Introduction
Much has been accomplished in Gibbs Farm redevelopment over the end of the summer and the fall. My involvement included completion of new hugelkultur beds, construction of bulk storage bins, harvesting of produce, seed saving, winterization of garden beds and hoop houses, sowing seed in hoop houses, and connecting with new produce buyers. In this report I will briefly describe several of those projects.

New Hugelkultur Beds
At the drafting of my last report we had three completed hugelkultur beds and two in progress. Since then, we have finished the incomplete beds and constructed another new one from scratch.

We tried novel techniques on the two recently-completed beds located on the western perimeter of the west side of the property. This included building log staircases up to the ridges of the beds and partially enclosing the beds with a log perimeter (Figure 1). These innovations allow easier access to the beds. The steep pitch of the beds previously made the peaks difficult to access. The log staircases allow people to easily reach the top and the log perimeters make a ledge where people can stand and reach near the top. The log perimeters have faced some criticism for over-delineating the hugel beds from the rest of the landscape. Without the perimeters, the hugel beds fit more fluidly with the rest of the property. My recommendation is to avoid them in the future, but to continue with staircase construction and to make a small path along the ridge of the beds.

For the newest bed we used material that was exclusively gathered on-site or in the immediate neighborhood, as usual. The bed is located in the northeast corner of the property. Per usual, we dug a one-foot deep hole in the earth, piled a mound of logs approximately four feet high from the bottom of the hole, and piled a couple more feet of brush on the logs. Because we had a large supply of bagged leaves gathered from the neighborhood, we stacked a layer of leaf bags on top of the brush (Figure 2). The entire mound was then capped with soil.
Seed Saving

With all the time-sensitive development projects over summer, I didn’t have time to devote to seed saving until the latter half of fall. Therefore, I didn’t save as much seed as I’d hoped, but I still obtained seed from tomatoes, peppers, corn, pumpkin, and beans. To process the tomato, pumpkin, and pepper seeds, I built drying boxes (Figure 3). After fermenting the seeds (Figure 3), I rinsed them out in the screened boxes and allowed them to dry before bagging. With the beans, I let them senesce on the bush before harvesting for further drying in the hoop houses (Figure 4). From there, I simply shelled the beans and saved the seed. I let the corn senesce on the stalk until dry and harvested the seed.

Recommendations for next year include using the saved bean seed for cover cropping and setting aside a bed exclusively for seed saving. This would allow us to let crops go to seed that normally wouldn’t, in a contained area.

Winterization of Garden Beds

As garden beds senesced over the fall we removed dying crop material and weeds. We then broadcasted cowpeas and oat seed as cover crop, using 140 lbs. of oats and 20 lbs. of cowpeas per acre. For beds that did not senesce until first frost we simply removed crop material and weeds and covered the beds with fallen leaves. We were able to cover crop Hugel Beds 2 and 4 but did not get to the rest before first frost because they were still producing crops. Throughout the property, the oats came up very well but the cowpeas did not come up (Figure 5). Recommendations for next year are to soak the cowpeas before sowing and to mulch after sowing.