

Farm Plan Recommendations Presented to Church Community

Planed by
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Introduction: This Farm Plan is being presented as part of a combined proposal of affordable housing, regular housing units, art studios, retail/food outlets; with the remainder of the property to be used for agricultural interests. This proposal is being coordinated by Church Community of Newport RI. for Joseph Bossom of Tiverton RI. The property is 173 acres of mostly wooded terrain with approximately 10 acres of cleared land. The agricultural proposal is to support a full time agricultural manager of the property from the commodities produced on the property. The manager will be supplied with a farm family dwelling and any other negotiated values to assist with initiating a viable operation. Joe Bossom will mentor the initial operations.

Existing environmental conditions: The existing environmental conditions have been identified as having potential effects on a viable agricultural enterprise. The property will be identified as East and West segments. (refer to map)

Existing conditions (east): This segment of the property presently contains the dwelling, an open barn, a wood kiln, and land used for various agricultural interests. The fields (10+/- acres) are presently being used for hay and pasture for beef and goats (refer to map). Field one and two are well maintained and have had rock outcroppings removed. Field three is of less quality with a few more rock outcroppings and encroaching invasive plants that can be removed for a good value agricultural use. The area identified as pasture is a wooded area with extensive rock outcroppings that has been cleared primarily by grazing with animals that consume brushy plants. This area has potential multi use agricultural value if rock out cropping and plant growth are removed. The east segment has no identifiable wetlands (although it might have a few small wet areas in the spring). It is 0-3 slope and no highly erodible soils. The remainder of the area (excluding the dwelling area, fields and pasture) is secondary forest growth with tree up to 8" in diameter, with rock outcropping.

Recommendations for (east): The hay fields are good quality for the area and could remain in hay/pasture. The area could also be used for non-till crops such as orchards, small bush fruits, xmas trees, or other crops that do not require annual tillage. The remainder of the east segment including the pasture and forest area have agricultural potential if they are prepared for this purpose.

Existing conditions (west): The west segment has 30 -40 % wetlands (refer to maps) that runs parallel to Cornell Rd. and Bulgarmarsh Rd. This places some limitations on agricultural use. The remainder of the area was used for pasture a few years ago and could be re-established for agricultural use. This area is now completely wooded with a

higher value timber crop in the wet areas. This land is also relatively flat 0-3 slope with an extensive rock outcropping. This area has an easement, running north to south, that contains a natural gas pipeline; limiting the use of this area and require permits from the gas company for any physical changes.

Recommendations for (west): This area has potential agricultural value outside of the wetland area. It could be used for hay/ pasture or non-till crops after it is cleared of plants and rock outcroppings.

There is a farm road on this section, but any alteration to the wetlands will require a permit.

Agricultural commodities: Agricultural commodities are very dynamic in nature. Commodity values change year to year ; therefore the following recommendations are general and address possibilities at the present. All of the land (If cleared) could primarily support no-till crops and animals. It could also support operations such as greenhouses and container growing. Any of these products would require value added components ,such as, processing and retail opportunities. For animals, some of the value added opportunities are cheese from sheep, goats, and dairy cattle and direct marketing of meat produces (some processed). This added to health conscious values such as grass fed meat products and organic milk and cheeses make small operations viable. With greenhouse and nursery competition in this area there would have to be a value added component to plants also. Examples of these are preparation of window boxes and container gardens, vernal pools with wetland plants, and patio and deck gardens. These types of value added ideas would compliment the art concept of the project.

Farm plan: It is impossible to identify a specific farm plan because the farm manager is a major part of the plan, but with over 100 acres dedicated to the agricultural enterprise the possibilities are endless . The manager's abilities and interests would play a major contributing role. At this time, the following are recommendations recognizing the existing conditions and future concepts. The farm operations would have to be diversified and contain a value added processing and retail component. It would take a manager that was versatile in both plants and animals. The farm would have to start with high value commodities (. This would have to be supported by the other components of the proposed plan such as a retail shop space and food distribution facility). The farm plan would also be contingent on the amount of property cleared and prepared for agricultural capability. The following are recommendations that have the potential to produce high value commodities. Greenhouse facilities to grow: annual plants, early producing vegetables, and container nursery opportunities. Growing small fruits such as blueberries, raspberries; with the opportunity to expand to dwarf fruit trees. Animals might include meat and milk goats, poultry, swine, and a small herd of beef animals (ethnic meat varieties are becoming popular). To be successful, animal products will have to be produced, processed and retailed as part of the farm management program

Conclusion: The following are some suggestions to enhance the initial agricultural project. There will be a committee organized to assist with the agricultural area.

1. Dwelling for farm family
2. Funds and support for structures for farm operations (greenhouse, barn, etc.)
3. At least 40 acres of cleared and prepared land
4. Funds for or access to basic agricultural equipment
5. Match farm opportunity with experiences and enthusiastic manager