

2014 CT Envirothon Oral Presentation Scenario: Sustainable Local Agriculture

The Tolland Agricultural Center (TAC) is purchasing an adjacent farm called the Gunther Farm. A portion has been used for hay production for the past several decades. The TAC Board of Directors has requested an assessment of the property by an Environmental Review Team (ERT) to identify the existing resource base and to evaluate its significance. Their report proposes various uses for the site and suggests environmental considerations that should be of concern. The ERT report can be found on the web at the CTEnvirothon site under 2014 competition and oral presentation.

The TAC Board of Directors is now asking you to develop a sustainable agriculture and education/demonstration plan for both the TAC and the Gunther properties.

While the ERT report focuses on all the natural resources on the site, your plan will focus on sustainable agriculture and education/demonstration. However, consideration of all the resources is a critical aspect determining the land use.

Be sure to note the Mission Statement for TAC which is included in the ERT report; then be sure your plan falls within the TAC mission. Some proposed uses for the site have been listed and are posted on the CTEnvirothon website for your consideration. Please don't restrict yourselves to these ideas.

Things to include in your plan are:

Identify the key goals of sustainable agriculture.

Describe how the soils on the property would or would not support agriculture.

Discuss how farming practices could improve soil health and reduce water use.

Discuss how Integrated Pest Management can be used as a production practice.

How will the community benefit from the activities at the farm?

How will produce raised at the Farm be marketed?

Discuss how the farm can be used for educational purposes.

Resources:

Links to the principles of Sustainable Local Agriculture can be found on the CTEnvirothon website here

<http://www.ctenvirothon.org/competition/currentissue.shtml>

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The Environmental Review Team Report along with descriptions of the TAC property can be found at:

<http://www.ctenvirothon.org/competition/oralpresentation.shtml>

USDA SARE, Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program, is a great resource for information on all aspects of sustainable agriculture. Take some time to explore it. Here are some materials that will help you prepare your plan. All publications are available for downloading and/or viewing on-line.

<http://www.sare.org/>

<http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/Bulletins/What-is-Sustainable-Agriculture>

<http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/Books/Building-Soils-for-Better-Crops-3rd-Edition>

<http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/Books/Manage-Insects-on-Your-Farm>

<http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/Bulletins/A-Whole-Farm-Approach-to-Managing-Pests>

<http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/Bulletins/Smart-Water-Use-on-Your-Farm-or-Ranch>