Poughkeepsie Farmers’ Market Moving to Walkway, Pulaski Park in 2011

Change in Locale to Bring Fresh Food to More Hudson Valley Residents and Visitors

The Poughkeepsie Farmers’ Market, managed by the Poughkeepsie Farm Project, plans to relocate to the eastern entranceway of the Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park and Pulaski Park in the City of Poughkeepsie next year as organizers seek to expand the popular market to reach more shoppers.

The significantly larger market will be offered concurrently in two locations from 3 pm to 7 pm every Friday from early June to late October, with one portion of the eastern approach to the Walkway and the other a block away in Pulaski Park on Washington Street, not far from the new access stairway for the elevated state park.

The decision to move and expand the Poughkeepsie Farmers’ Market follows extensive discussion and planning by several stakeholder organizations, including City of Poughkeepsie officials, representatives from the nonprofit groups, Poughkeepsie Farm Project and Walkway Over the Hudson, and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, which operates the Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park.

Farmers’ Market organizers outlined several reasons supporting their decision to move the market from its current location on Main Street to the Walkway and Pulaski Park locations. They are:

- Moving to this location will encourage growth—both in customers and vendors—while enhancing the market’s goal of supporting local access to fresh food and the regional agricultural economy. The current market location has proven challenging, because of the time, the lack of dedicated parking and the site’s physical size, condition and amenities.

- The Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park is a world-class tourist attraction with a built-in audience of potential customers predisposed to wanting healthy and local food choices, making it a natural fit for a weekly market.

- Having a farmers’ market on the approach to the Walkway will draw even more people — from the local area as well as from the greater region and beyond — to the Walkway on Friday afternoons and evenings, transforming it into a cultural as well as recreational destination.

“We are thrilled that the Poughkeepsie Farmers’ Market will become a seasonal presence at the Walkway Over the Hudson’s eastern entrance. It will undoubtedly enhance both the Walkway and the Farmers’ Market, providing yet another reason to visit Poughkeepsie,” said Walkway Over the Hudson Executive Director, Elizabeth Waldstein-Hart.

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Snippets of a Season

By, Angela DeFelice
2010 Full Season Intern

March 23

Sarah and I are trying to rebuild the cold frame of the side of the greenhouse. Rain, mud up to our ears, our hands are frozen. We rotate pairs of gloves through the germination fridge (kept at 80 degrees) and savor the 45 seconds that we have warm wet gloves, before they return to cold we t rubber and nylon.

May 25

Volunteers arrive for the 1stth harvest of season. Hello, my name is Angela. No, I’m not a Vassar student. Yes, farming is my full time job. Yes, I graduated from College. Yes, I think I would like to have my own farm, although it will take some time to know for sure.

June 29

Four,30-minute farm tours, back to back. Ten,7-year olds in each group. A few persistent children demand my attention to share their own story of growing tomatoes at home, or peas in paper cups at school. We talk about the good bugs and the bad bugs. We vaguely discuss feeding the soil with cover crops, although it’s not clear how the soil can “eat” anything. We taste, we touch, we observe, we taste some more.

July 17

Volunteers arrive for the 26th harvest of the season.

Hello, my name is Angela. No, I’m not a Vassar student. Yes, farming is my full time job. Yes, I graduated from College. Yes, I’m pretty sure I would like to have my own farm. I started working in agriculture when I lived abroad. Yes, I think there is a connection between living internationally and returning home to farm. It has to do with resolving our internal crisis of what our role will be in world change. We realize our limits, we can only do so much. Farming – a stable role, one rooted in community support, trust, relationships, nourishing my soul and your body. Creating change one community at a time. Because that is all we can do.

August 2

As we park the car, I can see several well cared for garden beds- raspberries, peppers, tomatoes, beans, flowers. Each labeled and roped off, a sign of trust and desperate hope that passersby will respect the barrier and not eat or trample what is not theirs. Three young women, all in high school, eagerly offer us homemade snacks. Today is their day to shine, to showcase the work the Green Teens do in the garden and community. They are nervous, quirky, but overall well spoken and take very seriously their roles as garden team leaders. Sam, the highest ranking youth in the bunch, shares a personal anecdote, one that sets her apart from so many of her peers. She is growing 13 varieties of tomatoes in her backyard garden. HER garden, HER tomatoes. She is beaming with pride. She plans to study agriculture in college. I think to myself - she is a young farmer, I am a young farmer, Asher is a
Reflecting and Planning...

By, Sarah Pappas
2010 Assistant Farm Manager, 2009 Full Season Intern

The mass harvests of potatoes and winter squash, the last CSA distributions, the members potluck – are all behind us at this point. We've rushed around to cover, and double-cover, beds in anticipation of frosts and hard freezes. We've taken down the tomato trellises, taken up the drip tape, sowed the cover crop, given everything its last water, and begun to take in all of our irrigation systems for the winter.

One of the most interesting tasks in this year's close-up has been our veggie review. The farm crew sits in the relative warmth of the greenhouse, farm plans in hand, and dissects the season's crops, item by item, pooling our memories to build a collective understanding of the successes or failures of each variety. Those of us moving on to other farms jot down notes to bring to our own future crop planning activities, and those staying on make direct notes about the 2012 plans: 'Early Wonder Tall Top throws more beets per seed pod than Red Ace, but Red Ace may be more uniform,' 'Tighter spacing on broccoli demands high enough fertility for good sized heads,' 'More watermelon at the beginning of the season when it is tastiest is better than more successions over the course of the summer...'

We are discussing the balancing act between the day length each crop wants in order to be the most beautiful and tasty version of itself; how much the CSA members will realistically choose of each crop at pick-ups (you probably don't want us begging you to take just one more head of escarole, eh?); and what planting schedules will lend themselves to the best pest and weed management strategies.

This conversation is one that farmers all over the hemisphere are having at this time of year, and one that farmers all over the world have been having since the beginning of settled agriculture. The acts of planting, tending, and harvesting certainly make me feel connected to humans' ancient history of agriculture - and so does this end-of-season step of reflecting and revising. Much of the growing season is carrying out the plan that was developed the previous winter, responding as quickly as possible to new issues and questions as they come up, all with the goal of growing enough food. The reflection step feels, to me, like a rare moment when our view stretches beyond Getting It Done, and focuses on how to get it done better. It is now time for the various ideas and opinions that we've set on a corner shelf in our brains during the summer to come out and get looked at, turned over, and recorded for further consideration.

The local food movement, small-scale farming, and CSA's receive a lot of press these days touting the connectedness to the seasons, the romance of the feel of the sun on your shoulders as you harvest your own heirloom tomatoes, et cetera. And, much of that rings true for me, and I am grateful to be a part of it and glad that awareness is spreading.

And... I am also grateful for the part of the cycle of the seasons that is for sitting back in the greenhouse, drinking tea, reflecting, sampling new winter squash recipes, eating the strawberry jam from the past summer, and gathering thoughts, energy, and intention for the following season.

Members... Thank you for welcoming me as part of your community for the 2009 and 2010 seasons! I have learned so much, and been so proud to be part of such an excellent farm. I will be moving on to Detroit, MI to work as a Farmer for the Greening of Detroit's Urban Agriculture program. If you know Detroit, or have any friends there who'd love to show a farmer around town, please don't hesitate to let me know! sarah.pappas@gmail.com.
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young farmer. I am overwhelmed with a deep sense of pride.

August 28

It’s Saturday afternoon, we are delirious. Laughing so hard we can barely eat the lunch we have been thinking about all morning. Not only because it’s the last day of our work week, but mostly because we haven’t eaten since 6 am. We’ve just completed two 3 hour work sessions with different volunteer crews, harvested enough food to feed 167 families, set up and broke down distribution, re-packed 478 lbs of produce for donations, and either won or lost the race to the microwave.

September 30

Volunteers arrive for the 59th harvest of the season. Hello, my name is Angela. No, I’m not a Vassar student. Yes, farming is my full time job. Yes, I graduated from College. Yes, in a few years I will have my own farm.

October 16

We have a reflection circle with the few apprentices that show up to the last CRAFT meeting of the season. Farmer Don from Caretaker Farm takes the lead. Why do you farm? Because of the role that I want to have in building community and creating change. Because I love to use my body and enjoy the rhythm of the work. Because I love to get up with the sun. Because growing food empowers me each and every day. Because growing food is somewhat of an addiction. When you have your own farm, how much money would you like to make? $40K per year. Once your own farm is established, how many hours a week do you want to work? 45-50hrs in season, 30hrs during the off season. What else is important to you, what else would you like to do in your free time? I would love to have the time and energy to go Latin Dancing once a month. I want to live near my family and spend time with my friends. In the off season I want the flexibility and resources to travel to new places as well as visit people and communities that I know well. Now, it is your job to figure out how you are going to reach all of your goals.

November 5

I am 29 today. That’s almost 30. How many more years am I willing to work for other people? How many more years will I put my labor and love into land that is not mine? and into communities that I will not stay in? How many more years will it take to save enough money to start my own farm? Will I actually be able to save enough money if I continue working on farms? How many more winters can I stand being a cashier at a grocery store? How many more years can I move from farm to farm, in search of skills and systems and experiences? When will I live in one place long enough to call home? Sigh. As they say in Nicaragua:

Hay más tiempo que vida. (There is more time than life.)