

Earthly Wilds Proposal Beneath

This Paper →

Earthly Wilds Greenlight

- Jane + Archives

Date: 9/19/25 PB: Planners (Phoebe, Hawina, Zi) in consultation with RET

Intro and Decisions

RET has been hosting many community meetings and discussions about how to make TO a more diverse and equitable community. The team has come out with a few proposals, including the creation of a new BIPOC-centered community on a piece of land TO will transfer to be collectively owned by its members. This proposal was received well at the community meeting in August and on the O&I paper up now.

Many details are yet to be worked out – the site, members, structure, legal agreements – but planners are greenlighting the project as a whole to move forward and continue sorting out details, with the general agreement that TO will follow through with giving land to a new BIPOC-centered community. There will still be a lot of work and process to do, including seeking community input at every step. To help facilitate this work, planners are giving 500 hours from planner contingency to a newly created “Earthly Wilds” labor budget, administered by RET, to support ongoing study and development of the project.

One request from RET was that any future stages of input around Earthly Wilds be non-confidential. Their reasoning being:

- Unlike manager/membership polls, the project and input is not focused on any single co, meaning there is less chance of interpersonal conflict.
- The most agreeable reason for confidential input being fear for safety is not applicable to input for this project.
- It is likely that the reason for wanting confidentiality comes from the fear of being perceived as racist, which is a behavior that upholds white supremacy. Giving non-confidential input could help us work through these fears and build a healthier culture.
- Confidential input has been hurtful to POC in the past, and there is a general desire from RET to minimize confidential input.

Planners agree with these reasons and are inclined to request that input given in future steps for the new BIPOC community process be non-confidential. We see this as a good step to building a more transparent and just culture around giving input. We would like to have conversations with members who feel it's important to be able to give confidential input so we can better understand their reasons. These conversations can of course be confidential. Please reach out now if you have concerns.

Next Steps

Look forward to a paper coming from RET to give a list of choice sites, and any other further developments. We imagine that input process and land use would happen after this initial paper, specifically about the site, and how we want to move forward with the process

Thanks for acting quickly on this. Planners,
and I support the no confidentiality idea
for input related to this project. - Michael
Aileen "Lindsey"
"ARI"

I really appreciate this + am looking forward to
conversations + if I agree, the non-confidentiality
will be beneficial. Kelpre

I think for a proposal this significant to work it
needs to have a broad base of support,
incorporating many voices and ideas. I'm
concerned that by greenlighting it so quickly
we may be taking an approach that doesn't
prioritize building this foundation. What is
it that we want to do as a community here?
And why and how? I want to see us taking
the time and doing the work to discern that.

I want us to have a healthy and open
communication culture around this proposal
and issues related to race more generally.
How can we foster more real ^{and open} communication
and the kind of critical engagement it
takes to do a large communal project
together?

- Edmund "Pam"

I'M A BIT UNCOMFORTABLE "GREENLIGHTING" THIS PROJECT BEFORE WE HAVE MORE INFO ON:

WHAT DOES "GREENLIGHTING" MEAN IN TERMS OF OUR DECISION MAKING PROCESS?

AND

WHAT SPECIFICALLY IS BEING REQUESTED OF TWO DAYS?

WHILE, LIKE MOST OTHERS, I AM BROADLY SUPPORTIVE OF THIS PROJECT, I WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE OF A CONCRETE PROPOSAL BEFORE THE PLANNERS MAKE ANY "BLANK CHECK" DECISIONS. - E - "Pam

The idea of the greenlighting was to say that in general we are supportive of the proposal. Every next step of the process will need to go through its own input and decision-making. This is not a "blank check" of any kind. Having planners

i think ~~stop~~ more process ^{was/} is needed to greenlight this, & 500 hrs seems like alot, that's more than some budgets, ~~was~~ & folks have opportunity for input on budgets. i think some sort of survey befor greenlighting would have been much better. ♡ Carol "Pam

(I haven't read the Earthly Wilds proposal yet. I'm catching up on the O&I and got to this paper before the proposal. 4 Transparency, Pam out! Found the proposal behind commar Pa

What I think we need most at this moment is to create space for real, engaged, respectful conversation, disagreements and all, about Earthly Wilds and related topics. A lot of inclusive collective engagement is needed for good outcomes in a major community undertaking. I'm concerned that we haven't done this yet and aren't on track to. Here are some of my ideas for how I think we can get there:

u
Pam

-For people to push their limits a bit more as far as voicing ideas, questions, thoughts and constructive criticism, even if they fear it could be unpopular or cause upset or pushback. A norm of withholding does not serve friendship or community building, and has a tendency to perpetuate conflict in the end. I'm not saying this always and for everyone – I understand that some will be more vulnerable or at times not have capacity to speak, and sometimes its useful to process your thoughts alone or in a smaller group. But overall I think we can do it and will benefit by being more courageous in our speech, as long as we also try to embrace kindness and care (which I understand doesn't work in all situations either).

u Pam

-For people who may feel attacked when disagreement or criticism of their ideas is voiced to try to take an approach of listening, curiosity, being careful about assigning motives, and looking for what could be of value in the criticism, even if you disagree with most of it. Maybe take time before responding.

-People who are upset, dysregulated and in the midst of trauma need grace and care – though this is not the same as agreeing with or validating all the things they are doing and saying. It is the role of our broader circle to hold people with care (but not indulgence) and to keep grounded and focused.

-I want to recommend the essay "A Critique of Ally Politics" because I think it could help us through some of the problems we're currently encountering (it's easy to find in an internet search and I will put a print copy in my mailbox...). The essay advocates for moving towards frameworks of solidarity, mutual aid, and reciprocity, and away from allyship and charity models. Allyship is an attempt to give over agency to categories of people you're trying to be an ally of. However, the ally still has to pick which voices to amplify from the demographic they want to support, and in doing so they are likely to flatten difference and marginalize other voices. Meanwhile, when we try to give up agency what we also give up is the taking of responsibility - for co-creating mutually respectful, mutually empowering relationships. Allyship creates a sense of self that is overly reliant on external validation and approval (or absence of disapproval). Solidarity and mutual aid are models that put healthy self-interest and self-respect back in the picture in a way that makes responsible mutuality possible.

On confidential input:

I understand frustration with confidential input, in that it doesn't open up space for response and dialogue, and often does the opposite. I also understand why people may not be up for giving public input or making public comments in the current heated communication environment, and I don't think it's good to miss their contributions. Embracing real, kind, open, and caring discussion is a way through this bind. I believe we have the capacity to create and hold this kind of container as a community – and that it's what we must do to succeed. When we do this, confidential input, and the debate around it, becomes less impactful.

u
Pam

11 -SHAZ

- Edmund

Earthy Wilds BIPOC Community Sanctuary

A Working Draft of Our Vision and Commitments

pb RET 8/21/2025

During yesterday's community meeting about Racial Equity, RET asked Twin Oaks to donate some land, enough for the creation of a new FEC community that would be led by and centered around Black, Indigenous, and people of color. A community which we have decided to name "Earthy Wilds". This wouldn't just be another housing option or a side project. It's a space where POC can live and organize without the barriers and challenges many of us have faced here. A place where safety, culture, and autonomy come first. A place where white allies with a proven track record of support and accountability would also be welcomed to become members alongside POC, helping to build a stronger, more inclusive community. All Twin Oakers would still retain access to hike the land, explore the trails and enjoy the forest, even as non-members of this new community. Earthly Wilds Community would also have different policies designed to remove barriers that POC face here at Twin Oaks, things like strict "property codes", "vehicle codes", barriers to families joining, an inflexible labor system, money system, or communication styles that are based on white cultural norms, etc, all of which can make it hard for people to feel fully included or comfortable here.

What follows is not a final blueprint, or a top-down plan. It's a living document, shaped by the values and labor of those who will actually inhabit this vision. We expect this to be debated, revised, expanded, and collectively transformed by the people who are building Earthly Wilds Community, not just dreaming it.

Our Core Values

Earthy Wilds Community stands for collective survival, freedom, equity and liberation.

We oppose:

- Racism
- Fascism
- Sexism
- Ableism
- Capitalism
- The State
- Genocide
- Hierarchical power structures

EARTHY WILDS PROPOSAL 8/21/25

We affirm:

- BIPOC empowerment, autonomy and self-determination
- Queer liberation
- Intersectionality
- Environmental sustainability and deep ecology
- Self-sufficiency through off-grid and land-based living
- Afro-Indigenous land stewardship and permaculture
- Disaster preparedness and long-term resilience
- Skill-sharing and member empowerment
- Egalitarian power dynamics
- Income sharing through community businesses
- Spiritual freedom (no imposed spiritual beliefs or dogma)

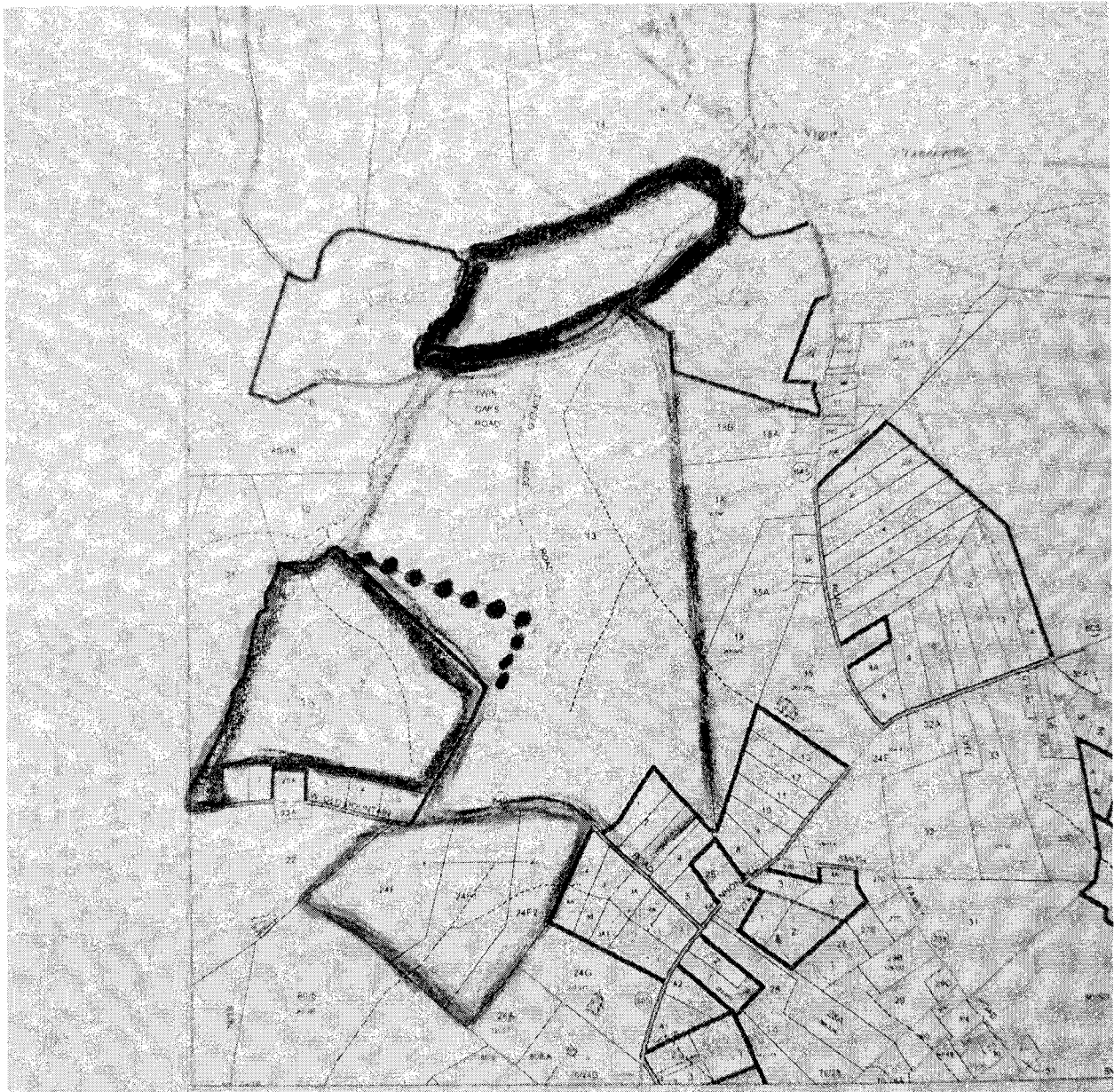
These are not just aspirational slogans. They are the filters through which decisions will be made and priorities set.

The Land We Intend to Build On

We are actively seeking a land donation from Twin Oaks to serve as the foundation for this project. The exact parcel of land has not yet been determined, as we want this choice to reflect both the input of Twin Oaks and the guidance of experts. Our plan is to hold an open consultation process, while also bringing in, if possible, a permaculture design consultant who can help us evaluate the land's natural features, such as soil quality, water access, and ecological resilience, so that the site selected will support long-term sustainability and wise stewardship of resources.

Minimum desired features include:

- 40+ acres (with a mix of forest and field)
- On-site potable water
- Road access
- Some degree of privacy from road visibility and neighbors



Central property ~~_____~~
 "Monacan Land" ~~_____~~
 river land ~~_____~~
 unspeakable land ~~_____~~
 Trout land ●●●●●●●●

84	87	85
89	91	83
74	83	81

MATCHING SHEETS

Governance and Decision-Making

We reject hierarchical power structures, not just as an idea, but in practice. Power will be exercised horizontally and with consent. Being anti-hierarchical is about dismantling rigid, imposed power structures. Prioritizing marginalized voices is about repairing inequity and ensuring true equality of participation. Rather than contradiction, they reinforce each other. Anti-hierarchy creates the space, and centering marginalized voices ensures the space is actually just. Anti-hierarchical systems recognize that oppression doesn't vanish just because you flatten formal structures. People bring in societal baggage. Actively uplifting marginalized perspectives helps prevent old hierarchies (like racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism) from creeping back in informally.

Decisions will primarily be made by those most directly affected by them. All decisions must align with our core values unless those values are formally amended by full consent.

Starting as a small group, we'll begin with a consent-based decision making model like what RET currently uses: any member can make a proposal, proposals pass if no one objects within a defined time frame; objections must come with a friendly amendment to the proposal, in order to have a healthy balance of "oppose" and "propose".

As we grow, we may use direct democracy to elect "temporary delegates", not to command, but to facilitate, manage, or honcho specialized time-bound tasks. Delegates would:

- Be elected directly and narrowly mandated
- Be immediately recallable
- Dissolve back into the collective after their task is done

Since power is rooted at the base, and ultimately returns back to it, this type of democracy should not be confused with "representative" democracy, which is a hierarchical power structure.

Money and Economy

We begin with donations of land, materials, and money, to get started. But long-term, we will fund ourselves through community-owned, anti-capitalist worker-co-op businesses, such as:

- Hosting tours, skill shares, and educational retreats
- Selling produce, art, or crafts online or at markets
- Portable Tiny house construction, for sale or as vacation rentals
- Empowering members to use their pre-existing skillsets to start other worker-owned ventures.

The financial goals are:

- Pay for operating expenses and infrastructure
- Provide a universal basic income / allowance for all members

Members would be allowed to have outside incomes, but they would be expected to donate a portion back to the community, depending on their income level.

Labor Systems, Accountability and Accessibility

We will not impose a rigid labor system from above. Instead, laborers will decide for themselves how to organize their work.

Open questions include:

- Should there be a labor quota? If so, how much?
- Should we mandate some amount of income-earning labor?
- Should we mandate some amount of cleaning labor?
- As an incentive for labor that is especially undesirable (but still necessary) can multiple labor credits be provided for one hour of that undesirable labor?
- How do we handle members who don't or can't meet expectations?
- How can we focus on "labor accessibility" rather than just "labor accountability"?
- How do we build accessibility for disabled or neurodivergent members?
- How do we create training programs to "Skill-up" and empower members to try new types of labor?

These questions are intentionally not being answered here. What we do know is this: those who labor should lead. Labor systems will be shaped by the laborers themselves. This is about trust, not control. That is why these questions will not be answered in this document. These questions will be answered by the people who would be most directly affected by them.

FAQ:

- What does the name "Earthly Wilds" mean?
 - The word "**Earthly**" affirms practices like permaculture, companion planting, ethical animal husbandry, agroforestry, these methods which align with Indigenous and African diasporic traditions, while supporting soil health and biodiversity. "Earthly" also keeps the vision grounded in the reality of this planet, and our cultural histories on earth. It is about healing generational trauma, rebuilding culture, and creating just, sustainable futures right here, not somewhere abstract or idealized. It signals that this is not just some "happy little bubble utopia" where people can just stick their heads in the sand ignoring all the suffering happening in the "mainstream" world, but rather a community rooted in the struggles and beauty of the real world. The word "Earthly" also roots the vision in the material, living systems of the planet, the soil, the sun, the water, and the ecosystems that sustain life. It implies a worldview where Humans are not separate from nature, but participants in its cycles. Where the land is not a resource to be extracted, but a relative to be honored. Where "sustainability" isn't a greenwashed marketing trend, it's ancestral knowledge, lived practice, and a necessity for our future survival on this planet.
 - Historically, the "**Wilds**" were seen by colonial and imperial powers as dangerous, uncivilized, untamed places to be feared, conquered, "civilized," or erased. But for Black, Indigenous, and other oppressed peoples, "The Wilds" have often been a refuge, a site of freedom. Maroons and fugitives fled into forests, swamps, and mountains to escape slavery and live freely in community. Indigenous peoples have preserved language, ceremony, and culture by retreating from colonized zones into ancestral "wild" lands. The wild is where people escaped surveillance, domination, and forced assimilation. The word "Wild" speaks to freedom from control and domination, especially from white supremacy, capitalism, patriarchy, and colonial systems. It implies reclaiming freedom, space, and land outside of imposed systems. "Wild" also speaks to liberation of the self, a shedding of imposed identities, binaries, expectations, and restrictions. It is a space to live in our bodies freely, especially for queer, trans, and gender-expansive POC reclaiming space outside of normative oppressive structures. In this context, "wild" isn't chaotic, it's sovereign and indomitable.

- Isn't it a contradiction to claim to be “opposed to hierarchy” while also being “BIPOC lead”?
 - *Hierarchy* = rigid, formalized, top-down authority (e.g. one group commands and another must obey)
 - *Centering marginalized voices* = a corrective structure, not a command structure. It's about redressing historic imbalance, not creating a permanent caste system.
 - So, being BIPOC-led doesn't mean BIPOC people have coercive authority over others; it means the community recognizes that liberation requires centering those historically silenced.
 - When it comes to matters of race or colonialism, BIPOC voices are given epistemic authority, similar to how you'd defer to a mechanic about fixing a car. It's not hierarchy, it's respect for knowledge rooted in experience.

- Are you giving up on racial equity within Twin Oaks?
 - Supporting Earthly Wilds Community is not the same as abandoning Twin Oaks racial equity. Twin Oaks can and should continue its own work of culture change, accountability, and policy reform. Earthly Wilds addresses a different but related need, creating a BIPOC-led space on this land where safety, autonomy, and self-determination are possible. These efforts work on different scales but complement each other.
 - Not every BIPOC person will want to focus on reforming a majority-white community from the inside. Some will, and some will need a sanctuary of their own. Supporting Earthly Wilds alongside Twin Oaks' internal work is not abandonment, it is taking racial equity seriously by allowing multiple approaches to exist and reinforce each other.

- Will this community accept BIPOC families with children?
 - Yes. In contrast to Twin Oaks, Earthly Wilds will explicitly be open to BIPOC families with children to join. We believe that those BIPOC children should also have access to Twin Oaks schools (PDU, Unicorns, Forest school, etc) for education and social opportunities. This would also benefit Twin Oaks white children too. In order for them to not grow up to become racist, Twin Oaks children need to actually be exposed to kids of diverse racial and cultural backgrounds to be friends with. This would be a mutually beneficial relationship for both communities.

- “Why make it BIPOC-centered? Isn’t that reverse racism?”
 - No. It’s not exclusion, it’s healing. BIPOC have spent lifetimes navigating white-dominant spaces. We deserve one space where we don’t have to explain ourselves before being believed, or shrink ourselves to fit.

- “Won’t this divide Twin Oaks?”
 - It might reveal division that’s already here, but that’s not the same as causing it. Earthly Wilds offers a new option, not an ultimatum. And if your values align, then nothing stops us from being in mutual solidarity.

- “Does this mean you’re leaving Twin Oaks?”
 - Some might, some won’t. Our goal is not to poach Twin Oaks of its members. Dual membership is an option. But even if we live next door, we’re not disappearing. We’re growing something new. If that feels like abandonment, ask yourself why it feels like betrayal to no longer be the center.

- “How is this not just a power grab?”
 - We’re not seeking to control Twin Oaks. We’re creating our own decision-making structures on our own land that serve those who have been marginalized.

- “Aren’t you just doing what Twin Oaks already does?”
 - No. This is not a copy. Earthly Wilds is explicitly BIPOC-centered and rooted in cultural reclamation. It doesn’t shy away from politics; it organizes around them.

- “You’ll be draining Twin Oaks’ resources.”
 - We’re not taking, we’re creating. We’re bringing new people, new skills, and new energy. Any support Twin Oaks offers will be returned in the form of resilience, reputation, and alliance.

- “What if it fails?”
 - Then we’ll learn, adapt, and try again. Failure is part of building anything worthwhile. But the real failure would be doing nothing while BIPOC members keep cycling in and out of Twin Oaks, exhausted, unseen, and disillusioned by the very idea of “communes”. If this new community does completely dissolve, then Twin Oaks can simply reabsorb the land again.

Thank you for reading all of this. Earthly Wilds is an invitation to grow something alongside you: a BIPOC-centered sanctuary rooted in survival, liberation, and care for the land. We hope you’ll see this as a seed worth tending together, in mutual support and solidarity.

-RET

To be clear, for this project we are only asking for that which Twin Oaks has in abundance: Land. We are not asking Twin Oaks for money or labor, which are scarce resources here. We'll be responsible for sourcing donations and grants.

- Miles

This is awesome! - Arlo

I support this idea! - Rowan "Anna" Fox

Congratulations on this powerful idea and proposal. I completely support the donation of a large piece of Twin Oaks land to this project. Your proposed system of governance and decision-making is fascinating and exciting to me - I'm eager to see it in practice. While I think your values are awesome, I worry a little bit about the risks - for members, the community and the FEC - of saying that you are opposed to "the State", because I think that's the kind of thing a racist propaganda machine - like Fox News - could mispresent and inspire uninformed and mentally unwell individuals to

EARLIER COMMENTS ON EW PROPOSAL

carry out ^{additional} acts of violence or suppression based on. Although activists will get your meaning, some dangerous people may not. Either way, I support y'all and this proposal and look forward to helping - as a FEC delegate - in any way I can. -Michael

I'd love to give \$2nd for this type of project! I'm curious what other supports may be needed for folks transitioning from T.O. to building this entity w/out falling too far into the T.O. #/to bar hole since while folks are still T.O. members, they are still bound by property code + vehicle rules. Are there non-T.O. folks involved yet? Also, I can help w/ grant searching + writing if that's helpful. -B.

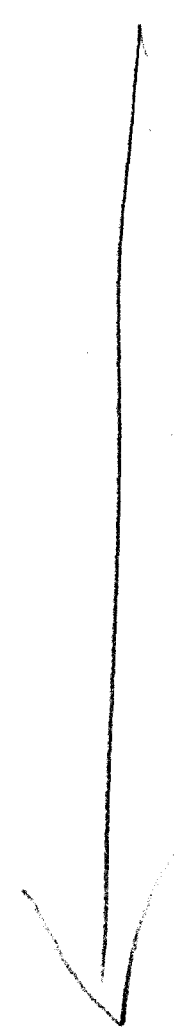
I support the idea of helping a Black community get started. My preference is to use the money that was used to start the bar and support the seed money put up and encourage people to consider themselves. A group also started considering helping. Accomplish to succeed at the end of it itself. Reported to succeed at the end of it. be in danger. I'm having a Yangtze River + ...

good morning
I've been thinking about this for a while
- Pam

Thank you for developing this proposal. I support it!

I support the creation of a new community center
next to Twin Oaks - Aer

Full support. - Dave



I like the idea of new communities starting on land that Twin Oaks currently owns - I think there's room for a few actually. What we have in abundance is forested land. Our pasture land is much more limited however. Early in my membership we produced all the dairy products and meat we needed from these pastures. I don't want Twin Oaks to give up that capacity. So if fields are wanted I think they need to be cleared / created. The Clearcut is a good candidate for this, and maybe parts of Monacan land that were more badly burned in the fire. If we are able to get the whole Clearcut that opens up much more possibility in terms of ag land. Monacan Land is divided into 3 sections in the county plat map, each about 20 acres. There could be room for a community on each one, especially if they could be supported by ag land in the Clearcut. We could develop a plan for how to solicit and evaluate community project proposals. ~~MM~~ I think careful, critical evaluation and decision-making is really important here, but then autonomy for the new community once it's decided and rolling. A land trust system of some kind could be used to handle community projects that fold or fail.

My biggest question about the current proposal is around funding to build infrastructure. The transition from being Twin Oakers to being an autonomous community ~~and~~ seems like it could be tricky to navigate, especially if resources and funds are scarce. - Edmund

The proposed acreage doesn't include any... Just to clarify in response to... - John