



PORT OF PORT TOWNSEND
SHORT'S FAMILY FARM - PUBLIC ACCESS PLAN
Information & Guidance for Visitors



Port Commission

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DRAFT

PRESENTED TO THE PORT COMMISSION 3/27/25

I. Purpose & Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of the Short’s Family Farm Public Access Plan is to provide useful information and a “Visitors Code of Conduct” for the public to use and enjoy the farm in a manner that is sensitive to, and compatible with, its primary agricultural use.

Introduction

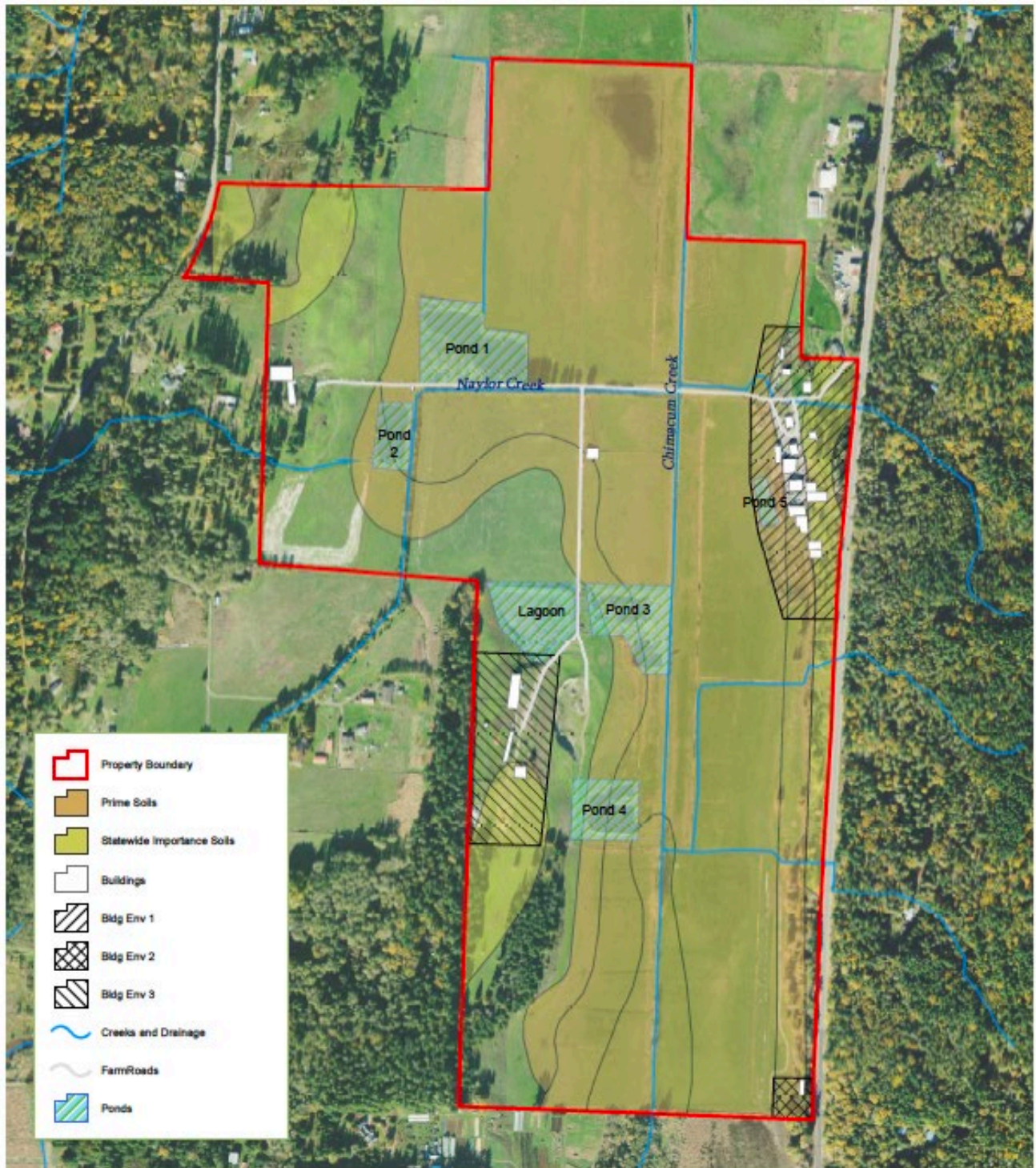
The Port of Port Townsend acquired the Short’s Family Farm (the “farm”) in the summer of 2023. In the spring of 2024, the Port conducted a process to develop a plan for the use and improvement of the Short’s Family Farm Plan (the “plan”). The plan was developed by a nine (9) member steering committee made up of local experts appointed by the Port Commission. In formulating the plan, the steering committee held a total of nine (9) public meetings between February and June of 2024. On July 10, 2024, the Port Commission adopted the committee’s recommended Short’s Family Farm Plan (Port Resolution No. 822-24).



Farm Steering Committee members, UW students and Port staff on a “hayride” tour of the farm – April 26, 2024

In purchasing and managing the farm, the Port’s central objective is to strengthen the agricultural sector of our local economy and support the health of our local food system. Hence, the Farm Plan is primarily focused on promoting a thriving agricultural sector. However, the plan also recognizes that other passive uses may be accommodated, provided that agricultural uses and habitat functions and values are appropriately safeguarded.

FIGURE #1:
AERIAL VIEW OF THE SHORT'S FAMILY FARM
Boundaries & Major Features



II. Current Farm Uses & Limitations

A. Land & Building Leases

Since purchasing the farm, the Port has focused on addressing critical maintenance issues (e.g., electrical upgrades, improving drainage by removing reed canary grass in the creek, water line and pump improvements, etc.), and entering into short-term lease agreements to put the land and farm buildings back into active agricultural use. By March 1, 2024, the Port had leased 127 acres of the 253.4-acre farm, mainly for agricultural uses (e.g., livestock, hay, crops). Except for building leases in the main complex of farm structures adjacent to Center Valley Road (Building Envelope #1), and a small residential land lease in the extreme southeast corner of the property (Building Envelope #2), all the leased farmland lies on the drier west side of Chimacum Creek. Table 1 below summarizes current leases at the Short’s Farm.

Table 1			
Short’s Family Farm – Current Land & Building Leases (March 2025)			
Lessee	Premises	Use	Term
Finnriver, LLC (d/b/a the “Grainery”)	Field #11 – 17.7 acres	Growing arable crops (wheat)	One (1) year ending 10/31/25, with two (2) one (1) year options to renew
Finnriver, LLC (d/b/a “Olympic Biochar”)	The “Commodities Shed” in main buildings complex – 1,750 sf	Delivery and storage of bulk and packaged soil amendments and remediation products	One (1) year ending 10/31/25, with two (2) one (1) year options to renew
Martin J. Mills (d/b/a “Flying Knucklehead Ranch”)	Fields #3, #4 & #19 – 37.3 acres	Cattle grazing	One (1) year ending 10/31/25, with two (2) one (1) year options to renew
One Straw Ranch, Inc.	Fields #5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 14, 15, 18, 20, 22 and 23, together with associated barns and outbuildings	Raising livestock (cattle, pigs and chickens), and for hay and agricultural equipment and implements storage	One (1) year ending 10/31/25, with two (2) one (1) year options to renew
One Straw Ranch, Inc.	Open shed in main buildings complex – 2,600 sf	Sheltering livestock, storing hay, and storing farm equipment and implements	One (1) year ending 10/31/25, with two (2) one (1) year options to renew
Puget Sound Voyaging Society, Inc.	The “Milking Parlor” in main buildings complex – 3,000 sf + 2,400 sf of adjacent land	Building projects (e.g., greenhouses) to develop the local workforce, build hands-on skills, and engage Jefferson County youth	Month to Month (commenced 3/1/25)
William Short	22,000 sf (approx.) on extreme SE corner of farm property	Locating and residing in Tenant’s mobile home	One (1) year ending 8/31/25



The Frederickson Family (“One Straw Ranch, Inc.”) – One of the Lessees at the Short’s Family Farm

B. WDFW Hunting & Wildlife Viewing Agreements

In addition to short-term lease and rental agreements, the Port also entered two separate license and use agreements with the Washington State Department of Wildlife in 2024 (WDFW) (“*Wildlife Program Cooperative Contracts for Habitat Improvement & Public Access*”). These agreements allow limited public access to approximately 118 acres of the farm for seasonal hunting and wildlife viewing. Although the 2024 agreements have now expired, Port staff are working with WDFW to negotiate new agreements that will automatically renew each year for a period of up to ten (10) years.¹ New agreements with WDFW are expected to be in place sometime during the summer of 2025.



¹ Please note that although the agreements presently being negotiated will automatically renew for a period of up to ten (10) years, either party (Port or WDFW) may terminate them upon 30 days’ written notice.

C. Agricultural Conservation Easement

The Jefferson Land Trust holds an agricultural conservation easement on the entirety of the 253.4-acre farm. Purchased in 2016, this easement protects the conservation values of the property in perpetuity, primarily by prohibiting non-agricultural uses of the land. Agricultural uses are permitted outright, and structural development is confined to three (3) defined building envelopes subject to impervious surface limitations (see Figure #1). Importantly, recreational and educational uses of the property (e.g., hunting, walking, etc.) are permitted, provided they do not require infrastructure with impervious surfaces. The easement is intended to ensure no net loss of agricultural activities, and the protection of critical areas, wetlands, and fish and wildlife habitat on the site.



Wheat Harvesting in Chimacum Valley by Finnriver (“The Grainery”) – Another Short’s Family Farm Lessee

D. Planned Future Use – Radio Controlled (RC) Seaplanes

The Port expects to enter a License & Use Agreement with local Radio Controlled (RC) Seaplane enthusiasts, the “Port Townsend Quiet Flight Association”, to offer a location for enthusiasts to fly their aircraft safely in a designated area. While not yet finalized, it is anticipated that this agreement will authorize RC Seaplane takeoff and landing from Pond #2 (see Figure #1, on page 3, above) between February 15 and October 31 each year.



III. Areas Open to Public Access

Approximately 118 acres of the farm are open to the public free of charge, dawn to dusk, year-round. The Port encourages the public to use and enjoy the property for passive outdoor recreation as outlined below. Please be advised that visitors use the farm entirely at their own risk, and the Port is not liable for unintentional injuries to such users (RCW 4.24.210).

A. Waterfowl Hunting by Reservation

The Port affords hunting access to the farm through WDFW's "Hunt by Reservation" program. Approximately 118 acres of the farm are accessible for waterfowl hunting on Tuesdays and Thursdays between November 1 and February 15 each year. Hunters are selected randomly through WDFW's Hunt by Reservation system for the days specified in each individual reservation.² For safety reasons, the farm is not accessible to the wider public on hunting days (e.g., for wildlife viewing, walking, etc.), but otherwise remains accessible during the period November 1 to February 15. Figure #2, on page 8, shows accessible hunting areas on the farm.

B. Wildlife Viewing

Subject to the "Farm Visitors' Code of Conduct" outlined in Section IV, below, wildlife viewing, photography and walking are permitted year-round on the farm. However, during the hunting season (November 1 to February 15), access is restricted to five (5) days per week (Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday).

Figures #2 and #3, below, depict those portions of the farm that are accessible for wildlife viewing year-round, dawn to dusk. Please note that parking is limited to designated areas only. On weekends, when the main gate is closed, parking is limited to the area immediately adjacent to Center Valley Road, with access to the property being "walk in" only (see Figure #3).

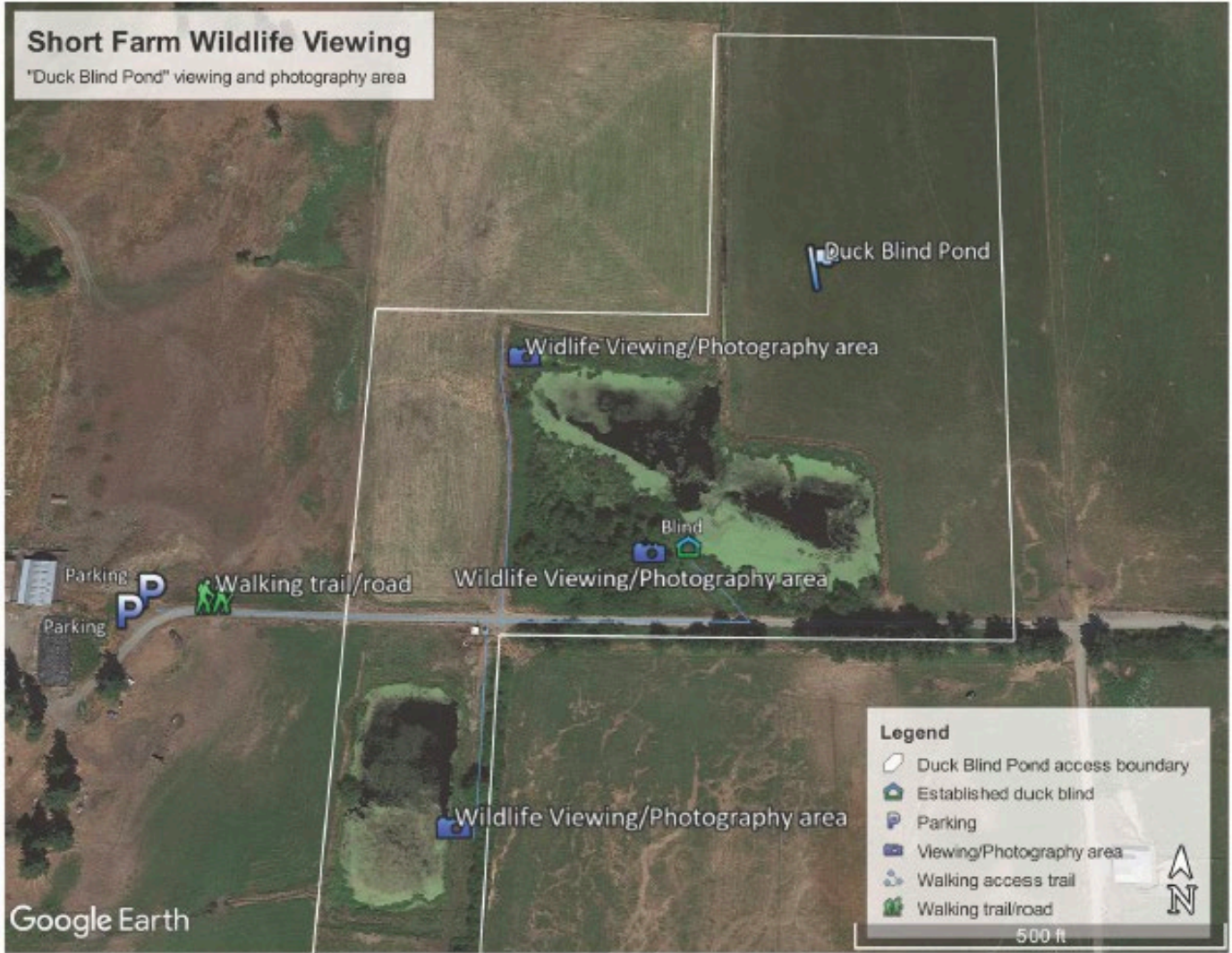


² Please visit: https://privatelands.wdfw.wa.gov/private_land/type/56/ for more information, or to make a reservation.

FIGURE #3:
SHORT'S FAMILY FARM – "VALLEY VIEW" - WILDLIFE VIEWING AREA
Open Year-Round, Except Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, Friday & Saturday Only
Between November 1 & February 15



FIGURE #4:
SHORT'S FAMILY FARM – "DUCK BLIND POND" - WILDLIFE VIEWING AREA
 Open Year-Round, Except Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, Friday & Saturday Only
 Between November 1 & February 15



* Note: on weekends, the main gate to the farm remains closed, with parking available adjacent to Center Road, as shown on Figure #3. Access is "walk in" only.

V. The Farm Visitors' Code of Conduct

A. Respect Everyone

1. Be considerate to those working on the farm, as well as other visitors.
2. Leave gates and property as you found them.
3. Do not block access to gateways or driveways when parking.
4. Be nice, say "hello", share the space.
5. Follow signs and keep to marked paths, farm tracks and permissible access areas.

B. Farming, Livestock and Wildlife

1. Your actions can affect other people's lives and livelihoods.
2. Co-operate with people working on the farm. For example, follow the farmer's directions when animals are being moved or gathered. This helps keep everybody safe.
3. Leave gates and the property as you found them or follow instructions on signs. Do not interfere with farm machinery or livestock.
4. Give livestock, wildlife, and horses plenty of space. Their behavior can be unpredictable, especially when they are with their young and you could get hurt.
5. Do not feed livestock, horses or wildlife as it can cause them harm.

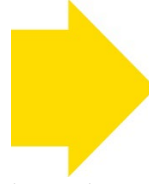


C. Parking and Vehicles on the Farm

1. Slow down to 5 mph and drive carefully on farm tracks.
2. Park only in designated areas. Make sure you do not block access to gateways or driveways when parking.

D. Follow Signs and Keep to Marked Paths

1. Use the map in the kiosk placed in the parking area on Center Road and other signs to help you find your way.
2. Stay on marked paths, even if they're muddy, unless wider access is available. This helps to protect livestock, crops and wildlife.
3. Get to know the symbols used on the farm. They help you identify permissible access areas for different users on the farm.



A yellow arrow indicates the pathway open for foot traffic only: walkers, wildlife viewers and hunters.



A red arrow indicates a farm track open to all traffic: farm and Port maintenance vehicles, walkers, wildlife viewers and hunters.

4. In addition to symbols, heed the guidance provided by the signs posted on the farm. A few of the most common signs are shown below.

Examples of Signs That Apply to All Visitors:



WARNING - WATCH FOR FARM VEHICLES

The yellow tractor sign indicates that a track is used frequently used by farm vehicles – visitors take heed.

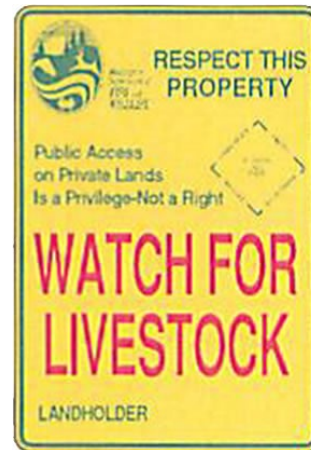
RESPECT THIS PROPERTY

Please leave the farm as you found it and help us clean up after others who have been less considerate.





NO UNAUTHORIZED VEHICLES BEYOND THIS SIGN
 No motor vehicle use allowed past this sign.
 (Note: During the hunting season, licensed hunters with a permit/reservation may be authorized entry).



WATCH OUT FOR LIVESTOCK
 animals may be present in some areas that are open to public access. Please yield to farm animals. And hunters, please make sure of your target before pulling the trigger. Whether travelling on foot or by vehicle leave all gates as you found them.

Examples of Signs That Apply to Only to Hunters (November 1 – February 15):



HUNTING BY RESERVATION ONLY
 An advance reservation permit issued by WDFW is required prior to hunting at the Short's Family Farm. Hunting season typically falls between November 1 and February 15 each year. All rules of the WDFW Hunting by Reservation Program must be followed in addition to any special rules established by the Port posted at the site.

SAFETY ZONE - Unlawful to Hunt Behind this Sign
Of all the signs used during hunting season at the Short's Farm, this is the most important one to recognize. It is used to alert hunters to areas where safety is a particular concern due to proximity to homes or areas where others are likely to be present. These are used to buffer hunting areas from roads, trails or access points.
Please make safety first!



5. If you think a sign is unclear or misleading, please contact the Port.

E. Protect the Environment

1. Leave no trace of your visit.
2. Do not light fires anywhere on the farm. Fires can be as devastating to wildlife and habitats as they are to people and property.
3. Always keep dogs under control and in sight.
4. Pet waste - bag it and take it home.
5. Be mindful, we all have a responsibility to protect the farm and its open spaces for current and future generations.
6. Care for nature - do not cause damage or disturbance. Leave rocks, plants and trees as you find them and take care not to disturb wildlife including ground nesting birds.



F. Take Your Litter Home

Remember to bring a bag with you and take your rubbish and food waste home. Litter spoils the beauty of the farm and can be dangerous to livestock and wildlife. Depending upon the amount, penalties for littering and garbage dumping may range from a civil infraction to a gross misdemeanor (RCW 70A.200.060).

H. Always Keep Dogs Under Control and in Sight

1. The farm is a great place to exercise your dog, but you need to consider other users and wildlife. Keep your dog under effective control to make sure it stays away from livestock, wildlife, horses and other people unless invited. You should:
 - a. Always keep your dog on a lead or in sight;
 - b. Be confident your dog will return on command; and

- c. Make sure your dog does not stray from the path or area where you have permission to access.
2. It is always good practice to keep your dog on a lead around livestock. Be mindful that a farmer can shoot a dog that is attacking or chasing livestock (RCW 16.08.020).
3. Always clean up your dog's waste because it can cause illness in people, livestock and wildlife. Bag it and take it home.

I. Enjoy Your Visit to the Farm!

1. Check weather conditions before you visit – and be sure you know where you're going.
2. Familiarize yourself with this Visitor's Code so you know what to expect and what you can do.
3. Enjoy your visit to the Short's Family Farm, have fun, spot a rare bird, make a memory.
4. A visit to the farm is a relaxing and peaceful activity. You'll enjoy your visit to the fullest if you prepare in advance (wear the right clothing!).



The Short's Family Farm
Respect • Protect • Enjoy