

Overmarsh Farm Commons (OFC)

Grower 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 uphold standards around the core principles of ecological farming—soil fertility, maximizing living roots, integrated pest management (IPM), crop rotation, water management, and minimizing soil disturbance. This will ensure sustainable food production, and soil and water health, for themselves and future growers. Growers must also be mindful of minimizing impacts on areas near their site.
- **Organic Requirements:** All participants must adhere to the National Organic Program (NOP) standards: no synthetic fertilizers, no genetically modified organisms, and only OMRI- or WSDA-listed materials for seed treatments/coating, inputs, and sprays unless approved by the farm manager. Non-organically produced seed and planting stock will be permitted.

- **Soil Fertility/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 to be made available to growers at a minimal cost. Growers should minimize soil disturbance and practice no-till when possible, and minimal tillage when needed. Growers are responsible for soil health and should base decisions on soil test results.
- **Cover Crops:** Growers must plant cover crops on portions of their fields that do not otherwise have living ground cover. At the end of the season, growers must plant cover crops by the last week of October, at the latest, though earlier is recommended. If cover cropping is not possible, an alternative plan to protect the soil must be discussed with OFC staff by October 1. Cover crop seed will be made available by OFC at a minimal cost.
- **Crop Rotations:** Growers are expected to use crop rotations for fertility and pest management. They must maintain current plot maps showing crop families and planting schedules and submit field maps at the end of the season. Growers may be relocated if they cannot rotate crops.
- **Water Usage:** Water usage will be metered for each major growing plot, with monitoring by OFC staff. The 2025 growing 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. Drip irrigation will be required for all growers, and OFC staff will provide assistance with installation recommendations and requirements and will have irrigation supplies available at cost. OFC will provide water moisture meters to help growers determine water needs.

- **Weed & Pest Management:** OFC emphasizes effective weed management to ensure grower success and site sustainability for all growers. Failure to manage weeds may result in termination of access to growing space.

4. Safety

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

- **Safety Gear:** Growers must use appropriate safety gear, including clothing, footwear, and ear/eye protection.
- **Wash Station:** OFC offers basic wash/pack facilities. Communal areas must be maintained to ensure access for all growers. A schedule may be implemented to reduce bottlenecks.

5. Site Use Requirements

- **Membership Agreement:** OFC offers year-to-year memberships, with annual renewal dependent on compliance and land stewardship. Plot sizes and locations may vary from year to year.
- **Legal Compliance:** Farm activities must comply with local, state, and federal regulations. Growers are responsible for maintaining and reporting compliance.
- **Record Keeping:** Growers must keep records of their production and land use and will submit an input log and field map at the end of each season. OFC will provide a template on which to record information.
- **Community Farm Hours:** Growers will contribute Community Farm Hours, contributing to site maintenance and betterment of the commons.
- **End-of-Season Cleanup:** Growers are responsible for cleaning up their areas and fields at the end of the season, including temporary structures and irrigation.

Cover crops must be sown on unused portions of fields/plots as per the Cover Crop section.

- **Community Conduct:** Respectful conduct and collaboration among participants are essential. Growers 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.
- **Structures:** All structures must be approved by the project manager and must be temporary (removable) and complementary to the nature (practical & aesthetic) of OFC.

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.

- **Plastic Policy:** To help maintain a microplastic-free environment, we strongly encourage growers to **limit the use of plastic mulches**.
 - If plastic is used, it **must be removed** at the end of the growing season.
 - **Fraying plastics are not permitted**, as they contribute to microplastic pollution. Any plastic used must have sealed edges (e.g., cut with a blowtorch or a similar method) to prevent fraying.

If you're unsure whether a material is allowed, please reach out—we're happy to help! We are hoping to have appropriate ground covering material for sale at cost for you to use.

- **Trash & Recycling:** Growers 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

For the 2025 trial season, there will be a \$30 membership fee for all grower participants and \$30/acre/year for graziers.

- **Water & Land Usage Fees**
 - Land Usage Fee = \$30
 - Water Usage Fee = No fee for the trial year 2025

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:** Growers 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.

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

Name: _____

Signature & Date: _____