

## ***Rural Progressive Platform - Summary***

We believe a rural progressive platform must be framed around land, livelihood, and community. We understand these three elements to be intertwined and integral to jump starting rural communities and facilitating a revival of progressivism that once characterized rural working class communities.

### **Land**

Our land is sacred. Generations have protected the streams and forests while using them to feed their families and communities. We don't think of ourselves as environmentalists, but we know our livelihoods and our children's futures depend on our pastures, water, woods, and natural landscapes remaining clean, useable and open for recreation. Increased investment and tax credits for sustainable farming, fishing, forestry research and practice along with policies like the RECLAIM Act and reinvestment in coal communities will allow our communities to lead innovation addressing our most critical environmental needs and create opportunities for jobs centered on conservation, renewable energies, and farming.

### **Livelihood**

Our sense of livelihood has always been prided on hard work and taking care of our own needs. We recognize that rural America provides for people all over the country and we are proud of our legacy as coal miners, factory workers, and farmers. In order to keep our communities alive and our economies growing, we need increased investment in technical and vocational education, job training for transitioning workers, and entrepreneurship support. We believe we work hard and deserve a living wage that allows us to take care of our families and save money for when times get tough. We recognize that taxes help keep our communities going and we believe everyone should pay their fair share, therefore, stock dividends, capital gains and other unearned income should be taxed like other income. We want good jobs from local and regional manufacturers and businesses that commit to long-term employment instead of coal companies who file bankruptcy or service jobs that hire part-time. We know unions protected our grandparents and we believe they'll protect us too. We want to see worker cooperatives take the place of outside corporations.

### **Community**

In rural places, family and neighborliness are hallmarks of community building. Our small towns are home to diverse people who still believe in Main Street, hometown schools, and when things get tough for others, you pitch in and help out. In order for everyone to have the opportunity to live happy, healthy lives our communities need health and community clinics, increased investment in public education from pre-school through college, and support for families hurting from addiction. Strengthening our local communities should be a central goal of economic, tax and trade policies which should invest in downtown instead of outside corporations like big box retailers and incentives for households and communities that take steps to increase self-reliance, local productivity and resilience. We think our voices should count the most at home and know without dramatic changes in campaign financing and lobbying the wealthiest 1% have extraordinary influence and advantage shaping life in our rural communities. We strongly believe everyone in our community has a right to equality and dignity, but we also believe everyone has the responsibility to work hard to make our rural homes good places to live. We recognize life can be tough, so we extend our neighborliness across the county, but we expect no one gets special treatment from the wealthiest down.

*This document was developed during the Spring of 2017 by members of Progressive 9<sup>th</sup>, based in southwest Virginia.*