

1. Project name and contact info.

Project Title: **Reclaiming Pastureland for Diversified Fruit/ Maple Production**

Grant number: FNE03-459

Project Leader: Stephen Davis

Farm Name: Cold Pond Community Farm

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2. Goals. Using techniques learned over the last 20 years of clearing pasture and crop land, we are setting up a model plot of reclaimed land that can show the cost comparisons and environmental benefits of clearing overgrown fields and pastures using low input strategies.

3. Farm Profile. Over the last couple of years since the application was submitted, we have made some large strides in making the Cold Pond Community Land Trust a financially viable and sustainable organization. After buying the 220 acre farm in 2003 we now have 6 of the 7 residential sites leased and are working clearing the brush and trees from the roughly 40 acres of ag land. About 15 acres of this total is rough pasture that is fenced in and rotationally grazed by our cattle, horses, sheep, pigs and chickens. About 2 acres is in row crops producing crops for sale and more will be added to this figure yearly

4. Participants. As of this date the consultants have not added their input as we were mostly clearing brush and trees and rotating the hogs over the site. The project manager and two helpers plus 2 farm interns, worked roughly 15 days to cut unwanted trees, pile and burn brush and maintain hog fencing.

5. Project Activities. We began the clearing and thinning of brush and trees in the winter of 2004 on roughly 6 acres. Cord wood was cut and either sold or used for home use and brush piles were made, some of which were burned. 5 hogs were raised on a 2.5 acre piece and their house and fence rotated over the whole site. Large animals were also grazed over the stump sprouts twice during the season keeping sprout growth to a minimum. Pasture mix was sown in fall over this rooted up area. 200 Fruit tree seedling rootstocks were planted into beds in spring 2003 and will be grafted in the nursery beds before transplanting. The remaining work includes picking stones from rooted up areas. Removing the rest of cordwood and burning remaining brush piles. The fruit trees will be planted out this spring and the first area to be planted in row crops will be prepared and planted, probably to field corn. Photo documentation has proceeded with implementation

6. Results. The results have been mostly as expected. However less time was available for land clearing last winter than necessary to clear the proposed area. As a result part of the planned clearing has not started and likely will not start as part of this project. Ground prep for planting will take considerable time as well..

7 Conditions. The 2004 season was relatively wet and though the soft ground was easy for the pigs to root, some areas where hogs were pastured became muddy as a result. Otherwise conditions were as expected

8. Economics. We are expecting to show that clearing land this way will be an economically viable method as income is produced immediately (cordwood, pork products, rough pasture) as work begins and overhead costs are very low compared to having heavy machinery do the clearing. Experience shows also that the land is left in much better condition as the soil layers are not disturbed.

9. Assessment. n/a

10. Outreach. Every person who has visited our farm, roughly 30 visitors /month during snow free period has been given a tour of the field clearing progression since 1983. Though formal advertised pasture walks have not been made since the grant began we plan to host them this summer.