

# FireFly Farm EarthVision Cooperative

A Forming Intentional Community that strives to understand and implement Right Relationship with the Earth, Her Community of Life, one another, society, and Spirit

## Core Values:

### Cooperative Egalitarian Culture

Cooperative Culture will be Intentionally Practiced. [\(Click here for more about Cooperative Culture, Consensus, Meeting Ground Rules, Ground Rules for working with Conflict, NonViolence Policy, and more\)](#)

Egalitarian Consensus based decision making and governance based upon Integrative Facilitation and Cooperative Culture Trainings from Laird Schaub and FIC [\(Foundation for Intentional Communities\)](#)

Members are willing to get training and skills in best practices for cooperative decision making and working with conflict

Members are willing to practice personal growth. Members are willing to give and receive feedback.

Members are willing to examine patterns of oppression and seek transformation toward right relationships.

Members embrace a value of Calling In to support transformation rather than a Calling Out (blame, shame, attack) (NVC meets consciousness raising...)

Structure Organization as a Cooperative with all shareowners/ full community members having an equal say in consensus decision making

A willingness to work through conflict by engaging with curiosity and an open heart, listening and seeking to understand, while searching for values based solutions

Decisions will be centered in the community Vision, Ideals, and common agreements

### **Current Manifestations**

-Lauren has completed two 2-year trainings with Laird Schaub on Integrative Facilitation for cooperative communities

-Lauren currently serves on the board of Weaver Community Housing Association, a low income housing cooperative, managed with consensus/ cooperative models by dwellers, and helps with facilitation and working with conflict on the board and in support of members.

-Lauren has attended trainings for conveners of committees for Friends (Quaker) and convened a Quaker committee

-Lauren has facilitated a community dealing with a pattern of sexual assaults coming to light that fractured the community and caused it to close

-Current shared household decisions, community garden decisions, and cooperative decisions are undertaken using consensus process.

-Current members make space to attend to clearing relationships as needed

### **Future Possibilities**

-Orient new members to cooperative skill sets

-Host trainings in cooperative culture

-Host education exchanges in cooperative culture tools

-Facilitator Trades with other intentional communities

-Maintain Facilitator Directory to use as a regional resource

## **Sustainable Renewable Life Style**

Strive to do no harm, but rather to have a beneficial impact on the ecology upon which we depend

Strive to eliminate fossil fuel dependence

Strive to produce and utilize renewable, clean energy

Strive to reduce consumption/ live on fair share of resources

Strive to responsibly integrate wastes, understanding we live in a closed system

### **Current Manifestations**

- Installed an 11.4 kilowatt Solar Array grid tied, but also with 2 Tesla powerwalls. This enables self-powering in emergencies, and offsetting of carbon footprint. 2020 was 102% offset for 2 households and the farm and barn. 2019 was 121% offset for 1 household and the farm and barn.
- Farming with hand, horse powered, or electric tools to use solar power whenever possible, including use of electric riding mower for mowing, seeding, and hauling manure to compost
- Improving skills for driving Draft animals for farm work and transportation. Currently driving an Amish trained Gypsy Vanner
- Participation in Triangle Draft Enthusiasts to learn and preserve driving and draft farm animal skills
- Protecting the watershed we dwell within by avoiding use of chemicals on the land
- Composting all kitchen and animal waste for returning to the fields, gardens, orchards
- Reuse of containers for farm products

- Housemate(s) to share resources of housing and energy use
- Conservation of Power and Improving Efficiency of Dwelling
- Strive to eat self-produced food. Currently Raising Eggs, honey, figs, blueberries, Peaches, Persimmon, Blackberries, Raspberries, Shiitake Mushrooms, Chicken of the Woods Mushrooms, Community Garden, Foraging,
- 2024 Purchase of Electric Vehicle for both community and hauling trailer

### **Future Possibilities/ Plans**

- Meal cooperative to enable less use of packing and plastics
- Try to grow more food on farm to reduce packaging use
- Expand harvest and preservation techniques
- Expand Community Garden
- Expand solar with an Agricultural array
- Tiny houses which are energy efficient to reduce energy consumption.
- Composting Toilets for outdoor events, guests, etc. This compost can be used for fertilizing the pastures.
- Shared milking animal

## **Sustainable/ Regenerative Agriculture**

Contribute to the health of the soil and forests, water, and air

Contribute to the local food shed

Organic, Regenerative, permaculture inspired agriculture

Sensitivity to the carrying capacity of the land and integrating with it as a beneficial member of the community of life

### **Current Manifestations**

- Organic Egg CSA
- Certified Beekeeping with honey and honeybee production
- Small orchard planted with blueberry, blackberry, and raspberry sales, and peaches and persimmons for home consumption
- Use of donkeys as livestock guardians
- Breeding and sales of miniature donkeys
- Pasture invasives tended with mechanical debridement/ organic methods
- Cultivating diverse, native blooms for pollinators in the fields, forests, pastures, and gardens
- Mowing schedule sensitive to pollinator habitat and forage
- Removal of invasives such as Ailanthus trees that compromise health of woodlands
- Avoidance of use of toxic chemicals
- Avoidance of light pollution and stewardship of amazing and rare tree FireFly Population
- Bees are kept using organic,integrated pest management
- Manure is composted and fed back to the soil systems on the farm for pasture, garden, and orchard fertilization
- Kitchen wastes are composted for garden and orchard use
- Current plants and trees are planted with using John Jeavons Biodynamic French Intensive Mini Farming approach to attending to soil health and well being, (regenerative)

- Raising Gypsy Vanner Horses and using natural horsemanship training for partnership in riding and farm work
- Community Garden

### **Future Possibilities/ Plans**

- Market gardening
- Gardening and Farming with more Horse power
- Expand Community Garden
- Expand Agricultural product lines such as mushroom production, lamb or pork or goat,
- Expand Apiary (honeybees)
- Install more pollinator trees and plants

## **Social Justice/ Service**

The community is supportive of serving as a platform for social justice and service work either through blessing individual member's leadings or activities, or through undertaking activities of service or justice work in committees or as a whole community

The Community will engage in activities to promote its values and will seek to model and offer education in these Cooperative Skills and Sustainable Living as one way to serve

The Community will seek to understand institutionalized oppression, Patriarchy, and white supremacy, and will work to create structures and interactions that are free of oppression and are egalitarian with respect to gender, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration status, size/ looks, ability status, religion, or socioeconomic status. Members are willing to examine patterns of oppression and seek transformation toward right relationships.

Members embrace a value of “Calling In” to support transformation rather than a Calling Out (blame, shame, attack) (think [NVC](#) meets consciousness raising...) ([link to NVC](#))

In acknowledgment of how privilege and oppression affects the financial resources members come to community with, membership share costs will be adjusted based on income/ assets, and those with indigenous ancestry to the Americas or descendants of slaves will have a zero financial contribution for their membership shares

### **Current Manifestations**

- Sliding scale membership shares
- Engaging in consciousness raising and unlearning oppressive patterns of relating and striving to shift toward egalitarian, healthy, respectful ways of relating
- Actively participating in greater social movements for peace and justice within our communities
- Volunteer as a Facilitator and Board of Director service for low income housing cooperative
- Volunteer member of a group working with a spiritual community on Accountability, Restorative Justice and harm reduction for survivors of sexual violence within the community
- Hosted an 18 year old young woman who was a refugee from Zambia (Congolese refugee)
- Seek to understand the history of indigenous peoples of this area. Seek to be an ally to them and seek to discern and implement Right Relationship with them

[\(Click here to learn more. Link to Ochenechee Band of Siponi Pages here...\)](#)

### **Future Possibilities/ Plans**

- Fostering Children

- Providing safe, transitional housing and support for refugees
- Providing work for refugees
- Providing a safe transitional place for people escaping trafficking, abuse or relationship violence
- Educational programs such as Pollinator wanders, or afterschool or summer camp programs
- Training in Cooperative Skills, Sustainable Living Skills, and or in Regenerative Agriculture Skills
- Participate in local Mutual Aid Networks

## **Spiritual Connection**

The Community will seek to create regular opportunities to connect to spirit, to one another, and to nature

No one “right way” or tradition is embraced: Truth is diverse, there is space for people of all faiths and no faith

### **Current Manifestations-**

- FireFly and pollinator communion
- Decisions are Ideals and Values based
- Dream work and meditation and prayer practice
- Hosting Celebrations honoring the Solstices, Equinoxes, and Cross Quarter Holidays

### **Future Possibilities/ Plans**

- Camp Fires/ Potlucks
- Dream Work group
- Meditation and prayer group



- Community Celebrations
- Nature Communion Opportunities

## **Community**

Creating opportunities for sharing:

- Celebration
- Spiritual connection, experiences, or rituals
- Play
- Work
- Creative Expression
- Deep and Intentional Connection

### **Current Manifestations-**

- Community with barn boarders enjoying horses and nature together
- working together on the Farm
- Celebrations such as Earth Day/ Farm anniversary and Solstices, Equinoxes and Cross Quarter Holidays
- Campfires, song circles
- Use of Consensus and Egalitarian Values Based Decision Making
- Potlucks/ Community gatherings

### **Future Possibilities/ Plans-**

- More parties and events communing with nature and one another

## **Perpetuity**

Strive to create structures, culture and governance, and tools that be sustaining into the future, going forward in time to perpetually offering an alternative model to extractive/ use relationships with the environment, or other humans; like a self-seeding or perennial plant, regardless of the life-spans of members, or of members moving on to other paths in their lives

Create a reproducible model that can be re-created as a way to conserve other farm lands or other ecologies

## **Other Important Values**

Multigenerational

Multicultural

Welcoming to other cultures and languages

Current languages spoken by community members

English, Spanish

Welcoming of members from a variety backgrounds

Resource sharing, though not income sharing

The community shares the resources of the land and common amenities, but members retain their own earnings from their own endeavors and do not pool income.

Path to membership financially accessible to all via sliding scales and work exchange.

Govern by striving toward common Ideals, rather and controls

Ideals are to be woven into decisions, and the fabric of life

## **Membership**

#### Approach to membership:

Have a tiered process for membership to allow increasing involvement and exploration of a mutual fit

#### **Friend of Community**

- Expresses interest in or support of the community
- Participates in activities, programs, events or work of the community
- Makes small share contribution or labor contribution

#### **Exploratory member**

- Has read vision and community documents and self- identifies as in alignment
- Participates in activities, programs, events or work of the community
- Attends open governance meetings
- Contributes exploratory member share contribution and/ or labor contribution

#### **Engaged Member**

- Has read vision and community documents and self- identifies as in alignment
- Participates in activities, programs, events or work of the community
- Participates in governance but does not “vote”/ block consensus
- Stage may last about a year
- Contributes Engaged member share contribution and/or labor contribution.
  - Share contribution can be credited toward full membership share

#### **Full member**

- Participants fully in governance including ability to block consensus
- Participates in activities, programs, events or work of the community
- Contributes Full Member share contribution and/or labor contribution.

### **Membership Process**

- Prospective members apply for each stage
- Share bio and share relevant community, work experience
- Affirm and demonstrate alignment with community vision, mission, & values
- Complete participation contributions for prior membership stage
- Complete share contribution for membership stage
- Consensus agreement of current membership for acceptance to next level

### **Membership Criteria:**

Prospective members will demonstrate:

- an interest in learning cooperative culture and skills and tools
- a willingness to contribute financially or in work exchange to their membership share
- a willingness and time to contribute to their participation share
- a willingness to come to the table and work through any conflicts that arise
- a willingness to collaborate and engage in cooperative decision making
- a willingness and ability to be accountable for agreements and commitments
- ability to give and receive constructive feedback
- ability to expand self-awareness and undertake personal growth for successful community relationships

- Strive to uplift one another in interactions
- High Emotional Intelligence
- Emotionally healthy interactions
- No active/ untreated addictions

## **Share contributions**

Each stage of membership has its own contribution share in either money or work trade.

- Full shareholders make all decisions together with egalitarian consensus process. All full shareholders have equal say in the decision making
- Understanding that a complex system of oppression has affected the resources people come to community with due to oppression based upon race, gender, and other classes, the financial contributions for full shares will be adjusted on a sliding scale for each income/ asset bracket. People demonstrating ancestry to indigenous American or people of American slave ancestry will have a zero share buy in

Options will be available for work exchange for membership share to create affordability and accessibility

## **Participation Contributions**

Each stage of membership has its own monthly hourly participation contributions to the Work of the Community. The Work of the Community is broadly defined as any work that furthers the Vision, Mission and Values of the Community, including participation in Community governance.

## **Membership Agreements**

Members will sign a membership agreement and agree to follow and be accountable to these agreements. Membership Agreements can be updated by consensus agreement

of full members. Members will agree to follow cooperative process, conflict and non-violence policies, and agreements about uses and treatment of the land and community infrastructure.

### **Ending Memberships**

It is healthy and normal that people's paths may take them in other directions. There will be a way to exit the community by selling the membership share contribution back to the cooperative for the price that was paid in for those departing for other life directions. Membership share contributions made with labor will be purchased back with an agreed upon value and exchange rate made at the time of the initial membership contribution. The community will attempt to purchase infrastructure contributions exiting members have made for the amount of the initial financial investment.

There will be an accountability process developed and utilized by which membership in the community may be revoked. This would be used as a last resort and for irreconcilable or extreme violations of community agreements and standards that cannot be otherwise worked out.

### **Financial structure**

The property will be placed into a trust and the trust will lease the property to EarthVision Cooperative on a long term lease. Full members are trustees of the Trust. Each member will contribute financially toward a share of the cooperative as a base buy in, adjusted for income and assets. Work exchange will also be an option for share contributions. A base share costs 100,000\$. This will be adjusted based on income. Someone earning 100,000\$ annually would contribute 100,000\$ in their share. Someone earning 50,000\$ annually would contribute 50,000\$ toward their share. Someone earning 150,000\$ annually would contribute 150,000\$ toward their share. Share contributions can be spread out over time or paid all at once as are proposed to an agreed upon by the community.

Lots can be rented while folks are exploring membership. The average Monthly Lot fee in Orange County in 2018 was 580\$.

Examples:

A 100,000\$ contribution spread over 10 years would equate to a monthly contribution of 833.33\$/ month

A 50,000\$ contribution spread over 10 years would equate to a monthly contribution of 416.67\$

If the cooperative dissolves, Lauren as founder will remain as trustee.

Once a core full membership group is established, the property will be transitioned ASAP to the management of the EarthVision Cooperative who will make decisions together regarding land use and planning by consensus/ cooperative process.

Members will also contribute monthly operational dues based on usage (farm business, living quarters, etc.) This will be used to cover the costs of ongoing living expenses such as maintenance, taxes, insurance, debt servicing, and future development investments, etc. To create affordability, work exchange will also be available for operational cost contributions

### **Participation Requirements**

Each Membership level has participation requirements. These are a minimal target monthly contributions made to the work of the community. Members may contribute above and beyond this from time to time or even frequently as individuals are called to take up the work of expressing the community values. Members are also expected to participate in monthly governance meetings which count toward participation hours, and or serve on committees. Members will be considered in good standing who contribute the minimum amount of participation hours a month, and who attend monthly governance meetings.

### **The Farm and Land shall be a resource and platform for members to follow their leadings and passions**

Farm/ Community businesses to generate income streams and that also further these values will be welcomed and encouraged

#### **Current Manifestations**

- Small Horse Boarding business defrays the cost of the the farm and helps qualify for bonafide agriculture status for the farm

- Small scale sale of honey, bees, eggs, donkey foals, and berries

#### Future Possibilities/ Plans

- Hip Camp or Air B&B
- Commercial Mushroom production
- Pork, lamb, turkey or goat production
- Pony Parties
- Pollinator Wanders teaching about Pollinators/ Agritourism opportunities
- Market Garden/ CSA
- Retreats
- Afterschool care, track out care, or Summer Camp programs
- Support Circles or Therapy spaces

## **Living at FireFly Farm EarthVision Cooperative**

#### Housing Options

- presently there are rooms for rent in a four bedroom shared household
- Presently Bring your own RV, Camper, or tiny house and hook ups will be made available
- Develop Tiny Houses nestled on the land with the farm house to be a shared community house
- Build other housing as suits members needs



- Buy houses on adjacent properties or nearby and share the Farm
- Help buy the property next door which has another farm house on it, and has more room for adding housing

## **Accountability**

## **Working with Conflict**

## **Decision Making/ About Cooperative Process and Consensus**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

Can I be a member and be involved in the farm and community even if I don't want to live there?

**Yes!** You can become a full member if you participate in the community in other ways besides residing at the farm, such as working there, contributing to the vision, mission and values of the community, operating an on farm business, participating on programs, etc.

### **Resources links for each section**

Documentaries (Live Like you are in a Canoe)

What a Way to Go, Life at the end of Empire

Kilowatt hours

How to Grow More Vegetables on Less Land than you Ever Thought Possible, John Jeavons

### **Pictures/ Videos**

### **Member Bios**

