

# Singing the Praises of Healthy Soil

## LSP Releases Bret Hesla-Six Feet Deep Music Videos

The Land Stewardship Project released a pair of music videos recently that offer an entertaining look at the importance of building soil health. “Got Cover Crops” and Back to Soil” were commissioned from Austin, Minn., native and singer-songwriter Bret Hesla, who performed them with the band Six Feet Deep. Video editing and production was by Kobi Dansingburg.

While composing the music, Hesla got deeply grounded in soil health through visits to the farms of Land Stewardship Project members Tom and Alma Cotter of Austin, and Kaleb and Angie Anderson of Goodhue, Minn. The goal

of these videos is to further build the energy and community that’s been growing among farmers interested in improving soil health



A scene from the “Got Cover Crops” music video.

in the Upper Midwest.

“We’re hoping this music can help inject a bit of hope and levity and support for those that are doing the right thing out on the land,” says Doug Nopar, who worked with Hesla on the video project while serving as co-director of LSP’s Bridge to Soil Health Program.

The music videos are available for public use and at no charge, and can be accessed at [www.landstewardshipproject.org/soilmusic](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/soilmusic). On that page, you can also download copies of the lyrics. If you’d like mp3 audio files of the songs, contact LSP’s Brian DeVore at [bdevore@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:bdevore@landstewardshipproject.org).

Other LSP videos on soil building techniques such as cover cropping, managed rotational grazing, no-till, and composting are available at [www.landstewardshipproject.org/lspsoilbuilders/soilbuildervideos](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/lspsoilbuilders/soilbuildervideos). □

## ‘Back to Soil’ Lyrics

1. If you study history, then you’ll know | The empire falls when the topsoil goes.  
Well the signs today are pretty clear to read | Soil’s looking bad and we’ve lost six feet.  
But here’s the news, we could build it back | And I heard about farmers with a plan for that.  
So I paid one a visit, we sat to chat ‘n that | one cup of coffee set me on a whole new track.

2. I went to no-till, let the soil be still. | I quit fighting what’s on my side.  
Then it was cover crop, covered every bare spot | with the armor of a thick green hide.  
And when the fields turned into gaudy buffet | I put new ways to graze in place.  
Now I’m working with nature, “Hallelujah!”  
The dirt’s coming back, back to soil.

3. I keep living roots, year round living in the soil | Pulling carbon out of the sky.  
They pull it down underground, then it’s shot right out | To feed the little microbes,  
mycorrhizal fungi.  
I make ‘em happy, and they send back | all the nutrients that I was paying money for.  
I’m building back black. “Hallelujah!”  
The dirt’s coming back, back to soil.

4. It takes a lotta swag, to buck big ag | Still farm and keep the family fed.  
You gotta first find a mentor that you respect | You study Mother Nature, and scratch your head.  
I made a lotta mistakes as I was changing things | But one day I noticed all the rain soaked in.  
Best of all, my money stopped eroding | all the way to the Gulf of Monsanto.

5. And it’s joy, joy, there’s a certain kind of joy | I feel when I’m down on my knees.  
Joy, joy, when I grab a chunk of soil | And it crumbles like cottage cheese.  
I know I’m on the right track, standing near | ‘Cause it smells like a good cup of coffee.  
Here’s a little cup for you. Hallelujah!  
One sip and I think you’ll see  
Why the soil’s got me singing, “Hallelujah!”  
One sip and I think you’ll see  
Why the soil’s got me singing, “Hallelujah!”  
The dirt’s coming back, back to soil.  
The dead dirt’s coming back. | Here’s a little cup for you.  
I hope you like it black.

Words and music by Bret Hesla. Written on commission for Land Stewardship Project  
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