

THE ISLAND AGRARIAN

NEWS FROM SAN JUAN ISLAND GRANGE #966

**GROWERS, MAKERS, AND KEEPERS WORKING TOGETHER
FOR MUTUAL BENEFIT AND COMMUNITY BUILDING**



BEAVERTON MARSH FARM UPDATE

*Potential areas of activity for
Phase 2 at Beaverton Farm*

By Bill Severson

Last month we introduced the Beaverton Farm concept with a mission statement:

Beaverton Marsh Farm is a commons where San Juan Islanders work and learn together to grow food to feed the community using the principles of regenerative agriculture.

So what has the team been up to since then? Well, we are in the final stretch of writing the proposal to submit to the San Juan County Conservation Land Bank. We are

figuring out costs and developing a farm plan. And we need to determine the best management practices we want to implement on the land. For example, how do we begin to prepare the soil when grass has been growing there for a hundred years?

We are also asking ourselves what can we accomplish and fund in the first year.

Continued on next page



San Juan Island Grange #966 is a grassroots, non-partisan advocacy group supporting a resilient community on San Juan Island.

The Grange serves San Juan Islanders with legislative programs and community activities, such as talent and craft contests, scholarships, and more. You don't have to be a farmer to belong, though many are. Our elected officers are volunteers, and our "work" is done through committees. The heart of our mission is fostering community well-being, and we enjoy gathering to celebrate this.

We are a 501(c)(8) organization, accepting donations towards our programs and to maintain Grange Hall, in downtown Friday Harbor.

Officers of San Juan Island Grange #966 may be found at sanjuangrange.org/officers.html

Our bylaws and resolutions may be found at sanjuangrange.org/structure.html

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Beaverton Marsh Farm continued

And what else do we need to succeed? Will a project manager help to get us off on the right foot, write grants, and stay on track? And what infrastructure do we need to get started?

I envision a vibrant, green, educational demonstration laboratory, bringing our community together around increasing production of quality food.

Court Bell

So far, we agree that we will begin with a 100-square-foot garden area with temporary deer fencing that can easily

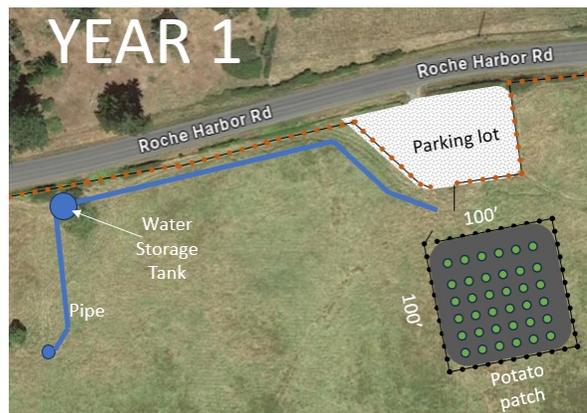
be moved later. We will put down a tarp to kill the grass and weight the tarp with grow bags filled with soil and

planted with potatoes. The grow bags will give us a wireworm free planting "zone." In the fall, we'll harvest the potatoes, take up the tarp, and prepare the soil to plant garlic—the first food crop actually planted in the soil on the farm.

When I see Grangers working so hard to bring the Beaverton Marsh project to fruition, I am amazed at their un-selfed, forward-thinking dedication. This is a once-in-a-lifetime project that will have positive generational impact. It aligns perfectly with the Grange mission and deserves our support.

Nirmela Arsem

Our plan is to start slowly but be ready to expand fast if would-be growers start lining up at the gate.



Humble beginnings at Beaverton Marsh Farm

Letter from the President

We propose meeting together, talking together, working together, buying together, selling together, and, in general, acting together for our mutual protection and advancement, as occasion may require.

So states the Declaration of Purposes of the National Grange, adopted on February 11, 1874, one hundred fifty years ago this month. From the founding of the Grange, its members have worked together to establish cooperatives, insurance companies, grain elevators and mills, and other ventures in order to "bring producers and consumers, farmers and manufacturers, into the most direct and friendly relations possible. Hence, we must dispense with a surplus of middlemen, not that we are unfriendly to them, but we do not need them."

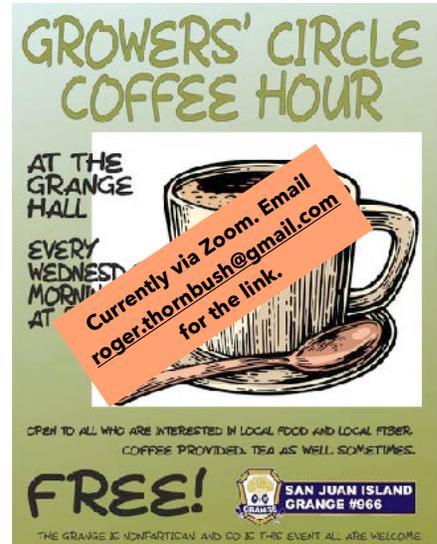
Our own Grange farmers market booth sells produce, plants, and handmade items, bringing producers and consumers into the most direct of relationships. Our feed co-op cuts out the middleman by importing organic feeds directly from the mill. We have made cooperative purchases of seed potatoes, mason bee tubes, fruit tree rootstocks, and spices.

Our members have come together for tree grafting parties, cider pressings, and fruit drying sessions. We've baked pies, made soup, and poured candles together. Our commercial kitchen allows us to make large batches of pasta sauce or chili to be divided and taken home by members.

The Harvest Table at the potluck and meeting would be a good place to expand our sharing. We've been unloading surplus zucchinis or extra iris tubers at the Harvest table for years, but imagine baking an extra dozen cookies or an extra quart of soup for your fellow Grangers to take home. The Harvest Table could blossom into a veritable barter fair at each meeting.

From its inception, the Grange has encouraged us to work together for mutual benefit. Let's see if we can get really good at it in 2024!

Roger Ellison, 2024 President



Notices

**2nd Annual Seedy Sunday
Seed Swap and
Give Away**
February 25, 1-3pm
at Grange Hall

Bring your friends,
bring your seeds.
Go home with your
friends' seeds!

Grow together!

Anyone possibly interested in working a plot of land at Beaverton Marsh Farm (see page 1), please contact Court at cannoncreek@yahoo.com.

For more info. on the project, contact Bruce Robinson at brobinson@rockisland.com.

Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop

While fruit trees are still dormant, now is the time to get them in shape for the coming year.

Join us for our winter Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop led by Madrona Murphy of Kwiaht, with Greg Meyer and Kevin Murphy as instructors. This will be a hands-on workshop for winter pruning of fruit trees, led by several experts in the field.

The event will be at Seagate Farm, located at 300 Sandwith Road on San Juan Island (near the Beaverton Valley and Sandwith Road intersection) on Sunday, February 11, 1:30 - 4pm. Funding for the workshop is from a WSDA specialty crop block grant.

Make sure to dress for the weather, wear mud boots, and bring whatever you need to be comfortable outdoors (water, extra clothes, etc.). Bring pruning tools for the hands-on pruning and so we can also talk about tool maintenance and appropriate tools.

This is a free event, but tipping the instructors is encouraged.

There is no need to register, but you can email John at seagatefarm.wa@gmail.com with any questions.

Hope to see you on February 11 for a great workshop!

Second Annual Seedy Sunday

What: Free seeds! This is an opportunity to share and receive seeds within our community. Herb, vegetable, and flower seeds are welcome. If you grew out seeds last year, bring some to pass along. If you ordered more than you need of seeds that don't store well, this is a chance to give them a good home. Come "seed free" to get seeds your neighbors grew, as well as seeds from the Grange seed bank.

When: Sunday, Feb. 25, 2 - 4 pm

Where: Grange Hall

Who: Everybody, not just Grangers

Why: It's fun! Humans have been saving and exchanging seeds for 10,000 years. It's cheap! Seed swaps are inexpensive ways to get seeds, try new varieties, and chat up your neighbors about what varieties work in their gardens. You can get locally adapted seeds! If you and your neighbors choose the best growing and tasting vegetables to save seeds from, eventually these become adapted to our island, something that big seed companies can never do.

What to bring: Seeds if you have some to share, envelopes to take seeds home in, and a pen or pencil.



DORMANT FRUIT TREE PRUNING WORKSHOP!

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2024,
FROM 1:30 TO 4:00PM.**

**SEAGATE FARM LOCATED AT
300 SANDWITH ROAD
ON SAN JUAN ISLAND**

**Hands-on tree pruning workshop with Madrona Murphy of Kwiaht,
Greg Meyer and Kevin Murphy as instructors.**

Funding by a WSDA specialty crop block grant.

Be sure to dress warm, wear mud boots, and bring pruning tools!

No need to register, but email seagatefarm.wa@gmail.com for questions.

2024 Grange Budget Ready for Vote on February 7

By Roger Ellison

Budget making has been an interactive process involving members, the Treasurer, and the Executive Committee, which will culminate in a vote to accept at the February 7 regular meeting. Please come to ratify the hard work of your fellow Grangers!

The process started with a meeting on January 14 at Grange Hall. Treasurer Boyd Pratt started off with a presentation on how our budget works and how much money we have in the bank. He then passed out last year's budget, showing funds allocated in 2023 versus what was spent that year. Attendees agreed: the 2023 budget could serve as a guide, but we would start over to build the 2024 budget. Boyd showed us that after expected expenses and income, we would have \$249,000 at the end of 2024. But how much should we consider spending, and how much should we keep on hand?

**It's a cliff-hanger!
See next page!**

Budget continued

After discussion, we agreed to keep enough money in our accounts to operate an entire year without income, with an additional \$50,000 in reserve for an emergency. That meant that of the \$249,000 we expect to have for 2024, we should keep \$160,000 in reserve, leaving \$89,000 for the 2024 budget.

Vice President Jessa Madosky then conducted a survey of meeting attendees, asking each one to propose three items to fund. After consolidating similar items, we then gathered in teams to determine how much in dollars and volunteer hours each item might cost. We found that in the final tally our "wish list" totaled \$105,000, well over the limit we had imposed on ourselves.

Without enough time at the meeting for "horse trading," we decided to give the numbers to the Executive Committee to make a recommendation for a budget and present it at the February 7 regular meeting for acceptance by the members. The meeting then adjourned.



Photos: Bruce Robinson

After deliberation, the EC has proposed this budget: \$30,000 for the Grange Hall building, including \$10,000 for architectural plans and permits and \$20,000 for repairs and improvements; \$6,800 for kitchen improvements, including \$4,500 for a commercial dehydrator; \$800 for an additional cider press; \$1500 for kitchen equipment; \$2,450 for seed projects, including \$1,250 for the seed bank, \$200 for seed exchange events, and \$1,000 for a seed library; \$3,500 for programs and events; \$2,750 for grants and assistance; \$1,250 for the 3rd Saturday Contra Dance; \$1,500 for the Scholarship Committee, and \$11,630 for the Beaverton Marsh Farm Project. The total of recommended proposals is \$59880, leaving \$29,120 available for additional proposals.



The EC will decide on allocating funds for the following items after more information is submitted: \$10,000 for a building project manager, \$10,000 for a Beaverton Farm Project manager, and a \$7,500 contribution to the Food Hub's Food distribution site.

I would like to thank the two dozen Grangers who participated in this year's budget process, especially Boyd and Jessa, who conducted the meeting, Lovel Pratt who took notes, and Executive Committee members Patty Garcia, Bill Severson, and Doug Rowan who made the final recommendation.

Notes from the Growers' Coffee Hour

By Roger Ellison

On December 20, we talked about **comfrey** in winter. You can remove the brown leaves, you can mulch over them, or you can leave them be. It will make little difference to the comfrey plant, which is secure within its tight fist of bud and root. Suki described her way of **sowing seeds** in plastic milk jugs, saying that seeds can be started now.

Keith said nighttime slug patrols this time of year can make a big dent in their population.

Growers listed their **favorite catalogs**: Baker Creek, Territorial, Fedco, Kitazawa.

Keith warned us against doing **dormant season fruit tree pruning** now, saying that we should wait until the trees have experienced more cold. This year that might not be until February.

John suggested [Trees of Antiquity](#) and [Orange Pippin](#) as **good sources of fruit tree information** on the web.

On December 27, we talked about a *Washington Post* article on whether **climate change is speeding up**. There was general agreement that, yep, things are moving faster.

Growers are **harvesting lettuce, chard, collards, parsley, kale, and carrots now**. Nancy said that in her garden, the chard is tentatively putting out tiny new leaves, but the kalettes are going strong, untouched by the freeze or rain! **Kalettes should be topped** in the same way as Brussels sprouts, to concentrate growth in the buds. [Kalettes & Flower Sprouts | Growing Instructions | Tech Sheet | Johnny's Selected Seeds \(johnnyseeds.com\)](#). Kat found that **red chard is hardier** than the other colors.



Nancy's kalettes are on a roll!

Alice has **sprouting acorns** to share! Steve says that **changes to our island climate will favor oaks**. Oak savannas on our island were managed by fire: [Indigenous fire practices once shaped the Northwest — and they might again | Crosscut](#)

Wilding by Isabella Tree is getting some good press right now. [Wilding by Isabella Tree | Goodreads](#)

The Beaverton Marsh Farm team is considering **using used billboard tarps to kill grass and prepare land** for vegetable beds. [Occultation: Weeding With Tarps - Hobby Farms](#)



JOB DESCRIPTION:

MARKET MANAGER IS A PART-TIME POSITION WITH PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR OVERSEEING FARMERS MARKET DAY OPERATIONS, BASIC FINANCIAL RECORD KEEPING, MARKETING, AND INTERACTING WITH VENDORS AND THE PUBLIC. WE ARE SEEKING A WELL-ORGANIZED AND SELF-MOTIVATED INDIVIDUAL WHO WORKS WELL WITH OTHERS AND BRINGS A PASSION FOR STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY AND LOCAL AGRICULTURE.

SKILLS & QUALIFICATIONS PREFERRED

- **PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH FARMERS MARKETS OR OTHER RELATED NON-PROFITS**
- **STRONG VERBAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS**
- **FRIENDLY AND POSITIVE ATTITUDE AND AN ABILITY TO THINK QUICKLY, SOLVE PROBLEMS, AND WORK WELL WITH VENDORS, CUSTOMERS, VOLUNTEERS, AND STAFF**
- **SELF-MOTIVATED AND ABILITY TO THINK CREATIVELY**
- **TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND ABILITY TO MULTI-TASK**
- **PROFICIENCY IN SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM), ONLINE OFFICE PROGRAMS LIKE QUICKBOOKS ONLINE & GOOGLE DOCS/DRIVE, MICROSOFT OFFICE, AND/OR THE ABILITY TO LEARN TO USE OTHER SOFTWARE.**
- **FAMILIARITY WITH MARKETING & PROMOTING.**
- **ACCURACY IN PERFORMING MATH AND CLERICAL TASKS, BASIC FILING.**
- **ABILITY TO LIFT AND CARRY 50LBS. ABILITY TO STAND AND WALK FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME.**
- **ABLE TO HANDLE EXPOSURE TO ELEMENTS AND ABLE TO WORK OUTDOORS IN ANY WEATHER.**
- **BASIC MATH AND CLERICAL TASKS**

To apply please contact SJIFARMERSMARKET@GMAIL.COM