

A Review and Analysis of Coffelt Farm

[DRAFT 1-7-21]



Conservation Agriculture Resource Team (CART)



SAN JUAN COUNTY

LAND BANK

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Introduction

In August 2019, the San Juan County Land Bank established a working group, the Conservation Agricultural Resource Team (CART), to provide input on the future of the Coffelt Farm Preserve. The goal of CART is to evaluate future scenarios for the farm, both in terms of the economic viability of the farming operation and the organizational structure needed to manage and operate the farm to meet the Land Bank's and community's goals. CART includes representatives of agriculture and conservation-related agencies and organizations, as well as members of the farming community. CART reports and presents recommendations to the Land Bank Commission and staff for consideration.

CART Tasks

- Review past operations of Coffelt Farm and identify lessons learned.
- Assessment of agricultural potential (within resource parameters set by the Stewardship Management Plan and Conservation Easement) including possible types of operations.
- Plan, facilitate, and review community input.
- Assessment of Coffelt Farm infrastructure and recommendations for improvements.
- Consideration of alternate models for management of public farm properties.
- Identify critical elements to include in a Request for Proposals (RFP) and lease agreement.

Process

The work of CART builds on previous county-wide efforts including the 2011 report, *Growing our Future: An Agricultural Strategic Action Plan for San Juan County, WA*, which identified key goals and strategies that would result in the preservation of priority farmland and actions to strengthen agriculture in San Juan County. One of the issues identified in this report is that “Conservation organizations are challenged by the task of managing conserved farmland” and “successful conservation of land must go beyond preservation of land” (*Bill et al. 2011, pg 27*). The San Juan County Agricultural Resource Committee (SJC ARC) continues to advocate for policies that support agricultural activities, including the active utilization of conserved agricultural lands in recommendations to the San Juan County Council. In the spring of 2019, Washington State University (WSU) SJC Extension hosted a roundtable discussion with representatives of multiple land conservation and agricultural organizations, to review strategies for management of conserved agricultural lands and discussed key barriers and opportunities.

Meeting monthly for over a year, members of CART have conducted a systematic review of Coffelt Farm and management of conserved agricultural land. Key findings and recommendations are presented in this report. In addition to public input, key stakeholders and subject matter experts were engaged in a series of interviews. Interviewees included: Sidney

Coffelt, life-estate holder; Meike Meisser, lessee of Stonecrest Farm; Rusty Milholand, Washington Farmland Trust; Lisa Byers, OPAL Community Land Trust; Kyle Freeman, Orcas Island School District; and Lincoln Bormann, Land Bank. These conversations helped inform the working group's perspective, provided important context, and helped shape recommendations. Beyond Coffelt Farm, the elements of this report have the potential to inform continued county-wide conversations on the on-going management of conserved agricultural land.

Coffelt Farm History

The 189-acre Coffelt Farm Preserve is integrated into the heart of the agricultural, ecological, and community landscape of Orcas Island. It has been documented that this area was inhabited by Native American people for over 6,000 years. Throughout the region, and the San Juan Islands, Coast Salish people engaged in various types of land management and cultivation including established camas plots in conjunction with harvest of aquatic resources (*Deur and Turner 2005*). While there have not been specific documentation of activities at Coffelt Farm, the San Juan Islands were a managed, cultivated landscape prior to European settler agriculture. First records of European occupation of Coffelt Farm started in the 1870s with Thomas Dixon. Throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s subsistence and commercial agricultural activities took place including livestock (cattle and lamb), flower bulbs, plums and apples, grain (wheat, oats, and barley), and vegetable crop production.

The Coffelt family purchased the property in 1950. Vern Coffelt took on management of the farm and engaged in the production of sheep, beef, apples, and grains while working an off-farm job with Orcas Power and Light Company. This period, from the 1950s to 1960s, saw a general decline in agriculture in San Juan County and a shift towards increased development of tourism and second homes. Vern married Sidney Coffelt in the 1970s and they took up full-time farming in the mid-1990s. Sidney holds a life estate at Coffelt Farm Preserve and has stayed engaged in various aspects of farm management. During their time farming, Vern and Sidney were involved with the establishment of the Island Grown Farmers Cooperative and the USDA-inspected Mobile Slaughter Unit, which was the first of its kind in the country and had an international impact. With support from the Orcas Island Community Foundation and Land Bank, Coffelt Farm developed a host site that enables other island producers to bring livestock to the Mobile Slaughter Unit on Orcas.

In 1995 the Coffeltes granted a conservation easement to the Land Bank and subsequently initiated the sale of the property to the Land Bank in 2008. After the sale of the property to the Land Bank, the existing conservation easement was extinguished with the agreement that it would be replaced by a new conservation easement held by the San Juan Preservation Trust (SJPT). That conservation easement was granted by the Coffelt's and the Land Bank to the Preservation Trust in 2012. As stated in the recorded easement: "When the Coffelt family sold the property to the San Juan County Land Bank in 2007, it was with the understanding that the

land would continue in active agriculture, growing food and providing opportunities for young farmers and members of the community to learn about sustainable, small scale agriculture.” (*Appendix A: SJPT Conservation Easement*). This sentiment was reaffirmed by Sidney Coffelt in a recent interview where she expressed the importance of prioritizing the production of food at Coffelt Farm. In 2010, Coffelt Farm Stewards was formed as a non-profit with the mission of supporting the operation of Coffelt Farm and providing educational opportunities and training in sustainable agriculture. During this time period, the Land Bank also established a field office on the property. Vern Coffelt remained directly engaged in day-to-day operations of the farm until he passed away in 2013.

The Coffelt Farm Stewards managed the farm until 2019. During this time, many hard-working dedicated non-profit board members and staff engaged in the production of a diversity of livestock and crops including: beef, lamb, pork, chicken, eggs, raw milk, hay, orchard fruit, and market garden produce, as well as providing educational opportunities for members of the public and Orcas Island youth. A farm plan was developed in 2015 with support from the San Juan Islands Conservation District (SJICD) and in 2018 an additional Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan was developed to address the management of livestock waste (*SJICD 2015, SJICD 2018*). Challenges with inadequate housing, limited labor, deteriorating farm infrastructure, nutrient management, and insufficient funding were identified multiple times as barriers to farm operation by the Coffelt Farm Stewards. In early 2019, Coffelt Farm Stewards presented the Land Bank with a request for additional funding and investment in housing and infrastructure. After an agreement could not be reached between both parties, Coffelt Farm Stewards initiated a dissolution process.

In May 2019 the Land Bank issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for an interim lease. Applications were reviewed and the interim lease was awarded to Lum Farm LLC. This lease agreement was extended by one year until December 2021 to allow for completion of the CART process, development of an RFP for long term management of Coffelt Farm, and to allow time for transition in operations. In 2020, the Land Bank developed a Coffelt Farm Preserve Stewardship Management Plan, which articulates long-term management goals for the property and creates a framework for areas of future agricultural use (*SJC Land Bank 2020*). As stated in the management plan, the Land Bank’s stewardship goals for Coffelt Farm Preserve are:

- to protect agricultural resources and support a viable agricultural operation that demonstrates sustainable practices;
- to protect and enhance freshwater resources and other ecological values and services; and
- to provide the local community with access to and enjoyment of food and farmland, environmental and agricultural education, and scenic rural character.

Coffelt Farm: Lessons Learned

Based upon a review of recent history at Coffelt Farm, the following key lessons learned have been identified by CART to help inform future decisions regarding management of Coffelt Farm:

- County-level commitment is needed to preserve both agricultural lands *and* agricultural production.
- There is a need for the Land Bank to have clearly defined vision, goals, and priorities for agricultural properties.
- Lease agreements need to clearly define expectations, roles, metrics, responsibilities, exit plan, and include a process for conflict resolution.
- Strong communication and collaboration between Land Bank, lessee, and community is essential.
- Effective farm management and leadership, as well as coordination with Land Bank and community partners, is important to facilitate a successful farming operation.
- Transparency is critical in the lease development and selection process.
- There is an opportunity to educate the Land Bank Commission, staff, and members of the public on the needs and challenges of a working farm.
- Incorporate best management practices from farm planning process and other resource providers to achieve natural resource management and production goals.
- Integrate the farm plan with Land Bank values and available resources (soil, water, and infrastructure).
- Create a management framework that allows for evolution and change in organizational structure, farming practices, and ecological systems. Recognizing that what worked in the past or the present may not work in future and that new opportunities will arise.
- Celebrate that these lands are protected and acknowledge the complexity, challenges, and opportunities.

Community Input

CART was tasked with collecting public input to shape and inform the recommendation process. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the first round of public input was shifted from holding an in-person listening session to distributing an online survey. The survey provided the community with an opportunity to weigh in on the importance of a range of past and future activities, public benefits associated with Coffelt Farm, and provided local farmers space to give input on more specific agricultural-related activities. Because responses were collected using a convenience sampling method, it is not possible to draw specific conclusions regarding how

responses represent the general public as a whole. However, responses still provide useful insight into community stakeholder priorities.

Survey Methodology

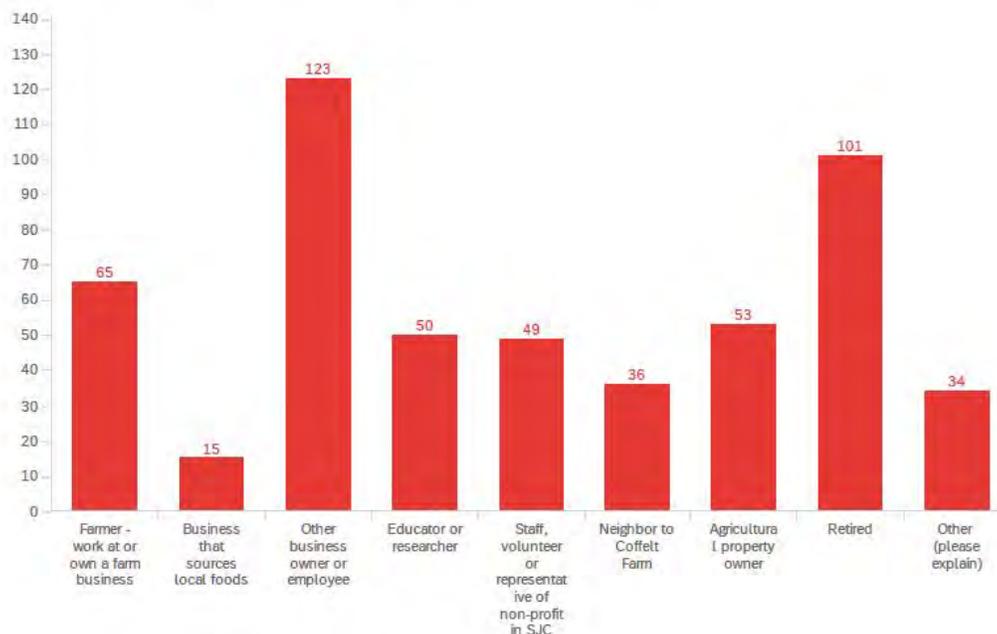
Participants were recruited using a convenience sampling method, because it was not a randomized sample of the population, it is not possible to draw conclusions about how responses represent the community as a whole. Responses were collected using an online survey tool, with invitations to participate in the survey sent out through the Land Bank email list, WSU SJC Extension Food and Farm listserv, posted and shared on Facebook, and distributed through personal connections. The survey was distributed in English and Spanish, though no Spanish responses were received. No personal identifying information was collected with survey responses and all results are reported as aggregate responses to maintain confidentiality. All survey responses were analyzed, including semi-completed surveys. Open-ended written responses were coded and used along with quantitative answers to identify major themes. Because a convenience sampling method was used, it is not possible to determine a response rate. The survey summary can be accessed online at: <https://ql.tc/gp5aQ> (*Appendix B: Survey Results*).

Survey Respondent Demographics

During the survey period, 407 total responses were collected, not all respondents answered every question. Based on self-reported demographics, 91% of respondents were full-time residents of San Juan County, and 74% lived on Orcas. Of total responses, 87% self-identified as White, 60% were over 55 years of age, 51% had household income above \$60,000, 75% had a 4-year college degree or higher and 70% did not have children living in their household. Occupations and connection to agriculture varied, in response to a multiple-choice question, 34% self-identified as a business owner or employee, 28% were retired, 18% worked at a farm or own a farm business, 15% owned agricultural property, and 14% were an educator or researcher (Figure 1). There was also a varying degree of past involvement with Coffelt Farm, 65% of respondents had purchased farm products from Coffelt Farm and 23% of respondents had not interacted with Coffelt Farm in the past. As noted above, the method of data collection does not allow for generalization or responses to all Orcas Island or San Juan County residents.

Figure 1. Survey responses to the question, “How do you identify yourself?”

Q3 - How do you identify yourself? (please check all that apply)



Survey Themes

Theme #1 - Providing local community benefit

Survey responses suggested that local community benefit is distinguished from broader public benefit, and Land Bank investment should reflect benefits beyond supporting uses for a single farmer. Examples of local community benefits include: supporting educational and research opportunities, including new farmer training; providing environmental stewardship, and providing locals with access to healthy food, contributing to community resiliency. In response to the question “How important are the following public benefits?,” food security, support agricultural economic activity, and contribution to island community resilience were ranked as top three in the “extremely important” category (Figure 2).

When asked what they envisioned at Coffelt Farm in 10 years, out of 212 written responses, 70% envisioned Coffelt Farm producing food and 46% envisioned the farm benefiting the local community. Examples of community benefits included: healthy, quality food for islanders of all income levels; opportunities for on-farm engagement (volunteering, harvesting); leasing to locals; sharing resources with local farmers; supporting local jobs, employment; and supporting island food self-reliance. Out of those same 212 written responses, 34% envisioned the farm providing agricultural education. Examples of education included: providing sites for local school field trips, providing sites for 4H projects and activities, and training interns and beginning farmers.

Figure 2. Responses to the question, “How important are the following public benefits?”

Q7 - How important are the following public benefits?

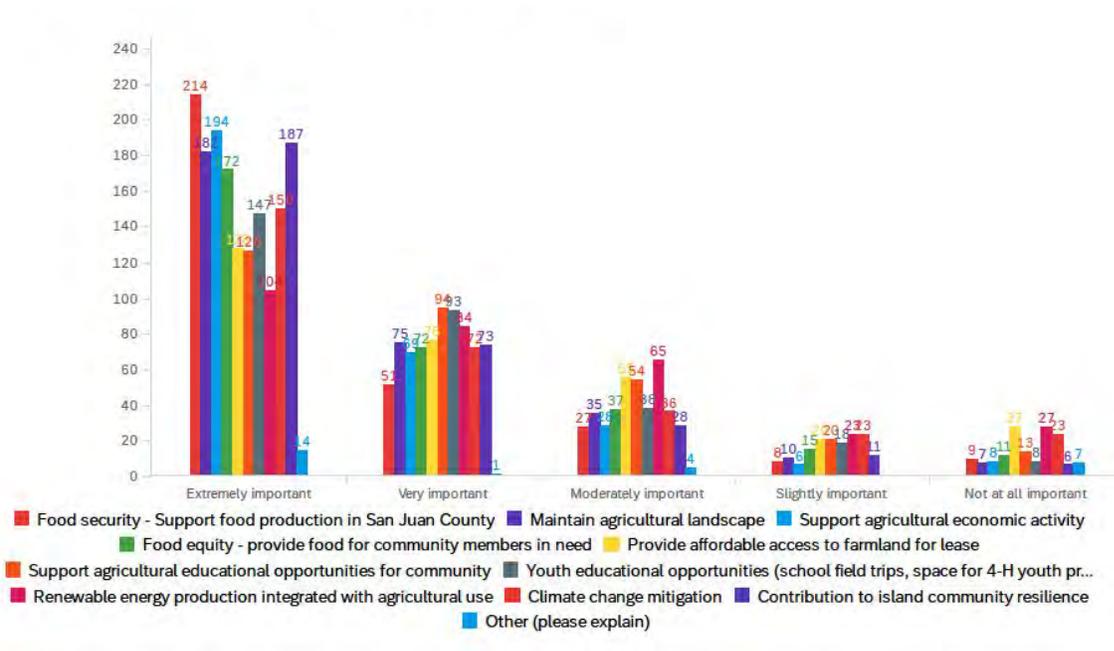
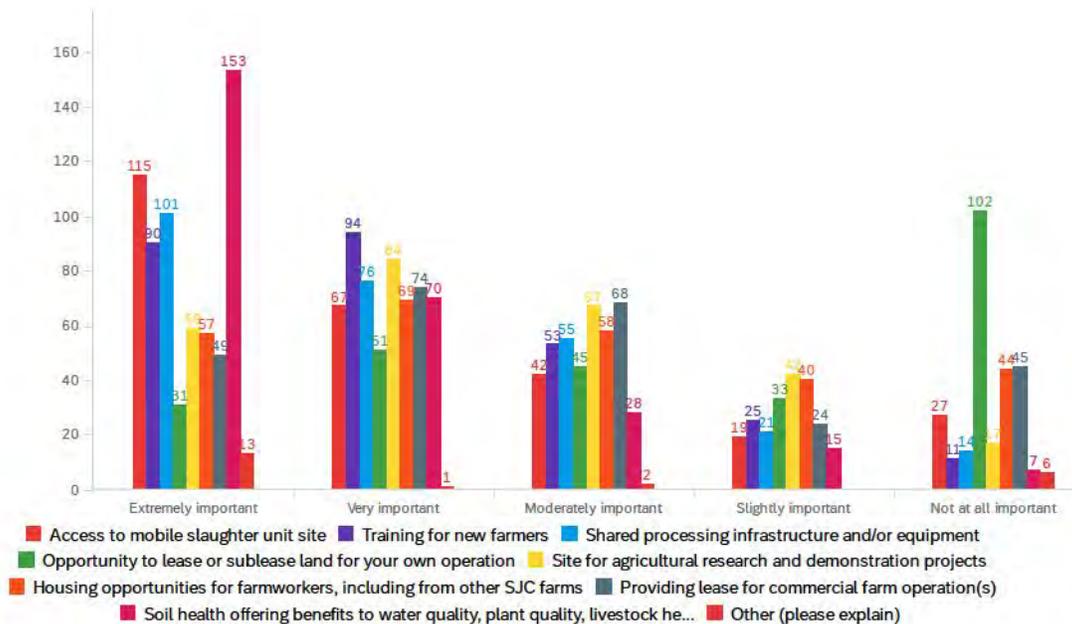


Figure 3. Survey responses to the question, “ Looking ahead - How important is it for the following activities and resources to be provided by Coffelt Farm?”

Q9 - Looking ahead - How important is it for the following activities and resources to be provi...



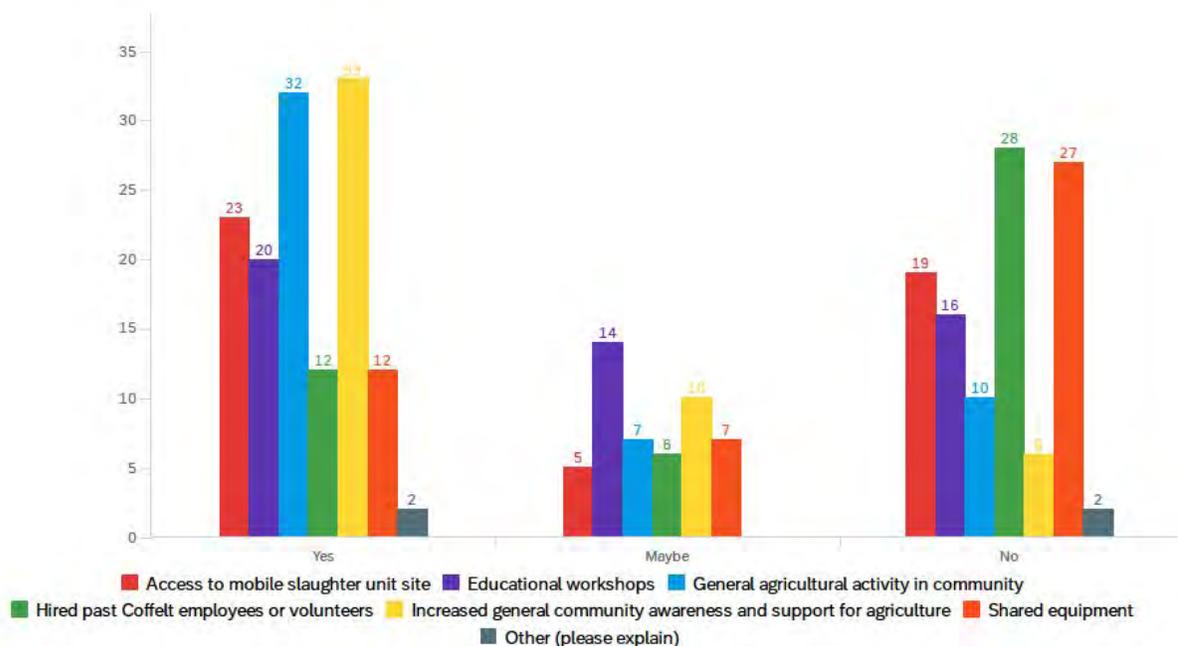
Theme #2- Providing benefit to local farmers and their businesses

Survey respondents indicated several ways for Coffelt Farm to support local agriculture (Figure 2 and Figure 3). Potential benefits to agriculture identified included: providing access to productive farmland, providing farming and farmer community-building opportunities, providing access to shared equipment and the mobile slaughter site, and providing educational opportunities. There is also a strong interest in investing in soil health (Figure 3)

Survey respondents who self-identified as farmers were asked, “Do you feel like the following activities and resources provided by Coffelt Farm have benefited your farm business in any way in the past?” Fifty farmers responded to the question, of those, 33 responded “yes” that increased awareness and support for agriculture had benefited their farm business, 32 to general agricultural activity, 23 to benefiting from access to mobile slaughter site, 20 to educational workshops, 12 to access to shared equipment (Figure 4). Farmers also asked “what shared equipment?” and “how do I access shared equipment?”

Figure 4. Responses to the question, “Do you feel like the following activities and resources provided by Coffelt Farm have benefited your farm business in any way in the past?” by survey respondents who self-identified as farmers.

Farmer Question 1 - Do you feel like the following activities and resources provided by Coffe...



Farmers were also asked to weigh in on whether Land Bank ownership of Coffelt Farm has affected their own farm business. Of the 33 farmers who responded to the open-ended question: “ Do you feel like Land Bank ownership of Coffelt Farm has affected your own farm

business in a positive or negative manner?”, 33% said they’ve been affected positively, examples including: providing visibility to local agriculture, educating the public about locally produced food, and providing a go-to information source for any number of farming-related questions- a resource that was reported to have improved animal health in our community. Twelve percent said they’ve been negatively impacted, with a perception that county funds are supporting a private business, creating unfair competition. 27% said they have not been affected.

Looking forward, farmers were asked how Coffelt Farm could provide benefit to their farm businesses and the broader agricultural community. Out of 35 written responses, the following themes emerged:

- 40% mentioned educational opportunities, examples include:
 - workshops on climate impacts of various farm practices and assistance to reduce the negative impacts;
 - a closer relationship with WSU; for example, research plots, seed isolation areas, adapting crop varieties for our zone, and anticipated climate changes;
 - outreach to the community at large about current farming practices;
 - increased access for the school community to use the preserve. A nature classroom, learning center, or dedicated space for school groups would be a fantastic community benefit.
- 37% mentioned providing farming opportunities
- 31% mentioned providing farmer community opportunities. Examples include:
 - General gathering place and meeting facility
- 20% mentioned offering shared equipment and facilities. Examples include:
 - Food hub and cold storage
 - tool rental library
 - plant repository and seed bank
 - electric farm equipment
 - heritage orchard to share scion wood

Theme # 3 - Environmental stewardship and sustainable land management practices

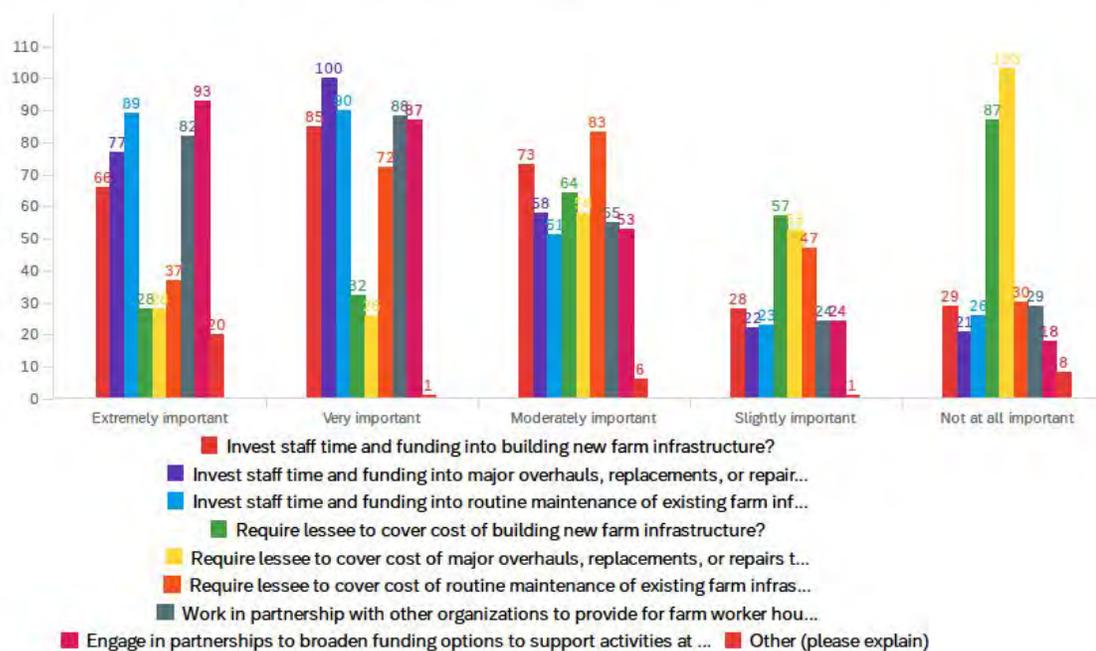
Throughout the survey, respondents made clear a desire for ecologically responsible management practices on this property. Out of 222 written responses to the open-ended question: “Do you think the lessee of Coffelt Farm should be held to specific farm management or land stewardship practices? Why or why not?”, 63% said yes; 10% said yes, but broadly; and 7% said no. A review of those 222 written responses indicated that 31% want to see the lessee farm with practices that include: organic, regenerative, sustainable, eco-friendly and 31% think the lessee should be held to specific practices to best steward the environment.

Theme #4 - Important for Land Bank to engage in community partnerships and stay involved in maintenance of Coffelt Farm Preserve

Survey respondents indicated general support for Land Bank investment of staff time and resources in maintaining, repairing, and building new infrastructure at Coffelt Farm. Developing partnerships to expand funding options and address specific challenges such as housing, were also ranked highly (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Survey responses to the question, “How important is it for the Land Bank to do each of the following at Coffelt Farm Preserve?”

Q8 - How important is it for the Land Bank to do each of the following at Coffelt Farm Preser...

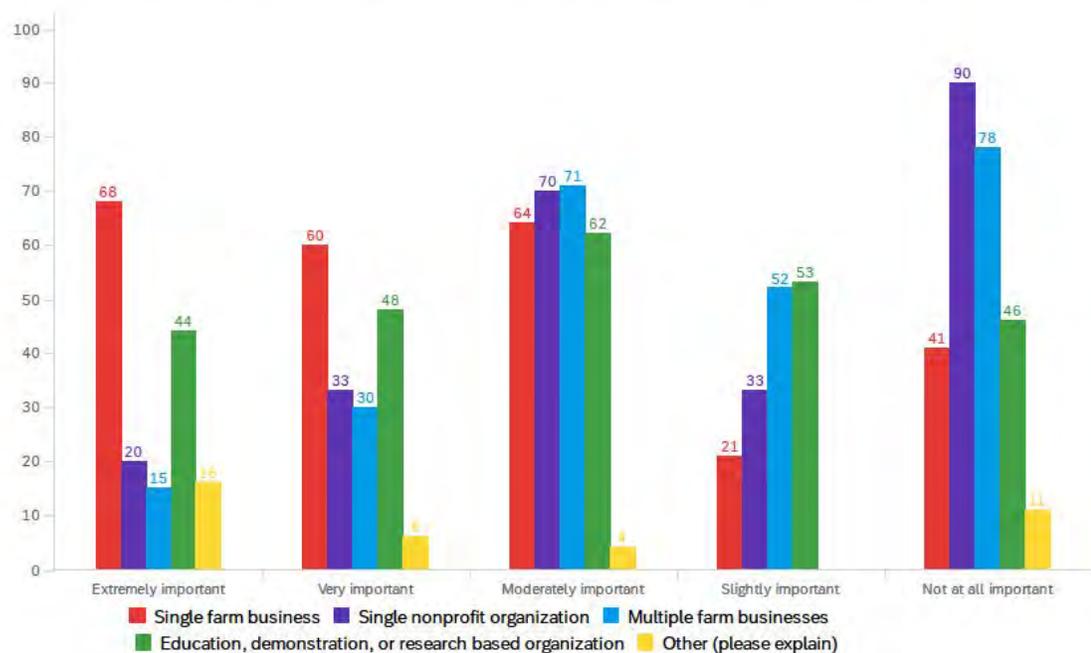


Theme #5 – Farm Management Models

There are conflicting areas of importance, with support for a single farmer lease structure as well as stress on the importance of providing community benefit. Leasing to a “single farm business” was ranked the highest at “moderately to very important”. “Education, demo, or research-based organization” was ranked in second place at “moderately important”, while “single nonprofit” and “multiple farm businesses” were ranked as “slightly to moderately important” (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Survey responses to the question, “How important is it that the Land Bank Lease Coffelt Farm to the following type of operation(s)”.

Q11 - How important is it that the Land Bank lease Coffelt Farm to the following type of oper...



Community Listening Session

Continuing to adapt for the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, CART will hold a virtual town hall in January 2021, for the second round of public input, seeking feedback on this draft report and recommendations.

Infrastructure

Coffelt Farm Preserve is unique to the Land Bank’s Agricultural Preserves as it has extensive infrastructure including housing, a diversity of agricultural buildings and fencing, and a Land Bank field office (*Appendix C: Land Bank 2020 Ag Preserves*). As with any farm, there is never a shortage of maintenance, repair, and improvement needs; this has proved to be an ongoing challenge for the farm operators, lessees, and the Land Bank. Past agreements have lacked clarity in responsibility and there has been limited capacity for necessary work. The current interim lease, and the Stewardship Management Plan (SMP) articulate structure and preserve management areas, as well as the responsible

party (*SJC Land Bank 2020*). These will be critical elements for future leases to clearly define.

There continues to be a need for maintenance, however Land Bank's investment in infrastructure on the farm has been substantial. Throughout the Coffelt Farm Stewards tenure, there were many collaborations to improve farm viability, especially related to improvements to the raw milk dairy. With the dissolution of Coffelt Farm Stewards, both parties assessed and negotiated a sale of all critical equipment and assets to stay on the farm for future operations. During the current interim lease period, the Land Bank has prioritized critical projects (Table 1) and has partnered with the SJICD on a project that Coffelt Farm Stewards had initiated to update and improve the dairy heavy use area.

In this section we provide an overview of the existing infrastructure and current responsibilities; options, suggestions, and ideas for future maintenance, improvements, and capital projects; housing discussion and considerations; infrastructure as it relates to the SJPT Conservation Easement, and future lease rate considerations. Due to the multiple users of Coffelt Farm, the infrastructure can be broken down into three distinct categories: Land Bank use, Coffelt Life Estate use, and Farm use.

Land Bank Use and Management

Land Bank staff currently use an area and several small structures as a field office, tool storage, picnic shelter, and parking area for trucks and trailers. The Land Bank manages and maintains these areas. Tool shed is also used to store equipment for the San Juan Islands Youth Conservation Corp. Additional areas of specific ecological significance are defined within the SMP, which will be managed by the Land Bank, as well as potential areas for recreational trail development (*SJC Land Bank 2020*).

Coffelt Life Estate

The life estate area is owned and occupied by Sidney Coffelt. Structures and areas included in the life estate have been recently clarified. This includes the 3,392 sq ft, 2-story farmhouse with a basement that was built in 1981, woodshed, chicken coop and run, shared use of shop, garden, and orchard (see map below). Sidney is responsible for maintenance, repairs, utility costs, and property tax associated with these structures and areas. Upon transfer of the Life Estate, the Land Bank will take on ownership, and decide on the best use of these structures and areas (Figure 7).

Figure 7. *Life Estate Area Map: These buildings and areas are not available for lease.*



Farm Use

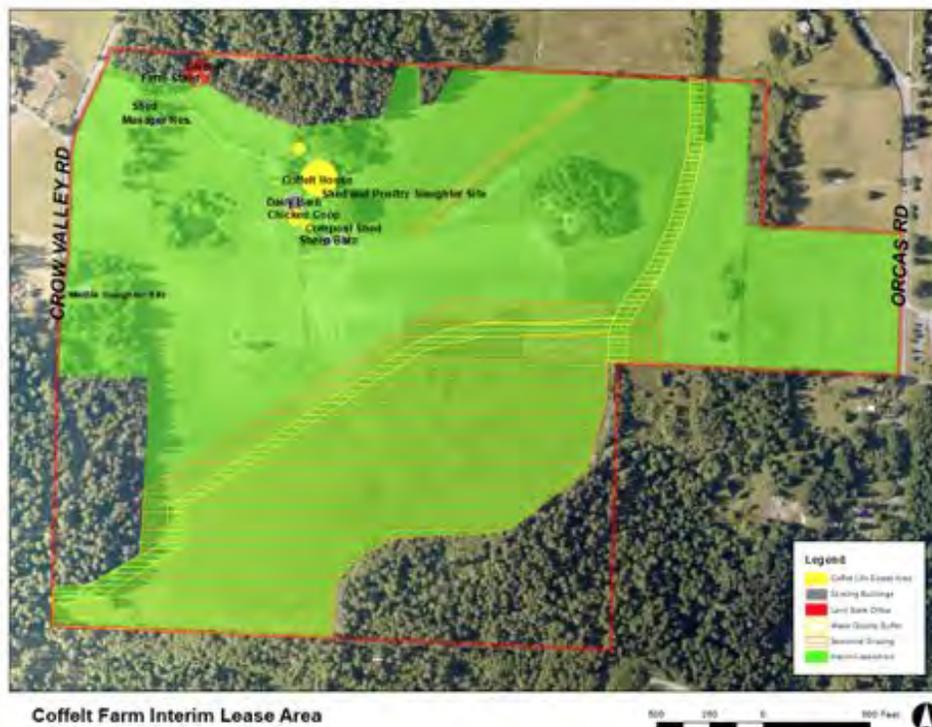
The majority of the farm infrastructure that has been included in past and current farm leases are listed with photos in *Appendix D: Coffelt Farm Infrastructure*. Included is a 1-story house with loft (1,652 sq ft), tiny house (seasonal use), farm store, dairy facility, poultry processing shed, multiple barns, sheds, pump houses, livestock fencing, and deer-fenced garden and orchard. In addition to structures, there is farm equipment, including dairy, processing, and market equipment (Figure 8).

Although there are several water sources and systems that have been used on the farm, water remains a key limiting resource. A potable spring provides water to the residences, livestock, and up to ½ acre of non-commercial gardens. In 1968 a water right was established for the use of this spring, which allows for up to 2 acre-feet (651,702 gallons) per year to be used for livestock and residential purposes. In addition to the spring, there is a low capacity (300 gpd) deep well that has a Group B permit for use in the dairy facility and a pond that has been historically been used for garden and orchard irrigation. A water right application for the pond was submitted in late 2019 for irrigation of 1 acre of market garden and orchard.

The Coffelt's designed and built the farm to function primarily as a diversified, livestock-based operation. Livestock fencing divides the property into numerous pasture and hay areas that are used to rotationally graze along with additional electric portable fencing. Springwater is available in many of the pastures. Barns are set up for equipment storage as well

as livestock management including shelter, lambing, hay/feed storage, dairy, and compost. A well-established farm store brings many customers to the farm.

Figure 8. *Coffelt Farm agricultural use area defined in current interim lease.*



Future Maintenance and Repairs Development

Maintaining the existing infrastructure for safety, functionality, and longevity should be a priority. Given the complex nature of the infrastructure at Coffelt Farm Preserve, it will be critical to determine a thoughtful strategy for long-term maintenance, repair, replacement, and improvement. Table 1 identifies current priority repair and maintenance priorities. The University of Vermont has developed a Farm Rental Guide which articulates several scenarios for determining who is responsible for the cost of infrastructure (*Cannella and Waterman 2014*). The details of scenarios outlined below should be articulated in future farm lease agreements:

Scenario #1 – Farmer pays the cost of all maintenance

Scenario #2 – Landowner pays the costs of all maintenance

Scenario #3 – Farmer and landowner share costs of maintenance

In evaluating these three scenarios, it is critical to consider factors such as:

- What is the Land Bank’s base responsibility regarding maintaining the values of the property, including infrastructure being structurally sound, functional, and safe?
- What is the public benefit of the investment in existing or new infrastructure?

- Is there a mechanism by which the value of work done by the lessee to infrastructure is compensated?
- Can repair and maintenance work be completed in a timely manner by the responsible party?
- What is the repair and maintenance schedule for each piece of infrastructure covered in the lease? How are estimated time, costs, and responsible parties defined?
- What is the mechanism for addressing questions about responsibilities that are not previously defined?

Public survey input indicates that there is strong support for the Land Bank to invest staff time and resources into maintenance of Coffelt Farm Preserve infrastructure (Figure 5), however, it is important to note that this investment should be balanced with community benefit associated with the lessee. If the future lessee is a private farm business, heavy investment in infrastructure, without commensurate adjustment in lease rate, could disproportionately support a commercial farm operation in competition with other local farms.

Table 1. *Current priority maintenance and repair needs at Coffelt Farm.*

Task	Description	Status
Upgrade electrical system	Identify risky wiring	underway
Lighting in barns and shop	Replacement of inadequate lighting in barns and shop.	underway
Remove fuel tanks	Gasoline and diesel tanks with inadequate support/containment	underway
Install/replace gutters	Where needed	underway
Tiny House	Site prep and utilities installed	underway
Farm Manager house maintenance	General maintenance, exterior painting, etc.	underway

Future Capital Improvements

The need for new capital improvements, beyond basic repairs and maintenance, will likely be necessary for the success of future operations. It is important to recognize that while substantial capital improvements may benefit the lessee in the near term, the value will be passed to the Land Bank at the end of a lease. This should be factored into who is responsible for costs

of such investments and can be managed through changes in lease rate, payment for cost of improvements, or other mechanisms (*Cannella and Waterman 2014*).

Development and design of new infrastructure should be conducted in conjunction with the future lessee and the Land Bank while considering the potential to benefit the community. The list of possible capital improvements below is based on an assessment of past and current needs, and community interest in access to shared facilities and educational opportunities. The relevance and priority of specific investments would depend on the future farm operation.

Possible capital improvement ideas, and opportunities to be explored in future lease

Farm infrastructure

- Complete hardening of dairy heavy use area with manure shed and loafing shed
- Replace interior fencing to provide for management of sensitive ecological areas
- Replace exterior fencing in areas
- Additional Heavy Use Area and livestock shelters at grazing island and slaughter site.
- Fruit and vegetable processing station
- More rodent-proof storage/cold storage
- Kitchen for farmworker use
- Year-round farmworker housing (in partnership with other organizations)
- Shared bathroom/shower/laundry facility for Farm use and Land Bank use
- Solar system
- Additional water source (golf course connection, new well)

Community infrastructure

- Shared commercial kitchen
- Shared poultry processing facility
- Community space for classes, workshops, and events
- Shared farm store infrastructure
- SJI Food Hub storage and aggregation location

Housing

The challenge of finding adequate farmworker housing has been identified as a key issue countywide and has been an acute constraint at Coffelt Farm. The 2011 *Growing Our Future* report recommended that: “In partnership with affordable housing organizations research into the feasibility and collaborative approaches to low-cost housing for farms and farm workers should be conducted” (*Bill et al. 2011, pg 30*). Recently the SJC ARC recommended additions to the Comprehensive Plan that would: “Encourage County Programs (i.e. Affordable Housing program and Land Bank) to collaborate in the development of affordable farmer/farmworker

housing and supporting Ag infrastructure in functional proximity to agricultural lands held in public trust” (*SJCARC 2019, pg4*). Based on an interview conducted with OPAL Community Land Trust director, Lisa Byers, there is potential to explore collaborative solutions to developing housing options at Coffelt Farm, within constraints of land use, conservation easement requirements, and organizational capacity.

At Coffelt Farm, the farm manager house has historically been sufficient for a family, and there have been many less than ideal seasonal and temporary structures used over the years to house farm staff. Currently, the lessee family occupies the farm manager’s house and an employee is using a tiny house on a seasonal basis. It is important to note that at some point in time, hopefully a long time from now, Sidney Coffelt will transfer her life estate to the Land Bank. At that point, there will be new options for housing and integrating the space into farm operations. Despite that possibility, there is a real immediate need to consider options to address housing options for future lessee and farm operations. As with other changes in infrastructure development of new housing options should be evaluated with the lessee and balance of investment appropriately distributed.

Housing options to consider:

- Continue as is.
- Develop an improved seasonal living scenario with necessary and well-designed amenities (shared kitchen, shower, toilet, laundry).
- Temporary structure or campsites.
- Develop “Farmworker Housing” within the framework of the easement and San Juan County development code.
- Add a small year-round permitted dwelling (allowed as 3rd single-family residence within the easement)
- Build multi-use housing, event space, processing, and storage building such as was proposed by Coffelt Farm Stewards in 2019.

San Juan Preservation Trust Conservation Easement - Infrastructure

To protect the open-space and agricultural values of the property, the conservation easement limits residential use of the property to three single-family residences and their appurtenant structures located within Structures Area 1 and to limit agricultural structures to Structures Area 1 and 2 (Figure 9). The existing main residence and farmworker house are to remain in their current locations. In addition to the single-family residences, agricultural structures may include structures used to house farm workers in accordance with Farm Stay Accommodations and Farm Worker Accommodations provisions of the San Juan County Unified Development Code 18.40.230.

Agricultural structures allowed in Structures Area 1 are any structures required for farming that are consistent with the terms of the Conservation Easement. Agricultural structures

in Structures Area 2 are limited to a barn, corral, and feed area. Outside of the designated structures areas, the Land Bank may construct, maintain, use, repair, remodel, relocate, or replace fences, trellises, irrigation piping, feeding and watering troughs, movable poultry pens, and temporary row covers as may be associated with agricultural activities.

In 2019, the San Juan Preservation Trust gave Discretionary Authorization to the Land Bank to construct a heavy use area livestock shelter outside of the defined structures areas on the forested “Grazing Island.” This structure was allowed because it would benefit the conservation values of the property by reducing soil erosion, nutrient runoff, and allow proper management of manure and compost for use on the property. It was determined that these benefits outweigh the impact on the conservation values. The structure may not be used for non-agricultural purposes. For more detail regarding the terms of the conservation easement, including the reserved and prohibited uses, see the conservation easement document (*Appendix A*).

Figure 9. San Juan Preservation Trust Conservation Easement structure areas.



Lease Rate

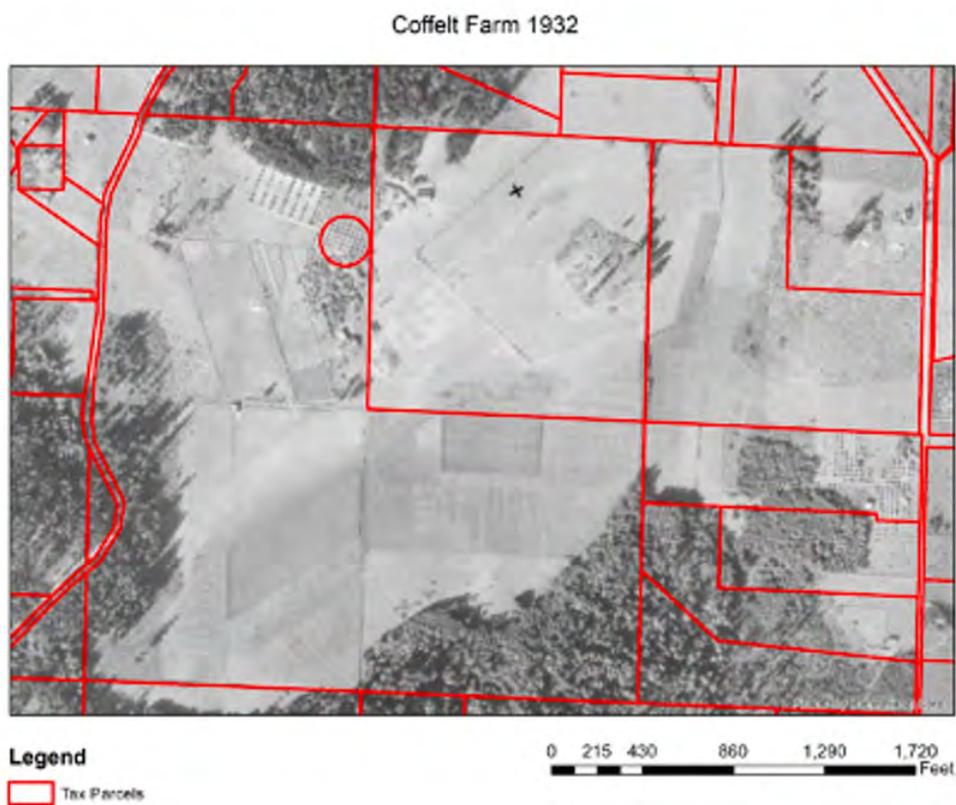
As discussed above the lease rate may need to be adjusted, depending on the level of investment in maintenance and capital improvement, and the responsible party. Determining a fair rate may also be influenced by the level of community benefit provided by the operation, as well as considering incentives for long term stewardship of the agricultural land and ecosystem function. There is limited information on agricultural leases in San Juan County and rates vary widely. On average western Washington pasture land is leased for \$48/acre/year and irrigated cropland is: \$280/acre/year (*USDA NASS 2016*). Ownership of farm equipment adds additional complexity to leasing land and infrastructure. Selling equipment owned by the Land Bank, or establishing a lease to own agreement, could simplify use, maintenance, and replacement responsibilities. Given the level of infrastructure at Coffelt Farm, further analysis of current rental rates for key structures including the house, barn, dairy facility, tiny house, and farm equipment should be considered.

Agricultural Potential

Past and Current Use

As noted in the Coffelt Farm History section above, this land has supported a wide range of livestock and crops. An aerial photograph of the property from 1932 shows the extent of cultivation, orchards, and establishment of drainage infrastructure (Figure 10). Through the years of management by the Coffelt family, the Coffelt Farm Stewards, and the current lessee, the property has primarily been managed for diverse livestock and forage production with a limited vegetable, fruit, and grain component. The future potential of any farm enterprise at Coffelt Farm revolves around soil types, water, climate, and market opportunities.

Figure 10. *1932 Aerial photograph of Coffelt Farm*



Soils and Acreage

Coffelt Farm is 186 acres and has nine soil types (Figure 11). All but one of these nine soil types is considered Prime Farmland and one is Farmland of State Significance in the USDA NRCS Soil Survey. Six of these soil types make up 98% of the total farm area, are well suited to livestock and grazing management, and have historically been used in the cultivation of a wide range of annual and perennial crops (Table 2).

Because of the underlying variation in soil type and topography, this property is well suited to a diversified farming operation. All the major soil types found on the farm, except for Semiahmoo muck (1006), have a shallow restrictive soil layer (dense clay) that impedes infiltration of water. This restrictive soil layer results in saturated soils in the winter, which can pose a challenge to certain farming activities. Potential crop production could involve annual vegetable or grain crops as well as perennial crops such as tree fruit orchards, vineyards, or berries with species that tend to tolerate poorly drained soils. Portions of the forested area are well established overwintering livestock areas, although additional agriculture use of forested areas is limited by the Stewardship Management Plan and the Conservation Easement. Within these limitations there may be opportunities to explore connections between agricultural and forest resources, for example, mushroom cultivation, managed grazing to assist with vegetation

management, or the use of thinned trees to make biochar, which can be used on more agricultural intensive parts of the farm and will sequester carbon. There may also be opportunities to expand utilization of agroforestry into historic pasture areas through planting of hedges and trees that do not obstruct the view.

Optimizing production will require careful soil management and correction of existing nutrient deficiencies (*SJICD 2018 CNMP*). A range of strategies can be employed to improve soil quality, including grazing management, incorporation of cover crops, use of on-farm manure and compost, as well as imported soil amendments. Ongoing research in San Juan County has indicated that adequate levels of organic fertilizer can double forage production in an existing hayfield, as well as improve the forage quality (*WSU Extension 2019*). Along with the potential benefits, the costs of off-farm inputs need to be carefully considered.

Figure 11. *Coffelt Farm area with soil types.*

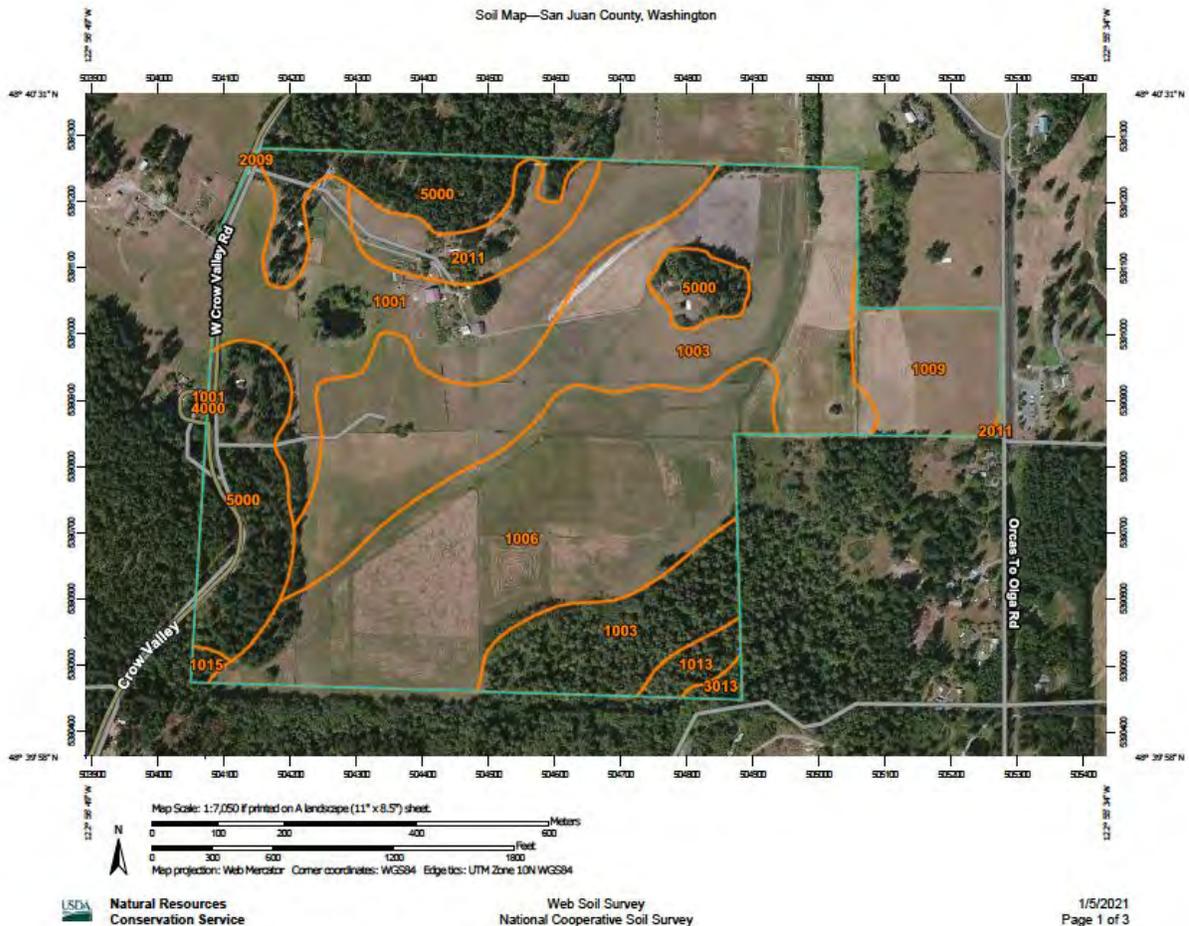


Table 2. Six primary soil types of Coffelt Farm, approximate acreage, potential agriculture use, and challenges to production.

Soil Type	Approx. Acreage	Primary Agriculture Uses	Challenges to Production
Coveland loam, 0 to 5 percent slopes (1001) ,	30	Annual and perennial crops such as grains, vegetables, and berries as well as hay and pasture	Seasonally wet, drainage may be needed
Coupeville loam 0-5 percent slopes (1003)	61	Annual and perennial crops, hay, and pasture	Seasonally wet, drainage may be needed
Semiahmoo muck, 0-2 percent slopes (1006)	49	Late season livestock forage, short-season annual crops tolerant of moisture and acidic soils.	Very poorly drained, drainage needed, excess ponding and water saturation into late spring, early summer that restricts cropping systems and grazing
Coveland-Mitchell Bay complex, 2 to 15 percent slopes (1009)	11	Annual and perennial crops, hay, and pasture	Seasonally wet, drainage may be needed
Roche-Killebrew complex, 2 to 10 percent slopes (2011)	8	Most optimal soil for diverse annual or perennial cropping systems.	Moderately well drained. Seasonal irrigation would be a necessary component of potential crop enterprise.
Cady-Rock Outcrop complex, 5-30 percent slopes (5000)	24	Livestock heavy-use areas, IGFC MPU use site.	Thin layer of topsoil over unweathered bedrock. Very well drained.

Agricultural Water Resources

Water availability is a significant constraint on crop production in San Juan County, particularly in the summer months when there is little precipitation. As a rule of thumb, annual vegetable crops require one acre-inch of water per week, or approximately one acre-foot of water during the growing season which is 325,851 gallons of water per acre. A similar rate of irrigation is recommended to maximize pasture production. Conversely, high rainfall in the winter months results in soil saturation, limiting winter crop growth as well as grazing. Planting crops along the contour of slopes could be an important method to take advantage of seasonal water flows or deflect them if saturation is a problem. Maintaining established drainage is also important for the continuation of agricultural production in low-lying areas.

The use of surface water in Washington State requires a legal water right, and use of groundwater is limited to certain exempt allowances without a water right. At Coffelt Farm, the currently available surface water rights and infrastructure provide for domestic use, livestock watering, and limited non-commercial gardening. The existing Class B well is very limited in volume, however it provides for operation of a certified dairy and processing of poultry. Given these constraints, there is not currently a viable option for irrigation of commercial crops at Coffelt Farm.

The Land Bank submitted a water rights application in 2019 which would allow for use of the surface water from an existing pond, however the time until review and approval by the Washington Department of Ecology is unknown. Rainwater catchment can be diverted and used for irrigation, which may provide a short term solution if appropriate infrastructure can be installed. Without additional access to irrigation, commercial crop production is likely to be limited to certain perennials, or annuals such as grain, which can be grown without irrigation. Additional groundwater sources may also be needed to expand dairy, develop commercial processing, or other areas requiring a certified water source. Developing adequate legal water supply is an important priority to continue investing in for commercial crop production.

Climate

San Juan County has a generally moderate climate influenced by the surrounding waters. There are important microclimate variations in precipitation, temperature, and winds that can influence production planning. Average annual precipitation at Coffelt Farm is between 25 - 40 inches, and the mean annual air temperature is: 48-50°F. The frost-free period is 200- 240 days with an average first frost date of November 15th and last frost date of April 15th. Use of greenhouses, high tunnels, or other protective structures, can help extend the growing season. High winds can damage crops and infrastructure, as well as stress livestock. Continued use of the established livestock areas within the forest can provide winter livestock shelter in addition to the barn infrastructure.

Economic and Market Considerations

According to USDA Agricultural Census (*USDA NASS 2017*), there are 316 farms in San Juan County and 576 producers. Of these producers, 64% worked some days off the farm and 30% worked 200 days or more off the farm. The average San Juan County farm has an annual gross revenue of \$13,035 per farm and 95% of farms gross less than \$50,000 per year. While these challenges are not unique to San Juan County, they highlight the importance of a careful consideration of models for long-term economic viability of proposed agricultural operations.

Market demand for San Juan County products remains strong and there is some evidence that the current Covid-19 pandemic has revived community relationship to local farm products, and renewed interest in purchasing local food. In past years, tourism has driven high demand in the summer months and this demand will likely continue. Farmers markets, restaurants, farm stands, community supported agriculture (CSAs), and other forms of direct marketing are important outlets. The recent establishment of the San Juan Islands Food Hub is increasing opportunities for interisland, as well as mainland, sales of products. Within San Juan County, the top crops in acreage are livestock forage, barley, fresh vegetables, apples, and flowers. The most common livestock in San Juan County are laying hens, cattle, sheep, horses, goats, and hogs. Access to appropriate equipment and infrastructure for storage, processing, and distribution are critical components of economic viability and should be considered as a part of building a viable path forward for future farming operations.

San Juan Preservation Trust Conservation Easement – Agricultural Activities

The purposes of the conservation easement are to preserve and protect the agricultural, ecological, scenic, and open-space values of the property in perpetuity; to limit residential use of the property to three single-family residences and their appurtenant structures and agricultural structures within defined structures areas, and to forever preserve the agricultural area as open-field farmland, wetlands, and mature woodland for agricultural and natural resource conservation uses and to be utilized in a manner that conserves the quality of the soils for open-field agricultural use.

The conservation easement allows for commercial or non-commercial agriculture. Grantor may cultivate, mow, and graze the open fields, raise livestock, horses, or poultry; raise cash or field crops; plant and cultivate orchards, vineyards, or other crops, including non-food products such as lavender or nursery plants; or engage in other forms of farming and agriculture using best management practices.

While the easement is not prescriptive about which type of agriculture should be carried out, it does have certain restrictions that would preclude some uses of the property. For instance, the manipulation or alteration of any marshes, wetlands, or surface drainage patterns is prohibited with the exception that the historic drainage channels found on the property may be maintained. The clearcutting of trees is prohibited, except within Structures Areas for building sites, for driveways and utility corridors, or to restore and replace orchards. Industrial uses of the

property are prohibited including, for example, animal feedlots for livestock not raised on the property. Also, views of the property from Crow Valley and Orcas Road may not be obstructed. For more detail regarding the terms of the conservation easement, including the reserved and prohibited uses, see the conservation easement document in *Appendix A*.

Educational and Research Potential

Education is a strongly held community value, and as noted in the *Growing our Future* report, “Local conservation organizations have a mission to conserve farmland and to promote agriculture and education. Farmland held by conservation organizations has the stability and security necessary for long term programs and leases. These lands offer a link from Agricultural education to learning to owning” (*Bill et al. 2011, pg 30*). One of the intents of the Coffelt family was to support education and training of new farmers in sustainable production practices. To address the continued need for training new farmers the SJC ARC recommended that Comprehensive Plan Economic Development Element include the language: “Support the education, training and counseling of county residents towards internships in agriculture to supplement and replace an aging talent pool” (*SJCARC 2019, pg 3*). Community input gathered during the CART survey also indicated strong support for educational opportunities as a function of Coffelt Farm. To learn more about the needs on Orcas, CART interviewed Principal Kyle Freeman, who indicated that Orcas Island School District has the capacity to collaborate to provide agricultural and food-related educational programming for school kids - from raising animals and vegetables to how they are prepared and enjoyed.

A farm-based facility for education would not just benefit school kids, but also adults in the community. This could expand opportunities to collaborate with other organizations within San Juan County that provide education for new and beginning farmers, such as WSU Extension, San Juan Islands Agricultural Guild, and others. There is consistent demand for educational programming. For example, the San Juan Islands Agriculture Summit draws over 150 participants annually. Cooperating farms are an important part of delivering relevant programming and hands-on, farmer-led workshops are of particular interest to the community.

Public land also offers the potential for stable long-term research projects, which can provide a benefit to the larger agricultural community, address issues related to sustainable production practices, and explore potential impacts or benefits of agricultural activities on ecosystem function. Coffelt Farm is well suited for research as soil types, as well as historic agricultural use, are reflective of many farms in San Juan County. WSU Extension has conducted applied agricultural research at the Land Bank’s Beaverton Marsh Preserve since 2016 and established an organic fertilizer and no-till pasture seeding trial at Coffelt Farm Preserve in the fall of 2019. Continued and expanded research activities at Coffelt would benefit, and benefit from, public education activities. Research activities could be compatible with a wide variety of

lease models as long as the lessee is open to collaboration and willing to make accommodations for certain management changes.

Development of Coffelt Farm into an education and research farm would require substantial investment to support not only farming activities, but research staff, equipment, and overhead needed to develop, acquire, and carry out grant-funded projects. Education and research require different skill sets and support than commercial agriculture. Success would depend on a clear vision and adequate investment in staff capacity and partnerships to carry out multiple functions. There is an opportunity for the Land Bank, as property owner, and SJPT, as easement holder, to engage more directly with the community in support of educational programs in a manner that would raise overall awareness of the organizations and support long-term conservation goals.

Models for the Conservation of Agricultural Lands

The models presented below are generalized examples of strategies for conserving working agricultural land. There is considerable overlap between strategies, including the examples presented, and many conservation efforts use multiple approaches in combination. Specific examples are provided as a reference, as well as some of the key benefits and challenges to each generalized model.

Model #1: Protect with conservation easement and sell the farm

This model is utilized by many land trusts whose sole mission is to preserve agricultural land and working farms. The development rights are removed. The utilization of a “mandatory agricultural use” or “covenant to farm” clause can be used as an additional safeguard to ensure the ongoing agricultural utilization of the land. It is important to note that Coffelt Farm is already protected with an easement held by the SJPT.

Examples:

- [Washington Farmland Trust](#)
- [Marin Agricultural Land Trust \(MALT\)](#)
- [Sonoma Agricultural Land Trust \(SALT\)](#)
- [Equity Trust](#)

Benefits:

- Simple management in the long term.
- Ensures protection.
- Conservation easements in general, and specifically utilizing a “mandatory agricultural use,” can deflate the value of agricultural land and make it more accessible for new farmers.

- Funds from the sale of the property can be used for other high priority conservation projects.

Challenges:

- Protection is only as good as the easement.
- May not end up being used for agricultural purposes if no mandatory agricultural use is utilized.
- Mandatory agricultural use can be a challenging requirement to monitor and enforce.
- Transition continues to be tied to the real estate market.

Additional Concepts:

- Covenant to Farm or Mandatory Agricultural Use as part of easement (used by MALT & Equity Trust)

Model #2: Single farmer lease

This option has the simplicity of working with one farmer while holding the land and guiding how it is utilized through the lease. There is a long history of public lands being leased for agriculture and grazing on both BLM and state DNR lands. Currently, the Land Bank leases other properties (eg. King Sisters, Frazer Homestead, and False Bay Creek) using this model. The success of a single farm lease model is tied to the clarity of the Request for Proposals, lease, and willingness of partners to follow through with commitments. Successes with this model have been able to balance the farmer’s need for autonomy in making business and management decisions, with the needs of the landowner.

Examples:

- [Stonecrest Farm- Lopez Community Land Trust](#) (Lopez Island, WA)
- [WA State Department of Natural Resources](#) (Washington State)
- [Greenfield Berry Farm](#) (Cuyahoga, OH)
- [Pitkin County, CO](#)
- [Boulder County, CO](#)

Benefits:

- Simplicity of dealing with one entity.
- Continues to support local food production.
- Can create clarity about who is responsible for what infrastructure and areas through the lease.
- Potential to reduce stress of the life tenant, as there are fewer relationships to manage.

Challenges:

- Success is dependent on the ongoing relationship between lessor and lessee.
- Potential for public displeasure and perception of public funds supporting private business.

Additional Concepts:

- This could be utilized in conjunction with other models for a designated portion of Coffelt Farm.

Model #3: Multiple leases with multiple farm enterprises

This model is often used in conjunction with the goal of farm business incubation. It can provide an entry point for multiple farmers. Different farm enterprises (e.g. livestock, vegetable, dairy) could provide synergy and utilization of different aspects of the preserve. These kinds of programs often couple land access with business support and mentorship.

Examples:

- [Viva Farms](#) (Mount Vernon, WA)
- [Snovalley Tilth Experience Farming Project](#) (Carnation, WA)
- [Dusty Williams & Broadleaf Farm](#) (Everson, WA)
- [Scatter Creek South of the Sound Community Farmland Trust](#) (Thurston, WA)
- [Mara Farms](#) (Seattle, WA)

Benefits:

- Greater access to beginning farmers, who may lack all of the financial resources required to start up.
- Ability to have multiple farm enterprises utilize the space in ways that produce different food products for the community.
- Multiple visions could lead to greater community benefit.
- Infrastructure for a variety of farm enterprises is on-site and available for use. Examples include:
 - Refrigeration
 - Packing/Processing shed
 - Established water system suitable for agriculture
 - Tool storage
 - Tractor and implements available for hourly rent or tillage services available for hire
 - Greenhouse space available for rent
 - Shared market outlets. For example, Viva Farms provides access to an established farmstand, CSA, and wholesale market channel for growers to sell through.

Challenges:

- Everything is shared and space may be limited.
- “Business roommate” feel.
- Some situations require more from the grower in terms of continuing education, limitations on timeframe.
- More lessees means more communication required and a structure to facilitate positive and constructive relations.
- Most models utilize a central point person and an overarching non-profit to manage the big picture, not always though.
- Multiple livestock operations in a shared area can create biosecurity issues.
- Potential discomfort of Life Tenant associated with a large number of people and relationships to manage.

Model #4: Non-profit education and research farm

These kinds of farm entities can influence and drive change in the regional agricultural sector. They are hubs of community engagement and learning. Having this kind of entity in the county could raise the profile of local agriculture.

Examples:

- [Oxbow Farm](#)
- [Rodale Institute](#)
 - ([Rodale has 3 satellite farms](#))
- [Pitney Meadows Community Farm](#)
- [Menoken Farm](#)
- [Center for Agriculture and Sustainable Food Systems](#) (UC Santa Cruz, CA)
- [WSU Research Farms](#)
- [WSU Twin Vista Ranch](#) (Marrowstone Island, WA)
- [Vashon Maury Island Land Trust Matsuda Farm](#) (Vashon Island, WA)

Benefits:

- Access to grant funding.
- Provides a community/public benefit through public access and volunteer opportunities.
- Opportunities to partner with other community players such as OPAL, the school district, food banks, WSU Extension and SJICD.
- Research and education could benefit managers of other agriculture and forest lands in San Juan County and the region.

Challenges:

- Would require either the creation of a new entity to run the farm or a robust commitment of staff and management by the Land Bank or other existing organization.
- Needs a very clear mission and commitment.
- Needs additional staff and resources to support a research and educational mission in addition to farm management.
- Operational costs would need to be supported by fundraising.

Model #5: County (or other public entity) operated farm

Examples:

- [Burlington County Agricultural Center](#) (Moorestown, NJ)
- [78th Street Heritage Farm](#) (Vancouver, WA)
- [Slate Run Historical Farm](#) (Canal Winchester, OH)
- [Historical Farm at Carriage Hill MetroPark](#) (Dayton, OH)

Benefits:

- Consistent funding stream for farm operations and infrastructure.
- Public input on crops grown, services offered, public access, etc. “governed by the community”
- Consistent management and oversight by a responsible agency.
- Less pressure to turn a profit.

Challenges:

- Significant time and financial investment for an agency whose focus may include, but is not limited to agriculture.
- Requires experienced staff to run the operation.
- Greater financial investment to run the farm vs. leasing it to another party.

Model #6: Regional employee-owned vertically integrated cooperatives

Emerging conversations in the sustainable agriculture community are challenging existing assumptions regarding the potential of single-family farm operations to have an impact. The model of vertically integrated, landscape-scale cooperatives is being proposed as an alternative that can scale up to reduce prices, and facilitate greater food justice, without sacrificing ecological principles. This model also supports leadership and empowerment of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC).

Examples:

- [Sylvanaqua Farms](#)
- [New Roots Cooperative Farm](#)

Benefits:

- Potential to help drive systemic change in sustainable agriculture.
- Addresses social justice as a component of land conservation and food production.
- Has potential for long-term economic viability.

Challenges:

- Access to land, capital, and human resources necessary to scale.
- Systemic barriers to BIPOC ownership and leadership in agriculture and food system.
- Need for integration with other farms, processing, and distribution operations that may not exist.

Further considerations for lease models

Based on review of agricultural lease resources, existing models, interviews with stakeholders and professionals in agriculture conservation, as well as personal experience, several important considerations were identified for development of an appropriate lease.

Recognizing the multiple demands on Coffelt Farm, including productive agriculture, public access, and conservation of natural resources, as well as residence of Life Tenant, and lessee, it is critical to create clear zones of responsibility and access. Farming often requires a fast pace of operation and a high degree of pressure. Public access areas should be carefully defined and designed in a manner to avoid disruption of working agriculture, which can create conflict as well as potentially dangerous interactions between equipment, livestock, and the public. Clear boundaries are crucial for respecting privacy of individuals living and working at Coffelt Farm. It is also important to manage public expectations of appearance, as the day to day reality of farm production activities may not always visually reflect what is presented in popular depictions.

Similarly, there is a wide range of perspectives regarding appropriate types of agriculture management, as well as access to shared infrastructure, educational and research opportunities. It is critical to recognize individual strengths and limitations and be aware that a single lessee may not be suited to meeting all of these expectations. If the goal is to provide a broad spectrum of community opportunities, potential partnerships should be explored to honor individual strengths and not overburden lessees responsible for agricultural production with other demands which may not be within their skill set.

Based on public input, there is strong community support for sustainable production practices at Coffelt Farm. In some situations, mandating specific practices can create unrealistic constraints on-farm operation and broad principles may be more appropriate. Year to year variation in weather, market opportunities, available staff, equipment breakdowns, livestock and

crop disease, and pests all require flexibility. Successfully implementing mandated sustainable production practices, while managing an economically viable operation, will likely require additional financial and technical assistance. Monitoring of production practices and impact on factors such as soil quality and ecosystem services also require a large degree of time, specific knowledge, and resources to conduct in a consistent manner. Partnerships between a lessee and the Land Bank or other organizations may be needed to facilitate robust monitoring of agricultural practices and benefits to natural resources.

Leases are the framework of a relationship. Long-term success will rely on the ability of individuals to establish clear boundaries, allow for flexibility, and build trust between the lessee, the Land Bank, organizational partners, and the community.

Conclusions

Coffelt Farm is a remarkable community asset and next steps to lease this property should be carefully considered. Based on the review of Coffelt Farm as presented in this report, CART has identified some general recommendations to help guide future decision making by the Land Bank Commission and staff. It is recognized that the Land Bank has multiple priorities and demands on resources, which will influence decision making. However, it is important to fully value the role of agriculture in the conservation mission of the Land Bank, and recognize that simply preserving the land, and the view, is insufficient to support long-term viability of agriculture. There is a need and opportunity to continue engaging with a holistic approach to agricultural conservation that engages the needs of production, ecosystem function, and community benefit.

Recommendations

- Carefully review lessons learned to look for ways to move forward from past challenges.
- Recognize the complexity of lease arrangements and relationship management. CART recommends developing a lease with a single business or non-profit entity with potential for that entity to manage subleases.
- Consider the potential financial viability of proposed operations including production, outside fundraising, and potential for direct support from the Land Bank and other partners.
- Respond to community interest in investments that support community benefit such as education and access to shared infrastructure.
- Seek and honor the input of the life estate holder, recognizing that life tenancy is not forever. Engage with life estate holders in the selection process of lessee to reduce potential for conflict and support the health of relationships on the farm.
- Work with the lessee to address key infrastructure constraints such as safety and maintenance of existing structures, and develop a balanced approach to capital improvement.

- The current lack of a viable source of water for crop irrigation is a major constraint and should be a priority to address.
- Engage with community partners to help address housing needs of future operations.
- Recognize the historic and current connection between this land and tribal communities and proactively engage those communities to solicit input and lease proposals.
- There is strong community support for sustainable production practices. This creates an opportunity to explore the development of lease structures that incentivize implementation and utilization of best management practices that steward the land for long-term productivity and benefit the underlying ecosystem and long term soil health.
- Future lessee and Land Bank should continue to engage with service providers such as the SJICD to develop, implement and monitor an Individual Stewardship Plan as part of the Voluntary Stewardship Program.
- Define clear zones of responsibility and access that don't overburden individual lessee with full range of community expectations.
- Celebrate the opportunity presented by Coffelt Farm and allow space for imagination.

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Appendices

Appendix A: San Juan Preservation Trust Conservation Easement

The complete Recorded San Juan Preservation Trust Coffelt Farm Conservation Easement is available online:

<https://apps.sanjuanco.com/auditor/recording/TempImages/461277395123941.pdf>

Appendix B: Survey Results

Participants were recruited using a convenience sampling method, because it was not a randomized sample of the population, it is not possible to draw conclusions about how responses represent the community as a whole. Responses were collected using an online survey tool, with invitations to participate in the survey sent out through the Land Bank email list, WSU SJC Extension Food and Farm listserv, posted and shared on Facebook, and distributed through personal connections. The survey was distributed in English and Spanish, though no Spanish responses were received. No personal identifying information was collected with survey responses and all results are reported as aggregate responses to maintain confidentiality. All survey responses were analyzed, including semi-completed surveys. Open-ended written responses were coded and used along with quantitative answers to identify major themes. Because a convenience sampling method was used, it is not possible to determine a response rate. The survey summary can be accessed online at: <https://ql.tc/gp5aQ>.

Appendix C: Land Bank 2020 Ag Preserves

Land Bank Agricultural Preserves 2020			
Property	Approx. ag acres	Status	Infrastructure
Coffelt Farm, Orcas	150	Interim lease through 2021. Long-term lease options being explored. \$1500/month	Farm Manager House and seasonal tiny house Well established farmstead with extensive infrastructure (See Appendix D).
King Sisters, San Juan	40	Leased for livestock grazing and market garden. \$300/month	No housing Perimeter woven livestock fence with electrified top strand, well water system, hay barn/ loafing shed, grid power, pump house
Alderman, San Juan	10	Short term management agreement. Considered for resale with Conservation Easement.	No housing Perimeter fencing combined with neighboring farmland
Frazer Homestead, San Juan	50	Leased to 2027 for livestock grazing and grain production. \$800/yr plus improvements	No housing Perimeter woven livestock fence with two barbwire top strands, solar-powered pond water system.
Beaverton Marsh North, San Juan	60	Short term management agreement for hay production. Collaborations with WSU Extension for pasture improvement research.	No Housing Perimeter livestock fence not functional, two drilled wells need testing (no power)
Beaverton Marsh South, San Juan	140	No active agricultural use. This is wetland dominated by reed canary grass.	No housing Old perimeter fencing not functional
Beaverton Marsh corner, San Juan	5	Short term management agreement for hay production.	No Housing Old well (no power), some perimeter fencing

False Bay Creek, San Juan	30	Leased for seasonal livestock grazing. \$400/year or exchange for services	No Housing Perimeter and interior woven livestock fencing with electric top strand, solar-powered pond water system
Zylstra Lake, San Juan	150	Short term management agreement for hay production. In the process of assessing future use.	No housing Some functional livestock fencing, several loafing sheds, concrete slabs, potential pond/lake water
Weeks Wetland, Lopez	5	Short term management agreement for hay production.	None

Appendix D: Coffelt Farm infrastructure list with photos



A. Farm Stand and Shed



B. Sheep Barn



C. Dairy Barn and Workshop



D. Chicken Processing Shed



E. Composting Barn



F. Spring Pump House



G. Loafing Shed



H. Market Garden and Hoop House



I. Hay Barn and Mobile Slaughter Site



J. Deep Well Pump House



K. Farm Manager House



L. Tiny House