

## **Wagon Hill Farm Community Garden Steering Committee Handbook**

### **Wagon Hill Farm Community Garden Overview**

The Wagon Hill Farm Community Garden (WHFCG) covers approximately one acre of land at Durham's Wagon Hill Farm on Rte 4. It was organized in 2008, as the first garden under the umbrella of Community Gardens for All (CGA), now a 501c3 organization. The first gardeners (six families) began working the soil and planting in the Spring of 2009. The land is leased without cost from the Town of Durham for the purpose of gardening.

The mission of the Wagon Hill Farm Community Garden is to help people in the Seacoast region provide themselves with fresh organic produce; to educate gardeners, new and experienced, in better practice; to build a healthy soil ecosystem on the site; to foster sustainable practices on the site and in the greater Durham community; to contribute to the mission and purpose of the Wagon Hill Farm; to help build people-connections and a sense of community among the participants; to provide fresh organic produce to area food banks, as available;

### **Steering Committee Structure and Function**

The WHFCG Steering Committee consists of nine members, each serving a three-year term on a staggered basis. As of December 1, 2015, members and term expirations are as follows:

Ellen Karelitz	Nov 2020
Suzanne MacDonald	Nov 2021
Robert James	Nov 2021
Debby Byers	Nov. 2019
Sally Tobias	Nov. 2019
Thomas Pistole	Nov. 2019
Cynthia Watkins	Nov 2020

The Steering Committee is self-perpetuating. The procedure for acquiring new members on the Steering Committee is informal. When a member's term is about to expire, gardeners who are especially active in WHFCG may be asked to serve, or may volunteer. A majority vote of Steering Committee members confirms appointment. Steering Committee members may serve more than one term.

The WHFCG Steering Committee through its individual members is responsible for the general and specific oversight, maintenance, planning, development, and success of the WHFCG.

Steering Committee members are also spokespersons for the garden and the value of gardening. Stay abreast of town discussions, committees, boards, etc, which might have impact on WHFCG. Maintain active relationships with other Town entities (e.g., Parks & Recreation, Conservation Commission, Agricultural Commission), and with the citizenry, and with Community Gardens for All.

Steering Committee members are expected to participate in monthly meetings (a minimum of eight out of approx. ten) during the year; to organize, lead, and/or participate in all-garden work days during the growing season; and to assume responsibility for and leadership of one or more of our critical areas: membership, secretary, garden steward, treasurer, education, community-building, food pantry, compost operation, materials coordinator, committee chair, and website.

**The critical areas for a successful community garden operation are detailed below:**

### **Membership**

Receive and respond to contacts made through the web site.

Maintain the email list for the WHFCG.

Create and maintain the Waiting List for the next gardening season.

Manage the membership process (begins in late Feb., and continues until the garden is full - usually mid-June)

Revise membership form and solicit revisions from the Steering Committee for the Garden Guidelines. Send revised forms to the website coordinator for posting on the web site.

Create/maintain the membership/payment list in alphabetical order by last name of primary gardener.

Assign plots to gardeners and create/maintain the plot list and plot map, and post them in the shed.

Collect money for membership and keep a record of who has paid and who has not. Send reminder emails to those who owe money and/or membership forms.

Give membership checks and money to CGA Treasurer to deposit.

Maintain file folders with copies of each year's signed forms and drafts of guidelines and membership forms and any written communications received or sent.

Participate in revision/update of the web site when it occurs.

### **Secretary**

Occasionally post on the web site (have the ability to do so).

Write summaries of Steering Committee meetings and send them to the Steering Committee.

Write reminder emails for garden work days, social/educational events, picnics, Durham Day, Ag Day, etc.

Keep a record of who has participated in a work day or in some other way has fulfilled the 4 hour service requirement each season.

### **Garden steward**

Oversee the week-to-week operation and status of the gardens and the gardeners.

Monitor and report pest problems (diseases, insects, weeds, dogs, deer, people...)

Note untended plots and contact their owners. This is a hands-on, in-the-garden enterprise, making the rounds at least once or twice a week.

Take tactical and tactful actions as needed regarding problems, issues, concerns, etc. This will include personal communications (direct, phone, and/or email) with out-of-compliance gardeners.

Send periodic updates as needed to the all-gardener email list regarding current and upcoming issues (pests, droughts/heat/flooding).

Work with website administrator to help keep the website up to date; write periodic posts for the website, and for general distribution.

### **Education**

Work with the Steering Committee, to provide and/or suggest garden-oriented educational opportunities for the membership;

Gather information on upcoming talks and opportunities and advertise these opportunities to the membership.

Communicate with the speakers and provide logistical support where needed.

Arrange for presentations, including speakers, venues, supporting materials/food/drink/tables/AV as required.

### **Community-building**

Devise creative ways to bring members together, and make it happen (picnics, potlucks, moonrises, equinoxes/solstices, games, special work projects, ....)

Arrange for refreshments at the Garden opening meeting and at the Garden closing meeting.

### **Food pantry**

Organize and operate WHFCG donations to Cornucopia, the Waysmeet Food Pantry, and/or other area food pantries.

Enlist a committed group of people to develop a workable plan. (Some funds exist to hire a coordinator to try to make this happen.)

Plant and maintain Food Pantry garden bed. Coordinate with garden work days.

During harvest (primarily July-Aug-Sept-Oct), coordinate harvesting once or twice per week; clean; package; deliver.

Encourage other gardeners to donate excess, educate gardeners on food waste, etc.

### **Compost operation**

Oversee the successful implementation and maintenance of the compost operation, utilizing a team of willing garden members. Ideally, a dozen or more gardeners would participate.

On a weekly basis through the growing season, turn the compost, water it thoroughly, add carbon to the greens (straw/woodchips/sticks/etc), add finished compost as "starter" to the green pile.

When ready, move material from the green to the brown piles, and from the brown to the black piles.

Keep compost weed-free and seed-free, and remove non-compostables (plastics, metals, nylon, etc.)

Maintain signs for the three windrows: green (fresh garden gleanings), brown (partially decomposed compost), and black (decomposed and ready for use).

At the two all-gardener meetings (early spring and late fall), present a brief report and educational session on how the compost system works.

Long-term, create a short video on the WHFCG composting operation.

### **Liaison with Durham DPW**

Interface with the Director of DPW in the Town with regard to on-going maintenance and potential construction needs of WHFCG.

Maintenance and construction needs include:

periodic mowing of the garden paths, around the garden, and in the surrounding meadows;

waterline maintenance, turn-on and shut-off, pump maintenance, possible expansion of the lines;

Order and delivery of woodchips;

excavation and maintenance of a proposed swale to deflect surface runoff from the garden;

and other unspecified projects.

Discuss with the DPW Director any proposed changes at the gardens that will alter the appearance of our area – new tarps, pergola construction, new picnic tables, etc.

### **Materials coordinator**

Coordinate garden materials and supplies, including woodchips, cardboard/newspaper, topsoil, hay; hand tools, and other.

Maintain inventory, order as needed.

Conduct Soil tests as needed.

Write checks for materials as needed and give receipts to CGA Treasurer

### **Website**

Maintain active and up-to-date website, including calendar, links to garden information, etc.

Receive and post in a timely manner new announcements, internet links, upcoming meetings, garden news, etc;

Cross-link and maintain up-to-date connections with Facebook and other internet sites;

### **Chair**

Lead meetings of the Steering Committee, and of all-gardener meetings in early spring and late fall.

Draft/revise meeting agendas; post meeting dates.

Maintain active liaisons with Town groups, including Agriculture Commission, Conservation Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission. File periodic reports to same.

### **Financial responsibilities**

The Treasurer of Community Gardens for All (CGA) will maintain the financial records and make reports to IRS as required by the by-laws of the organization. This will include but not be limited to the following:

Deposit WHFCG membership checks and donations;

Acknowledge WHFCG donations with a letter that meets IRS requirements;

Write checks for approved WHFCG materials and services;

Maintain WHFCG accounts of income and expenses;

Keep files of the monthly bank reports, and report same periodically (quarterly) to the WHFCG Steering Committee and to the Board of CGA.

Two members of the WHFCG Steering Committee will have signatory powers to write checks on the CGA account (2016 - John and Kay)

Members of the WHFCG Steering Committee will give the Treasurer any information s/he requires in order to make required annual reports to the State of NH and the I.R.S.

Write Grants to support programs and new initiatives at Wagon Hill Community Garden and other gardens as they develop.

### **Materials Purchases**

#### Compost/soil

2015: Seacoast Farms Compost Exeter, NH

Bob Kelly 603-396-4108 or bobk@ [seacoastcompost.com](mailto:bobk@seacoastcompost.com)

#### Hay

hay purchased: Ray LaRoche (free delivery)

Laroche Farm 37 Bennett Rd. Durham, NH. 292-5563

#### Wood for Raised Beds

Rick Stevens

Tuttle Road, Lee, NH

659-8346

Add a timeline of when things have to be done

Revised February 2019