



**2009 Community Food Matters Gathering
March 24, 2009**

Minutes & Notes from Presentations

Audio from the event can be found at www.cily.net/deconstructingdinner/cfm.htm

Community Food Matters

- Community Food Matters (CFM) is a coalition of businesses, organizations, individuals and institutions who are involved in the Nelson food system and/or are working on enhancing the local/regional food system (Interior Health, Kootenay Country Store Co-operative, Nelson Food Cupboard, Deconstructing Dinner, Earth Matters, West Kootenay EcoSociety)
- CFM maintains a vision to see Nelson as a well-nourished thriving community where everyone has the opportunity to enjoy abundant, locally produced food that is grown in a sustainable and socially responsible manner.
- CFM's mission is to engage the whole community in the development of initiatives, activities and policies that create a locally sustainable food secure system.
- CFM was formed out of the Nelson Food Coalition and hosted a food forum in November 2006
- Coordinated the Eat Local Challenge, participated in the Future of Food in the Kootenays Conference, hosted the first meeting of G.E. Free Kootenays
- Maintains a monthly e-newsletter w/206 emails
- Participated in the City of Nelson's Official Community Plan (OCP) revision process and was successful in getting a more appropriate definition of food security included
- Hosted other events; Fall Fair, film screenings, pruning workshops
- Presented the importance of food security to the City of Nelson in June 2008
- Believes Nelson can play a pivotal role as a catalyst for generating a viable local food system
- CFM meets once a month where everyone shares their work with each other and often collaboration results
- Maintains a presence on the www.kootenayfood.ca web site

Slocan River Valley Farmers Group (Malin Christensson)

- Formed 2 years ago by Jade Summer / Anne Warren
- Mostly Winlaw/Appledale based
- Share equipment/knowledge, mentor farmers, marketing
- Social group

- Not just farmers, but would like more farmers to join
- Hopefully can expand
- Not a society
- No membership required
- Over 100 people on contact list
- Group meets every month (30 people show up) – potlucks
- Attended the Gathering to see what else the group can do to integrate themselves with others
- Supports certified organic but are not restricted to certification
- Winlaw market starting again for 2009 in partnership with Kootenay Food Strategy Society
- Putting together a resource list... who has manure, eggs, pruning knowledge, etc.

Kootenay Organic Growers Society - KOGS (Suzanne Miller)

- Not-for-profit Kootenay based certifying body (1 of 11 in BC) based on provincial standards harmonized with international standards
- Committed to supporting and strengthening agriculture in the region
- Supports the principles of food security
- System of site inspection by a third party
- Process of farming is inspected not the product
- Further processing of food is overseen by KOGS
- Involved in marketing, newsletters, education, discounts on soil amendments

Kootenay Local Agricultural Society - KLAS (Abra Brynne)

- Born out of years of conversation and the interest to increase food production in region
- Formed in 2008 – over 70 members in RDCK
- Projects – seed bank/gene bank of locally adapted varieties
- Provides hands-on training programs (recent ex. for Grain CSA farmers in Creston)
- Offering bee-keeping course (very popular)
- Hosted Nelson speaking event w/farmer Michael Ableman in February '08
- Mario Lanther will be coming to host a composting workshop
- Anne Clark – U of Guelph Organic Ag. will come to Nelson/Creston to speak about grass systems and livestock
- New web site loaded with info
- Goal to develop market access = Kootenay Mountain Grown label (system of standards/certification)
- Has engaged support of local markets who have accepted KMG standard (Evergreen, Kootenay Co-op, Endless Harvest)
- Has adopted IFOAM standards – farmer-farmer certification
- Any farm who adopts standard also takes a pledge to adhere to ethical standards
- Awaiting approval of a mobile poultry abattoir docking station in the area
- Tool-lending library in development
- Farm-internship program in development

Kaslo Food Security Project (Aimee Watson)

- Started in Feb 2006 w/food forum
- Determined they needed a feasibility study on commercial kitchen = UBCM funding of first year

- Developed municipal food charter – documented by Bits and Bytes project
- Hosted speaker series to raise awareness of food issues
- Developed bulk local food buying club
- Provided cooking/canning classes
- Food for Families program / Food Pantry
- Mar. '08 - developed farmer mapping project, which, led to the West Kootenay Food Directory (on-line), encourages user maintenance/updating
- Apr. '08 – lawns to gardens program, educational workshops, three fallow lawns converted in first year
- Seed-saving workshops
- Food economic development center led to Kaslo Food Hub (storage)
- January '09 developed Farmland and Farmer Database = linking farmers with land
- Launched a lawns-to-gardens movie available on-line
- Gearing down quite a bit this year due to lack of funding
- Someone will be taking over Aimee's job while she goes on maternity leave
- Aimee works on Public Health Association of BC's e-brief

Future of Food in the Kootenays Working Group (Andre Piver)

- Hosted Nov. '07 Future of Food in the Kootenays conference (regional food system approach), brought together government, farmers, activists, organizations
- Final report issued on requirements for regional food system
- Group has chosen to carry on with a mandate to implement recommendations of report
- Publishes monthly e-newsletter
- Supports other groups in their efforts
- Advocacy with government/funders
- Is encouraging the formation of a RDCK task-force on a post-carbon future for the region
- Encouraged groups to involve themselves into the Smart Planning program for communities. Survey on RDCK web site
- Brought together people involved in food system in '08 at a meeting in Creston. Concluded that regular communication is needed. The meeting made it clear to farmers in attendance that producing for the local market is really something they may want to consider
- Internally, FOFWG is in a state of flux but there are new members interested in moving the group forward

Kootenay Grain CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) – (Matt Lowe)

- Inspired in 2007 by the Eat Local Challenge and later contacted a colleague in Creston to find farmers willing to grow grain.
- 3 farmers and a group of food security advocates gathered to form the CSA in December '07 – first of its kind in Canada
- Seed went into the ground in early '08 and they produced grain for 180 families and 1 Nelson bakery
- Chose the CSA model to rectify the problems within food system (sought to secure farmers with a fair income)
- Guaranteed farmers that they would be paid regardless of outcome of harvest
- Had hoped to produce 100lbs but produced just over 80lbs
- Five grains planted
- Shareholders were happy with outcome

- Tried to inspire by leading by example
- Spin-offs – Kootenay Lake Sailing Association helped sail some of the grain between Creston/Nelson
- The CSA has inspired other projects in BC
- 2009 – expanding to 600 shares, has already sold many of them
- Expanding to a model of retail supported agriculture and is inviting more businesses this year
- Ultimate goal of project is to provide grain for the entire Kootenay region using the CSA model

Creston Valley Food Action Coalition (Gail Southall)

- Network of farmers, environmentalists, health professionals, educators, students who share a common commitment to increasing the ability for the community to feed itself using local resources
- Around for a couple of years
- 75 members
- Umbrella organization – partners with other food security initiatives (Grain CSA, Creston Community Greenhouse)
- Community Greenhouse works with school programs and the project is hoping to expand
- Eat Local campaign
- Farm Fresh Guide – crestonfarmfresh.ca
- Launching a new Eat Local sign for farmers/businesses selling local food
- Harvest Share program – getting produce that would otherwise go to waste and gets it into the hands of people who need it. Will be ramping up the program this year
- Working to expand farmers' market
- Acts as a voice for policy issues
- Will be working on a food mapping project – identifying what farmers are growing and where the gaps lie

Community Farms (John Alton)

- Collaborating with a group of people to access land and operate a community farm
- Inspired by Kaslo Food Security Project event in February 2009
- Found a farm close to Nelson
- 10 people interested in project
- Challenges involve working out a lease with owners
- Exploring leasing models provided by The Land Conservancy of BC
- Sees the project as a more secure model of operating a farm

West Kootenay Eco Society (John Alton)

Community Markets

- WKES took on the community markets five years ago
- Joined the BC Association of Farmers Markets
- Expanded market from 1 site/day to 2 (Cottonwood Falls and Downtown)
- Couple of years ago decided to change the downtown market to a local-only market (to avoid imported goods)
- Has seen a steady participation by farmers over the years (4-6 every market)
- Started a fall fair last year

- Will be looking at Provincial program offering food coupons to those in need to use at farmers' markets
- Would like to see more farmers

Farmers' Market

- Another project being initiated: Nelson Farmers' Market
- Seeking support from Columbia Basin Trust through City of Nelson
- Wanting more of a farming focus and a more diverse population of people using the market
- Starting from scratch instead of trying to recreate Community Markets

Virtual Farmers Markets

- Internet based
- Hoping the site could offer more marketing opportunities for local farmers
- Businesses could use the site and see what's available and who's offering what

Kootenay Food Strategy Society (Sandi McCreight)

- Started in 2005
- Formed Society in 2006
- Goals include education, awareness, support, networking
- Castlegar community garden – 2 successful years (34 beds including 4 easy-access beds)
- Harvest Rescue program
- www.kootenayfood.ca web site w/networking tools
- Recently published a web site guide
- One of five partners in the Bits and Bytes project coordinated by Abra Brynne through Interior Health (www.bitsandbytes.ca)
- Acts as host agency for project support (ex. Kootenay Harvest Revival, Future of Food in the Kootenays conference)
- Lawns to Veggies project in Rossland
- Other groups they participate with (G.E. Free Kootenays, composting of Healthy Snack program waste, City of Castlegar sustainability committee, worm composting workshops, school collaboration)
- Some project applications pending (policy work, regional food security resource library, community outreach)

Earth Matters (Colleen Matte)

- Involved in community projects since 1995
- Focuses on hands-on youth oriented projects
- Produced an eat local brochure in 2006 and suggested people could take it on and revise it for redistribution
- Current capacity is limited
- Currently continuing to work on the interpretative medicinal herb garden at Cottonwood Falls park & Hendryx St. forest garden
- Will be participating in Earth Day and doing a Cottonwood spring cleanup
- Currently working on composting business plan for the city
- Reminded people that the RDCK still has about 40 composters available from a past project to make backyard composters more available to residents

Soil Matters CSA (Laura Sacks)

- Starting their third season of community supported agriculture
- Provides a weekly box of veggies for 30-weeks of the year
- 25-30 members maximum
- Members commit financially at the beginning of the season
- This year the CSA is requiring a working commitment from members
- Most rewarding part are the work parties when members help on the farm
- Lots of children involved (mostly homeschooled)
- Considers the involvement of members as the most rewarding aspect of the CSA model

Nelson Food Cupboard Society (Laura Gareau)

- In it's 10th year
- Offers barrier-free access to food for community members on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday
- Believes that good food is a human right regardless of income level
- Serves mostly Nelson residents but a some from outside the city
- Has seen a steady rise in customer use over recent months
- Over 1,000 people served in March (highest ever since Food Cupboard began tracking visits in 2003)
- Does more than just provide food and works to enhance the local food system
- Maintains an access to fruits and vegetables policy to make sure that every customer has at least 5 selections of produce to choose from
- Seeks to accommodate dietary restrictions
- Maintains a local food sourcing policy (maintains CSA shares from local farmers)
- Promotes the Grow a Row program by encouraging residents to grow a row of food for the Food Cupboard
- Promotes the Harvest Rescue program of gleaning food that would otherwise be wasted
- \$5,000 worth of food each year is gleaned from the Grow a Row and Harvest Rescue programs
- Offers opportunities for customers to get involved helping on farms who provide the Food Cupboard with food
- Maintains donation and purchasing partnerships with Save-on-Foods, Oso Negro Coffee, Kootenay Country Store Co-operative, Silverking Tofu, Kootenay Bakery Café and Co-operative
- Receives financial support from community donations and foundations
- Looking to increase access to protein sources (grant pending on a project to access eggs)
- Hungry Bowls fundraising event on April 28 at Hume Hotel

Slocan Valley Food Cupboard Society (Corrie Traenenburg)

- Operated by W. Graham Community Services
- Started food cupboard 5 years ago
- Feeding 50-60 people a week
- Very little of the food is locally produced
- Interested in launching a harvest rescue program and has been in consultation with Nelson Food Cupboard
- Not very good communication among those involved in food system in Slocan Valley

Oso Negro Coffee/Café - Jesse Phillips

- 28 employees
- 16 local suppliers - seeks to support local suppliers for the café (Ellison's Market and Kootenay Bakery are biggest)
- Started a rooftop herb garden last year and will continue with it again alongside a solar food dryer

Canning – Jesse Phillips

- Maintains a vision to create a kitchen where access to local food in the winter can be maintained through a community cannery where residents can share ideas, recipes, techniques
- Is unsure how to get the project going and is seeking support

United Nations (Kootenay Branch) and Pass Creek Community Hall Society (Netta Zeberoff)

- Has been working on permaculture for many years
- Offers workshops on seed saving, growing, canning
- Believes in harnessing knowledge from elders and offering it to youth

Interior Health (Tara Stark)

- Food security was recently recognized as a key determinant of health and is now recognized by Interior Health as one of 21 core programs
- Health authorities now have some funds available for food security projects (Community Food Action Initiative) via small grants to communities

Nelson Cares Society – EcoStore (Billy Jones)

- Currently in planning stage w/Earth Matters
- Wants to encourage purchase of local sustainable products for the home, garden, workplace via a physical space and on-line presence
- Profits will return to the community
- Hoping to open up before summer 2009
- Will be hosting an Earth Day celebration on April 25

Nelson Cares Society – Supported Employment (Florence Christophers)

- Works on linking up people with disabilities with employment
- Today it's increasingly difficult for people with disabilities to find work
- 40-50 clients w/developmental disabilities
- Proposes to farmers that her clients would be willing to provide labour through their Casual Labour Program. Clients work for 2 –10 hours or more a week.

Kootenay Country Store Co-operative (Michelle Beneteau)

- 8,000 members
- Promotes sustainability and fair-trade
- Hundreds of local suppliers and Co-op promotes these products over others
- Many small businesses got their start through supplying the Co-op
- 60 staff
- Focuses on fairly compensating staff
- Many community outreach initiatives (Dinner and a Movie film series in April 08; Film Festival in February 09)
- Currently in third session of cooking classes offered to community
- Partners with Nelson Food Cupboard to raise money and provide food donations

- Will celebrate Earth Day throughout April and promote the bulk section
- Hopes to become more of a hub for local products

Growing Through the Seasons – Gardening Course (Frank and Libby Ruljancich)

- Lives in Deer Park on Arrow Lake
- Over 30 years ago embarked on an effort to grow as much food as they could for themselves
- Now offering these skills and lessons through the course (now in it's second year)
- Huge interest and good feedback from last year's participants
- Lessons consist of; soil, starting plants, grafting/pruning/training of fruit trees, season extension, harvesting, canning, freezing, drying, seed saving
- Achille Lalonde is now offering a similar course in Blewett because Growing Through the Seasons is full. Frank and Libby will be participating.

Nelson Urban Acres – (Paul Hoepfner-Homme)

- Alongside Christoph Martens, NUA will be embarking on their first year operating an urban farm under an acre in size
- Using the SPIN (Small Plot Intensive) model started by Wally Satzewich and Roxanne Christensson whereby the land does not have to be owned by the farmers (thereby bypassing land access difficulties)
- Both Paul and Christoph have experience growing food
- The farm will be spread out over a number of pieces of land and they are still seeking plots (preferably already cultivated)
- They plan to sell their product at the community markets

Ellison's Market – SueAnne Smith

- Been in operation for 32 years
- Offers organic produce section w/ many local growers
- Would like to see more local products in the future and in particular throughout the winter
- Also provides a lot of garden supplies, seeds, manure, worm-castings
- Has observed a huge influx of people who have never gardened before now wanting to garden

Preserved Seed Café / Mount Sentinel Farm (Nadiv, Chets-Rashone)

- Arrived in Kootenay region 8 years ago and settled on farm at Slocan Junction
- Spiritual community of 30 people (7 families and single people) living on farm and operates the café in Nelson
- Made up of people of different backgrounds who have come together to form a tight-knit community
- On the farm, the work is shared, the money is shared and possessions are shared
- Believes the model of their community is a model for others to look to as an example
- Working on restoring the farm
- Sends compostables from the Café to the farm and provides food for Café from farm
- Believes food security has everything to do with human relationships

Backyard Chickens – (Valerie Sanderson)

- Spearheading initiative to legalize the raising of chickens in Nelson
- Is exploring how other municipalities have dealt with issue
- Has communicated with two City councillors and spoken with Mayor
- Both councillors are in support but Mayor is concerned with chickens as a wildlife attractant, impact on local businesses, impact on city departments w/ complaints
- Has launched on-line blog www.nelsonchickens.com

Rosemont School Garden (Monica Nissen)

- Planted a seed of an idea to construct a garden at Rosemont School

Abra Brynne – Foodshed Animator

- Has had her hand in many food related projects/groups over the past 15 years
- Currently working on Building Community Food Security through Bits & Bytes project (w/Interior Health) and has developed a wealth of on-line resources at www.bitsandbytes.ca
- Also works with the BC Food Processors Association on the meat inspection regulation changes implemented in October 2007. Works with communities in the southern part of the province wanting local meat processing facilities to meet the new requirements.
- Is a founding member of the BC Food Systems network and currently the communications coordinator. They are developing a provincial election toolkit.
- One of two BC animators for Food Secure Canada's People's Food Policy Project.

Community Futures (Joe Karthein)

- CF is supportive of food based businesses and at a recent visioning session, CF was very supportive of community-based agriculture and food projects
- CF can help producers by offering general business counselling
- Can offer specific food industry advice as many CF counsellors have experience operating their own food-based businesses
- CF offers a self-employment program for people recently on Employment Insurance
- Offers a business-book library (food focus too)
- Since 1984 CF has assisted 70 food-based businesses in the Central Kootenay region

Upper Columbia Co-operative Council (Robert Agnew)

- Suggests that cooperation via co-operatives is an ideal model to protect communities from irresponsible capitalist models
- The Council was created a couple of years ago and incorporated in the fall of '08 to help people think about cooperation and how to connect people with others involved in the co-operative movement
- Members of a co-operative can exercise a democratic right to determine the direction of the co-operative
- There are over 80 incorporated co-operatives in the Kootenays
- There are consumer co-operatives, worker co-operatives, producer/marketing co-operatives, multi-stakeholder co-operatives, supply co-operatives
- In the coming years the UCCC hopes to hold events to raise awareness about co-ops; bring current and future co-ops together; share experiences/skills; develop partnerships

- Would like to develop templates for land-sharing, resource sharing, trade, barter.
- Co-ops have a triple bottom line (economic, social, environmental)
- First AGM on May 7

Kootenay Lake Sailing Association

- Involved in transporting approx 5,000lbs of grain via a fleet of four boats from the Creston Valley in fall '08 as part of the Grain CSA
- There are a lot of members of the Association who are very much in support of the local food movement
- Believes the lake is an ideal natural corridor for movement of goods
- Hopes to involve a dozen boats for transporting the coming grain harvest
- There are some sailors interested to discuss transporting more food from other farmers up and down the lake and maybe selling it on the dock in Nelson

Sharing Backyards (Paul Craig)

- Was inspired by how Cuba responded to their food crisis and wants to bring the community of Nelson to similarly share resources, tools, seeds
- Hopes it would morph into community gardens, education

Achille Lalonde

- Is documenting the local food movement through film and encourages those involved to share their work with him

Central School Garden / Kootenay Citizens for Alternatives to Pesticides (Jennie Barron)

Central School

- Jennie is a parent/volunteer among the Wildflower students at the school
- Over the past couple of years has worked with students/teachers to transform an asphalt surface into a greenspace including lawn and raised beds
- In its first year, the beds included perennials incl. some food plants (berries)
- Other beds were planted with corn, pumpkins, tomatoes, etc.
- Received compost from Earth Matters urban composting project
- The growing of food ended in baking pumpkin pie

Pesticides

- Had been involved in getting the municipal pesticide ban in place in Nelson
- "How To Get Your Lawns Of Grass" author Carol Rubin will be coming to Nelson on May 5

Osprey Foundation (Dave Elliot)

- Operating for 8 years and has raised \$5 million dollars
- Maintains a small food security fund (past funding; Eat Local Challenge, Nelson Food Cupboard, Our Daily Bread, Central School garden)
- Grants are approx. \$1,000

Deconstructing Dinner (Jon Steinman)

- Hopes that DD can expand the peripheral vision of the general public as to what is happening to the global and local food systems
- Has produced 129 episodes to date since the show launched in January 2006. Airs on 35 stations across Canada.

- Believes that the importance of communication has been lost yet the building of community is rooted in the same word as communication so both are one and the same.
- As an example of the power of communication and collaboration (the Eat Local Challenge (funded by Interior Health / Osprey Foundation) led to the Grain CSA which led to the Kootenay Harvest Revival (funded in part by CBT) which led to the Kootenay Lake Sailing Association sailing the grain which led to media coverage on the CBC/Western Producer/etc. which led to a BC publisher suggesting that Matt Lowe and Jon Steinman author a book on the CSA)
- Will be continuing more public speaking engagements locally and abroad
- Sits on Board of Kootenay Country Store Co-operative (chairs EcoInnovation Committee)
- Involved in Grain CSA
- Sits on steering committee of Community Food Matters
- Involved in GE Free Kootenays

G.E. Free Kootenays (Jon Steinman)

- Group of five core people and maintains communication with Kaslo, Rossland, Creston, Vancouver, Castlegar)
- Umbrella group is KFSS and GE Free BC
- CFM hosted meeting in November 2007 to begin discussing how GE Free zone could be approached
- Currently working on introduction of GE Free resolutions to city councils.
- City of Nelson and Village of Kaslo are now both GE Free communities
- Will continue to approach municipalities
- Will engage in dialogue w/ Creston Valley farmers who grow GE and will present them with alternatives (Grain CSA collaboration)
- Percy Schmeiser will be speaking in Creston in September 2009 and hopefully a smaller meeting will follow w/farmers
- Grand Forks or Nelson as possible second venue for tour
- Maintains a presence on the KFSS web page
- GE Free Zones audio series on Deconstructing Dinner