



## Farmland Restoration & Animals at Stepping Stones August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021

We would like to let the Temple ZBA, Planning and Select Boards know of recent developments that are happening at Stepping Stones which support the Agritourism Permitting with the Special Exception Application.

On August 5<sup>th</sup>, in addition to passing out the completed Application with accompanying paperwork in a bound book, I briefly spoke to Agritourism exemption when I made a presentation to the ZBA Board Members. As promised, I would like to highlight the roll out of the return of farm animals to Stepping Stones Farm & Event Center.

First, today I signed a Purchase & Sale Agreement with a buyer for my current residence at 305 Webster Highway in Temple. I will be moving back to live permanently at the farm in the Cottage at 375 Webster Highway. I am excited to live on the property to not only watch over the guests but to expand the farm with more animals. I expect to begin moving into the Cottage in early September to enjoy the orchard of 8 trees too.

Since this spring, we have had a family of five goats, a flock of 15 chickens, 2 miniature horses and 2 miniature donkeys. They have been the highlight of our guests' experience. Evaluations and feedback strongly indicate that they would like to have more animals at the farm.

To that end, we have finally finished repairing and repainting the Stables at the farm. We will soon have 5 or 6 horses who live permanently at the farm.

In September, I will write a grant to the US Dept. of Agriculture and the NH branch of the Natural Conservation Resource Services with the help of Bill Fosher. He is the Lead Conservation Planner with the NH Association of Conservation Districts. He specializes in pasture restoration and management. This request to the NCRS will be to ask for a cost sharing partnership to remove the Invasives that currently are chocking the back 10 acres of my farm. It is our intent to remove them with heavy machinery, reseed and rebuild the pasture land. We will also seek help to purchase electric fencing. We should know if we got the federal funding by spring of 2022.



19 Putnam Road | Temple, NH | 603.321.5255

w: <https://www.steppingstoneseventcenter.com/> e: [boo@steppingstoneseventcenter.com](mailto:boo@steppingstoneseventcenter.com)

If we do receive this funding, our intention is to let the field grow during the spring, summer and fall of 2022. We will keep the field mowed with a bush hog and build the electric fence with a walking path all around it for our guests. We will also leave some of the natural growth like milk weed, golden rod and some brush to support the wild birds and bees. Tommy Krapf of Temple and John Deline of Lyndeboro will be helping us with this portion of the farm.

This winter (2022) I will be working with Bradford Volz of Dragonfly Farm in Wilton, NH to learn how to grow mushrooms in the downstairs of the barn. Because of fire regulations, we can no longer have horses stabled there, thus the renovations of the outside barn we are now calling The Stables. We will share these mushrooms with our guests and some of the caterers who are our partners.

In March of 2022, we plan to establish some honey bees at the farm to not only help with the wild population of bees but to aid in the re-establishment of healthy grasses, our gardens and the little orchard. Again, we will not sell the honey but rather give it as a welcome gift to our guests and for their enjoyment. Suzanne Brouillette of Solvenian Beekeeping in Harrisville, NH will be working with us to establish our hive and possibly to create a Solvenian Bee House.

In April of 2022, we plan to re-introduce a small flock of sheep in the front two paddocks by the Lodge. They will be for the production of meet as well as the enjoyment of our guests. Like a CSA for vegetables, we will have a CSA for friends and family members who wish to purchase a portion of a lamb for their own consumption. We will not sell this meat from any kind of store. Tommy Krapf will be helping with the sheep.

In the Spring of 2023, we hope to have the fields ready and fenced to begin raising a small herd of grass and corn-fed beef cattle. John Deline will be helping with the steers.

We will continue to improve the flower and herb gardens at the farm throughout this entire process.

Our guests will love the addition of more animals and bees, while we also maintain some natural habitat for the wild song birds, butterflies and small mammals that abound on our farm.

Respectfully submitted, Boo Martin



19 Putnam Road | Temple, NH | 603.321.5255

w: <https://www.steppingstoneseventcenter.com/> e: [boo@steppingstoneseventcenter.com](mailto:boo@steppingstoneseventcenter.com)