

Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) Final Performance Report

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your LFPP award objectives. As stated in the LFPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future LFPP or Farmers Market Promotion Program grant funding unless all close-out procedures are completed, including satisfactory submission of this final performance report.

This final report will be made available to the public once it is approved by LFPP staff. Write the report in a way that promotes your project's accomplishments, as this document will serve as not only a learning tool, but a promotional tool to support local and regional food programs. Particularly, recipients are expected to provide both qualitative and quantitative results to convey the activities and accomplishments of the work.

The report is limited to 10 pages and is due **within 90 days** of the project's performance period end date, or sooner if the project is complete. Provide answers to each question, or answer "not applicable" where necessary. It is recommended that you email or fax your completed performance report to your assigned grant specialist to avoid delays:

LFPP Phone: 202-720-2731; Email: USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov; Fax: 202-720-0300

Should you need to mail your documents via hard copy, contact LFPP staff to obtain mailing instructions.

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	April 1, 2016-November 11, 2016
Authorized Representative Name:	Andrew Waters
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Authorized Representative Email:	andrew@spartanburgconservation.org
Recipient Organization Name:	Spartanburg Area Conservancy (SPACE)
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Cleveland Preserve Farm-to-School Incubator
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15-LFPP-0067
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Spartanburg, South Carolina
Total Awarded Budget:	\$26,200

LFPP staff may contact you to follow up for long-term success stories. Who may we contact?

- Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).
- Different individual: Name: _____; Email: _____; Phone: _____

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1. State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by LFPP staff. If the goals/objectives from the narrative have changed from the grant narrative, please highlight those changes (e.g. “new objective”, “new contact”, “new consultant”, etc.). You may add additional goals/objectives if necessary. For each item below, qualitatively discuss the progress made and indicate the impact on the community, if any.
 - i. Goal/Objective 1: Production & Crop Planning
 - a. Progress Made: *SPACE staff has attended two meetings with Cleveland Preserve Farm Manager and Spartanburg District 6 Farm to School Coordinator Dylan Nitkowski. The stakeholder have begun initial discussions to coordinate crop and beef production for District Six consumption beginning in 2017.*
 - b. Impact on Community: *SPACE is working with Cleveland Preserve Farm Managers on GAP certification and crop production. The Feasibility Study recommendations have been circulated widely in the community.*
 - ii. Goal/Objective 2: Education
 - a. Progress Made: *The Feasibility Study identifies educational programs as a “good fit” for the Cleveland Preserve Farm. Developing the property as a “Farm to School” Resource Center was a primary recommendation of the Feasibility Study. SPACE plans to coordinate educational opportunities for the preserve through a “Community Food Projects” grant application with USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture—application due in November.*
 - b. Impact on Community: *Several class options were identified in interviews and research for the Feasibility Study, including Organic Animal Husbandry, 4-H classes, FFA classes and programs, production and crop planning with Clemson Extension, and more (see Feasibility study for full list of recommendations and potential partners.*
 - iii. Goal/Objective 3: Processing and Safety
 - a. Progress Made: *The Feasibility Study directly references Processing and Safety issues. GAP Processing remains a central issues for Cleveland Preserve along with other farmer’s in the area. The Feasibility Study recommends using the farm as a training facility for other farmers addressing GAP processing. Current Farm Managers are in the initial stages of seeking GAP certification. Cold storage is identified as a critical infrastructure need for the Cleveland Preserve. As part of the recommended planning process, Cold Storage either on site or at a nearby site will be addressed.*
 - b. Impact on Community: *The issues faced at Cleveland Preserve, and identified in the feasibility study, are identical to processing and safety issues for other farmer’s in the region. Efforts to address these issues through master planning and infrastructure development efforts can be duplicated by other farmers in the community, or resources on the Cleveland Preserve may serve a community purpose.*
 - iv. Goal/Objective 4: Organizational Structure and Sustainability
 - a. Progress Made: *Feasibility Study makes several recommendations for Organizational Structure and Sustainability: a primary recommendation is development of a Master Facilities Plan to guide future infrastructure development on the property. Other recommendations include developing the property for event rentals as a source of income; addition of an Educational Programs & Event Coordinator position, estimated at an annual income of*

\$60,000/year; and development of Agricultural education and training programs on the property.

b. Impact on Community: There is no current public, on-farm resource for educational programs related to farm-to-school production and sustainable farming practices in the Spartanburg area community. Addition of this resource would have significant community impacts.

2. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable, from the baseline date (the start of the award performance period, September 30, 2015). Include further explanation if necessary.
 - i. Number of direct jobs created: Two jobs. *Since the grant award, SPACE has awarded a long-term lease to farmers Brent and Sallie Belue on the property, who were selected through an RFP process for sustainable farming practices. Feasibility study recommends hiring of full-time programs/events coordinator*
 - ii. Number of jobs retained: *Two.*
 - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: *Two consultants were retained for creating the Feasibility Study*
 - iv. Number of markets expanded: *Local schools and institutions are identified as new markets in feasibility study.*
 - v. Number of new markets established: *Not applicable yet!*
 - vi. Market sales increased by \$insert dollars and increased by insert percentage%. *Data not available at this time.*
 - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: *22 farmers participated in an online survey associated with this Feasibility Study.*
 - a. Percent Increase: *This figure not available; no baseline data is available.*
3. Did you expand your customer base by reaching new populations such as new ethnic groups, additional low income/low access populations, new businesses, etc.? If so, how?

Spartanburg School District Six Food Services are receiving training in preparing fresh, local foods in part from a \$100,000 grant from Mary Black Foundation. Currently District Six has 11,000 students; the District offers lunches to over 1,000 students during its summer programs. Last summer SPACE and District Six entered into a partnership to explore opportunities to integrate the SPACE Cleveland Preserve Farm into the School's food production system. The feasibility study produced through this grant is considered a first step for moving the project forward. Several census tracts served by Spartanburg School District Six are identified as Low Income/Low Food Access Communities. As the project is developed, and partnership opportunities identified in the feasibility study are implemented, we anticipate children in these areas will enjoy increased access to healthy, locally produced and organic foods.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.
 - i. Who are your community partners?

Primary Partners: Natural Resource Conservation Service, Spartanburg School District Six, Thicketty Mountain Farms, Broadmoor Planning, Upstate Forever.

Secondary Partners: Carolina Farm Stewardship Association, Clemson University Extension Service, South Carolina Community Loan Fund, Grow Food Carolina, S.C. Department of

Agriculture, S.C. Department of Education, Feed & Seed, Innovative Rural Development Corporation, Hub City Farmer's Market, Hub City Food Co-op, Low Country Dirt Works Farm Incubator, Mary Black Foundation, Johnson Development, Sustainable Midlands, S.C. Rural Resource Development Commission.

- ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project?

Primary partners have played an active role throughout the process—participating in interviews and survey response, participating in the Open House planning and execution. We are working with Thicketty Mountain Farms, Spartanburg School District Six, and Upstate Forever on initiating the Master Planning Process identified as a priority recommendation in the Feasibility Study. Natural Resource Conservation Service has contributed \$32,000 in farm infrastructure improvement through the Environmental Quality Improvements Program (EQIP). Secondary partners participated in the interview and survey process.

- iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant?

We are working with Thicketty Mountain Farms on developing initial cost estimates for the infrastructure improvements identified in the Feasibility Study: Farm to School Outreach/Training Center and Event Center. We are working with with Spartanburg School District Six on additional grant opportunities to develop Farm to School and Food System Development Infrastructure in the community (submitting a SARE Planning Grant Application for the November deadline). We have approached Johnson Development and Mary Black Foundation about supported implementation steps identified in the Feasibility Study, specifically Master Facilities Planning initiative.

5. did you use contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project?

Contractors for preparation of the Feasibility Study were selected through an RFP. A proposal submitted jointly through Broadmoor Planning and John M. Newman Planning was selected. The consultants performed thorough research on existing projects of a similar nature and literature review on Farm to School initiatives and Incubator Farms. Consultants conducted a site visit and contacted numerous stakeholders for interviews and or survey responses. Twenty-two farmers participated in an online interview. Seven school district supervisors also participated in an online interview. Three Agricultural Educators participated in an online interview and 8 Food Service Directors. Forty (40) one-on-one interviews were conducted during the research phase of the Feasibility Study. The work of the contractors resulted in a thorough assessment of the current situation facing "Farm to School" opportunities in the Spartanburg Region and a comprehensive analysis of needs and opportunities. The contractors performed their work to specification and in the agreed upon timeline. Their work, and the Feasibility Study produced through it, was instrumental to the success of the project.

6. Have you publicized any results yet?*
- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?

Results of the Cleveland Preserve were submitted directly via e-mail to numerous farm related organizations and publications in South Carolina. Results were submitted directly via e-mail to local media outlets. Results were posted on the "Lowcountry Farmers" Google Group listserve (even though the name is Lowcountry Famers this is the primary listserve for local and sustainable farming initiatives throughout the state of South Carolina; the group has 326 members from throughout the state). Results were posted on the Spartanburg Area Conservancy Website; a link to the Website was posted on the Conservancy's Facebook page (3,260 total likes). Results with link to online PDF were also publicized through Conservancy's electronic marketing services, which has 1,024 subscribers. Results were shared at an Open House on the Farm facility held 11.3.16 attended by approximately 30 people.

ii. To whom did you publicize the results?

South Carolina Agriculture Commissioner Hugh Weathers, South Carolina Department of Agriculture, Carolina Farm Stewardship Association, South Carolina Farm Bureau, South Carolina Farmer Magazine, Spartanburg Herald Journal, Upstate Business Journal, WYFF (television) LowCountry Local First, South Carolina Rural Resource Coalition, Clemson Extension, SPACE e-newsletter subscribers (1,024 members), SPACE Facebook subscribers (3,260 total likes), SPACE Website users, Open House held on 11.3 (30 people in attendance), Land Trust Alliance, South Carolina Land Trust Network

iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?

Estimated at 2,500 so far through electronic media. We have not received any traditional media coverage to date ☺--I have been trying!!

**Send any publicity information (brochures, announcements, newsletters, etc.) electronically along with this report. Non-electronic promotional items should be digitally photographed and emailed with this report (do not send the actual item).*

7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?

i. If so, how did you collect the information? *Forty one-on-one interviews were conducted as research for the Feasibility Study. Interview participants included farmers, school system employees, extension workers, nonprofit, and government workers. A full list of interview subjects is included in the attached Feasibility Study.*

The interviews fulfilled several purposes:

- Educated interviewees on the project, establishing relationships and common knowledge about the project allows for easier discussion about future coordination and partnerships*
- Informed the consultants of which programs are most needed in the community*
- Provided information and resources on programs similar to those being considered in the study.*
- Provided information on programs and projects that may become potential partnerships.*

In addition numerous participants from the farming and school system communities participated in online surveys. Twenty-two farmers and 10 school system employees participated in the interview process. Survey results are also included in the attached Feasibility Study results.

ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

Summary feedback from the farmer survey included:

- *Majority of respondents were small farmers. 40.9% farm less than 10 acres*
- *90.9% of the farmers are not GAP safety certified*
- *68.2% are interested in becoming GAP safety certified*
- *None of the farmers are certified organic. Yet 68.2% grow organically.*
- *63.6% of farmers do not have all the farm equipment they need and 31.8% would be interested in borrowing or renting equipment*
- *Additional feedback is found in the Feasibility Study.*

School District Superintendent Survey:

- *Five of the seven school districts contract with Chartwell/Compass for food service*
- *85.7% reported that local foods are served in their school*
- *All superintendents who are unaware of the use of local foods in their system are interested in doing so*
- *57.1% of superintendents were interested in having agricultural education teachers partner with local farmer to enhance their curriculum.*
- *42.9% have implemented some kind of farm-to-school program.*
- *Additional feedback is found in the Feasibility Study*

8. Budget Summary:

- i. As part of the LFPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report:
- ii. Did the project generate any income? *No.*
 - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award? *Not applicable.*

9. Lessons Learned:

- i. Summarize any lessons learned. Draw from positive experiences (e.g. good ideas that improved project efficiency or saved money) and negative experiences (e.g. what did not go well and what needs to be changed).

Spartanburg, South Carolina, is located outside of the mainstream in Farm to School and Food Systems Development in the Carolinas. There is significant activity in nearby areas—Greenville, Clemson, Asheville, North Carolina, Charleston, and Columbia, but all of those areas are at least an hour away from the Cleveland Preserve Farm. Though we advertised the Feasibility Study RFP broadly it was difficult to attract proposals from qualified consultants. We were very pleased with the work of the consultants we selected but next time will take into account that we cannot anticipate broad interest from food systems planning consultants throughout the region.

- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:

Not applicable.

- iii. Describe any lessons learned in the administration of the project that might be helpful for others who would want to implement a similar project:

Our proposal was a feasibility project relying on the input from qualified consultants. It is important to develop your Request for Proposals early in the grant contract term and start the RFP process as soon as possible. This will account for any impediments or questions that arise as proposals are solicited, submitted and reviewed. By selecting our consultants early in the process we were able to conduct the field work and documentation for the Feasibility in a reasonable, unhurried timeframe, resulting in a more thorough and comprehensive document.

We are still struggling to gain attention for the Feasibility Study through local and statewide media. Despite direct solicitation and submission of the material to several local and statewide media outlets, we have not been able to gain any traditional media coverage. So far we are broadcasting results of the Feasibility Study through our own electronic and social media—Web site, e-newsletter, Open House on Site, and Facebook posts. If we could coordinate media distribution through USDA resources that might help gain media attention locally and across the state.

10. Future Work:

- i. How will you continue the work of this project beyond the performance period? In other words, how will you parlay the results of your project's work to benefit future community goals and initiatives? Include information about community impact and outreach, anticipated increases in markets and/or sales, estimated number of jobs retained/created, and any other information you'd like to share about the future of your project.

In the upcoming months and next year SPACE plans to initiate several of the recommendations included in the feasibility study. One of the main recommendations was for a master planning process for the property. We have been in touch with a planning and design firm in town about managing this process—they have given us an estimate of \$40,000 for this project. We are also in discussion with a professor in the Clemson University Department of Architecture who is interested in conducting a master planning process as part of a senior student thesis project. We are also evaluating this option.

Another primary recommendation was for a programming/event/packing center for the property. We have initiated discussions with a regional architect who has experience developing structures for farm properties for a preliminary cost estimate for this structure. Our current farmers have also expressed a strong need for a packing shed with cold storage capacity as a critical infrastructure requirement for their future farming plans. It is our hope/goal we can combine all of these needs in one structure. Once a master planning process is initiated and adopted, we anticipate that securing funding for this structure will be our primary goal.

With successful development of an event/programming/packing structure, we can begin pursuing other strategic initiatives outlined in the feasibility study—programs for farmers, food system employees, and students; other farm related events and programs; and event rentals that can serve as revenue to support programming and education opportunities. We will also be evaluating other grant opportunities that can support strategic recommendations in the feasibility study.

Programming support, grants, and fundraising will be instrumental in supporting these initiatives. The study recommends hiring of an event/program coordinator at an estimated annual salary of \$60,000 per year. Spartanburg Area Conservancy must continue outreach to local funders and grantors highlighting the food system and farm to school potential for the property in order to secure this funding stream. We anticipate the Feasibility Study will serve as a critical outreach and communication tool for pursuing these future development options. However, estimating market increases, jobs created and community impact remains challenging until implementation of the feasibility study recommendations can be initiated.

- ii. Do you have any recommendations for future activities and, if applicable, an outline of next steps or additional research that might advance the project goals?

Next Steps:

Identify funding for Master Facilities Plan.

Seek volunteer opportunities for Master Facilities Plan—we have an opportunity to work with senior students at Clemson University for a senior thesis project.

Develop plans/cost estimate for “Farm-to-School Resource Center” identified as an implementation recommendation in Feasibility Study.

Identify grant funding and financing opportunities for “Farm to School Resource Center”

Work with Community Partners to develop plans and grant funding for “Food Hub” facility identified as an Implementation Recommendation. Although it is not anticipated this facility will be located on the subject property, SPACE plans to play a role in developing this resource.

Farm Equipment Rental—At this point we do not plan to pursue this Implementation recommendation.

Visit and investigate other Farm-to-School Incubator projects to identify potential for collaboration or funding models for implementing Feasibility Study recommendations.