

A Proposed Forest Management Plan for The Evergreen State College

Organic Farm

January 1983

Introduction

For the development of models of integrated agriculture and forestry management systems, The Evergreen State College Organic Farm offers an excellent physical setting. Examples of specific and mixed forest types of various ages may be seen in the surrounding areas of the college campus. The soils are not untypical of Southwest Washington and many marginal but potentially productive lands to be found in the Maritime Northwest. The development of an adapted agriculture for this region calls for a special understanding and treatment of land, plant and animal life and the discussion accompanying this preliminary proposal will outline some of these opportunities to teach and demonstrate appropriate annual and perennial cropping systems, as well as to observe natural succession and the interactions of species.

The Plan

The Evergreen State College Organic Farm is surrounded by thick forest on every side. Nestled among young Douglas fir trees, the Farm's garden areas may be seen in a setting of on-going forest succession, with dense shrub and tree growth reaching out for available sunlight. As these native evergreen perennials reach skyward, they intercept much of the precious sunlight which annual crops need for successful growth. The shadows of these ever-growing trees now make horticulture impractical on over half of the main garden area, except for the most shade-tolerant and short-season food crops.

Area B (see map) consists of tall evergreen trees on level ground with an understory of western maple and sword fern. It is proposed to remove all large trees on this approximately 2 acre area, which consists of approximately 76 Douglas fir of 12" d.b.h. (diameter at breast height) or larger, as well as 10 maple and 6 alder of equivalent d.b.h. Standing timber volume has not been estimated at this time. The logs from this area would be milled into lumber on site, dried carefully and used for construction purposes on the Farm and the Evergreen campus. This would enable existing fenced, cultivated areas to be more fully utilized. It is proposed to replant this area with deciduous tree crops (e.g. chestnut, walnut) along with short rotation biomass and soil building crops such as red alder and coppiced (stump sprouted) maples.

Area A lies behind and to the south of the Organic Farm house, and should be cleared of enough trees to allow solar access to the house, which could take advantage of the potential energy savings and outdoor environmental enhancement. Further development of this site, once opened up, could include kitchen garden, outdoor meeting and picnic area, perhaps a "rose garden". Partial terracing of the gentle slope of this surrounding hillside could make it more multi-use, whether for delivery trucks, wheelchair and pedestrian access, and/or plantation of shade tolerant "edge" plants such as filbert, elderberry, huckleberry, etc. A firewood storage area close to the farm house would also be handy. A "solar" woodshed could be constructed from some of the harvested trees. This area of ± 1.20 acres consists of approximately 26 Douglas fir of 12" d.b.h. or larger and some 50 small pole-type fir trees. It is recommended that red cedar and madrone trees be left standing.

Area C has been proposed for increased parking area, both for the farm and the proposed arboretum. This lot would be carefully thinned, removing damaged and crowded trees, which includes 12 Douglas fir over 12" d.b.h. and 7 alder trees of comparable girth. The part of Area C adjacent to the community garden would be more intensively thinned, with some trees limbed and topped, to increase solar access to this area and the adjacent community gardens.

Areas D - I, of approximately 1 acre each, form the land base for the demonstration of short rotation forest management for fuelwood (biomass) production, as well as gradual conversion of forest to agriculture, in an up-dated version of the traditional "stump ranch". This area, now covered with young (10-20 yr. old) alder, maple, and shrubs, has good soil and sun exposure. A proposed 20-year rotation is to cut 1 acre every 3 years, starting from the south end, closest to the community gardens.

A further suggestion is to convert one-half of each of these cleared acres to permanent agriculture, pasture, or agro-forestry use, thus creating a visible and attractive demonstration of several aspects of integrated agroforestry systems along Lewis Road between the farm and the "slurry pit". This latter area needs better management as a recycling center for used lumber, prunings, firewood, and compostable biomass materials, rather than its current use simply as a dumping ground.

Area J is proposed as the site for an Evergreen Arboretum. This gently sloping area lies to the west of the highest hill on The Evergreen State College campus, and could initially be laid out with a circular trail system which could also serve as seasonal-use vehicle access roads. A long-term plan to develop the site should be undertaken, retaining exemplary individual trees, groves, and plant associations, and preparing areas for arboretum plantings. In such an arboretum, Evergreen may find many opportunities for positive community interaction, building long-lasting community pride in the only designated arboretum in Thurston County, as well as create a living laboratory/classroom for the college itself.

It is recommended to designate Area K for future forest management, but to carry out no planned activities at this time.

Area M, to the east of the West Field Community Garden, is in young forest, predominantly conifer. Careful thinning, topping, and pruning will insure good solar exposure for this garden site. A group of large fir trees near Lewis Road offers a good location for a picnic area and connecting trail between the main gardens and the West Field site. Much of this community garden is now too shady to use.

The proximity of the proposed development area to the Ben Kifer tree farm (which is also part of The Evergreen State College campus) provides a ready example of good conventional conifer forestry, just across from part of the proposed development area.

This completes the outline of a unique and truly multiple-use ecological agriculture and forestry center, except perhaps for development of college land at the intersection of 17th Avenue and Evergreen Parkway, which now consists of overgrown homestead areas which could be readily cleaned up and would provide an excellent location for well-made signs directing students and visitors to the Evergreen farm campus.

The components of this proposal can be considered, legislated and implemented independently, for the most part. For 1983, the priority is clearly on removing enough trees to allow adequate sun on the existing garden areas. This season's efforts by the ecological agriculture program are greatly impacted by lack of sufficient sunlight for extended season production as well as for demonstration of successful gardening methods.

A more complete study of this proposal and possible methods of implementation would be welcomed. There are many more benefits that would be obtained through such a carefully-planned project, with very few perceived negative impacts. I hope it warrants your consideration and support.

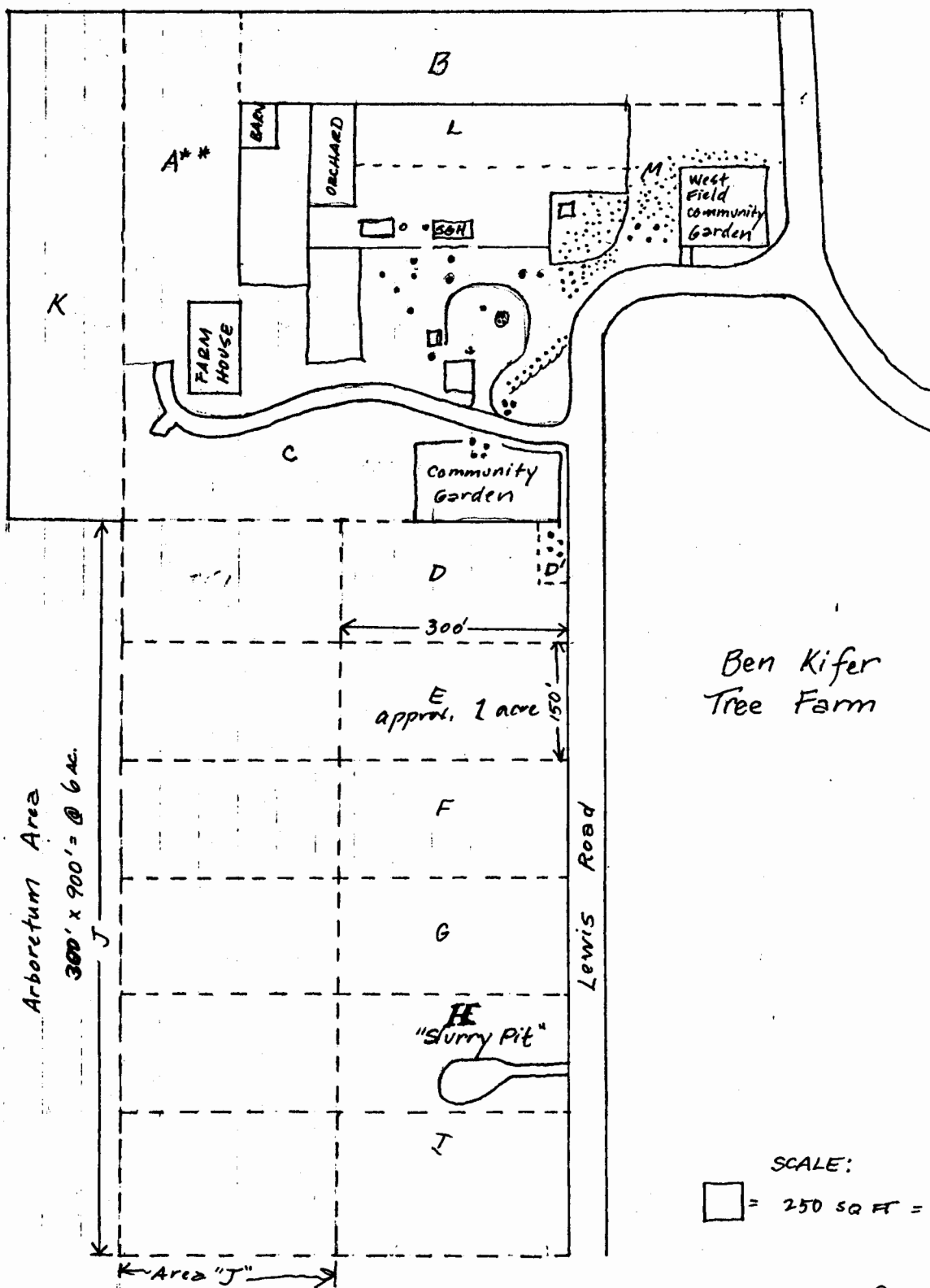
Respectfully submitted,

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The Evergreen State College Organic Farm*
 Forest Management Proposal 1/10/83***



* Includes existing Farm campus & proposed expansion

** See attached key for explanation of designated lettered areas.

*** Prepared & submitted by Michael Maki Farm Resident Consultant