Land Selection & House Placement • Development Issues
Organic Growers School Handout - Peter Bane - March 8, 2019

Scale of Permanance, (after Yeomans and Jacke)
1. Climate
2. Landform
3. Water
4. Legal Issues
5. Roads/Access
6. Vegetation: Tree/Plants/Wildlife
7. Microclimate
8. Buildings & Infrastructure
9. Zones of Use
10. Soil Fertility
11. Aesthetics

1. Most important decisions regarding land for human use are
   - Where is it located and how to choose that location?
   - How should be it be settled, built, developed?

2. Land has value for housing based on location:  
   - proximity to services, markets, neighbors, community  
   - access to roads, communications  
   - reliable supply of water  
   - sound legal title and lawful communal relations  
   - solar access in cool climates  
   - some level land with air and water drainage, not subject to flood

2a. Land for farming should also have a high portion usable (50%, minimum 3 acres).
   - Some of this can be wooded if harvestable (not excessively steep or isolated).
   - Wetlands can be useful, but should not dominate (≤ 20%)

3. Factors to avoid:
   - hostile or uncooperative neighbors; lawless community
   - no deeded access; landlocked
   - clouded title
   - high risk of catastrophe: wildfire, inundation, industrial accident, earthquake
   - no good water supply
   - no mineral rights; high potential for energy or resource extraction
   - low-lying or extremely steep ground
   - long access road or road crossing stream
   - lack of electrical power

4. Favorable situations:
   - dairy farm, active or former
   - broad ridges, some open ground
   - variety of aspects, including southern
   - neighborhood of mixed age and value of properties
   - counties not dominated by monoculture ag
   - proximity to a college or university
   - moderate distance from a rail line (1-4 miles)
5. House placement is dictated by the nexus of:
   - southern aspect
   - moderate slope at mid-valley elevation
   - reasonably short access road
   - connection to other cultivable and useful land
   - safety from flood; good frost, air, and water drainage
   - a measure of privacy
   - protection from storm and prevailing winds
   - distance to utility connections
   - soils that can percolate for septic field (where required)

6. Identify and reserve all house sites in advance of development.
   - Consider how housing might be clustered.

7. Locate areas for:
   - utility structures: barns, sheds, greenhouses, etc.
   - water storage: dams, ponds, rain gardens, tanks
   - reforestation

Criteria for Land Selection  - rate each item 0-5, multiply by number of points shown
Ratings: 5 - excellent; 4 - good; 3 - average; 2 - mediocre; 1 - poor; 0 - non-existent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Proximity to svcs, facilties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water</td>
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<td>Comfort (max/min temps)</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development ease</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Community suitability</td>
<td>8.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soil suitability</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Utilizable portion</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Character (personal taste)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Aspect</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural features (view)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Privacy</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural boundaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wind (good and bad)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electric Power</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tree cover</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Access</td>
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</tbody>
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Minimum weighted score in points: 400-420

Resources
Peter Bane, PO Box 182, Montague, MI 49437 • pcactivist@mindspring.com
The Permaculture Handbook: Garden Farming for Town and Country
permiculturehandbook.com
Permaculture Design magazine, PO Box 3607, Tupelo, MS 38803
permaculturedesignmagazine.com
Permaculture Institute of North America • 1248 Calypso Ct, Ashland OR 97520. pina.in
Graham, Edward H. Natural Principles of Land Use. 1944.