donated

180 cubic feet

Students reached

465

Field trips and outreach events hosted

34

GOALS for 2022

Organic Waste Collections

- Sign up 100+ new members
- Adopt route management software
- Adopt user-friendly membership app
- Expand drop-off service
- Create consolidation hubs for cyclists
- Pilot meat collection service

Compost Programs

- Retrofit and build 10 new aerated compost bins
- Hire long-term operations assistant position
- Improve compost moisture and consistency
- Integrate a black soldier fly processing system
- Source consistent carbon materials

Environmental Education

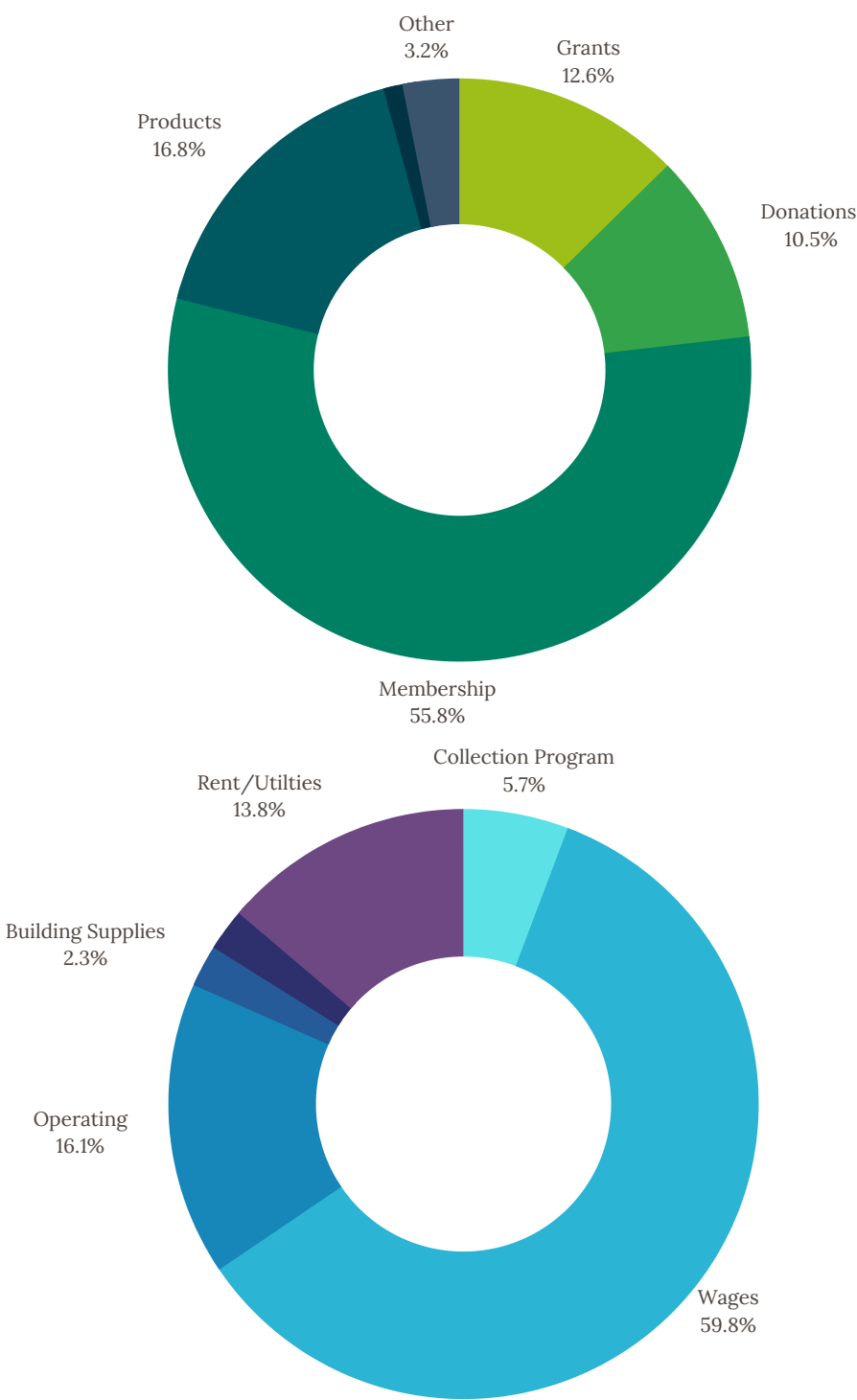
- Offer bi-weekly field trips and service-learning opportunities
- Setup aquaponics demonstration
- Offer 2+ composting workshops
- Improve demonstration garden - adding permeable surface and additional vegetables
- Offer weekly volunteer opportunities
- Build mobile education tools

Products & Outreach

- Retail soil amendments in 3 more locations
- Partner with at least one new nonprofit in outreach efforts
- Partner with local nurseries to sell bagged compost
- Expand compost tea services

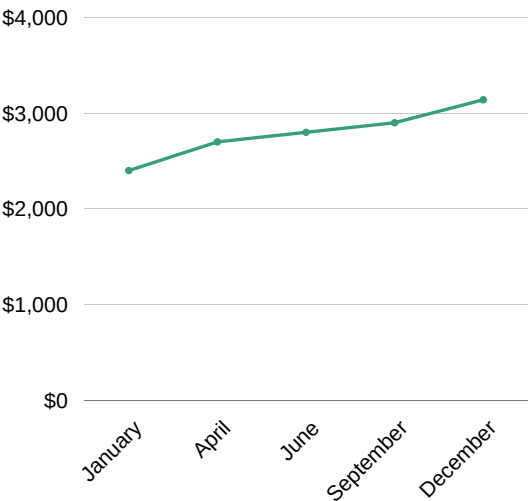
Financial Overview

Below is a basic, comprehensive report of the organization's financial activities throughout 2021 (the 4th year of operation).



ANNUAL INCOME

Below is an overview of monthly membership income in 2021.



2021 Income Summary

2021 Expense Summary

OUR PARTNERS

Building Community & Soil from the Ground Up.

Benefactors

- High Stakes Foundation
- Clearwater Credit Union
- 1% for the Planet
- Climate Ride

Sustainable Partners

- 1000 New Gardens
- ACE Fancy Plants
- Bitterroot Flower Shop
- Boyce Lumber
- Caras Nursery
- City of Missoula
- Cold Water Metal Works
- Earth In Hand
- Free Cycles
- Garden City Harvest
- Heart Beet Herbal Remedies
- Heritage Timber
- Home ReSource
- Leaf and Quiet
- Little Dumps
- Missoula International School
- Missoula School Districts
- Missoula Urban Demonstration (MUD)
- PEAS Farm
- Phoenixes Rising
- Recycling Works
- Rockin' Rudy's
- Southgate Mall
- Sun and Swell
- Turner Farms
- University of Montana

Commercial Composters

- Adventure Cycling Association
- Back to the Mother
- C3 Work Lounge
- Community Medical Hospital
- Complexly
- Earth Within Flowers
- Golden York Griddle
- Sacred Ally
- Shady Spruce Hostel
- Zoo City Apparel





Soil Cycle was the only Missoula-based organization to receive a 2021 EcoStar Pollution Prevention Award

- Commitment to waste reduction
- Environmental benefits achieved
- Innovation of waste reduction activities

TAKE ACTION

Continued support is what keeps our organization going; consider making a contribution:

- SoilCycleMissoula.com/donate
- Venmo funds @soilcycle
- Paypal to soilcyclemissoula@gmail.com

Help us decrease the impact of food waste. Without organizations like Soil Cycle, food waste will continue to end up in landfills, creating methane that pollutes our atmosphere. Your gift will ensure Missoula is a healthier, happier, and more environmentally sound community.

Soil Cycle is a 501(c) (3) Organization: Federal Tax ID #83-2816550.



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