Nov. 22, 1971

THE EVERGREEN COMMUNITY ORGANIC FARM

Members of the Evergreen community, particularly students and faculty in the Environmental Design program, have shown a strong desire to create an organic farm. There have been several meetings held at which ideas have been generated and developed. At this point, we, "the farm group", are submitting a request for the use of the property and building facilities at the corner of Lewis and Simmons roads. This land was a small farm prior to the development of The Evergreen State College. A boundary survey, included in this proposal, has been completed.

The Evergreen community farm is to be an organic farm modeled after the Santa Cruz and the J.I. Rodale experimental farms. These are both classical examples of working experimental farms. Organic means that no chemical fertilizers or pesticides are used and that the machinery is muscle-powered (animal and/or human) and/or a non-polluting form of energy.

Because the production of food is the very basis of human existence and because any agricultural endeavor involves altering the natural environment, this farm is a vital experiment for our program that is concerned with designing in harmony with the environment. The prime consideration of organic farming is sound ecological planning, i.e. altering the natural environment constructively. For example, it is necessary ~~to~~ ~~maintain~~ conserve proper soil fauna through composting to maintain the health and productivity of the soil. Environmental study and design will be one of the main responsibilities and learning experiences of the farm group.

The farm is intended to serve as a learning resource area where new ideas and skills can be attempted. Improved methods for farming organically, such as alternatives to chemical fertilizers and pesticides, can be explored. Initially, the farm project will be limited to basic research and building projects - soil and vegetation surveys, repairs to or removal of existing structures, land-use studies. As additional information is gathered and as skills develop, the farm and people and projects will expand beyond the basics of farming into areas

such as new insect resistant strains of crops. The farm has long range potentials for studies in future years when more land can be put into production, animals can be obtained and new structures can be erected.

Governance of the farm project will be by general consensus, or collective opinion, of the farm community. This form is adopted since the farm will be run as a community. The people, i.e. community, making the decisions will be those putting time and energy into the project and who have a working knowledge of the farm. This form of governance, rather than by committee, will facilitate the involvement of all members of the farm community in the decision making processes - a valuable learning experience - and consequently increase the knowledge base for these decisions. It will eliminate communication problems through group fragmentation; the knowledge isolation that results will be removed. All activities will be posted in order to insure that any interested member of the college community may participate. The Olympia community will serve as an important resource area. Since the farm is a part of the college, the farm group will be held directly accountable to The Evergreen State College administration, faculty and Students.

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE OF FARM PROGRAMS

1) Come up with a land-use plan consisting of (a) soil survey, (b) land survey of boundaries and contours (one foot intervals), (c) location and condition of buildings and other structures, (d) water drainage, (e) catalog of plant life and wildlife habitat types. This information will be cataloged by overlay maps patterned after Ian McHarg's techniques described in Design with Nature. These studies will be used as our reference for land-use decision, extending into a planting plan for spring. This plan will include a map of how the farm will look after planting (size and location of fields, crop location, type of planting style used, where other farm functions will occur). At this time, there is a contour and boundary map of the farm (included in this proposal) and soil and drainage surveys are in progress as well as an evaluation of existing structures.

2) In order to build up an adequate supply of compost by spring, a winter composting method will be started the first week of December. This includes remodeling one of the out buildings as a compost shelter since composting must be done inside during the winter to maintain necessary heat. A garbage shredder must be constructed in order to break down large pieces of garbage to facilitate faster decomposition. Because it is already late in the year, it is imperative that we begin immediately to allow decomposition processes to take place. Plans to gather organic refuse from the school are under way.

3) During December and January, the buildings for agricultural and craft use, such as canning, storage, weaving, need to be repaired for use in the spring. These buildings will also serve as a meeting place for farm community planning and workshops this winter. (Phil's evaluation...)

4) Develop a plan and possibly build a greenhouse or hothouse during winter quarter. This will be a low-cost, temporary structure, probably dome shaped and sided with plastic.

5) This winter, the desirability and feasibility of animal husbandry on the farm for this year will be discussed and studied. An extensive study and evaluation of what animals the farm can support and the desirability, benefits and maintainance will be undertaken.