Elbert County Agricultural Alliance's Vision for the Homestead Education Center

Enriching our community through agricultural experiences through:

Support
Collaboration and mutual support amongst our members and our community

Education
Caring for the land – teaching regenerative agriculture and animal management
Animal Husbandry – for food, fiber and family activities
Growing food – for personal consumption and/or profit
Skills that support farming, ranching and building

Community
Events designed to build community through education, the arts and family activities with a focus on our agricultural heritage.

The **Elbert County Agricultural Alliance** (ECAA) is a 501(c)(3) organization that is dedicated to supporting agricultural business and the Elbert County community through education and mutual support. We are collaborating with a number of organizations to create a wide range of experiential programs that will meet the needs of groups and individuals of all age groups.

The Homestead Education Center is a concept that was created to fulfill these needs. It will take time and require dedication and participation from the ECAA, EPR, the community and the County. Our first step has been learning about short-term and long-term interest of community members. Before embarking on this project we have spent a fair amount of time talking to members of the community to learn what is most important to them as we prioritize our efforts. This is a long-term project and will likely take up to 10 years to reach full potential. That said, each phase will be operational as a stand-alone.

Presently and based on community feedback, we expect to begin with a greenhouse, classrooms, a variety of outside demonstration gardens, a child/family activity area and an open-air education area. For the next phase, we envision developing the venue further for small community events and family activities. There will be a livestock/animal area for teaching purposes. At this time, it is not expected that animals would reside on the property.

Your values and those of other community members will influence our plans. We would greatly appreciate learning your thoughts through the survey below.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BRS89LJ

This Homestead Education Center will be built in collaboration with, and on the property owned by Elizabeth Park and Recreation District at 34560 Cimarron Trail in Elizabeth (north of Walmart). The project is not expected to take away funding from EPR's other upcoming projects for the community.

Issues that must be taken into consideration in the planning of this project:

- On the south side of the property, is a gulch within a flood plain. Care must be taken not to increase flooding risk to adjacent properties and hopefully to diminish that risk through site improvement.

- This same gulch has long been a riding trail. This must be maintained and access from Cimarron Trail should be improved.
- The parking area will need to be expanded and improved, as will Cimarron Trail, to safely accommodate increased traffic.
- The Cimarron neighborhood already feels strongly that there should be a traffic light at the intersection of Hwy 86, Cimarron Trail to the north and Legacy Circle to the south. Residents of Cimarron consider this intersection to be unsafe and have significant concerns that increased traffic would result in an increased number of accidents.
- The property will require water, power and a septic system.

To ensure that site improvement planning is done correctly in all aspects, a professional consulting firm will be employed for site and facility feasibility studies. This will be funded by a GOCO Planning Grant if awarded.

Why We Want Your Involvement

The Homestead Education Center will be a community resource, providing education and other opportunities. Its success will depend upon cooperation and collaboration amongst individuals, businesses, non-profits and service organizations. We hope that you will consider supporting this project for the good of the Elbert County citizens who want the opportunity to learn what it takes to live a rural lifestyle, raising animals and growing food using principles of conservation, efficiency and regenerative practices.

If you have an interest in joining the Elbert County Agricultural Alliance in helping us make the Homestead Education Center a reality, please call or email Diane Cribley.
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