



**BLACK FARMING. BLACK HISTORY. BLACK CULTURE.**

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September 1, 2019

It is with a mix of sadness and gratitude that we announce that Tamara Jones will be stepping down as Executive Director of SAAFON, effective October 31, 2019.

Tamara's relationship with SAAFON began in 2010 when she met SAAFON's co-founder Cynthia Hayes at a conference to help historically Black colleges and universities adopt more environmentally sustainable practices. Between 2010 and 2016, Tamara provided strategic planning, facilitation, and coaching services to SAAFON's Board and Executive Director. In 2016, upon the untimely passing of Cynthia Hayes, Tamara answered the call from the Board of Directors to relaunch the organization.

Tamara operated as a part-time Executive Director in 2017 and stepped into the role full-time starting January 1, 2018. Since that time, Tamara guided the organization to many significant accomplishments, including:

- Hired SAAFON's first complement of paid staff
- Grew farmer membership by over 300%
- Supported the recruitment of SAAFON's Board of Directors with over 40% representation from active farmers
- Created a Farmers Fund that has provided \$61,130 in direct awards and interest-free microloans to members
- Launched the Cynthia Hayes - Fannie Lou Hamer fellowship in partnership with the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) that has awarded 8 scholarships to undergraduate and graduate students totaling \$6,250
- Relaunched SAAFON's website and Facebook platforms
- Co-led the visioning and launch of the national Black Land and Power Coalition to help protect Black land, in partnership with Land Loss Prevention Project as a project under the National Black Food & Justice Alliance
- Served as an elected representative on the Black Farmer Discrimination Lawsuit Cy Pres National Council
- Guided the development of strong strategic plans to prioritize work
- Initiated and implemented administrative technological platforms and other internal operating systems
- Successfully attracted resources through fundraising, grant writing, and individual donor solicitations.

Above all, Tamara has helped to lead the organization and the greater sustainable ag and racial justice movements on an incredible path of growth, with much greater visibility, a strong vision and a pathway towards sustainability.

SAAFON has begun the search process for a new Executive Director. We are committed to finding the best individual to lead and guide our work, while still maintaining a stable and effective organization. We will share the job announcement soon and ask for your help in identifying candidates who can help SAAFON continue along our current successful trajectory.

Again, we cannot thank Tamara enough for the dedication, passion, enthusiasm, and motivation she has provided. Please see a brief note from her below. We look forward to staying in community with Tamara, following the success of her career and are grateful Tamara has helped to lead SAAFON towards this important next chapter of the incredibly important work of growing sustainable agriculture in the Southeast and Caribbean.

If you have any questions or concerns during this transition process, please do not hesitate to reach out to us directly at [info@saafon.org](mailto:info@saafon.org). You may also dial the SAAFON office at 920-3SAAFON (920-372-2366)

Sincerely,

SAAFON Board of Directors:  
Dara Cooper, Chair  
Ashanté Reese, Vice Chair  
Kristopher Smith, Treasurer  
Bakari McClendon, Secretary  
Owusu Bandele  
Terry Hayes  
Yvette Browne  
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