



## **Request for Applications**

### **Oak Spring Garden Foundation Fellowship**

to

### **Implement a Bio-Cultural Conservation Farm at the Oak Spring Garden Foundation**

Posted on: November 8, 2018

Responses Due: December 2, 2018

Expected Start: Winter 2019

Project End Date: Three years from start of  
contract

### **PLEASE SUBMIT COMPLETED APPLICATIONS BEFORE DECEMBER 1, 2018**

**About Us:** The mission of the Oak Spring Garden Foundation (OSGF) is to perpetuate and share the gift of Rachel (“Bunny”) Lambert Mellon, including her residence, garden, estate and the Oak Spring Garden Library, to serve the public interest. OSGF is dedicated to inspiring and facilitating scholarship and public dialogue on the history and future of plants, including the culture of gardens and landscapes and the importance of plants for human well-being. Additional information about OSGF is available online at [www.osgf.org](http://www.osgf.org).

**Introduction & Background:** OSGF is seeking applications from individuals wishing to help envisage and implement the creation of a “bio-cultural conservation farm” on up to three acres of the Rokeby Property of the Oak Spring Garden Foundation. The Rokeby Property is located in rural Upperville, west of Middleburg, Virginia. The available parcel includes a ca. ¾-acre walled garden, and additional open land that could be fenced if needed. Both the walled garden and the open land have good soil health, having been managed for decades for floriculture and agriculture on the estate of Rachel “Bunny” Lambert Mellon. Associated with the garden is an extensive series of unheated greenhouses that could be used in conjunction with the farm. Basic farm equipment is also available. See attached for more information and pictures of the site, equipment, and facilities available. Tours of the property can be arranged for interested applicants. Transitional accommodation of up to four months is available at a nominal rent if the successful applicant wishes to live on site close to the farm.

**Project Overview:** The purpose of this request for applications is to select an Oak Spring Garden Fellow who is expert in: i) growing a wide range of fruits and vegetables; ii) saving seed and propagating heirloom and heritage varieties of a wide range of plant species; and, iii) who can take the lead on the planning, management, and implementation of an Appalachian-focused “bio-cultural

conservation farm” at OSGF. For the purposes of this contract, a “bio-cultural conservation farm” is a farm that stewards the cultivation of heirloom and heritage vegetables and fruits, and conserves them as living plants or as seed, in order to illustrate, save and share the biological diversity of the edible plants that underpin our food system. We envisage that this farm will grow varieties of produce from many sources, not all of it from Appalachia. However, we intend that there will be a special focus on Appalachian heirloom and heritage varieties. OSGF’s Rokeby parcel in Upperville, Virginia is positioned at the north-eastern fringe of the upper/central region of Appalachia, which has been recognized as having the highest documented levels of agro-biodiversity in the U.S., Canada, and northern Mexico.<sup>1</sup> It is this Appalachian agro-biodiversity that will be the focus of the “bio-cultural conservation farm.”

The successful applicant will plan, implement and manage the bio-cultural conservation farm to grow and share a selection of produce that will include Appalachian heirloom and heritage varieties, including varieties of historical significance in northern Virginia. The harvest from the garden will be used primarily to support the programs of the Oak Spring Garden Foundation, which will include culinary uses for visitors and conferences. This will require the Garden Manager to communicate with and work closely with OSGF kitchen staff in considering their demands for the planning of the planting, harvesting, and processing of the herbs, fruits, and vegetables.

The medium term plan is that the bio-cultural conservation farm will be the centerpiece of a diverse portfolio of activities (e.g., artists and scholars in residence, visitors using the Oak Spring Garden Library, garden and farm trainees, attendees at workshops and other meetings on the nearby Oak Spring property) on Rokeby that will celebrate the culture and biological diversity of the Oak Spring area, and of Appalachia more broadly. Therefore the successful applicant will also have an outward-looking role and collaborative approach to the visioning and long-term use of the parcel. This will require active and creative participation in outreach to inspire, educate, and engage communities in Virginia, the Appalachian region, and beyond.

**Deliverables:** Payment will be provided monthly or quarterly as best suited for the individual. An annual report at the end of each year will be required that will summarize the year’s activities, progress, and future plans. The report will include, at a minimum:

- a list of all the varieties of different plant species that are under cultivation, including those of heirloom and heritage importance;
- a list of all produce harvested, all seeds saved, and all produce provided to Oak Spring and others, including the amounts (weight, bushels, or other measure);
- a summary of all public-facing activities conducted on the farm, including tours;
- lessons learned and next steps.

The precise and specific deliverables will be negotiated with the successful applicant, but following minimum activities are required:

- Year 1. Establish the garden with a broad range of range of produce, including Appalachian heirloom and heritage varieties of a wide range of plant species;
- Year 1. Begin delivery of a wide range of produce for use to the Oak Spring kitchen with the excess supplied to suitable area food banks.

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<sup>1</sup> Veteto et al. (2011). “Place Based Foods of Appalachia: From Rarity to Community Restoration and Market Recovery.” Available at <http://www.albc-usa.org/RAFT/resources.html>.

- Year 1. Provision of occasional tours, liaison with OS staff and planning for Years 2 and 3.
- Year 2. Further expand the range of heirloom and heritage varieties produced and refine production to meet the needs of the Oak Spring kitchen and of suitable area food banks.
- Year 2. Build connections to other Oak Spring programs beyond the kitchen, including artists in residence, and other visitors. Establish the farm as the centerpiece of the increasingly diverse portfolio of activities on Rokeby.
- Year 2. Work closely with OS staff, including OS interns, and to build and cultivate connections to Fauquier County Schools for educational purposes.
- Year 3. Further expand the range of produce, including heirloom and heritage varieties, produced and continue to refine production to meet the needs of the Oak Spring kitchen and of suitable area food banks.
- Year 3. Continue to build connections to other Oak Spring programs beyond the kitchen, including artists in residence, and other visitors.
- Year 3. Build collaborative programs of outreach to Fauquier County Schools for educational purposes and develop capacity for increased provision of tour to educators, and other trainers and activities for groups that may work on the espalier, greenhouses, or other features of the farm.
- Year 3. Produce a Final Report that summarizes activities, progress, and future plans, and that compiles and integrates the information provide in previous reports over the three-year period.

**Period of Performance:** The project will commence upon selection of the finalist, with the goal of launching in Winter 2019. OSGF is committed to providing three-years of funding assuming steady progress on the overriding objectives. The following outlines an approximate schedule for kickoff:

- No sooner than January 1, 2019: Signed agreements and initial payment for the award
- Winter 2019: Engagement with OSGF, external advisors, and potential partners for planning plantings, programming/public engagement.
- Spring 2019: Implementation of Year 1 activities.

**Selection Process and Criteria for Selection:** The successful applicant will be selected by an external panel of assessors, working with the staff of the Oak Spring Garden Foundation. Applicants who are short-listed will be required to attend for interview, for which travel expenses will be reimbursed. The Selection Criteria will include the following:

- Experience managing a vegetable and fruit garden under sustainable principles from planning and planting, through harvesting and processing.
- Experience and strong commitment to the conservation of heirloom and heritage seed-stocks, including seed saving, testing and cultivating heirloom and heritage varieties of produce, vegetables, and/or fruit trees.
- A strong interest in the cultural connections between plants and the people who cultivate them – and the many stories that highlight the broader cultural connections between plants and people.
- A team player, interested and able to work collaboratively with partners, contractors, OSGF, and others in the visioning and implementation process.
- Ability to work closely and collaboratively with the Oak Spring land management team managing the broader Rokeby landscape.

**Proposal Requirements:** Please send a brief proposal (no more than four pages in length, not including any resumes/c.v.'s for the proposed work) to [programs@osgf.org](mailto:programs@osgf.org) before the deadline. Letters of support from partners or affiliations that would benefit the proposed activities are accepted, but not required. The proposal should include:

- An introductory letter
- A narrative explaining your interest, relevant experience, and fit for the project;
- A description of the specifics of how you would approach the project, the opportunities as you see them and the challenges likely to be encountered, determining phases and a timeline as you deem appropriate;
- A detailed three-year budget that relates to the commitments made in the narrative and that is based on the information below.
- The names of three referees who can speak to the applicant's potential for professional growth during the fellowship and their ability to deliver the desired results. References will only be contacted for applicants who are short-listed.

**Budget and Staffing:** All reasonable proposals will be considered. The budget should be itemized to include the following with appropriate accompanying explanatory narratives: i) the salary of the successful applicant (set at \$45,000 p.a. with two 2.5% annual increments); ii) appropriate allowances for medical and other insurance; iii) the salaries of two nine month (March through November) interns to work on the farm (set at \$16 an hour); iv) a list of the equipment needed with estimated costs; v) cost of seed, tree stock and other necessary supplies; vi) itemized other running costs (e.g., travel, professional development opportunities). The submitted program and the submitted budget will both be regarded as indicative, rather than final. The final program and budget will be worked out in close consultation with Oak Spring staff with careful consideration of the available facilities.

OSGF is able to provide temporary transitional accommodation of up to four months is available at a nominal rent of \$500 per month (including utilities) for the successful applicant. OSGF will also provide accommodation at no cost for the two nine month (March through November) interns.

Please direct any questions and final applications to:

Marguerite Harden

Program Officer

[programs@osgf.org](mailto:programs@osgf.org)

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## **Attachment 1: Bio-Cultural Conservation Farm Site, Facilities, and Equipment**

The site that will be overseen by the Garden Manager includes the following:

- A ca.  $\frac{3}{4}$ -acre walled garden, and additional unfenced (>3 acres) — both with good soil health.
- Substantial cold frames.
- Substantial greenhouse space. The greenhouses were constructed in 1939 and are currently unheated. It will be cost prohibitive to renovate and heat these greenhouses but they could be used creatively in many ways in conjunction with the garden and cold frames.
- Significant indoor storage space for equipment and materials.
- A large potting shed.
- Office space.

For additional information please see the attached photographs.

Applicants interested in touring the site may contact [programs@osgf.org](mailto:programs@osgf.org) to schedule an appointment prior to submitting proposals.

### Image 1: All 700-acres at the Oak Spring Garden Foundation

The property at Oak Spring are broken into three tracts of land. The farm site is located on the Rokeby tract – circled in red in the image below. The walled garden, greenhouses, and grounds are just south of a formerly used airstrip.



### Image 2 and 3: Aerial photographs of the farm site

GPS coordinates: 38.969477, -77.87169



Source: Google Earth



Image 3 and 4: The Walled Garden



Image 5: Unfenced land, formerly irrigated and farmed. Cold frames in the background.  
Image 6: Additional beds and slat house just west of the greenhouses



Images 7 and 8: Historic Greenhouses



**Image 9: Potting shed attached to greenhouses**

