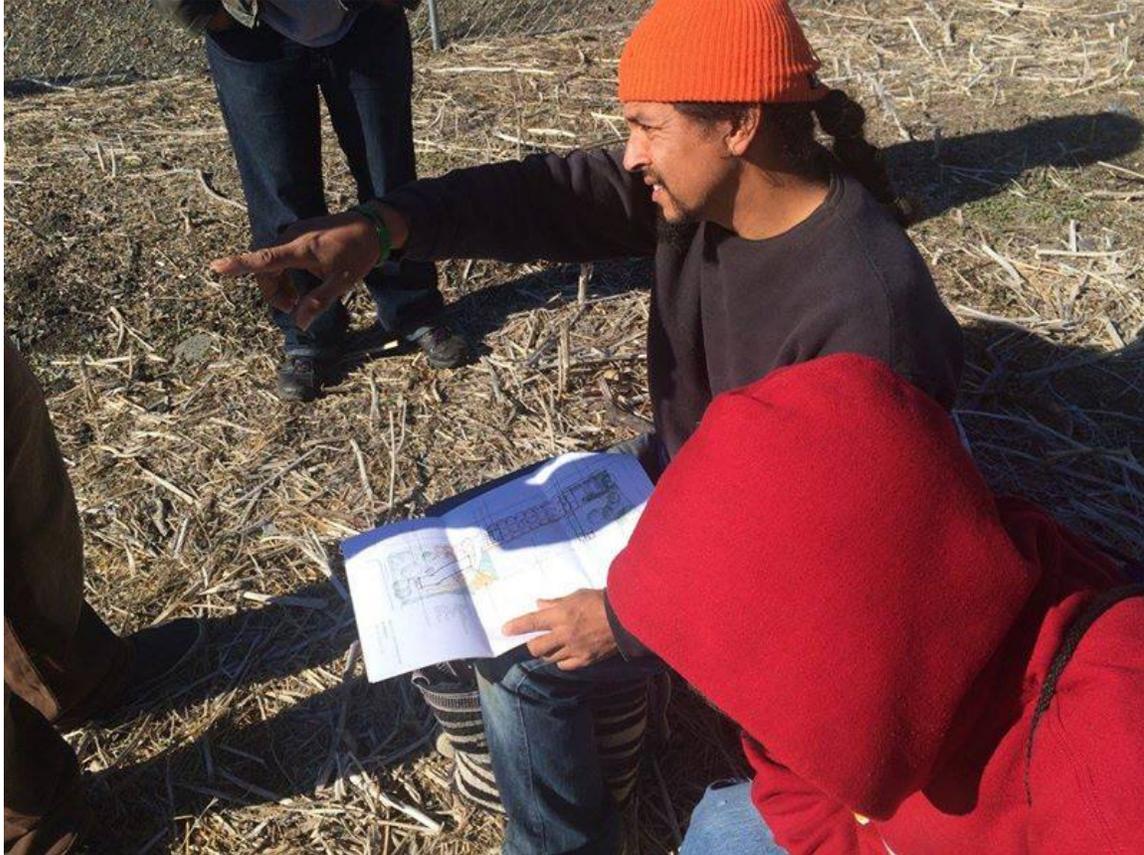


Restoring Tilth

North Richmond Farm Newsletter | FEBRUARY 2016



News from the North Richmond Farm:

In this issue:

- **Welcome Congressman Mark DeSaulnier**
- **Vacant Lot to Urban Farm:** Soil moving begins on site...
- **Rebuilding Our Soils:** Update from our Technical Advisory Team
- **Starting with Collaboration:** Meeting with Contra Costa County Agencies to lay the groundwork
- **New Farm Design is Here:** Update from the Design Team

Upcoming Events:

Welcome Congressman DeSaulnier!

Congressman Mark DeSaulnier joined County Supervisor John Gioia and Urban Tilth staff on January 20th to tour the site of the North Richmond Farm.

The visit was the last stop on a trek to various West Contra Costa County sites that demonstrate cooperative community partnerships. DeSaulnier, a former restaurateur, pledged to explore opportunities for federal support of the farm, which he described as a great project that will enhance health, education and food production in North Richmond. The 3-acre farm site is provided through a nominal lease from Contra Costa



County and supported by more than \$600,000 in county funds. Supervisor Gioia, whose district includes North Richmond, proposed the idea for an Urban Agriculture project to [Urban Tilth](#) after visiting a similar farm in Portland, Oregon.

[Learn more about the North Richmond Farm...](#)

From Vacant Lot to Urban Farm



After 2 years of planning and paperwork, over the last three months the North Richmond Farm team has begun to clear and excavate the land!

We started in the middle of December 2015 with the removal of a 700 x 40 foot area of blackberries along the east side of the farm. We loaded up fourteen 40 cubic yard containers and with the support of our friends at [Republic Services](#) and Supervisor John Gioia's office. We were able to take the green waste to our landfill to create more City compost. We are looking forward to working with Republic Services to see if our community farm can create the rich soil we will need from the compost Republic Services creates from our local residents' green waste. This could be a perfect way to begin to bring life back to the soil. *More news on this to come...*

This February, we began to scrape asphalt and concrete in a 500 x 50 foot area. There was evidence found that this section of the 3 acre site was used to dump garbage such as tires, large pieces of asphalt, plastic pipes, and more.

Moving forward, our next step is to sift all the soil that was dug up and back fill the area with the cleaned out top-soil. We will also store rocks and asphalt in an area so we can later use it when our gravel drive-way is built on site. Special thanks to our machine operator, Chris Hammond, a long time North Richmond resident for his on-going support.

- Luis Chavez

** Special thank you to Bielle Moore and Republic Services for your generous support!*

Rebuilding Our Soils:

Update from the Technical Advisory Team

We are working on building the soil at our new North Richmond Farm. Initially we were worried about soil contamination because of this section of the site's history of illegal dumping.

We did some secondary soil testing, following up after the preliminary tests performed by the County, and found that the site is clean contaminant-wise, which is great news!

However, we also found that there is NO beneficial organic matter there, so now we know where to focus our soil building energy.

We will be doing more extensive testing to fully characterize the soils at the site. We are also planning an applied soil building experiment in collaboration with UC Berkeley



graduates students Joshua Arnold and Sarick Matzen, where we will look into the best cover crop combinations for rebuilding vacant lot soils for urban agriculture. With this experiment we will be rehabilitating our soils while also producing results that will help out other urban farmers.

- Sarick Matzen, NRF Technical Advisory Team Member

Learn more about Forage Radish just one of the cover crops we will explore in our soil building experiments:

- [Forage Radish: New Multi-Purpose Cover Crop for the Mid-Atlantic](#)

Starting with Collaboration: Meeting with Contra Costa County Agencies to lay the groundwork



In the Fall of 2015, the design team and Urban Tilth staff met with the various Contra Costa County departments which will need to approve the future construction at the site; these include: Public Works, Building Inspection, Planning, and Environmental Health.

We were very pleased to be met with a lot of enthusiasm and support for the project! Meeting with these stakeholders early on is very helpful, so that we can begin our detailed design with a clear understanding of their requirements and they understand our desire to construct a truly sustainable project.

We look forward to developing this collaboration as we move through the permitting process.

- Adele Ho

New FARM DESIGN is here!

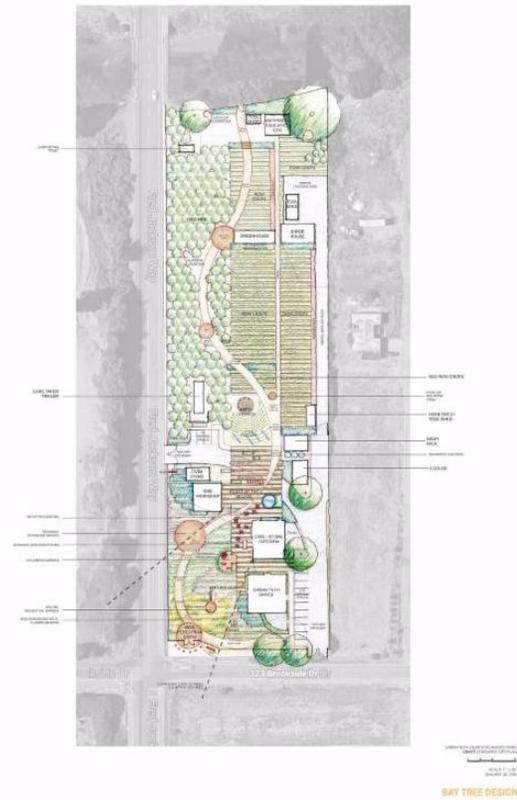
An update from our Design Team

2015 saw the start of the design of a master plan for the farm site. With input from the Community Advisory Committee, the Technical Advisory Committee, and the

public, a preliminary design was developed by our selected consultant, Byrens-Kim Design Works with BayTree Design Landscape Architects.

- **New FARM DESIGN pdf**

The planned farm layout includes an orchard and row crops with a "village" at the entry to the site. The village includes the Urban Tilth office, a kitchen, cafe, farm stand, bike workshop, and amphitheater, as well as an Ohlone reflection garden, gardens, hedgerows, and teaching spaces. A meandering path traverses the site from Brookside Drive to San Pablo Creek, with interpretive elements along the way providing insight into the rich history of the North Richmond community.



At the far end of the path and bordering San Pablo Creek, are located a Watershed Education Center and outdoor classroom. Greenhouses, tool sheds, other utility buildings, a caretaker residence, and parking areas are also included. We are working with Contra Costa County to design stormwater treatment areas, sidewalks and a bike lane to access the site.

- Adele Ho

For more information about the design process contact Adele Ho at adele@urbantilth.org

Visit Our Website

Upcoming Events

Introducing 4th Saturdays

North Richmond Farm Volunteer Day!

Want to help grow Urban Agriculture in the Bay Area?

We will be start hosting regular Community Volunteer Days on the 4th Saturday of every month starting Saturday February 27th!

Join us! See the land with your own eyes, help build the foundation of the farm, check-out the farm design, and meet folks.

Every 4th Saturday
Saturday February 27th
10am - 1pm

Brookside Dr &
Fred Jackson Way
North Richmond, CA 94801



Help build or grow a farm and community from the ground up!

For more information contact luis@urbantilth.org

More information available at to our [Facebook event](#)

Join the North Richmond Farm Newsletter!

Restoring vacant lots is a long and detailed process. We are excited to chronicle this project in an effort to help others who dare to restore the lands where they live to healthy, living communities.

Stay informed!

Join our North Richmond Farm Monthly Newsletter.

Come on this epic journey with us...



[CLICK HERE TO JOIN](#)

Support the Farm!

Throughout 2016 - 2017 we will be continuing to raise funds to build develop the soil, install the orchard and building the 1st farm buildings on the North Richmond Farm.

In order to realize this game changing dream for North Richmond we all of the support we can get.

Please consider making a 100% tax deductible donation to support the Farm today:

Make a Donation



THANK YOU!

More farm news to come...

Urban Tilth | 510-232-0911 | nrf@urbantilth.org | urbantilth.org

STAY CONNECTED:

