Version:1.0 StartHTML:0000000181 EndHTML:0000003163 StartFragment:0000002362 EndFragment:0000003127 SourceURL:file://localhost/Users/computer/Desktop/obits/barefootfarmer.doc

Farmers gamble. I've known that one day the Long hungry would rise up into our lower garden. For 14 years we have been blessed. No, I wasn't surprised, or even sad, when four feet of water rushed over the carrots and peas.

It was beautiful, with class three rapids, waves jumping several feet, and the powerful roar. It was simply awesome. The cave filled up to the second shelves, and I thought of all the times the floor was full of lettuce, cucumbers and green beans.

We feel grateful and lucky. No one was hurt, and it is only the beginning of May. In another week I would have had another acre planted that would have been destroyed. All of my seeds are safe and dry in the cabin.

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But the garden is gone. It was composted and fluffed up, ready to plant. Now it has deep gullies and lots of g ravel. I just keep wondering what to do.

Besides a half-acre of early vegetables, the little apple and pear grafts took a beating. I think the apples will survive, but the pears are gone. It's interesting how the water moved through the field.

Some places are dug out deep enough to bury a car. Past the cave, Mark found a beautiful arrowhead. It's been a long time since some of this earth has been exposed.

New blackberry and blueberry plantings suffered losses. There a re rocks everywhere. The fence is down and will have to be removed. I don't feel too confident in gardening here again. The next time you see the garden behind the barn on the T.V. show, picture it as a raging river.

On the big farm we lost a lot of creek bank and trees. The swimming hole which raised a few generations of kids is long gone. But there are new ones in other places, and we will find them.

The potatoes and onions are fine, just beat down a bit. I'll probably raise a little less corn and plant the garden on the hill where it was going to go. Roads are wiped out, and it'll take some work before I can get a tractors to the fields.

We are all a little shell-shocked. But life goes on. the CSA will have to do without carrots and peas, but the folks are from Nashville and will certainly understand. I'm sorry for all the destruction that's happening there.

Farming is risky business. You win some and lose some. This bottom and has yielded well, and now she is gone. But we will keep planting and rolling those laughing bones.