



'JMU students have a great time helping out. We get to hang out and share a meal with the farmers who produce our food, learn new skills and ground ourselves in the real world.'

— GARRETT STERN ('11)  
anthropology major and  
Crop Mob co-organizer





# PEOPLE POWER

**O**n a chilly February day, volunteers mob Andrew Schaefer's Wildside Farms in Singers Glen to build a tractor bridge, marking one of the newest phenomena to hit Harrisonburg: the Valley Crop Mob. Providing assistance for small-scale sustainable farms, they knock out big projects in a single afternoon.

There is strategy behind this people-powered marvel, says co-organizer Garrett Stern ('11). The Friendly City Food Co-op and JMU EARTH sponsor these monthly mobs to build a bridge between JMU and the community and to advocate for locally grown food and sustainable farming.

"The Crop Mob is the easiest way to unite people in an environmental way and build connections back to farmers, because everybody has to eat," says Stern, who is also the Harrisonburg Farmer's Market newly hired program manager.

Farmers who strive to farm organically consider the mobs a real boost.

"It's been great having this much help, getting all this done at once," Sherri Huffer told the *Staunton News Leader* when the mob descended on her Gathering Rabbitry and Farm in Mount Sidney in March. "They're getting a lot of things done that would not have gotten done."

The mob last hit Janet's Garden in Greenville in April. **M**

\* Watch the Crop Mob video at [www.jmu.edu/bethechange/stories/FirstCropMob.shtml](http://www.jmu.edu/bethechange/stories/FirstCropMob.shtml)



**Michelle Strickland ('14), foreground, heads to the site of the emerging tractor bridge with an armload of stones to assist 12 other JMU students volunteering at Wildside Farms in Singers Glen. Inset: Organizer Garrett Stern ('11) contributes a load of cement to the tractor bridge project.**