

State Technical Committee Tour and Meeting

Newark / East Orange Urban Ag Tour

June 19, 2019

Time	Topic	Location / Speakers
9:30	Arrive at Greater Newark Conservancy Education Center – Light refreshments will be served, and restrooms are available. Street parking available on either Prince or Broome Street (overflow in the ShopRite parking lot)	Prudential Outdoor Learning 32 Prince Street Newark, NJ 07103
9:45	Welcome and Introductions	Robin Dougherty <i>Greater Newark Conservancy</i> Carrie Lindig <i>NRCS</i>
10:00	Depart and travel to East Orange	14 Cottage Place, East Orange, NJ 07017
10:20	Tour Site 1 - Coeur et Sol Urban Farms	Chelsa Hernandez <i>Founder at Coeur et Sol Urban Farms & GreenGrocer Food Hub</i> Audrey Ting <i>Intern at Coeur et Sol Urban Farms and Public Health and Environmental Science undergrad at John Hopkins</i>
10:40	Depart and travel to Ironbound	Down Bottom Farms 371 Ferry Street Newark NJ
11:10	Tour Site 2 -Ironbound Community Corporation	Maria Lopez and Christian Rodriguez <i>Ironbound Community Corporation</i>
11:30	Depart and travel to Greater Newark Conservancy Farm	Hawthorne Avenue Farm 446 Hawthorne Ave Newark, NJ 07112
11:45	Tour Site 3 – Greater Newark Conservancy Hawthorn Ave Farm and XRF Demonstration	Karen Rutberg & Mark Kearney <i>Greater Newark Conservancy</i> Edwin Muniz and Rich Shaw <i>NJ NRCS</i>
12:30	Depart and travel to Greater Newark Conservancy Education Center	Prudential Outdoor Learning 32 Prince Street Newark, NJ 07103
1:00	LUNCH – Bring your own or pre-order lunch, restrooms will be available	
1:30	State Technical Committee Business Meeting	Carrie Lindig <i>NRCS</i>
3:00	Adjourn Meeting	

Tour Site 1: Coeur et Sol Urban Farms

Coeur et Sol Urban Farms is a woman owned and run urban farm in a residential neighborhood in East Orange. In 2017, they broke ground on their leased 1/4 acre lot and spent the fall to the early spring prepping for our first growing season in 2018 where they grew (and continue to grow) greens, veggies, and cut flowers. Founder and owner, Chelsa Hernandez, left a career of retail management and buying to start a farm with the vision of connecting urban and suburban Essex County residents with the greater agricultural community in New Jersey. From this idea, an offshoot of the farm business was born in early 2019. GreenGrocer Food Hub is an online grocery delivery service sourcing from NJ farms and food entrepreneurs, with a grocery storefront opening in Bloomfield this summer.

Tour Site 2: Ironbound Community Corporation's Down Bottom Farm

Down Bottom Farms is a project of the Environmental Justice and Community Development (EJCD) Department at Ironbound Community Corporation. At Down Bottom Farms they believe there is a special power born in working together as a community to restore the land in whatever way we are able to, and to encourage her back into communication with the birds, worms and bumblebees. That special power of what can be born on a farm when folks work together we transmute into the power to change our whole community. We are united because of the bond we formed on the land. From here we can walk anywhere, together—to City Hall to protect rent control, to the garbage incinerator to say shut it down, or to Coney Island to get some fun in the sun and ice cream.

At Down Bottom Farms Ironbound Community Corporation is implementing agroecological practices based in the values of biodiversity and a holistic approach to farming that takes into account the well being of the people growing and eating the food they grow.

At the farm they grow organic vegetables, fruits, herbs and cut flowers without the use of chemical fertilizers or pesticides. The food grown gets sold at their farmers market on the farm and also distributed to volunteers who farm with them. The youth of the Ironbound is absolutely crucial to everything that happens at Down Bottom Farms and they currently run three different Young Farmers Programs in partnership with different Newark Public Schools.

Their youth learn all aspects of our farm: they plant everything in our greenhouse, transplant on the farm, work the soil, water, build the compost, harvest and also sell our products at our Farmers Market. This summer they will have 5 paid farm assistants who are students just graduated from Ironbound's East Side High School.

Tour Site 3: Greater Newark Conservancy Hawthorn Ave Farm

The Greater Newark Conservancy's Hawthorne Ave Farm, located in South Ward of Newark, was established 6 years ago. The site was a residential block razed to build a school, and currently owned by the NJ Schools Development Authority, leased to the City of Newark, and leased to the Conservancy on an annual basis. We strive to employ best practices in Soil and Water Conservation, Fruit and Vegetable Management, Food Safety and Distribution, and Community Engagement.

Our philosophy is to connect with the best and brightest free technical support and expertise, to work smart, and to leverage the limited resources and variable flow of volunteers. For technical support and expertise, we are working with the US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service for soil testing and water conservation, and with Rutgers Agricultural Extension Service for orchard management, integrated pest management, and soil fertility and conservation. The NRCS conducted a trace metal study in February 2019 and prepared an irrigation design for us in April. We have also connected with Rutgers and NJIT's planning and ecology departments to collaborate on farm-based/focused projects.

To work smart, we are implementing a farm management system that enables us to define all tasks associated with each crop, from bed prep to harvest, and to calendar them. This calendar of tasks will enable us to focus our volunteer recruitment efforts. With accurate data input, we will project our harvest yields and dates, which will shape our harvest distribution plans.

Production Areas

The farm consists of multiple production areas. We are growing more than 40 different annual vegetables as well as raspberry, strawberry, and asparagus perennials. We chose our crops to support the Conservancy's senior nutrition program, the educational program, and farm stand. The production areas are: West Field: 52 seventy-foot rows, mainly perennial vegetables with some raspberries and asparagus; East Field North: 15 forty-foot rows for green manure and herbs; East Field South: 17-forty foot rows, for farm shares and sweet potatoes; Hoop House: 6 eighty-foot rows for a variety of climbing plants. Orchard: approximately 130 apple, peach, pear, plum, and cherry trees Raised Beds: 15 along the central path for strawberries and lettuce.

The farm's irrigation system will be expanded from covering only the West Field, to cover the East Fields, raised beds along the central path, and the Hoop House.

New Farm Features

In addition to the production areas, we have introduced new features to attract visitors and enhance enjoyment of the farm. These include adding art work, an arched trellis for pickling cucumbers and climbing cherry tomatoes, a learning circle, and a shaded activity area for weighing and preparing harvest. We also hope to create a pollinator garden and a meditation labyrinth on the east edge of the site.

Tour Route

