

## **Bullock Permaculture Homestead Intern Program Detailed Description**

### Overview

One of the ethical underpinnings of Permaculture is “sharing the surplus.” Thinking about this ethic, our intern program was born in 1993. We wanted to be able to share the knowledge, experience, and skills that we have accrued over the years so that others could benefit. Essentially, we feel that this internship program is one of the best ways we can help encourage the expanding Permaculture movement.

Since we have started accepting interns we have realized benefits that we had not foreseen when the program was conceived (as is the case with most Permaculture systems). We have been able to improve our site remarkably and have been able to connect with some amazing people. With the same spirit in which our intern program was born, we now seek to make it better for both interns and us. Below is a description for those who are interested in interning here.

### What makes one a good intern?

We encourage people that are hard working, self-motivated, responsible, enthusiastic, and capable of living and sharing with others to apply. Maturity and cleanliness are both traits that will lead to a satisfying community living experience while here. Another important trait we look for in our interns is the ability to be self-directed. We are more than happy to give direction and field questions, but we do not have time for handholding. Also, we ask that people have some form of gardening experience before they get here and other skills are a plus. This could be a WWOOF position or simply working in your home garden.

There are several other traits we look for in our potential interns. We want people who are fully present and prepared for an intensive experience. The nature of the work we do here requires folks who will be present and willing to put this experience at the top of their priority list. Those who are constantly drawn away from the homestead for parties, visits to friends, the lure of the city, shows, etc. will not get as much out of this experience as those who are able to focus their energy here, thus impacting the intern community as a whole..

We also look for high-energy people. The folks that tend to get the most out of this experience are those who have the energy to keep up with our pace here (which is pretty fast). If your energy level isn't very high whether due to physical illness/limitations or lifestyle choice, there may be experiences better suited to you elsewhere. Note, however, that this does not refer to physical strength or size; we'll take you whether you're a hulking beast or a small wonder, just so long as you're energetic and ready to get things done.

Finally, we seek interns who are physically, mentally, and emotionally fit. If you do not feel well in any of these senses the reverberations will be felt throughout the intern community. Therefore, if you are going through major life changes/challenges this

intensive experience may not be appropriate for you at this point in your life. That call is up to you.

We aim to have eight to ten interns at a time, although sometimes this number is higher or lower.

### Prerequisites

We ask that all of our interns have some form of gardening experience. We also ask that each intern read Introduction to Permaculture by Bill Mollison before coming. You can find used copies online or order a new one from the Permaculture Activist.

### What kinds of things will I learn?

Every year is different. Depending on which projects we are tackling an intern could gain hands-on experience in numerous areas including: organic gardening, grafting, pruning, electrical, plumbing, irrigation, metalworking, carpentry, nursery management, pond construction, mushroom propagation, ferrocement construction, canning & food preservation, cooking, working with small animals, plant propagation, bee keeping, pedal-powered machines, natural building, mechanical, and more. Our interns also have the opportunity to sell our nursery stock at the local farmer's market.

Each summer we also teach a three-week Permaculture design course (PDC) here on the land. This is a great opportunity for interns to gain a greater understanding of how all the systems with which they have been working fit together. All of our interns receive this course for free in exchange for helping out behind the scenes (cooking, leading work projects, helping prep hands on projects). The course usually takes place the last two weeks of July and the first week of August.

### Internship Core Dates

On a temperate homestead, spring is the busiest season. Therefore, we need to make sure our interns arrive here early enough so we do not get behind. There are also tasks that need to be done before winter sets in.

For this reason we ask our interns to be here for our entire set of "core dates." Our core dates here on the farm are Apr. 1 – Sep. 15. We will give preference to people who can stay until Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup> to help us winterize our nursery stock. People are welcome and encouraged to come earlier or stay later.

### Schedule

Here on the farm our schedule varies. Before the PDC interns should expect four full days of work here on the farm and three unscheduled days. These unscheduled days may be spent on individual projects or interests, relaxing, hiking, swimming or seeking employment elsewhere. The three unscheduled days should fall on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday are coordinated amongst the interns each month so the farm is never without someone to keep an eye on things.

We understand that the rest of the world does not necessarily work on our schedule. We also understand that emergencies pop up now and then. Therefore, we appreciate that it may become necessary to be gone on a workday from time to time. However, we also ask that interns make up missed days on their unscheduled days and limit missed days to five or less before the design course (since our spring season is so busy).

Each week there will be two meetings. The first is a business meeting on Friday morning. At this meeting everyone here meets with the interns to plan out our workweek, pass along information, announce comings and goings, etc.. On Monday evenings after dinner the intern community does a “check-in” meeting where everyone has the opportunity to express anything they want to share with the group.

Workdays here on the farm are structured in such a way that we can accomplish tasks that require the entire group, but still leave time to pursue individual projects. Therefore, we typically spend mornings working on large group projects with afternoons left for individual projects. However, morning projects often run over into the afternoon. We try to be done with breakfast and ready to work each morning by 8:30am when we meet briefly to organize and decide who will be working on what.

### Money

In order to support the intern program we have created a “Land Fund.” Each intern is asked to contribute \$150/month to the land fund. This money is then spent to:

- Purchase materials for projects (*e.g.* solar panels, fasteners, fertilizer, spray rigs)
- Pay a stipend to the intern coordinator
- \$20/person/month is returned to the intern group to purchase bulk food
- Group tools
- Intern phone line and Internet connection
- Gas, propane, etc

In order to reserve your spot as an intern we will ask for your first two month’s land fund payment (\$300) up front.

Also, if possible, we recommend that you come with a little money squirreled away. Late spring is the leanest time in the garden here, so this is when outside food costs will be highest. By late summer, the “intern food kitty” is usually overflowing from visitor contributions and many of our food needs are being met by the garden. Having a little extra money can take away a lot of stress during the lean time of year.

Most interns work at least one of their unscheduled days each week to pay land fund and save some money. Wages on the island range between \$12-20/hour depending on skill level. Most of our interns find that paying the land fund contribution is easily done working two days/month. Sam Bullock has a landscaping company and can employ a limited number of people on their unscheduled days.

We do ask that interns remain here on the farm (not working offsite or taking vacations) during the entire three week design course and the week before, so plan accordingly when you arrive and start seeking summer employment.

Finally, we suggest making a rough budget for yourself before you come here. Working two days a month at standard Orcas wages (16 hours x \$12 = \$192 per month) should provide enough money to pay land fund and extra food costs. If you have a lot of extra expenses (student loans, credit card debt, cell phone bill, car payments) you should think about how practical it is to meet your financial obligations here without burning out.

### Community

There are three Bullock family units living here on the farm. The interns comprise a fourth community. During the cold parts of the year interns share an indoor kitchen space in one of our greenhouses. When the weather is nice we have a spacious outdoor kitchen. Household tasks such as cooking, dishes, cleaning, preparing shower fires (if there is no sun), recycling/dump runs, etc. are all part of living here and all are expected to share these responsibilities. There are also rotating monthly chores to allow interns to experience and take ownership over the many areas of daily life here that need attention.

The homestead has become a place of interest for many with visitors dropping in throughout our work week. We attempt to limit the number but intern program applicants should be aware that they will be constantly sharing their living space with interesting and sometimes challenging visitors throughout the season. This networking opportunity is one of the many benefits of living at the homestead.

Each Sunday at 1:00 pm we also host a potluck that is open to the entire Orcas community.

### Accommodations & Amenities

Most of our intern lodging consists of tent platforms that can have tarps strung over them. Lodging is handled on a first come, first serve basis. Outhouses and hand-washing sinks are located throughout the property.

Amenities offered here include:

- Solar hot showers on sunny days
- Swimming pond
- Wood fired hot showers on cloudy days
- Propane stove and oven
- Wood fired pizza oven!
- Local telephone service & voice mail
- Wireless Internet access
- Access to our library
- All the food you can grow and harvest while sharing the surplus
- Local saltwater access (for kayaks, quick dips, etc)

### What to Bring/Get

- Camping gear (tent, sleeping bag, sleeping pad, etc.)
- Flashlight
- Clothes for a variety of conditions (35°F - 90°F)
- Raingear
- Good footwear
- Hand tools
  - Each intern is required to have a secateurs (hand pruners), kama (Japanese sickle), and hori hori (Japanese digging tool). We also recommend a grafting knife, a pruning saw, and a sharpening stone. If you have these items bring them. If not we can help you get them at wholesale prices when you arrive.
- Alarm clock, watch, or whatever you need to get up in the morning and keep track of time throughout the day.

We also have a pre-cycling spot here called the Exchange. If you forget anything, they are likely to have it cheap (esp. clothes).

### Off-Season Internships

Winter season can be a difficult time to spend here as an intern if you have not been here for the normal intern season. Therefore, we discourage interns from starting here in the winter. Contact us if your circumstances suggest that a winter internship would be appropriate.

### Interested?

Do you have further questions? Is your interest piqued? If so, please contact our intern coordinator at [interns@permacultureportal.com](mailto:interns@permacultureportal.com).