

Living Energy Farm  
April 2011 Newsletter

Openhouse and Workshop

Our openhouse and oxen workshop went great! Luke Conner brought his well trained team, Calvin and Hobbes, and amazed everyone with their skills. Even though Calvin and Hobbes look huge, they are still not full grown, and will put on another 1000 pounds before reaching maturity. They are accustomed to the cosmopolitan oxen life, pulling wagons at fairs and doing an occasional movie shoot. But they did well at farming, pulling a sled, disk and plow throughout their visit at LEF. We had many locals come by and visit on Friday. On Saturday, we had about a dozen folks attend our oxen workshop and learn about training and driving oxen.



LEF's own oxen, Lojki and Fiddle, were overwhelmed with curiosity when they



met Calvin and Hobbes, and refused to be separated from them. Lojki and Fiddle had a good day. They are accustomed to having numerous handlers, and did well at pulling smaller loads. It will take them another couple of years to be able to pull full-sized farm implements. Luckily, we have just received a donation of numerous pieces of horse-drawn equipment (we had collected a few ourselves). We may put Lojki and Fiddle to use soon pulling lighter implements and trailers.

## What We Have Been Up To

April was a fruitful month at the Living Energy Farm. We have spent many hours tilling and working in fertility enhancements on our new seeds fields. We have been planting and setting out plants. We are about half way to finished planting.

Our fruit trees are growing well. The deer have been nibbling on them a bit, but not enough to cause serious concern just yet. The land at LEF is blessed with acres of wild persimmon saplings. We have been grafting dozens of cultivated Asian and American persimmons onto these wild saplings. Because the saplings are already well rooted, they will not have to be watered through the first summer, and the trees grafted onto them will grow very quickly.

We have siding on our barn, and we are setting up shelves and storing tools and materials there. We have started work on a small cook shed that will be near the barn. We have begun planning our first residence. We have sited and gotten a permit for our solar well, the funds for which have already been donated to us. We will be drilling it soon.

The circle of people interested in our project grows wider every day. We have been signing up a couple of people a day on our email lists. We have one full time intern named Ben who will be working at least through the summer. We have several more interns who will be showing up soon and helping us through this summer.

We have been bringing in donated material and farm supplies. These building supplies will be especially useful for outbuildings on the farm. We will have to purchase some material for our first house starting this summer.

Some LEF folks will be attending a woodgas conference in early June to improve our skills in that area. We think woodgas is going to be an important transitional fuel for us in the years to come.

We are still looking for donations of garden tools, and building supplies, and of course, funds. We can generally use even basic stuff, like buckets, tarps, rusty tools we can recondition (saws, chisels, hammers, anything), and any kind basic farm equipment. We can often pick things up in the central Virginia area. For more information regarding our workshops, or to join our mailing list, see our website at [livingenergyfarm.org](http://livingenergyfarm.org), contact Living Energy Farm at [livingenergyfarm@gmail.com](mailto:livingenergyfarm@gmail.com) or 434 409 6006.