

Schroader, Kathy



From: Orjiako, Oliver
Sent: Tuesday, September 08, 2015 8:17 AM
To: Euler, Gordon; Alvarez, Jose
Cc: Schroader, Kathy
Subject: FW: Land Use forum letter

FYI, and Kathy for the index. Thanks.

From: Jacqueline Freeman [mailto:FriendlyHaven@sisna.com]
Sent: Sunday, September 06, 2015 2:36 PM
To: Madore, David; Stewart, Jeanne; Mielke, Tom; Alyssa.hoyt@gmail.com
Subject: Land Use forum letter

David Madore
Jeanne Stewart
Tom Mielke

We have owned our farm in Battle Ground since 2002. Originally it was a family farm and we have been able to continue to work the land in sustainable agriculture.

Many people ask us what we grow, and they do that with the expectation that we're going to give them one answer -- like "apples" or "corn" or "sheep," but our answer is different. We are a family farm that is formed with the understanding that a farm works best when it has **DIVERSITY**. The entire system works to support itself with plenty of overlap of resources within the farm.

We have a ten acre farm and we lease eight more acres nearby for livestock pasture. On our land we have dairy and beef cows, dairy goats, broiler chickens, laying hens, seasonal turkeys and many honeybees. We grow orchard fruit -- apples, pears, peaches, plums, grapes, goumi, seaberries, thornless blackberries, currants, melons and cantaloupe, yellow and red raspberries. We raise squash, peppers, cucumbers, salad greens, beets, potatoes, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower and 44 varieties of tomatoes. We also grow a wide variety of herbs and flowers, and always try a few interesting things (this year we are growing peanuts!) to see how far we can expand our farm.

We have plenty of fruit shrubs and flowering bushes to provide forage for our very healthy honeybees. This last is a challenge for many beekeepers in Clark County who often rely on nature to feed the bees. We are proactive and plant heavily in the summer and fall so our bees have food when the season goes dry.

We make our own compost from animal manures and vegetation we cull from the land. We use this finished product to enrich the gardens and animal pastures. These days many people don't understand the value of composted manure and choose instead to use chemical fertilizers which leach into our local water with dire effects. Compost is more natural way which makes the soil stronger and the fruits and vegetables more resistant to pests and diseases.

Our system is successful and we have a bounty. We sell our food in Clark County and donate surplus to the Food Bank. Our system works because we have enough land to access each crop or livestock's unique aspects. The cows and goats provide milk, cheese and beef, and we feed the surplus to our chickens for extra protein.

The goats are voracious browsers who keep the blackberries down. The cows and all our livestock donate tons of manure that is the primary ingredient in our soil enriching compost. Even apple trees are multi-faceted: they provide fruit, cider, shelter and food for our turkeys who in turn keep the trees free of bugs. Even damaged fruit gets re-purposed to livestock treats and then into compost piles.

With a small piece of land, we would not be able to engage each of these farm components to their maximum use. Animals take up a lot of space, especially when we rotate them through different pastures using principles of sound pasture management. The animals are a very important part of making sure we have nutrient dense soil for the food that we grow, which makes it healthier than conventional or imported food.

If larger parcels are broken down into smaller pieces, you won't find many people raising animals, yet animals are important to the health of the soil. Without animals on the land, the only choices are to supplement the ever-weakening soils with imported fertilizers and to put the water supply at risk.

We also want to point out something that needs to be at the front of your minds as you make these choices about which plan to follow. As part of the ancient Willamette Valley floodplain, the lands that are here are some of the richest and best growing soils in the world. Every time some of this soil is turned into residential or commercial areas, that incredible soil is lost to agriculture forever.

We know you aren't farmers and that it's hard for you to understand what that loss of perfect soil means, but it makes a grown farmer cry to know this land will never again grow food for anyone, man or animal. In some parts of Clark County we have topsoil that is a dozen, even twenty feet deep. This is highly unusual and a tremendous resource for Clark County and should be protected to the hilt.

Alternatives 4 and 2 may look like good ideas but they will have a devastating effect on local agriculture because they will break up agricultural land into parcels too small to sustain a healthy and productive food system. Please look instead to ways that will allow MORE sustainable farming in Clark County and increase our access to healthy land and healthy food.

Jacqueline & Joseph Freeman

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"Where Spirit and Nature Meet"

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