



Triangle Land Conservancy
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Request for Farm Proposals: Williamson Preserve
Beginning Farmer and Rancher Program
Due: November 15th, 2024

TRIANGLE LAND CONSERVANCY
CONTACT: Heather Szaro (hszaro@triangleland.org)

I. INVITATION

Triangle Land Conservancy (TLC) is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization that strives to create a healthier and more vibrant Triangle region by safeguarding clean water, protecting natural habitats, supporting local farms and food, and connecting people with nature through land protection and stewardship, catalyzing community action, and collaboration.

The Bailey and Sarah Williamson Preserve is a 405-acre farm and public nature preserve in eastern Wake County, located at 4409 Mial Plantation Road, Raleigh NC. In addition to 130 acres of farmland, Williamson Preserve has over 250 acres of forest with 16 miles of hiking and biking trails that are open to the public.

For more information about the history of the Williamson Preserve, please visit our website resources found here:

<https://www.triangleland.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/williamson-historical-signage-web.pdf>

II. BACKGROUND

TLC owns the 405-acre Williamson Preserve, a public nature preserve in addition to being a working farm. The Williamson Preserve is also a historic agricultural property that will continue to host agricultural activities into the future. TLC is seeking to integrate agricultural, natural, and recreational components onto the property. An agricultural concept plan and more details on the site are available on our website at:

<https://www.triangleland.org/explore/nature-preserves/williamson-preserve>

Triangle Land Conservancy's objectives for Williamson Preserve agricultural lands are to:

- Develop organic and sustainable production practices;
- Increase opportunities for new and beginning farmers (under 10 years of experience);
- Support local and regional food systems;
- Increase child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of healthy foods;
- Invest in agricultural research, including a focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;

- Provide land for a diversity of farmers carrying experiences from students to new and experience farmers, farmers of color, and veteran farmers looking to mentor the next generation;
- Protect and improve pollinator health;
- Protect and improve soil and water quality in partnership with the Wake Soil and Water District, Wake County Extension, and other Partners.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

The Triangle Land Conservancy will be opening up 2.5 acres for an interested annual crop farmer or group of farmers in fall of 2024. Farmers being considered will be growing annual vegetables, grains, flowers, or general crops. Qualifying operations will agree to the Guiding Principles of the farm (see below) in all growing and stewardship activities.

Interested farmers should complete the application below and email it back to Williamson Farm Coordinator as soon as possible. Farmers selected will be asked to provide additional information on their business plan, project goals, and long-term needs at the farm. If selected, farmers will be provided with a 1-year trial period with the Triangle Land Conservancy. This period of time will allow both the farmer and TLC staff to get to know one another and assess the strength of the project. If the farm operations are a good fit for both parties, a more long-term user agreement can be negotiated at the end of 12 months. TLC does not traditionally sign leases with farmers. Licensing Agreements are used at the Williamson Preserve between agricultural operators and the Triangle Land Conservancy.

IV. QUALIFICATIONS

All interested parties shall be qualified to perform their agricultural activities including relevant experience, off site housing, transportation to the farm, and resources to get the project started. Candidates should have at least 1-3 years of experience in their area of focus. Interested candidates and necessary qualifications will be discussed with the Williamson Preserve Farm advisors and partners before farmers are approved. Once approved, farmers will need to show a business proposal or plan and be willing to sign a Licensing Agreement with the Triangle Land Conservancy for a minimum of 12 months.

V. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Interested applicants should email their proposals to: Heather Szaro, Farm Coordinator, (hszaro@triangleland.org). All emailed proposals should be sent as a PDF document. Interested farmers are encouraged to schedule a phone call or video call with Heather Szaro if they have questions during the application process. All proposals should be submitted by *November 15th, 2024* to be considered for review.

VI. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

The TLC's Conservation and Stewardship staff will review proposals. Applications will be reviewed as they are received. All farmers must provide three references that can be contacted by Triangle Land Conservancy staff during the course of this application process. Applications will also be reviewed by preserve advisors including but not limited to representatives from the Soil and Water Conservation District and other Wake County Departments.

VII. PROPOSAL PROMPTS

Proposals should seek to answer all the questions below. Supporting documentation of previous work projects or qualifications can be added for reference. The answers to these questions will help us to match farmers with the appropriate space on the Preserve. The Williamson Preserve Guiding Principles should inform all proposals. These Guiding Principles can be found below and in context within our “Bailey & Sarah Williamson Agricultural Concept Plan” found on our website: <https://www.triangleland.org/explore/nature-preserves/williamson-preserve>

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

General Principles	Broad principles that guide overall operations and decision-making.
Utilize a "Triple Bottom Line" accounting approach, considering economic, social, and environmental goals; People, Planet, Profit. (Source: Adapted from ATTRA, Applying the Principles of Sustainable Farming, May 2003)	1. Economic Sustainability: Project "value" and economic strength is consistently going up. Farmer debt is consistently going down. The farm enterprises are consistently profitable from year to year. Purchase of off-farm feed and fertilizer is decreasing. Reliance on government payments is decreasing.
	2. Social Sustainability: The farm supports other businesses and families in the community. Dollars circulate within the local economy. The number of rural families is going up or holding steady. Young people take over their parents' farms and continue farming. College graduates return to the community after graduation.
	3. Environmental Sustainability: There is no bare ground. Clean water flows in the farm's ditches and streams. Wildlife is abundant. The farm landscape is diverse in vegetation.
Regenerate soil, water, and biodiversity	Bringing back health to degraded natural resources is imperative. Regenerative agriculture systems utilize self-repair and rebuilding strategies.
Support ecosystem services	Ecosystems provide important services, given the chance. This includes pollination, flood control, climate regulation, nutrient cycling, etc. Activities should allow and support these functions.
Develop resilience in operation and production	The ability of our ecosystem and social systems to bounce back from disturbance and change is diminished. Diversity, redundancy, localized economies, healthy soils, recharged aquifers, and reforestation are some resilience strategies. Resilience planning can occur at the local and regional level as well.
Accept feedback	Feedback is an opportunity to learn and improve practices, and bring greater strength to overall operations. The farm plans and operations can adapt and change as new opportunities and information emerges.
Build in diversity and utilize edges	Diversity of crop systems, crops, and strategies helps create stability and resilience. Edges are environments that are often underutilized or degraded. Opportunities to utilize and take advantage of the microclimates and resource flows abound at the edge.
Agricultural Principles	"Designing an economically viable, sustainable and productive modern agricultural system is based on enhancing the health of the land and rural communities and concentrating on long-term solutions rather than short-term treatment of symptoms." MSU Extension - Intro to Sust Ag
Use water and nutrients efficiently.	Employ water conservation techniques; only apply fertilizers/amendments according to soil test recommendations; utilize biological and organic amendments.
Keep soil covered throughout the year.	Utilize cover crops, mulching, and crop rotations to keep the soil covered to reduce erosion and increase biological activity.
Reduce or eliminate tillage in a manner consistent with effective weed control.	Tillage disrupts soil structure and biology and leads to compacted, degraded soil. Reduced or no-till systems are available for numerous crop growing situations.
Diversify farming enterprises to spread agronomic and economic risk.	Utilize perennial and annual crops and season extension for off-season sales. Develop value-added products and on-farm sales opportunities. Use media and technology resources to improve practices and consumer reach.
Utilize perennial crops and agroforestry systems.	Perennial crops and tree crops add farm diversification and resilience and sequester more carbon in the soil.
Rotate crops to enhance yields and facilitate pest management.	As opposed to monocropping, crop rotation has multiple benefits including reduced pest pressure, improved soil conditions, reduced erosion, and increased yields.
Use cover crops and green manure and/or animal manure to build soil quality and fertility.	Cover crops build soil, soil structure and support the soil food web. Cover crops sequester carbon in soil. Manures should be composted before adding to fields, or pare added as part of a livestock cycling program.
Protect water quality.	Farm in a manner consistent with ecological health in or near wetlands and waterways. Use filter strips; avoid excessive use of fertilizers; don't allow livestock access to waterways (bring water to animals).
Develop ecologically-based pest management programs.	Synthetic chemical pesticides have proven to be harmful to the environment and human health. Many pests develop resistance to pesticides and stonger compounds get used. There are many facets to ecologically-based pest management such as crop rotation, fallowing, intercropping, and incorporation of organic matter into soils.
Integrate crop and livestock production.	Livestock can be integrated into crop fields as a rotation to interrupt pest cycles, add fertility, increase nutrient cycling, and increase carbon sequestration.



Bailey & Sarah Williamson Preserve
Beginning Farmer & Rancher Program
2024 Application
Submission Due: November 15, 2024

Please complete the following information to the best of your ability. Staff from the Triangle Land Conservancy will review all the information provided. Please provide as much information as you feel comfortable. The following information will help TLC staff to best match your goals with appropriate resources and support at the Williamson Preserve.

A.) Personal Information:

Name: _____

Preferred Pronouns: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Please describe your ethnicity: _____

B.) Contact Information:

Email: _____

Phone Number: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Current Farm Address (if applicable):

Farm /Project Name: _____

C.) Farm Project Information

- 1.) Please describe your previous farming experience. Please include any management positions.

- 2.) Do you currently own any agricultural land? If so, please describe.

- 3.) Describe your current farming operation. Please provide as much detail as possible.

- 4.) Do you have experience and interest in sustainable or regenerative farming methods?

- 5.) Describe your farm or ranch management techniques and strategies. What barriers or limitations have you faced in practicing these techniques and strategies?

- 6.) Do you currently sell farm products? If so, please describe.

- 7.) Have you completed a qualified farm management program that includes substantial fieldwork experience? If yes, please describe the completed farm management training program.

8.) Please detail any other farm training experience you would like to share (trainings, workshops, conferences, certifications, etc.)

9.) Will you be farming by yourself or with a team of people? If you will be farming with a team or group, please describe the arrangement:

10.) Will your farming operations be open to the public? Will volunteers or educational workshops be involved in any capacity? Please describe:

11.) Will your farming operation involve any training or demonstration components? If so, please describe:

12.) Below list any relevant education, trainings or certificates:

13.) If there are any infrastructure needs (i.e. buildings, electricity, internet, equipment, etc) that the farm will need or plans to bring to the field, please list below and with a general plan of how this will be achieved.

14.) Please attach any photos, supporting documents or growing plans here for review. These resources are not required but do help us get a better sense of your goals. *Applicants do not need to share a business plan at this phase.*

15.) The Triangle Land Conservancy will require all applicants to provide three references that they can check over the review period. References should be listed below with their contact information.

- Reference 1:
Name-
Affiliation-
Relation to Applicant-
Phone Number-
Email Address-

- Reference 2:
Name-
Affiliation-
Relation to Applicant-
Phone Number-
Email Address-

- Reference 3:
Name-
Affiliation-
Relation to Applicant-
Phone Number-
Email Address-

Additional Resources

For more information about the Williamson Preserve, you are also encouraged to explore our website and all recorded videos that relate to the Farm. The video links to these recorded presentations can be found below:

- March 2020: Conservation Conversation, Regenerative Agriculture: <https://www.triangleland.org/regenerative-agriculture>

- October 2020: Farming on Conservation Land, Carolina Farm Stewardship Association's Sustainable Agriculture Conference: <https://youtu.be/brddv0D6-ts>

- After completing this application in its entirety, please read the complete Agriculture Concept Plan (<https://triangleland.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Walnut-Hill-Agricultural->

[Concept-Plan-FINAL1.pdf](#)) for the Williamson Preserve, including the Guiding Principles at the end of the Concept Plan. A reference map for the Williamson Preserve is provided below.

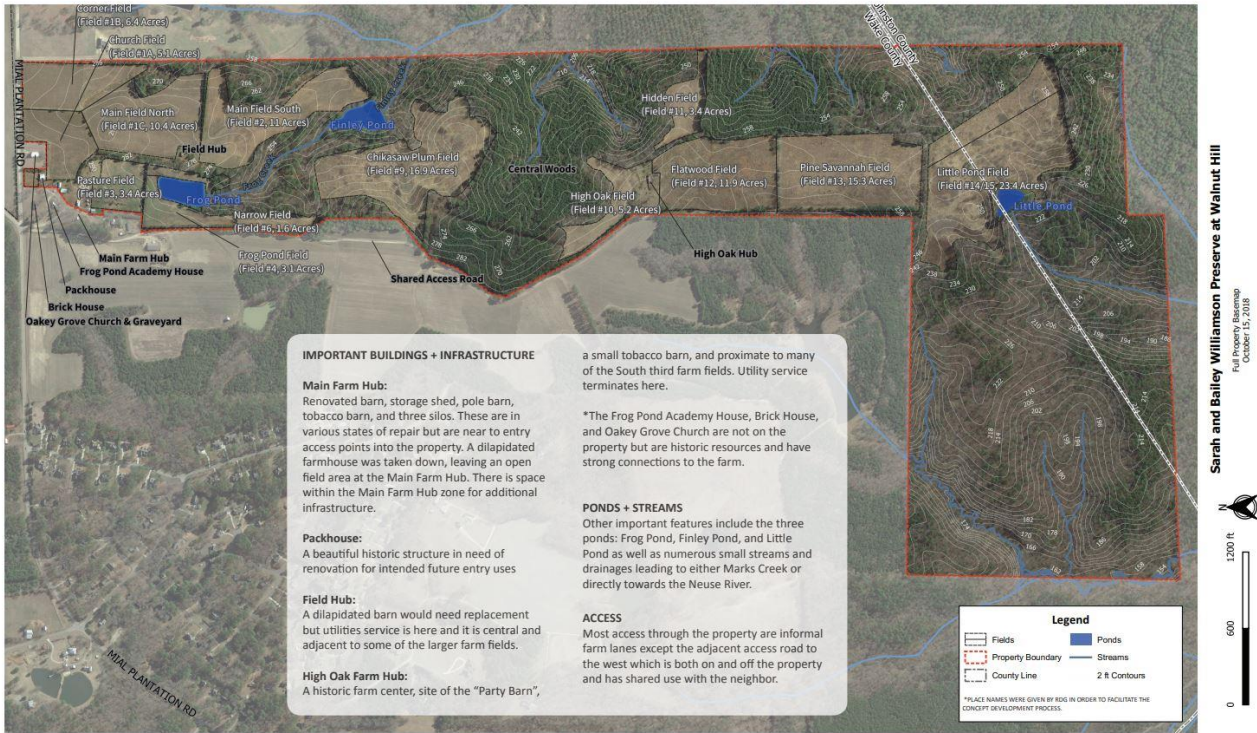


Figure 1: The Bailey & Sarah Williamson Preserve located at 4409 Mial Plantation Road, Raleigh, North Carolina.

After reviewing all required information, please sign below and a staff member from the Triangle Land Conservancy will be in touch within 5-7 business days. For general questions, please contact Heather Szaro, Farm Coordinator, at hszaro@triangleland.org

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

Sign Name: _____

Date: _____