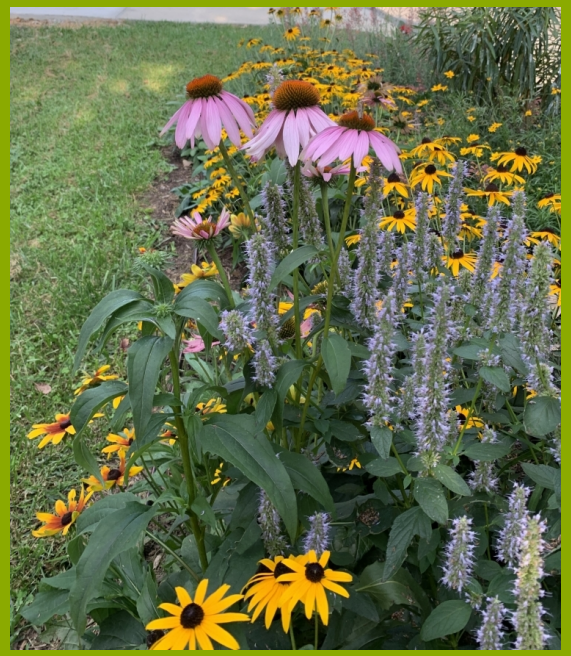


Conceptual Site Plan



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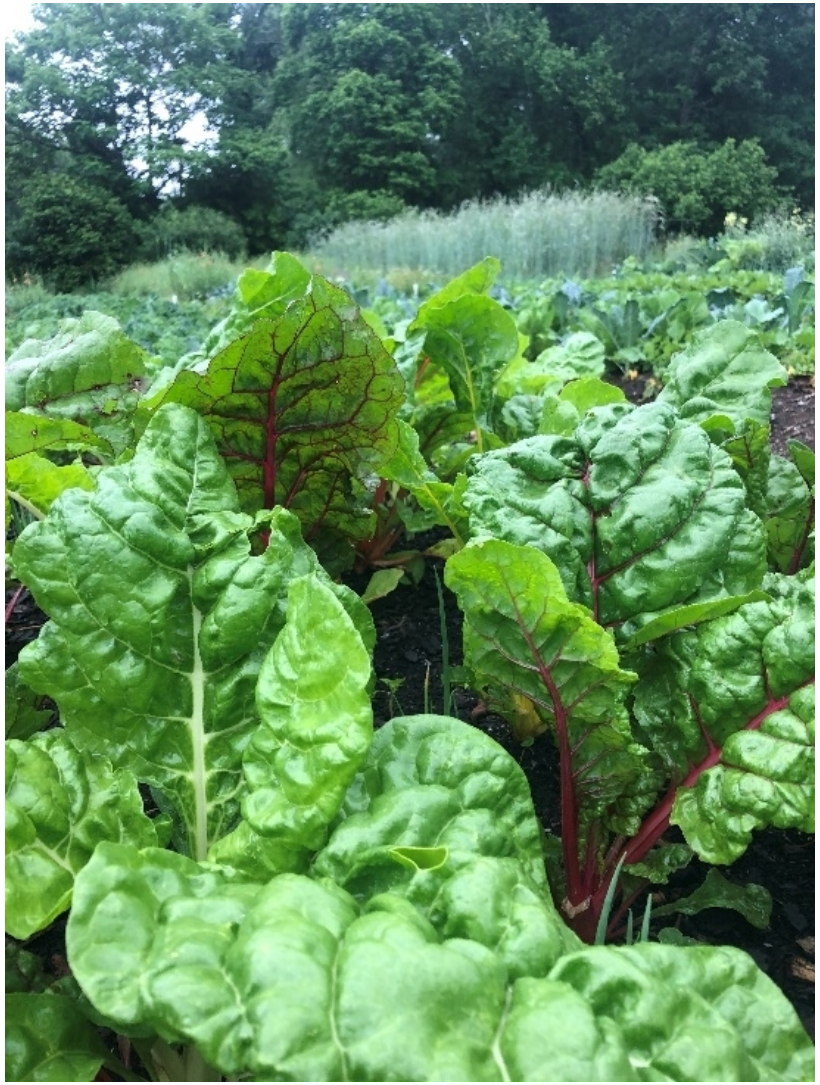
Dr. John Wilson Community Garden

Presented February 2025

by Leonora Stefanile, Community Garden Manager

& Josh Henderson, Recreation Director





Agenda

- Brief overview of the Community Garden
- What is the Conceptual Site Plan for the Dr. John Wilson Community Garden?
- The Plan: overview of new and existing features
- Impact of Hurricane Helene on the Community Garden and the Conceptual Site Plan
- Garden Infrastructure implementation for 2025:
  - Irrigation: an essential resource
  - Food safety improvements

Current Programs in the Community Garden



- Rental plots
- Donation to Bounty & Soul
- Volunteer workdays
- Internships
- Educational Workshops
- Composting drop-off
- Food Forest
- Invasive species management

Impacts the Town Makes through the DRJWCG

- Reducing waste through composting
- Educating our residents to improve health and resilience
- Providing access to local, healthy foods
- Providing space for community building
- Maintaining beauty and ecology of park
- Bringing pride for residents and attracting visitors



Purpose for the Community Garden's Conceptual Site Plan

- The Recreation Master Plan that was adopted in 2022, recommended a site-specific plan for the Dr. John Wilson Community Garden with community input.

Dr. John Wilson Community Garden

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines recreation as; "the refreshment of strength and spirits after work" and Black Mountain's community garden exemplifies this definition for the patrons and volunteers that have worked to make this a successful asset to the community. With an abundance grown from the cooperative efforts of garden participants, benefits of this recreation have been shared by the community via food donations to the Bounty and Soul organization.

Excerpt from the Dr. John Wilson Community Garden 10-year Strategic Plan:

Operational Goals (< $25K/goal) for the next 2 years (2024 - 2026)

a. *Create a site plan to guide future structures and hardscaping.* Long-term goals include bathrooms, a greenhouse/glasshouse, and a new facility. Result: supporting document for long-term goals. Conceptual site plan is in development at the time of this document.

   i. Action items:

      1. Gather relevant existing data on site
      2. Find consultant and invite to site
      3. Hold charette to get community input
      4. Draw up conceptual site plan

The Conceptual Site Plan

The Dr. John Wilson Community Garden 10-year strategic plan, adopted in 2024, listed a site-specific plan as an operational goal.

- Re-named “Conceptual Site Plan”
- That is what we are presenting today!
- New and existing features represented on the map
- The Conceptual Site Plan was created before Hurricane Helene; some changes need to be made to the Site plan mainly due to ongoing study/cleanup efforts regarding the status of water safety in the Swannanoa River



Purpose for the Community Garden's Conceptual Site Plan

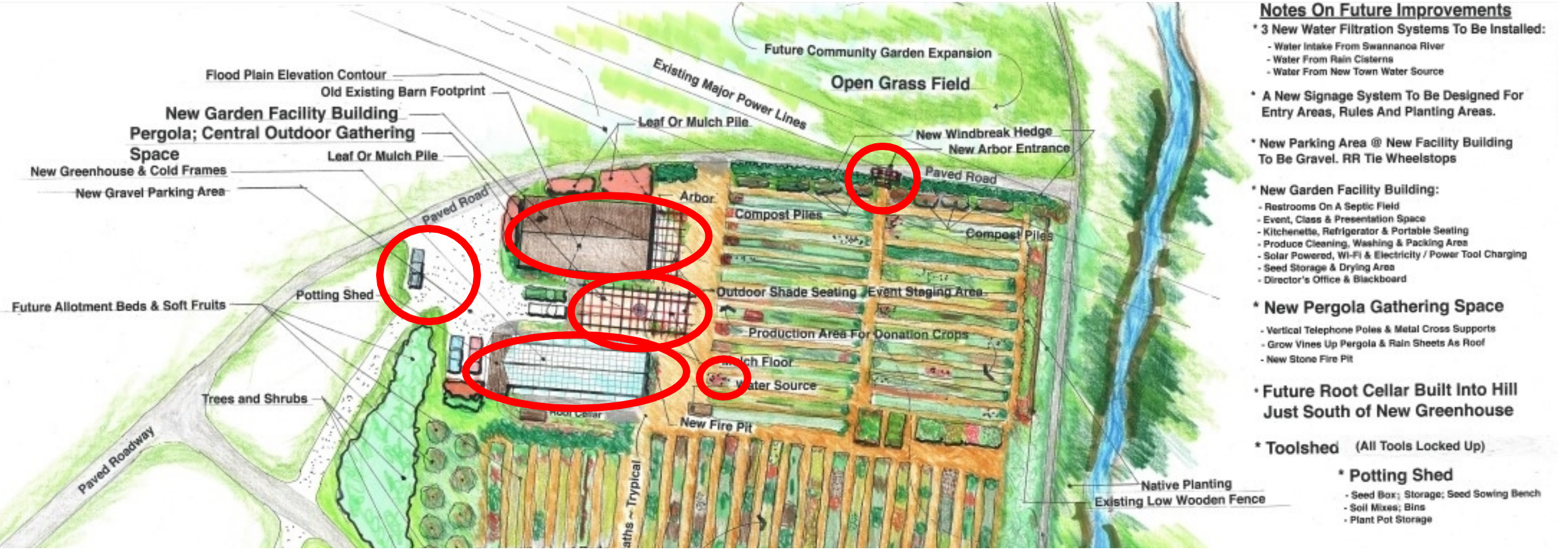
Recommendations

- A Site-Specific Park Master Plan should be implemented and include community input
- A full-time facility manager should be hired by the parks and recreation department
- The existing metal roof shed should be replaced with a new barn type structure and include an office and classroom
- An accessible walking path should be constructed from the parking area
- Water / sewer service should be extended to the site

Conceptual Site Plan: thank you Craig Siska, designer:



Conceptual Site Plan: New Features



Conceptual Site Plan: New Features



Other items included in the Plan (first Priorities)

- More signage
- City water hookup
- Produce Washing Station
- Restrooms
- Solar Panels for electricity in the Barn/Main Building
- Outdoor Sitting area (picnic tables with hardscape underneath)



Hurricane Helene Impact: Growing Local Food is Essential



- Hurricane Helene demonstrated how important access to any locally produced, renewable resource is, such as locally grown, fresh produce

- We are growing food using the compost largely created in part from kitchen scraps brought to us from the community. The food grown in the garden is a true example of a renewable resource.
- In 2025, we hope to showcase the Dr. John Wilson Community Garden at the _____, as an example of a successful model of a town-supported community garden.

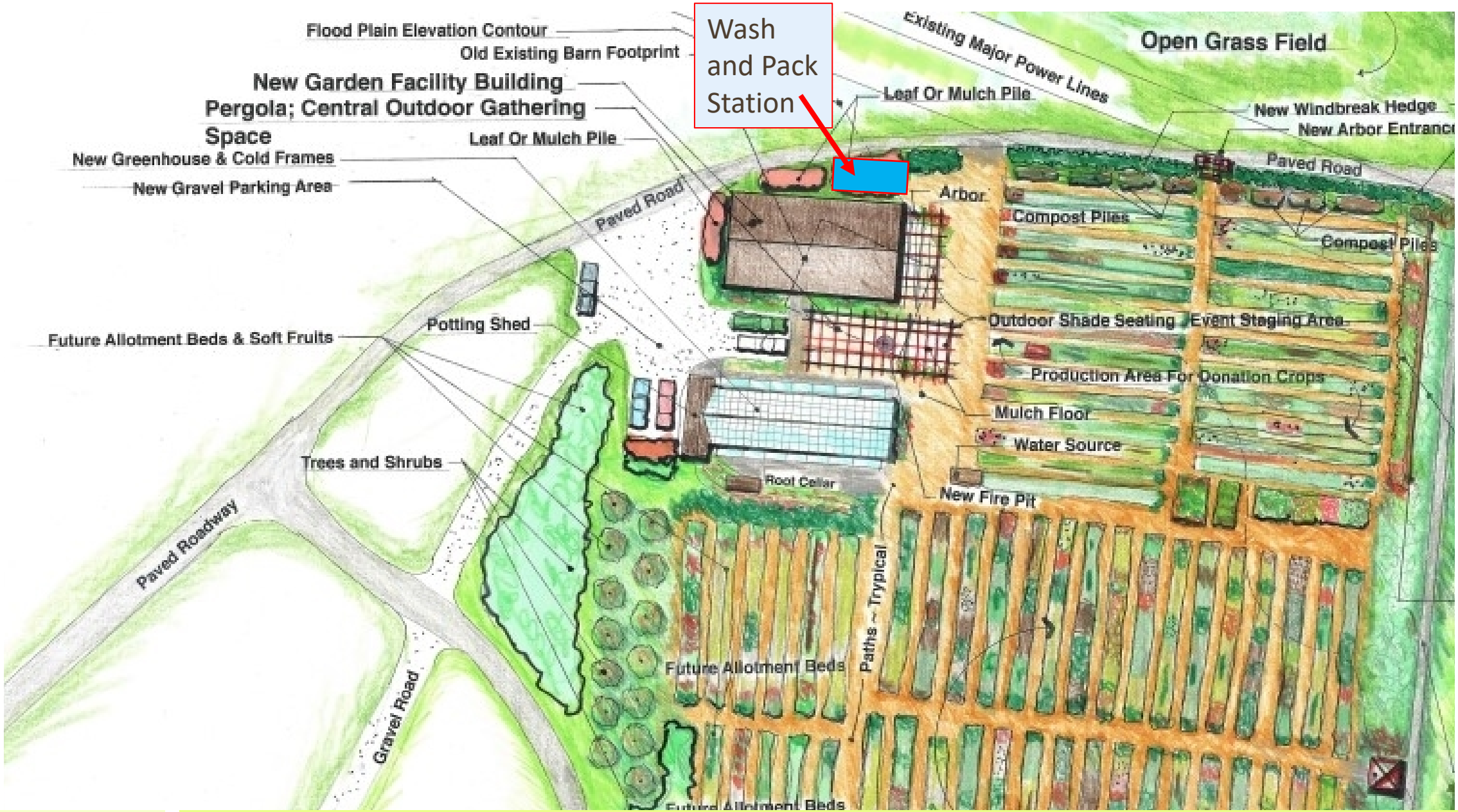
Infrastructure Improvements in the Garden, 2025

- Priorities:
  - Secure an ongoing, year-round source of irrigation water that does not source surface water from the Swannanoa river
  - Provide potable water for drinking, hand washing, and for washing produce
  - Food Safety: install a wash and pack station for washing produce before donating to our food distribution partners (mainly Bounty and Soul)
  - Repairing the barn to address safety issues

Conceptual Site Plan: Updates needed due to Hurricane Helene



Conceptual Site Plan: Updates needed for increased food safety



Irrigation: A Cornerstone to the Community Garden's Operation

- Without irrigation during dry periods, we can only grow about 50% of the food we normally grow, especially in summer
- Many crops will produce little to no food without irrigation
- Irrigation helps plants stay optimally healthy
  - This a staple for organic growing: the healthier the plant is, the more resistant it is to plants and diseases
- Moist soil is more microbially active, which in turn increases plants' ability to take up nutrients that they need to grow and bear fruit
- Many gardeners are older and have trouble hauling water and moving hoses around
- We need a regular watering system that irrigates all the garden beds with minimal intervention (drip irrigation that is sourced by a well is ideal)
- Next month, we will present a funding opportunity we hope to secure that will enable us to install an agricultural-capacity well



Food Safety: Our Responsibility to our Beneficiaries

- If we are distributing food to the public, all soil should be washed off all edible portions
- This helps keep soil-borne pathogens from potentially infecting anyone
- Standard practice at other community farms, such as Root Cause Farm in Fairview, and Eliada Home in West Asheville
- A basic wash and pack station setup is relatively inexpensive (~$1000)
- Ideally city water is the water source (regularly tested and treated)



Food Safety: Our Responsibility to our Beneficiaries

- We are working with Elena Rogers Food Safety Specialist with NCSU Cooperative Extension on where the best location and design for the wash and pack station
- Bounty and Soul now requires all its farmer and grower partners to wash produce prior to hand-off to B&S staff.
- Common practice in commercial farming: a great training opportunity for our volunteers, interns, and gardeners
- Adds value to the garden offerings for gardeners who rent plots



Black Mountain's Community Garden is a model

Let's stay at the forefront





Thank you