

Code	517027
Subject	Darwin Kelsey
Date	6/23/08
Interviewer	Bill Boone
Special Notes	Executive Director of Cuyahoga Valley Countryside Initiative

minutes:

- 0 introductions
 - Cuyahoga Valley Countryside Initiative botn 1999 as nonprofit to help Cuyahoga Valley figure out how to rehab local farms within park; background
- 1 information; founders; leaders; administration
 - in early years a lot of farm houses and barns were removed during park
- 2 creation, John Debo's arrival as superintendent in 1980's
 - emergence of agribusiness moved farming south and west and small farms
- 3 seemed irrelevant,
 - many environmentalists viewed any agriculture as wrong and not important for park, but Debo still interested in doing something to engage public in farming
- 4 and history of farming
 - Kelsey worked with in 1960's living history farm concept at Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts, which was first of many successful museum type
- 5 farm parks,
 - grew up on small dairy farm, trained as nuclear reactor operator, but not
- 6 satisfied, wanted to do something purposeful,
 - obtained BA in history, and masters in American folk culture, and entered
- 7 museum field
 - joined research department at Old Sturbridge Village, team spent two years studying history of agriculture, Cuyahoga Valley wanted to use living history farms as model for their farm initiative by mid nineties over 300 similar
- 8 programs in United States
- 9 joined Lake Metro Parks as advisor in 1980's
 - proposed idea to demontstrate actual ways people work with domestic plants
- 10 and animals, not living history farm museum, Kelsey developed concept
 - idea was to turn Lake Farm Park into a cross between zoo and botanical
- 11 gardens, worked there for a decade
 - Tom Ublanski suggested Kelsey talk to John Debo and help with agricultural
- 12 landscape in park in 1998
 - by late 1990's sustainable, organic agriculture popular and possible, the time
- 13 had come to allow real farms and real farmers to work in the park
 - late 19th century over 800 farms in the valley, began to disappear in twentieth century, by time park was created more were gone, park creation demolished
- 14 more
- 15 Deciding what farms to restore, goal of at least twenty working farms
 - How to go about leasing a farm: request for proposals open to any citizen,
- 16 fifteen questions asked of those who apply;
 - need to grow high value, local products for sale, must be both farmer and
- 17 business person
- 18 need to have family, friends, resources, equipment and capital
 - must be compatible with the Park, red tape etc. for the sixty year lease,
- 19 basically all of their lives, invest life savings, live in a "fishbowl"
 - need to be able to deal with people observing their work, have to abide by
- 20 National Park rules and regulations

21 eight farms currently in operation

22 leases used to cover issues involved in maintaining farm, or choosing to leave

23 various types of farms including "Sarah's Vineyard", summer solstice festival
24

Discussing the new farms from 2005, pick own berry farm, membership farm,
25 meat goat and heritage turkey farm

Kelsey talking about his own farm-goat meat, giving other farmers

26 ideas/support, presents demos

uses his farm to display permitted types of fencing, out buildings, Kelsey
talking about his farm-goat meat, most of red meat consumed in world is goat,
ethnic groups in Cleveland/Akron area mostly from goat eating parts of world,

27 good market for goat meat

Career Accomplishments include Strubridge Village, Lake Farm Park,

28 Cuyahoga Valley project less flashy

farm project in park unique in the US, moved on to farm markets, involved

29 with Center for FarmLand Preservation

doing important work which may be involved in larger movement for

30 sustainable

United States of Obliviousness-Americans don't know where our food comes
from, "we don't get it" post World War II rise of agribusiness which moved

West and South, 98% of American food is long distance, Ohioans incapable

31 of feeding ourselves "which means we're typical"

it took decades to get into this mess, will take decades to get out, but we will
32 have to,

33 for most Americans food is abundant and cheap, not true for most of world,

34 cheap can mean inexpensive, also inferior, tasteless,

grocery store fruits and vegetables are nutritionally inferior to locally grown

35 farm food, food grown in industrial ways uses pollutants

36 overuse of energy, abuse of cheap labor,

Increasing awareness of major agricultural issues will allow slow changes to
37 put in place ideas to ease the forced change that must eventually come

38 if more Americans become aware of how they grow and consume food it

farm conservancy to create next generation of farmers, it will be difficult to

39 change mega business attitude

40 over 10 billion dollars spent in Ohio for food, not even 1% grown here

farms remind us about how things were in the past, but also show where we

41 are headed and how we can get there

Advocating increased small farming in Ohio to help the economy, John Debo

42 saw the possibilities in

43 John Debo and pride in the Countryside Initiative

Where are the farmer's markets- in Northeast Ohio ? Locations listed on

44 Cuyahoga Valley initiative website, eating locally is not easy

45 buying locally is good for local economy

Getting foods that are out of season, hoop houses, greenhouses can extend

46 growing season,

47 difference between having good food in season, or tasteless food year round

48 Westside Market is not farmers market, good food, but not local