

2005 Annual Report

D Acres of New Hampshire
Annual Report 2005


Organic Farm & Educational Homestead
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D Acres
of New Hampshire

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D Acres of New Hampshire is an Organic Farm & Educational Homestead
committed to promoting a more sustainable future through farm-based
workshops, internships, and public access.

Making Progress

Staff

Josh Trought
Executive Director

Abby Holm
Farm Manager

Sam Payton
Woodcrafting Mgr.

Rachel Leisso
Perennial Garden Mgr

Board of Directors

Brian Marsicovetere
Chairman

Jay Legg
Vice-Chairman

Elizabeth Trought
Secretary & Treasurer

Kel Rossiter

Mike Long

Kevin Wall

Micki Visten

Another growing season has come to a close at D Acres Organic Farm & Educational Homestead. The overwhelming feeling at this time of year is that of closure - tabulating the final harvest numbers, reviewing intern evaluations, returning to the goals that we set for D Acres and ourselves this year, and discussing the advances and hang-ups we have experienced. A review of the past year leads inevitably to planning for the year to come, but it is important to take a moment to celebrate our achievements before we plunge back into the cycle once again. We are excited and proud to present our friends and supporters with some of this year's major accomplishments...

Educational opportunities. This year marked our second full season as a non-profit educational center. We hosted twenty four workshops, four plant walks, eleven films, twelve Open Houses and nine school groups including 147 students from Interlakes Day Care, Mt. Prospect Academy, Dublin School, Rivendell High School, Proctor Academy, Hunter School, Granite State College, Holderness Day Camp and Lyndon State College.

Five interns, two apprentices and one international WWOOFer (that's Willing Worker on Organic Farms) joined us at the farm to learn about sustainable living alternatives, the practicalities of growing food, building soil fertility, logging with oxen, caring for animals, and living in community. Meet these hardy young men and woman on our centerfold: "On Farm Education: A year in Review."

Cooperation with Plymouth State University. In the last year, D Acres has finally begun to establish a strong relationship with several members of the faculty at Plymouth State. We are excited about the possibilities that these relationships offer D Acres in our pursuit of academic accreditation for internships, for direct involvement with students, for increased visibility in our community, for new board members, and for pig food! (PSU has joined a committed core of local restaurants and stores that provide D Acres with vegetarian pre-plate and post-expiration food waste - reducing the burden that organic materials place on the solid waste system and putting it to good use!)

Intestments begin to mature. This year we began to see returns on the long-term investments that we have been making in the gardens, the woods, in people and in infrastructure. The fertility of the gardens continues to grow each year with substantial inputs of composted ox, goat and chicken bedding. This effort paid off in our largest harvest to date. By involving interns and other learners in the basics of transforming rock, sand and clay into a fertile edible landscape through mulch and manure, we are not only building the capacity of this land, but sending that seed off to other places, where organic agriculture will thrive as well.

In the woods this year we harvested our first cultivated mushrooms. Of course, once they started, they wouldn't stop! We harvested 12.5 pounds of Shiitake mushrooms and 2.5 pounds of cultivated Oyster mushrooms. The mushroom

harvest is a glimpse of the future abundance that will come from the many perennial fruit and nut trees, berries and medicinal herbs that we have planted. Though we still have another 10 years to wait before harvest begins on the first Black Walnut trees we planted, it is encouraging to see our initial efforts begin to bear fruit. The perennial planting system will continue to grow with climax still decades off in the future.

Similarly, we are beginning to see returns on the investment that we have made in the people that are committed to the D Acres project. Sam Payton, our woodcrafter, is a great example. Sam arrived at D Acres in the summer of 2003. That winter, he began designing furniture and small crafts that he could create using the wood sustainably harvested on site. In the first year, Sam created a dozen or so prototypes of tables, casework and boxes, and designed a brochure that illustrated his craft. He worked with many interns and a few workshop participants, incorporating them into his projects in order to teach them about the medium, the tools and the techniques involved in woodcrafting. As a cottage industry, however, the woodshop remained in its infancy. A place-based industry of this intimate scale, rooted on ecological principles, takes many years to develop a devoted clientele.

This year, we are pleased to announce that Sam's work is moving! We're not talking about factory production here, but D Acres woodcrafts have begun to provide income for the organization as a whole. For the first time this year, income from woodcrafts surpassed expenses (including personnel costs and a portion of overhead). Not by much! But it's a start. The objective of all of the cottage industries at D Acres is to utilize locally available renewable resources to create value-added products whose revenue supports our educational programs. Learner involvement throughout the process is the best method we know of for transferring practical rural skills to others.

Just outside the Homestead, 15 solar panels, installed this Spring, are producing clean energy and reducing our electricity bill each month (rather more than we had hoped in fact!). Though the investment seemed monumental, it is truly worthwhile when one considers the number of people that have come through in the last six months, learning about photovoltaics and other renewable energies, not theoretically, but in practical terms.

Can you feel the difference? For us at the farm it is the difference between time spent planting for the future, and harvesting what we have sown; it is the difference between talking about community involvement and having more than 60 people come for a monthly Full Moon Potluck; it is the difference between discussing what farm products people might like, and having folks contact us for custom ecological pieces. Since D Acres began in 1997, we have been making enormous investments in our future. This year, we are finally seeing some results from our work.

We appreciate your involvement and encouragement in the D Acres project. Without our community, in Dorchester and beyond, the educational programs at D Acres would not exist. Thank you for helping us grow together. We look forward to seeing you all soon.
-The staff at D Acres

Many thanks to our Volunteers

Bob Reals
harvesting garlic

Marissa Berti
gardening

Joe Martignetti
harvesting garlic

Frank Navarro
harvesting garlic

Kevin Wall
forestry, gardening, etc.

Tom Nowak & Kay Snyder
with Michael, David
& Katie
harvesting garlic

Jennifer Stainton
cutting back sucker growth

John Morrissey
brewing instruction

Mikey Hohn
brewing instruction

Brett & Tyler Durham
*potluck cleanup,
smiles & storytelling*

Special Projects

Permaculture Gathering

On the weekend of November 5th and 6th, D Acres hosted a gathering of Permaculture teachers and practitioners in New England. Permaculture, a framework created by Bill Mollison and David Holmgren in the 1970's, is a design system for creating sustainable human environments. The word itself is a contraction of Permanent and Agriculture (as well as Culture), which indicates the importance of sustainability in all its design components.

In Permaculture theory, each element of the system performs many functions. An example of this would be a chicken. Chickens produce eggs for eating and poop for fertilizing the gardens; their natural tendency to scratch the ground can be utilized to incorporate compost into garden beds; they can warm a greenhouse with their body heat and provide CO₂ for the plants, and ultimately, they can be eaten.

An apple tree can also serve several functions: the good apples can be used for eating, baking, or making cider; the bad apples can be fed to pigs, chickens, goats and cows; the leaves that fall each autumn provide mulch, which improves the soil below; the tree itself can provide cover for shade loving perennial plants; pruned branches can be utilized to make wooden utensils; and in the end, the tree can be harvested for lumber and firewood.

Permaculture teaches us to design the areas around our homes, schools, and workplaces in order to benefit in as many ways as possible from the combination of plants, animals, fungi, buildings, water and energy sources. It teaches us to think about our specific weather patterns, soil types, and natural land formations, but above all, to create systems that mimic the way nature works.

The purpose of the Permaculture gathering at D Acres was to bring together people who are creating these systems, or teaching others to do so, in order to develop a closer network. This network of individuals, teachers, farmers and gardeners will be working together to increase outreach in New England so that Permaculture principles will be better understood and utilized.

The group that attended the gathering in early November included David Jacke, a Permaculture instructor and author of the new two-volume book *Edible Forest Gardens*; Juli Brussel, a program leader in Agricultural Resources with the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension; Keith Morris, of the Prospect Rock Permaculture Project; Molly Macleod, representing Marlboro College; Paige Bridgens of the Permaculture Guild of Western Massachusetts; and Tanya Balsley, of the Mountain Brook Center in Guildford, VT. The staff at D Acres looks forward to hosting and participating in more events with this dynamic group of people.



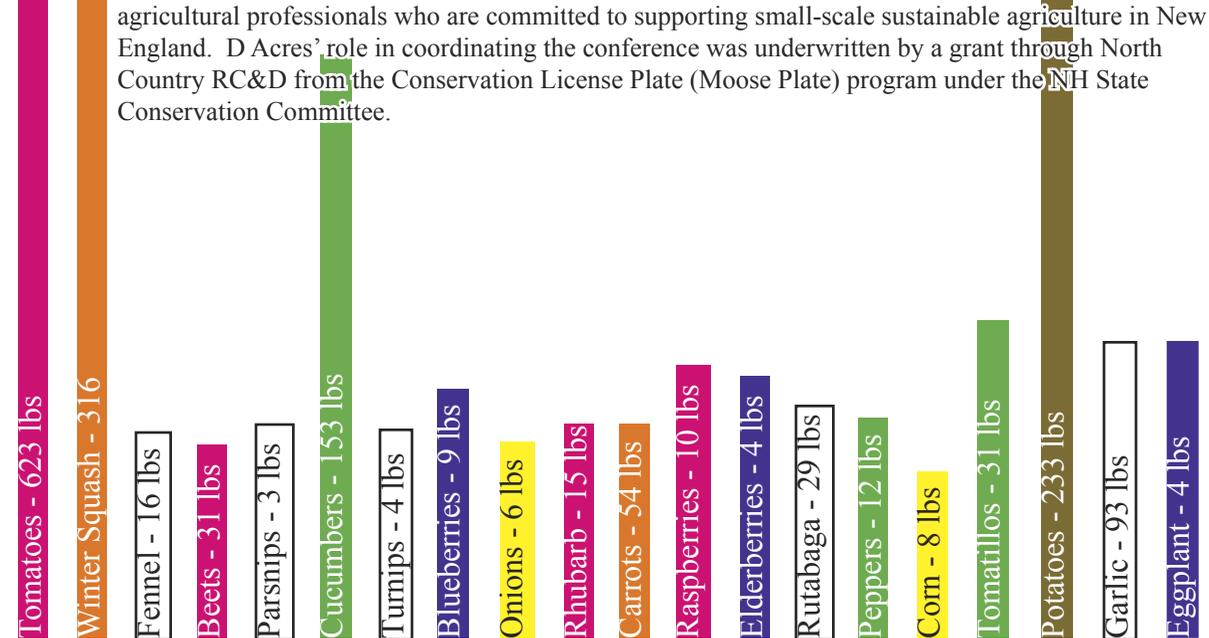
Special Projects

Northern New England Small & Beginning Farmers Conference

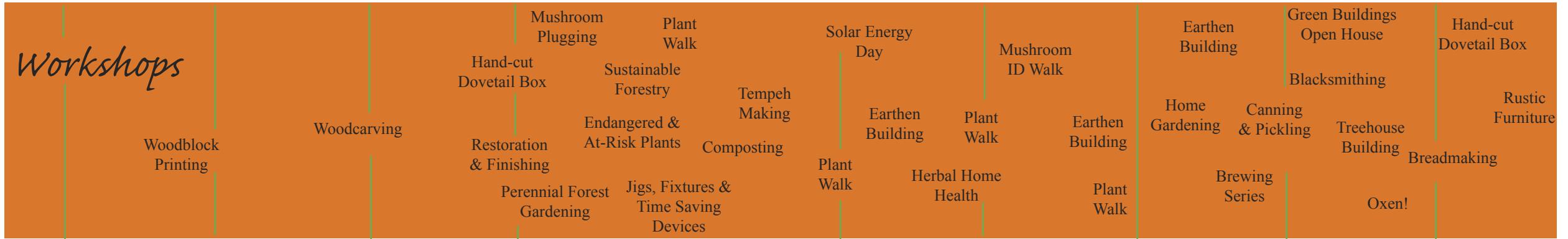
Following on the heels of the Permaculture gathering at D Acres was the 2nd Annual Northern New England Small & Beginning Farmers Conference. D Acres's Farm Manager, Abby Holm coordinated the conference, in collaboration with representatives from North Country Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) and Beginner Farmers of New Hampshire. The conference was a success in and of itself, attracting nearly 200 farmers from throughout New England. Participants chose from 15 workshops throughout the weekend, and were alternately inspired and enraged by controversial keynote speaker Joel Salatin. Salatin's emphasis on strong community relationships, hands-off legislation for on-farm sales, healthy grass-fed livestock, and an all-out verbal attack on unsanitary and abusive confinement of animals set the tone for small-scale, ecological farming as positive social and environmental activism.

The weekend also gave staff the opportunity to meet with other farmers and agricultural professionals in the region. A great deal of table talk centered around creating a New Hampshire internship database in order to facilitate increased practical experience for students and strengthen our capacity as farmers to share knowledge and skills. Proponents pointed to the success of the Maine Organic Farmers and Growers Association's (MOFGA) Apprenticeship and Journeyman programs, which utilize the administrative infrastructure of the organization to connect learners with farms and vice versa. MOFGA's Apprenticeship coordinator, Andy Marshall collaborated with D Acres' Executive Director, Josh Trought, in presenting a workshop entitled "On-Farm Apprenticeships & Internship Programs."

For D Acres staff, the conference reinforced the efficacy of interacting with other farmers and agricultural professionals who are committed to supporting small-scale sustainable agriculture in New England. D Acres' role in coordinating the conference was underwritten by a grant through North Country RC&D from the Conservation License Plate (Moose Plate) program under the NH State Conservation Committee.



On Farm Education : A Year in Review



Interns & Apprentices

“My main interest in coming to D Acres was seeing permaculture practices ‘in action’ - the perennial and forest farming, sheet mulching, garden design, medicinal herbs and so on.... My experience here was very valuable - I learned a lot of skills and information, and was able to see some of the pros and cons of putting these ideas into practice.” (B. Torras)

“I believe that I gained so much from this experience because I put a lot into it... This experience reaffirmed my belief that I would like to start my own small community in a semi-rural setting whose goal is to live sustainably.” (C. Byrne)

“There are so many [moments] that bring a smile to my lips. Like the time I was shovelling the ox-hovel compost pile and one of the oxen leaned it’s great head over the rail to knock off my hat, or when I ate what I had harvested, or when I returned back to my tent platform and listened to the creek.” (M. Freke)

Brandon Grossman & John Krist
Maintaining & marking woodland trails, creating tree book & trail guide, turning compost, chicken & goat chores.



Carrie Byrne
Watering, weeding, seeding, planting, transplanting, harvesting, turning compost, chick chores.



Marte Freke
Harvesting, turning compost, processing the harvest, planting garlic.



Adrienne Jones
Planting, turning compost, chicken chores, hilling potatoes, weeding, loading hay into the ox barn, applying compost, harvesting, laying and fixing irrigation, picking potato beetles, edging garden beds.



Ryan DeMatteo
Sanding & finishing woodcrafts, building coldframes, pulling wood and brush with the oxen, raking leaves, apple picking, turning compost.

Matt Harcourt
Creating a new three bin compost area, planting garlic, assisting in the gardens.

February March April May June July August September October November

Goodbyes & Hellos

On November 1st, two of our staff finished up the season at D Acres. **Sarah Haggett**, our Kitchen Manager, and **Michelle Nowak**, our Garden Manager have moved on (temporarily, at least) to Massachusetts and Mexico, respectively. We appreciate the work that they have done in their respective fields. Throughout the season, Michelle wrote several articles about annual gardening, one of which will soon be published in BackHome Magazine. She shared her knowledge with workshop participants and incorporated interns and volunteers into her work. Michelle's consistent presence in the annual gardens ensured that food streamed in from the gardens throughout the season. Meanwhile, Sarah was ready in the kitchen, canning, pickling, freezing, cooking and baking everything that came her way. Sarah also managed the bakery program, teaching others to bake bread, and devising eleven new recipes for organic cookies, bars, sweet breads and muffins, including our favorite: the Oatmeal Tahini cookie. We are sad to see these amazing women move on, but excited about their future endeavors.

Over the years many of you have come to know and love our horticulturist **Micki Visten**. Micki has been managing the gardens at D Acres for six years. She established our Medicine Trail, a woodland area planted with at-risk and endangered plants. She made the tea, salves and medicine that kept us healthy. She taught us how to cultivate plants and gave us a greater appreciation for the native flora of New Hampshire. This Winter Micki returns to her family in Washington state. When she returns to the East coast next Spring, Micki will be living and working at Rosemary Gladstar's Sage Mtn Herbal Retreat Center in Vermont to continue her lifelong study of medicinal plants. Words cannot express how much we appreciate Micki's spirit of love and compassion, nor the years of commitment that she made to this project.



This Fall we are pleased to announce the arrival of a new staff member, **Rachel Leisso**. Rachel's primary farm experience was gained from working with her family who have an organic dairy farm outside Stoddard, WI. She was also involved with many aspects of organic vegetable production at Harmony Valley Farm (www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com) for a number of years. Rachel graduated with a B.S. in Plant Pathology from the University of Wisconsin Madison. Prior to arriving at D Acres, Rachel was working for the UW Extension Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic, for the Wisconsin DATCP Plant Industry Lab, and with the Stanosz lab group at UW.

At D Acres, Rachel will be focusing her efforts on our perennial gardens, making the tea herbs and nursery stock that we grow accessible to the public, supervising the mushroom cultivation project, and possibly raising chicks. Rachel brings a great deal of farming experience, both practical and theoretical, she wakes up early and works her butt off, so we think she will do quite well at D Acres.



On August 23/24th, these cute little guys were born. We learned a great deal about pig birthing, and will be working on an article this winter so that we can share the experience with others.

Earlier this year we also welcomed two new board members, **Mike Long** and **Kel Rossiter**. Both have taken well to their responsibilities in guiding this organization. Kel has already begun to make connections between Lyndon State (where he serves as a member of the faculty) and D Acres. Mike has been helping us to get the word out about D Acres in our local community.

Financial Review - January 1 - November 15, 2005

Income

Contributions	\$24,071
Memberships	\$2,800
Educational Programs	
Courses	\$4,808
Hostel	\$11,130
Fundraising Events	\$2,654
Community Fee	\$28,544
Sales	
Woodcrafts	\$13,682
Produce	\$1,115
Baked goods	\$5,653
Herbal products	\$385
Eggs	\$1,307
other	\$1,249
Total Income	\$97,398

Income by Class

Administration	\$609	1%
Fundraising	\$26,468	27%
Inkind	\$1,827	2%
Farm Operations	\$2,020	2%
Forestry	\$250	<1%
Gardening	\$1,786	2%
Kitchen	\$5,908	6%
Woodshop	\$13,682	14%
Education	\$16,313	17%
Community Fee	\$28,535	29%
(Employee Contributions)		
Total	\$97,398	

Expenses

Personnel costs	\$50,537
Animal expenses	\$4,175
Advertising	\$1,843
Bank service charges	\$26
Dues & subscriptions	\$1,338
Insurance	\$1,455
Licenses & permits	\$302
Occupancy	
Communications	\$1,145
Food	\$5,174
Rent	\$8,250
Postage & Delivery	\$650
Professional fees	\$4,825
Purchases (for resale)	\$7,615
Repairs & maintenance	\$279
Supplies	\$6,593
Vehicle expense	\$2,179
Total Expense	\$99,199

Expenses by Class

Administration	\$13,208	13%
Fundraising	\$5,708	6%
Construction	\$2,395	3%
Farm Operations	\$15,869	16%
Forestry	\$3,219	3%
Gardening	\$16,408	17%
Kitchen	\$18,190	18%
Landscaping	\$2,381	2%
Woodshop	\$12,243	12%
Education	\$9,578	10%
Total	\$99,199	

(Unaudited Figures)

D Acres of New Hampshire is grateful to all of our members and donors for support of our educational mission.

Membership Categories

Students - \$15
Individuals - \$25
Families - \$35
Supporters - \$100

Donors \$150+

John Holm
Ronda Kilanowski

Donors \$500+

Susan & Jeffrey Pulver
Elizabeth & William Trought
Jennifer McGoldrick
Dara & Mike MacDonald
Brian Marsicovetere

Student Members

George Willamer III
Janet Towse
Meagen Grundberg
Katie Ramsey

Individual Members

Kevin Wall
Lesley Johnson
Charles Martel
Louise Turner
Lillian Etmekjian
Joanne Gaines
Lalita Karoli
Bryan Felice
Sean Lacey
Kim Musler
Ken Gould
Regina Burt
Ernie Botellio
Carli Carrara
Marissa Berti
Nancy Dowey
Nancy Donahue
Renee Garcia
Lyle Moody
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Tracy Cato
Susan Powers
Brenda Kneeland
John Repp
Judith Olsen
Christopher Frilette
Marion Mills
Phyllis Rockwell

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Beth Safrit
Artie & Diana Burdette
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Michael & Gisela Jakubowski
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Kaye Miller & Bill Womble
Valerie & John Hession
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Eileen Stachecki
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Kathy & Bob Herrmann
Brenda & Bob Akerman
Lili Whitin & John Morrissey
Zack & Sara Holm
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Shirley & Cleveland Williams
Maureen McVail
Bob Gregoire
Steve & Rebecca MacDonald
MaryEllen McGowan

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Kel Rossiter
Pauline & Win Duke
Curtis Fitzgerald & Carolyn Billings
Mike Long
Paul McGoldrick
Nancy Burhyte
Mike Iacona
Charles Dalton

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TK Rossiter
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Bree McHugh
Jonesy Taliaferro
Isiac Hathaway
Kristin Nowak
Steve & Charlene Whitman
Jan Nash

Businesses &

Nonprofit Organizations

Plymouth Area Renewable Energy Initiative
Biederman's Deli
Peppercorn Natural Foods
Subway
Plymouth State University
Plymouth Bagel
Encore Books
Community Guaranty Savings Bank
Plymouth Ski & Sports
Chase Street Market
Cascade Coffee House
Half Baked & Fully Brewed
Elvio's Pizzeria
Rock Barn
Northern Angel
Plymouth Pet & Aquarium
Cafe Monte Alto
Style Works
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From the Executive Director

Thank you for your interest and support of the D Acres project. We are making great strides in Dorchester in the search for cooperative existence. There is a tremendous necessity in our society to develop a sustainable, holistic culture. The objective is to design systems that provide for food, fiber, shelter and personal growth with local organic resources. The challenge of human history is to create long-term civilizations, which depend upon appropriate use of resources.

Farms and the food system must be preserved. The farm ecology, including the people, soil, flora, fauna and infrastructure, is a long-term investment in the land. Preservation for the romanticized vistas is not productive. We need to build our knowledge and skill bases related to food crops, animal husbandry, appropriate construction, energy systems, forestry and human cooperation.

D Acres is a demonstration of how we can work towards a stable perennial based system of human development existing in balance with natural resources. D Acres provides an alternative to destructive consumption patterns and provides practical skills that are lacking in our society. It is a thoughtful experiment in our future, promoting a cooperative community based society.

It is a long process to design a system that will nourish and endure. It will take years of investment, countless hours of shovel work, commensurate keyboard punching. Thousands of hours of human sweat equity are the basis of the system. There are also physical components to the D Acres infrastructure we would like to promote through demonstration. Structures such as a wood/herb dehydrator and a ceramics/blacksmithing studio will demonstrate earthen construction technique and applicable value-adding farm infrastructure. Increased solar hot water at the Homestead will promote this appropriate technology. Investment is needed to provide for the personnel and infrastructure that can demonstrate a sustainable future.

Part of what I experienced through studies in college was a doomsdayperception of the future. The symptoms: overpopulation, resource depletion, climate change and pollution are the problems of today. We must search for viable solutions to these dilemmas by sharing and documenting the process of promoting a sustainable future. Long-term investment is needed to overcome the centralized system of consumption and waste. We must build infrastructure and knowledge to regain independence for the local economy. D Acres serves as a catalyst for this change. D Acres invests in the ecology of place by supporting the people, soil, flora and promoting sustainable infrastructures such as earthen construction and photovoltaics. Your support provides the opportunity to continue this work. We must invest now to create solutions to global dilemmas by promoting a system of localized use and production where community is the reality.

We have been at D Acres since 1997. We feel encouraged on many levels by what is transpiring at the farm. The long-term staff is coalescing into a perennial team of specialists who act symbiotically. The growth of our no till perennial style garden is increasing exponentially. We nurture the land as caretakers for the future. We are producing more food and are increasing our economic

capacity annually. The Homestead infrastructure is serving the community as a resource for potlucks and community functions. Workshops on skills such as organic gardening, woodworking, and food preparation are a resource for the region. The internship program is immersing learners in the realities of an agrarian lifestyle. This project is an example of the progress that can be made when resources are utilized to promote a mindful, sustainable existence.

The process of building a community based agricultural system is demanding. There are countless tasks, which bring us ever closer to the sustainable future we envision. We need your help to design and implement a system that will endure. We need funds to continue our program of educational offerings. We need support to build demonstration infrastructure that provides the necessities of life. The D Acres project is a valuable cooperative effort, which needs your participation. There are many ways that you can become part of this movement. By supporting local organic production, or voting consciously, you help shape the future. You can support the D Acres effort through onsite visits and participation in events. The Support Us page of our website (www.dacres.org) gives more details of help we need. Today I am asking you to stand up in support of the world you would like to see by making a tax-deductible donation to D Acres. Financial contributions make a direct impact on our ability to promote this mission. Please support this effort in any way you can.

Become a part of this work in progress. We can consciously promote a future of promise by preparing. Let's build tomorrow together by taking direct action today.

Thank you for your support,

Joshua J. Trought

Executive Director

Contribution to the Annual Fund

Name: _____

Address: _____

and street or p.o.

town

state

zip

Donations to D Acres are tax deductible under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. EIN # 20-0489664

We appreciate donations of any size. Please give as your means allow.

___ \$20 ___ \$50 ___ \$100 ___ \$500

___ \$1000 ___ \$10,000 ___ other