

Addendum to 303 Nahanton Street Proposal presented by the Newton Conservators

Newton Community Farming at Angino Farm

Prepared by Kerisa Perazella and Leah Birch Postman
June 21, 2004

The Angino Farm Advisory Committee, in partnership with the Newton Conservators, presents this proposal for a community farm at Angino Farm.

I. Introduction

The steady growth of community farms in the United States seems to be a direct response to the economically and socially devastating decline in family farms across the country. Whereas more and more of our food production falls into the hands of agribusinesses reliant on genetically altered, chemical resistant crops, community farms push back. They are small, fitting into the niches of populous cities and towns, using organic practices and working with the lay of the land. They are growing food for local customers and inviting them to take a closer look at the process, to *participate* in the process of sustaining the land and a vibrant, healthy community.

In an area with ever-increasing development pressure, the benefits of preserving Newton's last farm are tremendous. The economic and aesthetic benefits of preserving open space are easily identifiable. But in addition to preserving the farm vista, a community farm would actually preserve the legacy of farming in Newton, and afford the opportunity for the next generations to participate in that legacy.

At first glance, a community farm may look like a traditional farm – vegetables in neat rows, a farmer humming along on a tractor. But on a given day the farmer may share their field with residents picking their own peas or high school students frost-seeding clover in late February. There is a diversity of models for successful community farming. We have included brief summaries of Natick Community Organic Farm, Waltham Fields Community Farm, Land's Sake, Stearns Farm CSA, and the Food Project, all successful community farms located in the immediate area. As illustrated in the summaries, all of these models evolved over time to fill a niche in their communities. We envision Newton's community farm evolving to fit its own unique environment. However, we have identified three basic small-scale farming models that have had great success in the northeast and would be appropriate for the Angino property:

II. Operational Models for Community Farming

1. CSA. Originally Teiki, or “partnership,” the CSA movement was started in 1965 by a group of women in Japan who were concerned with pesticide use, the rise in processed and imported food, and decline in farm populations. The philosophical translation for Teiki is “food with the farmer's face on it.” The CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) was introduced to the United States from Europe first in 1984 at Indian Line Farm in S. Egremont, Massachusetts. Since then, it has only gained in popularity – there are about 60 active CSAs in Massachusetts alone. In a CSA, people pay a lump sum and then receive a “share” of fresh veggies weekly for the entire growing season. Shareholders get to know the farm and farmer at their weekly pick-ups, and often lend a hand in the harvest or other chores as part of their pay. See Waltham Fields and Stearns attachments for successful CSAs. Stearns Farm CSA in Framingham sells 150 shares on 2.5 acres, and operates with a huge amount of community participation. We estimate that the Angino site alone could support 75-85 shares at about \$500 per share.

2. Market “Garden”. On small acreage, many farmers choose to maximize efficiency by focusing on a small number of crops (e.g. berries, specialty herbs and greens, flowers). Crops may be marketed directly from the farm, sold to restaurants and/or farmers markets. In Newton, the farm could grow a variety of crops that could be sold at the popular Cold Spring Park and other local farmers markets.

3. Expanding Possibilities. A newer farming concept that is gaining ground is that of farms or farmers partnering to grow for a common market. This allows farmers to use their land optimally and ecologically, and also to grow for customers they might not otherwise have access to. Angino Farm could be an ideal vista for such a partnership with other farmers and fields. Another successful way to support the farm is to grow a membership of people in the community who believe in the farm's vision and want to be a part of that vision. (See Land's Sake attachment.)

III. Social Mission

1. Learning Opportunities - Inherent in the definition of community farming is its role in addressing social issues. Community farms in this area have a rich history of engaging youth and adults in the landscape – providing the opportunity for hands-on lessons about health, environment and stewardship by literally getting their hands in the dirt. Many local schools – from elementary schools to universities – use Waltham Fields Community Farm as a resource for outdoor learning. Both Natick Community Organic Farm (NCOF) and Land's Sake Farm began programs to create opportunities for at-risk youth. NCOF continues to provide in-school as well as on-the-farm programming to local schools. Land's Sake attributes a significant amount of its funding to its summer Green Power program. The farm also runs programs throughout the year for kindergarteners (sensory education), high school students (environmental studies) and middle school students (maple sugaring). Please see attachments for more information about these farms' learning opportunities. There is no limit to the learning opportunities made available on a community farm. Growing food to sustain the people and environment is a concept that bridges all ages and cultures.

2. Feeding the Hungry – Community farms are capable of producing an abundance of food on small acreage, and there is a strong tradition of Massachusetts community farms helping the hungry. In addition to donating surplus, the Newton farm could allow individuals to purchase CSA shares or share portions and donate them to a local food bank.

IV. Project Scope

We strongly advocate for the conservation of the entire Angino property, including the house and barn, for use by the Newton community farm. A barn provides a sheltered work space as well as storage for tools, supplies and crops. It could also be used for creative, farm-based crafts and programs. Using the house to provide community housing year-round for a farmer is optimal for the production of the operation. Housing presents a constant challenge for farmers in this area, and the presence of the farmer year-round allows him/her to meet the constant demands of a farm operation with ease. We would like to see the house preserved to be used for one (1) community housing unit as well as office and programming space.

Key to this proposal is the groundswell of support from the community. The Planning and Advisory Committee that has already been established is composed of members of the Newton Conservators, Green Decade and the Nahanton Park gardening community as well as experts in farming, outdoor learning, community organizing and conservation whose dedication and expertise will make the farm a success (see attached). This transitional committee will serve to oversee the formation of a non-profit organization devoted to running and sustaining the Newton community farm. Striving for an inclusive model, we want to include the vision of all of the organizations and residents of Newton who are interested in this project.

V. Conclusion

Farming has been a part of Newton's legacy since it was first established as a town in 1691. Towns and cities everywhere are at a critical decision-making point; we are losing important and beautiful pieces of our history to new development on a daily basis: obesity and diabetes are epic amongst our children. Fewer and fewer children have the opportunity to understand what it takes to create the food they put in their bodies. When faced with the question of should we use our resources to preserve the last farm in Newton, we must also ask if we can afford to lose an opportunity for our residents to experience first-hand a sustainable food system, a vibrant community space, and an important connection to our heritage.

Newton Community Farm Open Space, Historic Preservation and Community Farming On Newton's Last Remaining Farmland

A Proposal by the Newton Conservators
Prepared by Jonathan Regosin

In a city with few remaining privately held open spaces, the purchase and protection of the Angino Farm presents a unique opportunity. By providing funding to purchase the last remaining farm in the city, the Community Preservation Committee will *preserve a scenic and historic landscape* that is part of the larger Winchester/Nahanton Streets Scenic Streetscape, *provide community housing*, and help to *sow the seeds of a community farming and education program* that has the potential to impact the quality of life of Newton residents for years to come. However, after several months of negotiation with the sellers, it is critical that we move quickly to purchase the Angino Farm, before the opportunity to protect this historic landscape and restore it as a working farm is lost forever.

Project Proposal

- The Newton Conservators respectfully request that the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) fund the acquisition of the entire 2.26 acre parcel, including historic house and barn, for the sum of \$2.5 million dollars, plus reimbursements for appraisal and other transaction costs estimated to be less than \$20,000. This represents a substantial overall reduction in the purchase price compared to what was initially presented to the CPA Committee.
- To address previous concerns about land valuation, we propose that CPC funding be contingent upon an appraisal establishing that the parcel value equals or exceeds the proposed purchase price.
- We propose that the City of Newton assume fee ownership of the land, while the Newton Conservation Commission would hold a Conservation Restriction on approximately 1½ acres as shown on the plan. There will also be Preservation Restriction which will preserve the historic character of both the house and barn in perpetuity.
- One of the most exciting aspects of this project has been the emergence of strong resident support for a community farming operation on the Angino property. Community farming would provide Newton residents of all ages with the opportunity to join together to produce, eat, and enjoy significant quantities of delicious and healthy fresh vegetables produced right here in our own community—and to develop a deeper appreciation of land and environment. The community farming operation would include educational programs for Newton school children, and contribute to feeding the hungry through establishment of a link with a local food pantry or soup kitchen.
- At the last CPC meeting, the Committee sought assurances that the proposed community farming operation would in fact be viable. In response to this concern, representatives of the Newton Conservators have joined with other interested parties, including representatives of the Newton Historical Society and the Green Decade Coalition to produce what we believe is an extremely credible and well researched Newton Community Farming Proposal. This document (attached) demonstrates that an economically self-sufficient farming operation can be successful at the Angino farm site.

- The farming proposal includes a plan for maintaining and utilizing the farmhouse and barn which would include at least one unit of community housing. In a matter of weeks, the farm committee has already raised \$15,000.00 in pledges toward farm start-up costs, including a pledge of \$7,500.00 by the Newton Conservators (contingent on CPC project funding). This represents a significant proportion of the anticipated annual farm budget (see attached supporting materials). In addition, eight (8) families have indicated their interest in joining the Newton CSA at \$500.00 per share.
- The Farm Planning Committee that has emerged would establish a non-profit organization to operate the farm. This entity would lease the farmland from the City (or other landowner) for \$1 per year. This is similar to the approach taken by other nearby communities with high land costs, including Concord, Natick, Waltham, and Weston.

Conclusion

In response to issues raised by the Community Preservation Committee about an earlier version of this proposal, the Conservators have made significant changes that dramatically increase the value of this project for the Newton community. These changes include:

1. the reduction in the purchase price by One Half Million Dollars (\$500,000.00) to Two and One Half Million Dollars (\$2,500,000.00).
2. A deed restriction to be placed on the residential unit to be created in the house requiring continuous use as community housing (length of restriction determined by State Statute).
3. A guarantee of no further development on the project site
4. A reversion of the buildings and $\frac{3}{4}$ of land, should the farm cease to be operated properly.
5. The establishment of an organization that has the expertise and dedication necessary to establish a viable community farming operation.

We urge the Community Preservation Committee to seize the opportunity that is now before us, and fund this important project. If we fail to act now, we are extremely unlikely to have a second chance.

Sincerely,
Jon Regosin

Farm Operating Proposal

at the Angino Farm

June 16, 2004

- 1) **Introduction** – Community farming, the intention to *participate* in the process of sustaining the land *and* a vibrant, healthy community, would provide Newton residents of all ages with the opportunity to join together to produce, eat, and enjoy significant quantities of delicious and healthy fresh vegetables produced right here in our own community—and to develop a deeper appreciation of land and environment.
- 2) **Two models for successful small-scale community farming**
 - a) **Summary of the two models**
 - i) **Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)** – People pay a lump sum and then receive a “share” of vegetables weekly. Shareholders get to know the farm at their weekly pickups, and often lend a hand picking vegetables or weeding. The Waltham CSA is on five acres and the Stearns Farm CSA in Framingham sells 150 shares on 2.75 acres. We estimate that the Newton farm could sell approximately 85-100 shares at about \$450-500 per share.
 - ii) **“Expanded” Cash Crop** – On small acreage, many farmers choose to grow a small number of lucrative crops (e.g., strawberries, specialty herbs and greens, flowers) and market them intensively. For example, there is a for-profit farming operation in eastern Massachusetts that produces flowers on about one acre. In Newton, the cash crop model could be employed, but with slightly more crop variety than is typical, in order to facilitate sales at the Cold Spring Park farmers market.
 - b) **Education and Feeding the Hungry** – Two important roles of *Community Farming*.
 - i) **Education** – Establishing and teaching about direct links between sustainable food production, local residents, and the health of both individuals and the environment is vital in urban settings. Education programs will be developed in cooperation with the Newton School Department and summer camps program. High school interns will be hired during the summer (See supporting materials for models of successful farm education programs and a list of Newton residents working on this).
 - ii) **Feeding the Hungry** – Community farms are capable of producing an abundance of food on small acreage, and there is a strong tradition of eastern Massachusetts community farms helping the hungry. One model for such an effort at the Newton farm would be for individuals to buy CSA shares, and then donate all or a portion of their share to a local food bank. The farm would arrange for delivery.
 - c) **Economics** – The farm will generate substantial revenue from production, and will supplement this with modest fundraising. This will enable the farm to cover costs, and we anticipate a modest surplus that will be dedicated, in part toward a fund to maintain the farm buildings. Reference model budget....Revenue from ed. Programs, grants, full time farm manager involved in fundraising and ed. Program development during off-season...
- 3) **Farm Buildings** –
 - a) **Uses:** A barn provides a sheltered work space as well as storage for tools, supplies and crops. It could also be used for creative, farm-based crafts and programs. Using the house to provide community housing year-round for a farmer is optimal for the efficient operation of the farm. Housing presents a constant challenge for farmers in this area, and the presence of the farmer year-round allows him/her to meet the constant demands of a farm operation with less time wasted in community and added transportation costs. Portions of the house shall be used as one (1) community housing unit, as well as office and community space to be used for CSA programs.
 - b) **Preservation:** We have formed a Historic Preservation subcommittee which will be charged with developing a long term comprehensive preservation plan for the house and barn as well as the ¼ acre of the property restricted by the Preservation Restriction (see map). This group will also handle the funding for the building maintenance as well as review all phases during preservation work. The committee will obtain funding to restore the buildings from sources such as the Massachusetts Historic Matching Grant program under a Non-Profit structure as well as the formation of a Charitable Partnership (not tax exempt) that will utilize available Tax Credits.

- c) **Maintenance:** The Farm may be able to generate revenue for building maintenance in time, but may facilitate fundraising (such as the \$65,000 raised at Stearns Farm for a barn). That portion of the farmhouse used for community housing will be rented to the farm manager at below market rate. This will help maintain farm viability by making it more affordable for the farm manager to live in the community. Rent goes towards building maintenance. If the farm manager turns down this housing, the unit will be rented to someone else at below market rent as defined by community housing guidelines (Income: 80-100% of community median), in exchange for being an active farm volunteer (this is “community housing,” a CPC interest).
- d) **Deed Restriction:** There will be a restriction placed on the deed that will require the continuous use of the one (1) unit of community housing to be created in the house to be always kept available within the “community housing” guidelines i.e. income within 80 to 100% of median for Newton. The longevity of this Deed Restriction is determined by State Statute. It is noted that this Deed Restriction may potentially conflict with a Reversion should it be necessary to cancel the farm lease. This needs further clarification.
- e) **Reversion:** Since money for the acquisition of the buildings and barn occupying the land (3/4 acre) shown as PR on the enclosed map, is to be provided by the Community Preservation Act Fund, it is understood that should it be determined by the Board of Trustees, formed to oversee the operation of the farm and maintain compliance with the lease, that the Newton Community Farm is no longer exhibiting reasonable effort in supporting the farming operation and/or has been determined to be wasting the property, that The City of Newton shall have the right to cancel the lease, occupy the property (honoring any lease term then in place on the community housing unit) and find other uses for this property, within the guidelines of the existing ordinances of the City of Newton, including sale as a private residence. Outside sale will be only after a full and exhaustive investigation of all other “public” uses that may be determined to be appropriate for this land and buildings. This “reversion” will not apply to the 1½ acres that are under the CR, which shall remain open space in perpetuity, whether under use as a farm or just laying fallow.

4) Conclusion

- a) Either the CSA or Cash Crop models can be successfully applied to the Angino Farm site. (see Supporting Materials for sample budget). The farm planning committee is leaning toward implementing the CSA model, because of the opportunity to sell shares up-front. However, some production would be reserved for sale at the Cold Spring Park Farmers Market, which will provide a critical venue to raise community awareness and garner support. The scope of potential education programs will be dependent upon ability to obtain funding through grants or School Department support.
- b) The ability to use the entire site, including the house and barn, provides the greatest opportunity for an outstanding farming and education program.
- c) There has been a groundswell of support for the community farming concept. A “Planning and Advisory Committee” has been established. It is composed of farming experts from both inside and outside of the community, as well as other individuals whose dedication and expertise will make the farm a success (see Supporting Materials).
- d) The Planning Committee received a \$7,500 “challenge grant” from a Newton resident to help with start up costs. In response, the Newton Conservators Board of Directors has pledged an additional \$7,500, contingent on CPC project funding. This \$15,000 represents an excellent start to a fundraising campaign to fund farm start-up costs.

Farm Operating Proposal

Supporting Materials

Planning and Advisory Committee

Farming Subcommittee

Brian Donahue A noted environmentalist, he helped develop the Land's Sake and Green Power programs in Weston, MA, where he lives with his family. He is an associate professor of American Environmental Studies at Brandeis University and the author of Reclaiming the Commons: Community Farms and Forests in a New England Town (Yale University Press, 1999), and The Great Meadow: Farmers and the Land in Colonial Concord (Yale University Press, 2004).

Gretta Anderson Currently serving as President of the Board of Directors of Community Farms Outreach in Waltham, MA, She is strongly dedicated to supporting the growth of community farms.

Vilen Feinhaus is a Newton resident who has extensive experience farming in the former Soviet Union, and is widely renowned as a farming expert by his fellow gardeners at the Nahanton Park community gardens. According to his son, farming is Vilen's passion, and he looks forward to working with us to make the Newton Community Farm a success.

Kerisa Perazella has been an organic farmer for four years. Currently the assistant farmer at Stearns Farm CSA in Framingham, Kerisa also worked at Vanguarden CSA, and as the assistant farmer at Land's Sake. Previously she worked as an environmental planner for the city of Springfield, where she managed projects for the *Sustainable Springfield* initiative, including rail-trail development and alternative fuel vehicle fleets. She maintains a strong interest in urban/suburban land use.

Leah Birch Postman is a Newton Resident and long time community farming advocate. She has been active in community farming efforts in a number of neighboring communities, and will be providing expertise on farming operations and organization.

Lynda Simkins As director of Natick Community Organic Farm since 1982, She has fostered the growth of the farm as a Natick treasure. She has developed both in-school and on-site educational programs, and has served the farming community as President of the Northeast Organic Farmer's Association.

Jon Regosin is a Newton resident and member of the Board of Directors of the Newton Conservators. He has worked on land and habitat conservation issues in New England since 1994, and has extensive grant-writing experience. He also grows much of his family's summer produce on a small plot adjacent to his Newton home.

Elyse Rosenblum is a Newton resident and parent in the Newton public schools who works on education policy issues at the national level. Her children attend summer programs at the Natick Community Farm, and she is a strong advocate of a farming, food, and nutrition education program for the Newton schools.

Megan Whitman is a former Farm Teacher at the Casey Farm in Saunderstown, and will provide advice on educational programming.

Chris Yoder has been farming since 1988, and spent two seasons (1989-1990) farming with Jerry Angino. He is a founder of Vanguarden CSA in Dover, MA, where he lives and farms. He serves on the Board of Directors of Waltham Community Farm Outreach, and on the Board of Natick Community Farms.

John Westbrook An electrical and electronic engineer, has been a Newton resident for 7 years and is a member of the Green Decade Coalition, serving on the Sunergy Committee and has a strong commitment to sustainable energy.

Historic Preservation Subcommittee:

“The historic restriction will be on the entire farmstead, or the historic landscape *and* buildings, in toto, not just the building facades. The property will essentially become a mini historic district with all changes to structures which includes walls, driveways, grading and buildings, except paint colors and plantings coming under the review of the historic commission. This what is required to protect what we are trying to preserve for the community.”

Don Lang, June 23rd, 2004

Donald Lang AIA, Chairman: Newton resident since 1987. Registered architect since 1979, President of Donald Lang Architects, Inc. (www.dlaboston.com) with concentrations in residential, historic renovations and food service design. Licensed builder and real estate developer for 12 years (1970s and 1980s) specializing in renovation and adaptive reuse housing projects in Newton, Brookline and Cambridge. Member of American Institute of Architects, Boston Society of Architects, Massachusetts Restaurant Association. Serves on Chestnut Hill Historic District Commission and Newton Historic Commission.

John S. Rodman: Mr. Rodman is currently the Chairman of the Newton Historical Commission. He has served as a member of the Chestnut Hill Historic District Commission and the Newton Historical Commission since March of 1992, having been appointed by Mayors Mann, Concannon and Cohen. These two Commissions regularly address issues respecting architectural integrity, the preservation of historic resources, and the appropriateness of proposed renovations. Mr. Rodman's Boston law practice has provided the additional perspectives of condominium conversions, Chapter 11 business reorganizations and facilitating the practical resolution of commercial disputes.

Dr. Gene Rubin: As a neighbor to the Farm and also as the President of the Ledgebrook Condominium Association, Dr. Rubin also has a deep sense of the Historical significance of the Angino Farm buildings.

Eric Reenstierna: President of the Newton Conservators and professional Appraiser.

Duane Hillis: Neighbor and member of Newton Conservators, President of The Friends of Nahanton Park.

Model Budget¹

Newton Community Farm CSA

<u>Income</u>	
85 shares at \$500 / share (annually)	\$42,500.00
Sales at Cold Spring Farmers' Market	5,000.00
Rental Income from Community Housing Unit ²	9,600.00
Grants, donations, membership support	<u>15,000.00</u>
Total Income	\$72,100.00
<u>Expenses³</u>	
Labor ⁴	\$49,600.00
Miscellaneous equipment and tools	4,500.00
Lime, compost, fertilizer	3,500.00
Seeds and plant stock	3,500.00
Water bill	2,500.00
Surplus for building maintenance fund	<u>8,500.00</u>
Total Expenses	\$72,100.00

¹ Funds limited to educational programming only. Additional programming will require additional funding sources.

² Rental income is shown as part of the Farm Managers salary. If the unit is rented out the rent will be Income.

³ Excludes one-time start up costs associated with first season of operation.

⁴ Includes full-time farm manager to be involved in fundraising and grant-writing during the off-season, as well as one seasonal employee. Assumes below market rate housing for farm manager in farmhouse.

Land's Sake
27 Crescent Street
Weston, MA 02493

HISTORY Founded and incorporated as a nonprofit in 1980, with a progressive vision of land preservation with the participation of young people. A strong proponent of open space preservation, Land's Sake activities encompass not only community farming and education program's, but management of the town's forests and trail system as well. Land's Sake is a proponent of a progressive model of suburban forestry management; they view -- and manage -- Weston's forests as a whole entity, despite the physical separation between many noncontiguous parcels. Land's Sake works collaboratively with the town of Weston and it's Conservation Commission, as well as the Weston Forest and Trail Association and the Weston Land Trust to optimize the potential for sustainability and enjoyment of Weston's open space -- for now, as well as future generations.

OPERATION Land's Sake operates a small but *busy* farm stand on the old Case estate. This stand also serves as the "home-base" for the popular pick-your-own berry harvest -- strawberries in early summer, and raspberries stretching from late summer until first frost. Land's Sake also sells a "picking pass" -- allowing members to pay an additional fixed price, to partake in the harvest throughout the season. These come in three flavors: flower picking-pass, produce pass, or a combination "run of the farm" pass.

Land's Sake now operates the Green Power program, originally founded in Weston in 1970 (a decade before Land's Sake) with a two-prong mission: growing and delivering ultra low-cost fresh produce to inner-city residents, and involving suburban youth with the land. Inherent to this mission, was the involvement of young people with community service, and community outreach. Land's Sake continues to deliver about 20,000 pounds of produce to Boston's homeless shelters each year. Green Power continues to offer popular and affordable summer programs for middle-school age children, providing an opportunity for direct engagement with water, dirt, and sunshine -- and the wondrous surprises that they produce on a farm.

In conjunction with the Weston Public Schools, Land's Sake also offers educational programming during the academic year. There is a range of offerings, from kindergartners -- who visit the farm four times during the year, focussing on exploring their environment with their senses, to high schoolers -- who in conjunction with environmental science curricula might focus on forestry or orienteering.

NATICK COMMUNITY ORGANIC FARM
117 Eliot Street
Natick, MA 01760

HISTORY Natick Community Organic Farm (NCOF) has been rooted on its current site since 1976, when the town purchased the twenty-seven acre non-working farm adjacent to the Memorial School. Over the ensuing quarter century, many projects have expanded the capacity of the existing farmstead to serve as a vital resource for Natick and surrounding communities. From the restoration of the historic barn (circa 1815, restoration 1976 -- with Bicentennial Committee support), to the construction of a modern greenhouse (passive solar 1978, updated 1992), NCOF has grown respecting both preservation and innovation. Most recently (2002), capitalizing on its deep community support, NCOF was able to plan, raise funds for, and complete a \$280,00 addition -- within an astounding eighteen month time span.

OPERATION From its inception, NCOF has been committed to young people. By the late seventies, NCOF had garnered national recognition, with awards from the National Institute of Drug Abuse for its model of drug prevention, as well as from the Department of Health Education and Welfare. In-school (elementary and middle) farm programs started in the early eighties, as did summer and school vacation programs that continue to be popular. With the growth of home-schooling in the eighties, NCOF offered abundant opportunities for inquiry-based projects -- ever-changing with the seasons.

The community garden plots, as well as the Spring and Harvest festivals offer people of all ages a place to share their delight in the timeless wonder of a farm. Using environmentally sustainable farming methods since 1980, NCOF achieved national organic certification in 1992. For the thousands of annual visitors, this has made the benefits -- both personal and ecological -- of participating in the process of locally-grown, organic foods accessible.

NCOF 2

ORGANIZATION Conceived and started by volunteers, ongoing growth and smooth operation are now conducted by five groups, working collaboratively:

- Board of Directors - Comprised of volunteers, responsible for fiscal procedures, long-term planning. Reservoir of skills and energy.
- Farm Staff - Director, assistant director, partially Salaried by Dept. of Recreation and Human Services.
- Town of Natick - Recreation and Human Services - general oversight, staff salaries/benefits
- School Department - ongoing cooperation, lessor
- Public Works - water supply, trash removal, plowing
- Advisory Board - Volunteers with wide-ranging expertise; help ensure influx of new ideas and expand range of support.
- Volunteers - Essential, enthusiastic and broad contributions

BUDGET Originally founded with a vision to serve young people, federal programs (e.g. CETA) were a significant source of funding. With the disappearance of these sources, other income strategies have been developed. Staffing is the largest ongoing expense -- about 60% of the annual budget, followed by crops and animal feeds, which comprise about 25% of expenses. Incorporated since 1985, NCOF is a registered nonprofit with an annual operating budget of roughly \$150,000, from three approximately equal sources:

- Town of Natick - Staff salaries, liability coverage, public works
- Produce/ Product Sales and Programs - Seedlings, veggies, eggs, meat; garden plots; educational programs
- Fund-Raising/ Donations - Memberships. Board of Directors oversees ongoing outreach/solicitation.

"Thus far, the Farm has been able to maintain itself in a financially stable manner. Each year the budget grows a little larger as a result of inflation and increased costs of services and products. However, in terms of what the Farm provides in hands-on learning experiences for the community, in-school programs, festivals, special events, environmental activities, organic food products, and an interesting recreational space, it is a real bargain." ("Farming With the Community: An Operations Manual" , 1992, Martin Gursky, Natick Community Farm)

**URBAN FARMS:
SOUTHSIDE COMMUNITY LAND TRUST
THE FARM AT LONG ISLAND SHELTER
THE FOOD PROJECT**

These farms were chosen to illustrate the effectiveness of the community farming model, which is both strong enough and flexible enough to adapt to settings which might seem less than ideal. These farms have all emerged on small parcels of land, some of which were buried in trash and contaminated with heavy metals and other toxins. Yet with community commitment and perseverance, urban farms offer not only the promise of plentiful fresh produce, but the opportunity for intergenerational and transcultural community building.

The Southside Community Land Trust operates in South Providence, RI. For a decade and a half, they have been reclaiming land -- transforming blighted vacant lots into vibrant community gardens. The Land Trust sponsors educational programs for adults as well as children. The community's diversity requires that the newsletter be printed in four languages. This land has afforded immigrants the important opportunity to grow foods important to their heritage that would not be commercially available. The Land Trust now runs City Farm on a mere half-acre. Small, to be sure, but large enough to operate youth summer programs and support school-year visits. Local residents can learn organic farming and gardening skills by exchanging their farm labor time for either produce or education. City Farm sells herbs and flowers at two local Farmer's Markets, as well as donating produce to food pantries and soup kitchens. This year, City Farm has launched a CSA targeted towards low-income participation.

The Farm at Long Island Shelter is a four-acre farm operated by the Boston Department of Public Health on Long Island, the largest of the Boston Harbor Islands. This certified organic farm produces about 30,000 pounds of fresh produce annually which feeds the 850 homeless individuals served by the shelter. About 15% of the harvest is sold at farmer's markets in Boston and Quincy, which helps fund this venture. The farm also affords the Culinary Arts program participants the opportunity to gain experience with a wide array of premium quality fresh ingredients -- which would otherwise be cost prohibitive. Clearly, this training is a great boon to residents' employment potential, and has led to employment within the restaurant, food, and floriculture and landscaping industries. The Farm welcomes volunteers from school groups or corporate or civic service projects to work along side of program participants to grow this vision.

URBAN 2

The Food Project began in Lincoln, MA in 1991, dedicated to "creating personal and social change through sustainable agriculture." Offering summer youth internships and year-round opportunities, Food Project has been hailed nationally as a model for engaging young people from diverse backgrounds in the shared endeavor of feeding the community. Their support is as far reaching as the accolades they have garnered, including national charitable foundations, such as the Merck Family Fund. In addition to the 21 acre site in Lincoln, they also farm a 1.4 acre farm in Roxbury and a 1.2 acre farm in Dorchester. It is easy for us to think of Lincoln as farmland, but harder to recall that Dorchester and Roxbury were once home to large farms as well. The Food Projects vision helps us reclaim that facet of our heritage. In 1998, with a federal EPA grant, Food Project began the process of "reclaiming" land in the Dudley Street Neighborhood. Partnering with the community-based Dudley Street Initiative, Food Project's advanced interns have also worked closely with individual gardeners to bring new hope to this community.

The Food Project quotes an unnamed sixteen year old girl in their Spring/Summer 2004 newsletter, commenting on the importance of working on the farm:

"Out here, everyone is equal, because no one really knows about farming when you start. This isn't competitive either, like sports. We share a goal --boys, girls, people from the city, from the suburbs. We have to get along and get the work done because people need our food. Farming also teaches kids a lot about how to care for something. If you don't do your work, the plants die or get choked out and can't grow. Farming is also really hard work. You have to push yourself beyond limits you think you can't cross. Farming takes a lot of energy, but you feel good about yourself when you finish a hard day's work."

Southside Land Trust's City Farm, The Farm at Long Island Shelter, and The Food Project's urban farm sites are small farms with a big impact. Each of these farms has demonstrated the capacity for a small parcel of land to grow bountiful nourishing food, thereby strengthening our bodies. And each of these farms has offered a place for young and old alike to learn about the direct connection between tending the land responsibly and caring for ourselves well and to experience the wonder inherent in the transformation from seed to salad. Finally, each of these farms is a successful model for strengthening our communities by sharing in food production.

Community Farms Outreach
Waltham Fields Community Farm
240 Beaver Street
Waltham, MA 02452

HISTORY Waltham Fields Community Farm (WFCF) was founded in 1995, by a group of volunteers who had been active in local hunger relief efforts. Leasing four acres from the University of Massachusetts Field Station in Waltham, in their first year they harvested almost seven tons of produce, all of which was donated to area food banks. In 1996, they were able to purchase some equipment and hire two interns, but had a disappointing harvest. This led to the decision to launch a Community Supported Agriculture program in 1997, with the goal to both increase production, and to provide the financial base to hire a farm manager thereby optimizing that goal. With an experienced farm manager on board, not only did production increase fivefold, but donations doubled. Now in its tenth season, operating as a 185-member CSA, WFCF donates fully *one-third* of their fresh organically-grown harvest annually to local soup kitchens, food pantries, and homeless shelters.

OPERATION An active service learning program encourages participation from community groups -- both civic and religious. In 2003, over 6,000 volunteer hours were donated, in support of CFO's mission. The Children's Learning Garden Program, a joint program with the Cambridge Camping Association, was designed to offer city kids an opportunity to engage in hands-on farm activities.

ORGANIZATION In 1996, Community Farms Outreach (CFO) incorporated as a nonprofit corporation responsible for the operation of WFCF. CFO not only manages WFCF, but also acts to support community farming regionally, in accordance with their stated mission: *to promote, support and manage community farms and farms in the community*. WFCF continues to employ a farm manager, as well as an administrative development manager. Two seasonal interns provide increased farm labor during the peak growing season. An active volunteer Board of Directors oversees operation and long-term planning.

BUDGET For 2003, 57% of income was from the CSA and fruit share sales, 11% from contributions (business, organizational and private), 30% from foundation grants. With a budget of approximately \$136,000, 53% covered personnel, here again, the largest expense. Agricultural production (greenhouse supplies, seeds, soil, compost), and farm equipment (maintenance, repair, rental, fuel) were each about 10% of the budget. Operating expenses and rent (land, greenhouse, storage, office) accounted for 5% each. Program expenses accounted for 3% of budget.

Stearns Farm CSA

History

The mission of Stearns Farm CSA is to preserve the historic Stearns Farm, with a history that begins when Timothy Stearns purchased a large tract of Framingham land in 1723. His grandson built the historic house (1787) across the street and it was in the family until Margaret Welch assumed ownership in the early 1900s.

Penelope Turton, a friend of Mrs. Welch, came from England and founded Stearns Organic Farm in 1954. The land was granted to the Sudbury Valley Trustees by Margaret Welch in 1975. Penelope was introduced to the CSA model in 1991, and sold 10 shares that year. In 1994, the farm was incorporated as a non-profit as "Stearns Organic Farm CSA," now "Stearns Farm CSA."

Operation

The farm now supports 150 shareholders on 2 ½ acres of SVT land. The shares also include a flower share which, can be purchased individually, and which is intended to spread awareness on the ecological benefits of purchasing flowers locally. The farm has a huge emphasis on nurturing community, and does this by requiring all shareholders to put in 12 hours of work. The farm also offers work-for-shares, where people work 3 hours a week all season in exchange for a share. The season is punctuated by community celebrations and work days.

Budget

Stearns has an annual income of around \$63,000, most of which comes from purchased shares, a small fee paid by work-for-shares, flower shares, and payments made in lieu of work. A board is working on fundraising for a new barn and other capital expenses.



by Nina Danforth
at Lands Sake. Weston



by Nina Danforth