

2008

“Getting Back to Nature” Business Plan



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Executive Summary

Overview

The desire [and need](#) to get away from the routine hustle and bustle of city life to experience life differently, reflect, plan, build [or renew](#) relationships, and have fun is evident in [academia](#), [the](#) business world, and the community-at-large. [Teachers want](#) safe places [that students can go, which](#) allow them [to](#) experience nature and learn in new and [exciting](#) environments. Universities seek living laboratories in which to conduct research. Houses of worship and community organizations [seek](#) remote areas to send their members to relax, reflect, and reconnect with themselves and each other. Employers and their employees want to get away from the stresses [of](#) work that include meetings, stringent and demanding deadlines, strategic planning, and team building. Tourists [long](#) for new and interesting venues to [visit and learn about](#). Families and individuals long for places that they can go to relax, [have fun, forget about their problems](#), and reconnect with one another [and themselves](#).

In order to reach their goals, people are willing to invest in activities that allow them to get away, [so](#) they can learn, strengthen ties, and [build or renew](#) relationships, strengthen their minds, [and](#) recharge their bodies. [And often times, one of the best places for this to happen is](#) in a remote location with few distractions.

Getting Back to Nature, a subsidiary of Martin Acres, Inc., will host school outings, family [gatherings, nature and history tours](#), reunions, weddings, community and youth groups, business events, and serve as a [natural](#) laboratory for colleges and universities.

Mission Statement

Getting Back to Nature seeks to recapture the idea of the “family farm” by reaching back and gathering the best of what the past has taught us, while we reclaim, revive, preserve, and perpetuate a new vision of the “farm.” [It will also seek to use the “farm” to bring a greater awareness and appreciation for nature and will do so through utilizing the natural resources on the “family farm.”](#)

Core Values

Our core values are to maintain the [natural](#) resources that comprise Martin Acres, [while making a positive impact on ourselves and the community-at-large](#). These resources include all the acreage of Martin Acres [and the Finis Martin Estate](#), as well as the knowledge base that [encompasses our family](#).

Background and History

Martin Acres, Inc.

There lies a family farm in western Kentucky that is 800+ acres, [with abundant fertile soil](#), and rich in [Black](#) history, natural resources, [and](#) wildlife. It is called “Martin Acres” and represents over 150 years of history.

In the mid-1800's, Lourenza Dow Martin, [a slave](#), bought and paid for his freedom and then [a short time later](#), the freedom of his wife, [Minnie Malvina Reynolds Martin](#). Lourenza, [Minnie](#), and their 12 children made their home in the Rhodes Chapel Community of Muhlenberg County, Kentucky—[portion of it is now a part of Martin Acres](#). As the children [got older](#), some of them moved [out of the state](#), however, one of the sons, Finis Martin, [bought a farm and settled near Rhodes Chapel Community](#).

[Finis](#) was a very industrious man who gave his 5th child, Herbert Leslie Martin, 100 acres of land, [upon which 100 more was purchased a short time later](#). Herbert learned [how to](#) farm from his father and [became a](#) very successful and widely respected farmer [and person](#). [During his lifetime](#), he acquired over 1000 acres of land. At his death in 1968, the ownership of the farm went to his wife, Beatrice Tutt Martin and [his 15](#) surviving children.

Past Activities (of corporation)

Herbert [understood](#) the importance of family and after his family began to only see one another for weddings and funerals, [in 1965](#), he decided to appoint Labor Day as a time for the immediate and extended family to return to the farm for a reunion.

One of the legacies that he passed down to his children and grandchildren was one of his favorite thoughts and sayings, “there’s always room for one more.” Although he died 3 years later, the value of family was passed on and today, the the family still gathers at Martin Acres every Labor Day weekend.

In an effort to [ensure](#) that the [farm](#) stayed in the family, the children of Herbert Martin decided to form a corporation, Martin Acres, Inc. [incorporated \(“Martin Acres, Inc.”\)](#) in 1982 or 1985. *Getting Back to Nature* is an extension of the forward thinking that [began](#) Martin Acres, Inc., [and will help to](#) expand our vision [of the farm](#).

Resources

Natural resources (Land)

Getting Back to Nature will utilize the natural resources of Martin Acres—the mature forests, wetlands, grasslands, roads, trails, shelter, and [fertile farm land](#) around the “Big House” ([the initial phase will not include the Big House](#)).

People (Family)

In keeping with Herbert Martin’s motto, “there’s always room for one more,” *Getting Back to Nature* will involve all family members. We will [utilize](#) the [education](#), expertise,

knowledge, training, and skills of [our extended family](#). We will “extend” our family if a needed skill is not readily available.

Financial

Martin Acres, Inc. has leased its premises [over the years as a means to gain capital](#). The leasing has included farming, oil [and mineral](#) rights, and hunting. On average, the leases have brought in X dollars per fiscal year. [In 2008](#), a portion of adjoining land was sold for X dollars.

Currently, the corporation has X dollars that can be used for the expenses detailed in the Financial Plan.

Digital and Electronic

We will use the digital and electronic resources of the family to continue and preserve our family legacy. These resources will be used as marketing and promotional tools for *Getting Back to Nature*.

Maps, photos, documents, audio, and written histories

These resources will [be used](#) to educate our [selves and others](#) about our history, [to be used in conjunction with history tours of the farm, and for marketing and promotion.](#)

Programs and Uses

The focus of this initial phase is [to](#) develop programs and [activities](#) that [use](#) resources that are immediately available at Martin Acres. [The initial programs and uses are discussed below](#) [while the future ones are in the Appendix](#).

School and Youth Programs Tours/Youth Investment

These programs will be offered to school age children:-

- Hay Rides
- Nature Walks
- Eco-system Lessons and Self Discovery
- History Lessons
- Play/games (tree swings, softball, baseball, soccer, football, volleyball, kickball)
- Youth Internships
 - Boy and Girl Scouts
 - United Way
 - YMCA
 - Boys and Girls Clubs

Nature Tours and Self-Discovery

Of interest to [all](#) age groups are tours that allow individuals to explore [and learn](#) on their own.

- Nature Walks
- Hiking Trails

Environmental Awareness

These types of programs will be created as we continue to learn more about the various ecosystems on the farm. These are intended to be hosted tours.

- Nature Walks
- Hay Rides
- Hands-on Activities/Self-Discovery
- Demonstration projects
- Ecosystem tours

History Tours

These [will be guided walking and/or tractor-driven tours that will show and explain the historical significance of Martin Acres.](#)

- Nature Walks
- Hay Rides

College and University Conference Tours

These tours [will be conducted in conjunction with the local colleges and universities and will be catered to the interest\(s\) of the conference participants.](#)

- Nature walks
- Hay Rides
- History Tours
- Points of Interest Tours
- Ecosystem Tours

Business [Event](#) Hosting

[The](#) hosting of business [events](#) will initially focus on outdoor activities.

- Shelter/Grounds Rental
- Meeting Room(s) (Temporary dome rentals)

Family [Gatherings](#) and Weddings

[The hosting of family gatherings and weddings will take place outside and will allow for multiple uses.](#)

- Shelter and Grounds Rental
- Hay Rides
- Horseback Riding
- Play/games (tree swings, softball, baseball, soccer, football, volleyball, kickball)
- Nature Walks

- Other contracted activities (water slides, inflatables, etc.)

The Customers and Public Benefit

The primary customers [reside](#) within a 1 (one) hour drive of Martin Acres and include schools, daycares, community organizations, houses of worship, [individuals](#), and families. The secondary customers are colleges/universities and businesses.

The public benefit will be a greater sense of awareness, concern, compassion, and understanding [of](#) the natural environment, farm, [country and rural life](#), families, and each other. [It will positively impact the](#) community-at-large [by renewing the value or bring a new value on community and nature](#).

Marketing and Promotion

Primary methods of marketing include:

- Letters and presentations to schools, daycares, houses of worship, community organizations, [colleges, and universities](#)
- Web site, brochures, and free local advertising
- Virtual tours (available via DVD and Web site)
- Listing with local and [commonwealth](#)-wide agencies, Web sites, [magazines](#), [newspapers](#), and tourism guides

We anticipate repeat business from the schools as they typically reserve certain trips for specific grades. We will maintain our presence through mailers and advertising in local [media](#). As we gain experience, we will market to larger cities such as Louisville, Lexington, Paducah, [and](#) Nashville.

New customers will come from word of mouth and continued advertising. We will also improve and expand our services as time goes on.

Partnerships

We will seek out and consider partnering with various organizations to provide services.

- Non-Profits
 - 4-H
 - YMCA
 - Boy and Girl Scouts
 - Houses of Worship
 - Boys and Girls Clubs
- Colleges and Universities
- Libraries
- Vendors

- Caterers
- Activities (inflatables, horses, petting zoo, etc.)

Operational Plan

Goals and Indicators

Our goals are to enhance the sustainability of Martin Acres through its 3 (three) pillars: economic, social, and environmental.

Economic

From an economic standpoint, we would like to generate a profit of X every year, which means that our revenue will exceed the operating expenses and overhead costs by X dollars.

Social

Getting Back to Nature will allow the youth to be involved in positive and life-affirming activities that will help to steer them clear of trouble and will engage them in being good stewards of the environment, thereby strengthening the community and commonwealth through the deeds and actions they undertake as a direct result of their involvement at Martin Acres.

It will also help the family bond by us working together for a common goal. It will also encourage current and future generations to know and understand the importance of family and nature.

Environmental

Martin Acres contains a diverse landscape with multiple ecosystems and fertile farm land, which will be maintained and enhanced by the activities of *Getting Back to Nature*. The activities can help to resolve the environmental problems that we currently face. We will utilize our land to encourage the youth and adults to spend more time outside (to combat nature-deficit and support the “No Child Left Inside” legislation), to value and respect nature, and to preserve land, especially family land.

Overcoming Challenges

A key challenge for *Getting Back to Nature* is how we manage the operation in spite of our busy schedules. Additionally, a challenge is to collectively maintain and continue the vision and mission of Martin Acres, Inc.

Governance and Leadership

Getting Back to Nature will be governed by the Martin Acres, Inc. stockholders and some non-stockholders. The subsidiary will be handled by subcommittees comprised of stockholders, family members, and others:

- Executive/Managerial
- Marketing and Promotion
- Communications and Public Relations
- Reservations and Booking
- Technology (Web development, video, audio, digital maps, etc.)
- Insurance and Legal
- Accounting
- Logistics
- Primary Resource Documentation

Performance Measurements

Performance can be measured by:

- the number of events we book
- percentage of activity vs. non-activity of resources
- number of family members actively involved
- quizzing family members on knowledge of farm and family history
- providing surveys to clients establish the quality of events
- yearly profit margin
- number of repeat customers (outside of school system)
- number of customers that begin to positively impact their community (through survey)

Assumptions and Risks

If we start slowly and focus only on those things that are readily available to us, we minimize our financial risks. There are liability and legal risks that we will acquire because of having non-family members on the property. These risks can be minimized by having appropriate insurance, legal coverage, and preparing for potential problems.

Additionally, investment in family knowledge and participation will be necessary to insure the sustainability of *Getting Back to Nature* and Martin Acres, Inc. The amount of activity at the farm will reduce the risk of illicit activity on the farm grounds. *(will need to flesh out other risks and think through scenarios of what can go wrong with this venture and put in place methods to eliminate or reduce risks)*

Financial Plan

The total cost estimate for this project will be X dollars, which can be extended over a period of 5 years. This estimate includes the operating and overhead expenses that will be incurred.

The operating expenses will be dependent on the activity(ies) that take place during the course of the year, so they will vary from year to year.

Annual Funding Sources

<u>Source</u>	<u>FY2008</u>	<u>FY2009</u>	<u>FY2010</u>	<u>Totals</u>
<u>Sale of adjoining land</u>	<u>\$10,000</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>\$10,000</u>
<u>Partnership with Colleges and Universities</u>	<u>-0-</u>			
<u>Environmental Grant</u>	<u>-0-</u>			

Table 1

Here we will need to talk about expenses, pricing, and startup funding (grants, fellowships, awards). We can establish a price for weddings, shelter rental, grounds rental, school outings, etc. Any request for research, added amenities, and special requests should be handled on an individual proposal basis.

Appendices

Stockholders

Board of Directors

Organizational Structure

Funding Resources (local, state, and national)

Protocol (for signing up, registration, rules and regulations, etc.)

Photos, trail maps, topographical maps, etc.

Future Activities

- Aquaculture
- Wildlife Habitat
- Land Conservation
- University Research
- Research Farm
- Renewable Energy
- Community Farm
- Community Workshops
- Virtual Tours
- Nature Retreat
- Eco-tourism
- Nature Rehabilitation
- Soil, water, and land testing/research
- Organic Orchard and Farm Produce
- Horticulture
- Horticulture Workshops and Demonstrations
- Cabin Rentals
- University Research and Research Farm