

**THE CENTER FOR AFRICAN HERITAGE**  
**AT THE**  
**RIVER POINT CONSERVATION AREA**

**Work Projects Completed, 2009-2011**

During the months of July -September of 2009, thirteen youth workers from the Riverton Park housing community in Portland, paid with stimulus dollars through American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), participated in agricultural, job readiness and leadership development training at River Point Conservation Farm. For a video review of this summer program please see Michael McDade's nine minute review at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cydJmuPHLM>

In 2010 and 2011, CAH continued to invest in infrastructural improvements at the site. To date we have:

- cleaned out, painted and repaired the barn;
- installed and removed livestock fencing;
- serviced and installed an artesian pump in the neighboring well;
- re-established and made functional the electrical system to the barn; and
- constructed four raised beds near the barn used as demonstration plots.

**Projects in the Planning, 2012-2015**

In the planning for 2012, three youth workers and one youth leader will:

- identify and assess the ecological and archeological sensitive sites on the property, as well as soil and water testing;
- develop and monitor small vegetable production test plots;
- set up and use a portable greenhouse/hoop house;
- organize a permaculture design; and
- critically implement best practices for managing community gardens, youth training, and nonprofit enterprise.

Based on the above evaluations, the summer of 2013 program will expand to twelve youth workers and two youth leaders. The twelve youths will participate in agricultural, job readiness and leadership development training at River Point Farm. The key elements in this second season will be:

- the establishment of a four acre vegetable farm for growing produce for the institutional market;
- the planting fruit and nut trees and berry bushes as part of a long term permacultural design for the site;
- the installation of stable, secure, and yet movable fencing will be installed to secure grazing animals.

- the introduction of seasonal livestock, for example of goats to aid with the poison ivy control.
- the expansion of the current four raised beds for community use;
- the setting of and use of a produce washing station.

We plan to actively supply the Falmouth Food Pantry with fresh produce and all revenue generated at farmer markets, i.e., Falmouth, Westbrook and Portland will be used to support the project.

During the third and fourth seasons of 2014 and 2015 we will further expand from 12 youths to 18 youth workers and three youth leaders and then again from 18 youth workers to 24 and four youth workers. These teams will participate in agricultural, job readiness, and leadership development training at River Point Farm. The beginning four-acre enterprise farm will add an additional two acres in 2015. The focus will be on growing vegetable for what all will recognize is a steadily growing demand in our immediate farm markets. Also, we will add another element during these two seasons, i.e., developing incubator farm sites for enterprising participants. More fruit and nut trees will be added and bee cultivation will begin. Additional seasonal livestock will be introduced. Notably, we plan to install a small-scale model slaughter facility.

We will honor any restrictions on the site suggested by the Town of Falmouth, as well as ending any project elements that the town decides are inconsistent with its goals.

**Key partners:**

The following key partners:

Town of Falmouth  
 University of Maine Cooperative Extension  
 Portland Public Schools  
 Maine Small Business Development Center  
 Nature Conservancy in Maine  
 The Resilience Hub  
 Veterans for Peace  
 NAACP-Portland Branch  
 First District Congresswoman, Rep. Chellie Pingree

Current Active Gardening Groups including:

Sudanese Nuba Mountain  
 Somali Bantu  
 Rwanda Community Association

**Resources:**

We are pursuing a \$300,000 grant with funding spread over three years, i.e., 2013-2015 from the United States Department of Agriculture's "Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program". The deadline for grant submission is Thursday, November 17th.

We seek to continue our partnership with the Town of Falmouth through an extension of our original Memorandum of Understanding. We are seeking support for our USDA grant application which will in turn fund our above outlined project over the period of 2013-2015.

We seek your approval of the issuance of two documents from the Town of Falmouth specific to this grant proposal:

- a letter of support and
- a letter of commitment.

In conclusion, we are asking that the Town Council to authorize a letter of commitment by the Town Manager in support for our USDA grant application. The location of the proposed four acres will be specified in this letter of commitment. Key to this commitment will be an estimate of the value of the designated parcel of land and buildings.