

**Oregonian, The (Portland, OR)**

**Title: EDITORIAL Making a model-farm dream practical and sustainable**

**Date: January 4, 2006**

SUMMARY: Last-minute community support could avert development and save a site near Tryon Creek

They call it the Tryon Life Community Farm. But the acronym the nonprofit group uses to describe its dream also has a nice ring to it: The TLC Farm.

As of Monday, The Oregonian's Fred Leeson reported, the nonprofit was \$100,000 shy of its goal of acquiring seven acres adjoining Tryon Creek State Natural Area (previously known as Tryon Creek State Park). If the site can be purchased, the nonprofit hopes to build a demonstration farm on it, showcasing organic farming and environmental building practices as well as techniques for watershed and habitat restoration.

If that sounds green and dreamy, it also sounds like a realistic goal in the Portland area. Members of the nonprofit TLC group have already demonstrated that they are willing to labor, not just dream. They have created a large organic garden and worked hard to remove invasive species (we all know how much fun that is, but five goats help with blackberry removal).

Over the past year, the group has also started offering the kind of environmental education classes, tours and workshops it eventually hopes to specialize in. Near the stunning Tryon Creek State Natural Area, a model organic farm would actually be a good fit, helping to buffer the park and preserve this acreage from a more intensive development. In Portland, it's conceivable that the farm, in a small and quiet way, would even sprout into a mini tourist attraction.

For this dream to move forward, though, the nonprofit must nail down the remaining money to purchase the property by Tuesday. The property owners have already said that, one way or the other, they must sell the property. A previous development proposal called for high-end houses. However nice these private homes might be, a small farm and environmental education center would be wiser on that acreage, more in the public interest and, potentially, a community treasure, not unlike Tryon Creek park itself.

The nonprofit group that is working to preserve the land wouldn't own it, but would work the farm as tenants. A statewide organization called the Oregon Sustainable Agriculture Land Trust would hold the title.

In Portland, this kind of project sounds doable, even (as they say) sustainable. All that's needed is the public's help, some willing green thumbs and a little TLC.

ILLUSTRATION: Photo

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