

# Overmarsh Farm Commons (OFC)

## Grazier Participation Agreement

### 1. About Overmarsh Farm Commons

Overmarsh Farm Commons is a cooperative enterprise where San Juan Islanders work and learn together to grow food on shared land, guided by the principles of regenerative agriculture. The project is a collaboration between the San Juan County Conservation Land Bank and the San Juan Island Grange.

### 2. Orientation

All participants must attend an orientation provided by OFC staff at the beginning of each season. This orientation will cover water policy, equipment policy, inputs, the organization's structure, available infrastructure, etc.

### 3. Best Management Practices

- **Land Stewardship Ethic:** Participants are expected to implement plans around the core principles of ecological farming - protect and conserve water resources, protect and enhance soil resources, conserve and enhance wildlife habitat, and provide healthy and humane care for livestock. Growers must also be mindful of minimizing impacts on areas downstream from their site.
- **Organic Requirements:** All participants must adhere to the National Organic Program (NOP) standards: no synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, or insecticides unless approved by the farm manager.
- **Soil Health:** OFC staff will conduct regular soil testing. These tests help track soil health, manage nutrients, track soil changes, inform input recommendations, and help make management decisions. OFC will provide input recommendations and resources for guidance and help. OFC will provide bulk soil amendments

that are made available at a minimal cost. Graziers are responsible for soil health and should base decisions on soil test results.

- **Grazing Practices:** Practicing intensive rotational grazing is highly recommended. Before turnout, the new growth of annual grasses and small perennial grasses must be at least 4 inches. Larger perennial grasses must be at least 6 inches. Livestock will be moved before stubble height drops below 3 inches for annuals and small perennials, or 6 inches for larger perennials and upland areas.
- **Herd Health:** All grazing operations must follow best practices for animal husbandry.
  - Livestock must have and maintain an average body condition score (BCS) and pass health inspections.
  - Purchase and distribute salt and supplements as needed.
  - Monitor livestock health, treat sick animals, and transport them to a vet if necessary.
  - Graziers must monitor heat levels and be ready to install shade structures or move animals to an off-site shaded location if temperatures are too hot.
- **Water Usage:** Water usage will be metered and monitored by OFC staff. The 2025 season will serve as a trial period as we install irrigation infrastructure and determine the best practices for monitoring, usage, and fees. We kindly ask all participants to conserve this valuable resource by minimizing usage and maximizing efficiency (see water rates in the Fees & Incentives Section below).
- **Weed & Pest Management:** OFC emphasizes effective weed management to ensure success and site sustainability for all participants. Graziers must notify OFC if noxious weeds are found on the property. OFC will be responsible for controlling them, while Lessee must prevent their introduction. Incentives for proper weed management include \$100 off the Participation Fee (see section

\_\_\_\_\_, below). Failure to manage weeds may result in fines, relocation, or termination of access to growing space.

#### 4. Safety

OFC is committed to providing a safe working environment for all participants. Graziers are expected to report unsafe situations to OFC staff for immediate correction.

#### 5. Site Use Requirements

- **Membership Agreement:** OFC offers year-to-year memberships, with annual renewal dependent on compliance and land stewardship.
- **Legal Compliance:** Farming activities must comply with local, state, and federal regulations. Growers are responsible for maintaining and reporting compliance.
- **Assignment:** Grazier may not sublet or assign the property without OFC approval.
- **Access:** OFC and Land Bank staff have unrestricted access to the leased property at all times, provided their activities do not unreasonably interfere with the Lessee's permitted use.
- **Maintenance of the Property:** The grazer shall maintain the property in its natural state. No alterations or additions may be made without prior consent from OFC. The grazer will be held responsible for paying for repair if any damage occurs to the perimeter fence.
- **Movable Property:** Graziers may use salt and mineral block feeders, cattle catch pens, stock tanks, and other movable properties as needed, following best agricultural practices. The grazer is responsible for supplying their movable property and for removing it at the end of the grazing season.
- **Hay, Mineral, and Other Supplements:**  
The grazer must obtain permission to feed hay or grain on the property to

prevent the spread of noxious weeds. The grazier may provide mineral supplements and must remove the remaining tubs or supplements at the end of the grazing period.

- **Record Keeping:** Graziers must keep records of animal rotation dates. OFC will provide a template on which to record information.
- **Community Farm Hours:** Graziers can contribute 10 hours of Community Farm Hours, which contribute to site maintenance and betterment of the commons. Completion of these hours qualifies graziers for up to \$100 off their Participation Fee (see Section \_\_\_\_).
- **End-of-Season Cleanup:** Graziers are responsible for cleaning up all movable materials by 11/1
- **Community Conduct:** Respectful conduct and collaboration among participants are essential. Graziers are expected to adhere to OFC's non-discrimination policy: nondiscrimination regarding race, color, gender, national origin, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation, and act as ambassadors for the program. Conflicts or grievances should be documented and submitted to OFC staff for review.

## 6. Farm Guidelines

- **Parking and Road Access:** Parking is allowed only in designated areas.
- **Shared Facilities:** Growers must follow protocols for the use and maintenance of shared facilities. Labeling personal items and maintaining cleanliness is required.
- **Offsite Equipment Usage:** All equipment brought on-site must be cleaned to prevent soil-borne disease contamination. All mechanized equipment brought on-site must be pre-approved by OFC staff.
- **Shared Farm Infrastructure:** Farm infrastructure includes a greenhouse, wash/pack space, and porta-potty services.

- **Trash & Recycling:** Graziers are responsible for managing and disposing of their trash and recycling off-site. If OFC staff has to remove your trash/recycling, you will be charged for time and disposal fees.

## 7. Fees and Incentives

- **Community Incentive:** A \$300 community participation fee is due in the 4th quarter, which can be waived by meeting specific stewardship, land management, and site maintenance criteria. Farmers who meet these criteria are eligible for a \$300 reduction in fees.

TASK	ACTIVITY	DUE DATE	INCENTIVE
Good Stewardship	Complete 10 Community Farm Hours	11/1	\$100
	Clean up complete	11/1	\$50
Weed Management	Maintain weed control throughout the season		\$100
End of Year Responsibilities	Submit field map and questionnaire by the end of the year	11/1	\$50

- **Water & Land Usage Fees**

- **Land Usage Fee** = The land use fee is based on a rate of \$30/acre and an additional \$300 Participation Fee (with a potential end-of-season community incentive to reduce to \$0). The calculated base rate will be due at the beginning of the season, 3/1/25, and the remainder of the fee will be assessed by 11/1/25.
- **Water Usage Fee** = \$2/1000 gallons to be calculated and paid at the end of the season.

## 8. Feedback Loops

- **Good Standing:** Continued participation in the OFC program is contingent on compliance with program guidelines, payment timeliness, and collaborative behavior.
- **Program Accountability:** Graziers are encouraged to provide feedback at the end of the season. If issues arise, they should be reported in writing to the Project Manager for resolution. OFC aims to ensure the program meets the needs of all participants.

## 9. Additional Grazier Application Requirements:

- **Vaccination Record:** The Grazier will submit a vaccination record including vaccination type & dates.
- **Healthy Animal Inspection:** OFC is committed to humane livestock treatment and low-stress handling practices. Animals should maintain a healthy Body Condition Score (BCS) and be free from any injuries or diseases. Prior to their arrival at OFC, animals must pass an inspection by the OFC health inspector to ensure they meet these standards.
- **Operating Plan and Map:** The Grazier must submit an operating plan along with a map that includes rotation plans, expected dates, and the location of any movable property (water tanks, mineral feeders, etc). The map will be provided by OFC. The operating plan will be updated throughout the season and submitted at the end of the season with any changes.

By signing below, you agree to the above participation agreement:

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature & Date:** \_\_\_\_\_