

**Re: Northwest Agri-Village Project Land Search**

12-12-2019

To Interested Parties,

As a designer of innovative farms and many community supported initiatives in Oregon and Washington, I am proud to give my full endorsement to the Northwest Agri-Village team as they work to secure land for their important and timely project.

Their goals are exemplary, and any agriculturally based region will be glad to include them in their community. When realized, the project that they propose will combine their teams many years of dedicated learning and experience into a leading example of how to keep farm land viable and productive while adding value that supports people who live there and work the land. In the face of a spectrum of economic pressures to develop open space, this team has an approach that the rest of us will be thrilled to see arrive in the NW region, which will also inspire others to have new hope and tools. Here are some of the important benefits of the project.

- The Northwest Agri-Village will preserve and protect the maximum amount of farmland possible. By clustering homes dedicated to people who will live in community with each other, and on a minimal footprint, the vision is to provide families on-site to support the farm and related activities. The protected land will be available for residents to run their farm enterprises with opportunities for collaboration.
- This project will offer access and opportunity for young people who would not normally have enough resources to participate in farming. The Northwest Agri-Village team will provide substantial financial support to a variety of worthy candidates, and the team already includes several women farmers who are ready to go. The team also aims to help give other similar startup farms a leg up.
- A sustainable agriculture master plan will form the framework of the project, with numerous outstanding goals. These include using practices that eliminate biotoxins, while also greatly reducing the need for fossil fuels. The team intends to enhance habitat for biodiversity wherever possible, for every creature from the sky to the soil. Key to this vision is localizing people and farming, so they are present, not needing to use vehicles to transit back and forth, and working in a just and equitable way.
- The Northwest Agri-Village team really likes a Centennial Farm in Snohomish County, and they want to continue its legacy and productivity while meeting a variety of contemporary challenges. They also very much desire to contribute to the local community there while providing healthy organic farm products and opportunities for education.
- This project has a simple, time-tested approach that is a win-win for all. They aim to bring multiple families together to get this all done. By having more hands on the farm, including kids who will grow up caring about the soil, and with tools in their grasp, they will begin with an outstanding and stable long term plan.

As you can tell, I am very excited for this team and their project. Their commitment is outstanding. I have worked with some of them over the course of many years, and admire the others as well. Please do not hesitate to contact me in case you would like to discuss their project further.

Thanks always,

**Mark Lakeman**

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