

West Coast Food Security Emergency Plan



2025



ALBERNI-CLAYOQUOT
REGIONAL DISTRICT

Upland
agricultural consulting

Land Acknowledgement

Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District serves the communities of the central and west coast of Vancouver Island located on the ʔahahuuli (traditional territories) of the Nuuchahnulth Nations of Ahousaht, Ditidaht, Hesquiaht, Hupačasath, Huu-ay-aht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Toquaht, čišaaʔath (Tseshah), Uchucklesaht, and Yuuʔuʔiʔath. Since time immemorial, Nuuchahnulth Peoples have walked gently in these places where we live, work, learn, and play. We are committed to building relationships based on honour and ʔiisaak (respect), and we offer our gratitude.

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REGIONAL DISTRICT**

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Executive Summary

Purpose and Methods

The West Coast Food Security Emergency Plan (FSEP) was developed to improve the resilience of communities to food access disruptions caused by emergencies for the communities of Bamfield, Long Beach, Ucluelet, Tofino, and several Nuu-chah-nulth Nations. These areas face unique vulnerabilities due to geographic isolation, reliance on single access roads, tsunami threats, and exposure to climate-driven hazards such as wildfires, droughts, and floods. Both the 2023 Cameron Lake wildfire and prolonged closure of Highway 4 and the 2025 Mount Arrowsmith wildfire and prolonged closure of the Franklin River Rd. demonstrated the severity of these vulnerabilities, leading to economic losses and heightened community concern about both short-term and long-term community food security. This plan responds to these realities by providing a framework that links emergency preparedness with long-term strategies for strengthening local food systems.

To create the FSEP, the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD) collaborated with the District of Tofino, District of Ucluelet, Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ, Huu-ay-aht First Nations, and Toquaht Nation. Building on previous regional food security initiatives, the FSEP aims to:

- Identify opportunities for the ACRD to support community food security in emergency preparedness and response;
- Determine food security priorities for the West Coast communities; and
- Develop recommendations to support community food resiliency across the region.

The project took place between 2024 and 2025 and was informed by technical research and extensive engagement. Supporting reports, including a *Background Report* and a *What We Heard Engagement Summary Report*, provided the foundation for the FSEP's recommendations. Multiple methods were used to build a comprehensive understanding of food security challenges and opportunities. First, a review of existing reports, strategies, and policy documents provided the foundation for identifying systemic gaps and lessons from past emergencies. In-person engagement activities involved Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ, Huu-ay-aht First Nations, Toquaht Nation, businesses, food security organizations, and local government representatives. Through interviews, presentations, workshops, and surveys, the project team gained critical insights into past and current food system challenges, community food assets, and the gaps and opportunities for both short-term emergency response and long-term resilience. Finally, draft recommendations were refined with partner feedback and organized by timelines, resource levels, and priority actions to create a practical implementation roadmap. Together, these methods created a holistic assessment of West Coast food systems, balancing technical data with community knowledge.

Results and Recommendations

A range of hazards threaten food security on the West Coast communities of the ACRD. Tsunamis and fires can cut off key road access, flooding and power outages can damage infrastructure and lead to food and drinking water contamination. Supply chain disruptions from earthquakes, landslides, pandemics, or severe weather can limit deliveries, creating shortages and price spikes, with remote communities like Bamfield particularly vulnerable. Wildfires pose comparable risks, closing transportation corridors, causing power outages and disrupting deliveries, while also preventing the ability of local seafood and tourism-based food enterprises to conduct business operations. Droughts add another layer of stress by restricting water needed for community gardens and seafood processing, while also harming salmon runs that underpin

both ecosystems and food systems. Collectively, these hazards reduce food access, affordability, and reliability, underscoring the urgent need for improved emergency planning and resilient local food infrastructure.

Land-based food production in the region is minimal, with only one active farm and scattered community gardens. By contrast, marine resources are abundant, with over 15,000 tonnes of seafood harvested annually. However, most of this is exported from the region, and limited local processing or storage infrastructure restricts the ability to retain and distribute seafood for community consumption. This paradox highlights the gap between natural food resources and local food security, and the importance of shifting infrastructure and policy to support local access.

Engagement with community members and organizations reinforced these findings. Residents and businesses acknowledged that the food supply is fragile during road closures, power outages, and extreme weather. Roles and responsibilities for food distribution during emergencies are unclear, and communication systems, cell towers, tsunami sirens, and emergency radios are fragmented and in some cases unreliable. While food businesses and organizations often step up informally during crises, there is no formal coordination framework. At the same time, participants identified a strong willingness to collaborate with local governments during emergencies. There is recognition that fisheries, restaurants, resorts, and processing facilities could play larger roles in emergency food access, but they need clearer protocols, resources, and support.

Given the region's vulnerabilities to hazards, limited food self-sufficiency, and dependence on external supply chains, the recommendations in this report aim to strengthen resilience and ensure more reliable access to food during emergencies. The FSEP recommendations are grounded in both technical research and extensive community engagement, reflecting the realities of the West Coast communities' food systems. They are designed to be practical for regional, municipal, and First Nation governments to implement within their authority. Each recommendation identifies lead and supporting actors, timelines, resource needs, and priority levels to guide action implementation.

To provide clarity, the actions are grouped into three categories: emergency preparedness, long-term food security, and support for Indigenous food sovereignty, as described below.

Food Security Emergency Management Planning and Preparedness Actions: These actions focus on emergency preparedness, response planning, and communication to help manage food security during a crisis. Appropriate planning and preparedness ensure a community can respond effectively to food disruptions when they occur.

The actions are:

- Create a food distribution strategy between local governments, food banks, food security organizations and other actors to activate during an emergency.
- Advocate for more cell service and broad band connectivity throughout the Highway 4 corridor, Pacific Rim Highway, Franklin River Road, Bamfield, and for tsunami siren upgrades in Bamfield.
- Consider if food storage needs and distribution logistics are adequate at Emergency Reception Centres.
- Explore emergency food storage on Airport Lands in Long Beach and in Bamfield.
- Engage with the tourism sector about emergency planning and food needs.
- Engage with the BMSC about emergency planning and food needs in Bamfield.

- Advocate for alternative emergency routes into and out of West Coast communities.
- Collaborate with relevant partners to support food business continuity planning efforts.
- Conduct a post-disaster assessment of impacts to food security.
- Support funding for backup generators/ secondary power sources for cold storage, emergency reception centres and other critical food assets.

Long-term Food Security Actions for Increased Community Food Resiliency: These actions focus on long-term solutions to reduce food insecurity risks at the community level. They focus on supporting increased resilience of the local food system and supporting organizations and committees working towards enhancing regional food security.

The actions are:

- Promote increased utilization of publicly-owned land for agriculture and food growing.
- Support existing and new food and seafood processing businesses.
- Continue to support organizations working on public education related to food security and advisory committees.
- Work towards long-term water security.
- Support the establishment of refrigerated and frozen cold storage space with backup generators outside of the tsunami inundation zone.
- Showcase local organizations and businesses working towards food security
- Continue and expand the waste diversion program to create high quality soil amendments.
- Support regional collaboration and learning opportunities.

Actions to Support First Nations' Food Sovereignty and Emergency Food Security: These actions focus on how the ACRD can support First Nations in long-term food sovereignty and shorter-term emergency food security.

The actions are:

- Explore permanent funding sources for staff positions to increase programming related to food production, preservation and food sovereignty.
- Pursue grant funding applications to expand infrastructure, equipment and training related to food sovereignty and emergency food security.

Acronyms

ACRD	Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District
ALR	Agricultural Land Reserve
BCCDC	BC Centre for Disease Control
BCS	Bamfield Community School
BCSA	Bamfield Community School Association
BMSC	Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre
CBT	Clayoquot Biosphere Trust
CBT-EWC	Clayoquot Biosphere Trust – Eat West Coast
CFR	Coastal Foods Roundtable
DoT	District of Tofino
DoU	District of Ucluelet
EA	Electoral Areas
EOC	Emergency Operations Centre
ESS	Emergency Support Services
FSEP	Food Security Emergency Plan
Ha	Hectares
HFN	Huu-ay-aht First Nations
OCP	Official Community Plan
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TCFI	Tofino Community Food Initiative
TCH	Tofino Community Hall
TN	Toquaht Nation
TUCG	Tofino Ucluelet Culinary Guild
UFN	Ucluelet First Nation
USS	Ucluelet Secondary School
YG	Yuuʔuʔifʔath Government

Glossary and Key Concepts

The following are key concepts and definitions important for a reader to understand when discussing food security. This terminology will be used throughout the *West Coast Food Security Emergency Plan*.

Emergency: an event that has occurred, is ongoing or appears imminent and is caused by one or more incident of accident, fire, security threat, etc., or by the forces of nature and requires prompt coordination of action or special regulation of persons or property to protect the health, safety or welfare of a person or animals or the safety of property or of objects or sites of heritage value.¹

Food Assets: beneficial components to a food system; they are places and organizations where people can grow, prepare, share, buy, receive or learn about food.²

Table 1. List of common food asset terminology and examples of each.

Food Asset	Examples
Food production, hunting, fishing, and foraging	Farmland, community gardens, parks, ocean, lakes, forests.
Food sources	Grocery stores, farmers' markets, restaurants, food banks, food hampers, and meal programs.
Food organizations	Organizations involved in food rescue, recovery, redistribution, food literacy and education, and food advocacy.
Food waste management	Composting and curbside food collection services.
Food processing facilities	Packing houses, community kitchens, cold storage, commissary kitchens, food hubs.
Community food economy and food culture	Harvest/food festivals, food trucks and mobile food markets, farmers markets, agri-tourism.
Community food literacy	School gardens, cooking classes, recipe sharing, food processing classes, seed libraries, food hub and shared kitchens.

Source: Urban Food Strategies, Community Food System Planning Strategies

Food Literacy: the ability of an individual to understand food in a way that they develop a positive relationship with it, including food skills and practices across their lifespan in order to navigate, engage, and participate within a complex food system. It's the ability to make decisions to support the achievement of personal health and a sustainable food system considering environmental, social, economic, cultural, and political components.³

Food Security: encompasses many interdependent aspects of society, not only meaning that everyone has equitable access to food that is affordable, culturally preferable, nutritious and safe; but that everyone has the agency to participate in and influence food systems; and that food systems are resilient, ecologically

¹ Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (2024). [Disaster and Emergency Management Plan](#).

² K. Romses (2017). [Vancouver Food Asset Map Glossary](#). Vancouver Coastal Health.

³ T. Cullen, J. Hatch, W. Martin, J. Wharf Higgins, and R. Sheppard (2015). [Food Literacy: Definition and Framework for Action](#). *Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research*. 76(3): 140-145.

sustainable, socially just, and honour Indigenous food sovereignty.⁴ Food security can be viewed at both a community level and a household level. For this work, the community level is the main focus.

Community Level Food Security

Community food security arises when all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice.⁵

Household Level Food Security

Household food security reflects the ability of individuals and families to consistently access and utilize adequate, nutritious food that supports health and wellbeing. It is shaped by a combination of external factors—such as income, geography, and policy—and internal factors, including food literacy, budgeting, and coping strategies. Both structural conditions and household-level capacities influence overall food security.

Hazard: a circumstance, condition, process, phenomenon, activity or prescribed type of thing, whether natural or human-caused, that may give rise to an emergency.⁶

Indigenous Food Sovereignty: refers to the rights of Indigenous peoples to self-define food systems. It encompasses the ability to control and manage food sources, production, and distribution according to cultural traditions, ecological knowledge, and social needs. This concept is deeply rooted in the connection between Indigenous communities and lands, water, and ecosystems, and emphasizes the importance of self-determination and cultural integrity.⁷

Food System: encompasses the entire range of actors and their interlinked value-adding activities involved in the production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption and disposal of food products that originate from agriculture, forestry or fisheries, and parts of the broader economic, societal and natural environments in which they are embedded.⁸

⁴ BC Centre for Disease Control (2022). [Defining Food Security and Food Insecurity in British Columbia](#).

⁵ Hamm, M.; Bellows, A. (2003). Community Food Security and Nutrition Educators. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* 35 (1): 37–43.

⁶ Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (2024). [Disaster and Emergency Management Plan](#).

⁷ Island Indigenous Foods Gathering. (2024). Summary Report and Conclusions from a Multiple-Community Roundtable Discussion.

⁸ UN Food and Agriculture Organization (2018). [Sustainable food systems: Concept and Framework](#).

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1.0 Project Background

In recent years, food security and resiliency have become increasingly urgent issues in the Alberni Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD). The region faces emergencies exacerbated by climate change, such as drought, flooding, wildfires, and supply chain disruptions, as well as ongoing earthquake and tsunami risk. These events not only threaten the health and safety of residents but also impact agricultural producers, fishers, food distribution systems, and transportation corridors, creating additional challenges for the region and its residents. While the ACRD's geography contributes to its natural beauty, it also creates structural vulnerabilities in the regional food system. Limited road access, the absence of active railways, seismic risks, and mountainous terrain edged by a rugged coastline and river systems all pose challenges to food security and emergency preparedness.

In 2023, the region experienced drought, wildfires, and prolonged closures of Highway 4, which led to short-term food shortages. These events gave residents of West Coast communities (Electoral Area 'A' (Bamfield) (Figure 1), Electoral Area 'C' (Long Beach), the District of Ucluelet, the District of Tofino, and surrounding First Nations communities) firsthand experience of what it could mean to live in a food-insecure community. Additionally, short-term power outages and road blockages from downed trees, fallen rocks and localized flooding occur regularly each year. Most recently, the Mount Underwood wildfire of summer 2025 resulted in a months-long closure of the Bamfield Road, requiring residents to drive hours on logging roads to reach Port Alberni for supplies and appointments even long after the fire itself was under control. With climate change continuing to intensify these risks, and the tsunami threat ongoing, there is a growing need to identify the gaps and opportunities that will strengthen local food system resilience.

This *West Coast Food Security Emergency Plan (FSEP)* builds on past efforts by the ACRD and local organizations to support a stronger regional food system. The objectives of this project are to:

- Identify opportunities for the ACRD to support community food security in emergency preparedness and response;
- Determine food security priorities for West Coast communities and collaborating First Nations; and
- Develop recommendations to support community food resiliency across the region.

This project was led by the ACRD, in collaboration with the District of Tofino, District of Ucluelet and Ucluelet First Nation, with discussions occurring with Huu-ay-aht First Nations and Toquaht Nation. These partners helped guide the project to ensure it reflects local priorities and Indigenous perspectives on food sovereignty and emergency preparedness. In parallel with this work, a separate *Alberni Valley Food Security Emergency Plan* was developed to address the distinct geographic, climatic, and agricultural considerations of the Alberni Valley. Together, these plans provide a coordinated framework to enhance food security and emergency readiness across the entire ACRD.



Figure 1. View from the Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre.

1.1 Project Timeline and Documents

The project began in the Summer of 2024 and finished in December 2025 (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Timeline of project milestones.

Two accompanying documents were created as part of the project and help to inform the recommendations presented in this report.

1. ACRD Food Security Emergency Planning Background Report

This report provides essential background for the West Coast FSEP. Building on prior work by the ACRD and community partners, the report includes a review of relevant policy documents and an overview of food security infrastructure across the region. The report examines projected climate change impacts, assesses hazards and vulnerabilities and presents a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis for food security in the ACRD. Some of the key documents reviewed to inform the West Coast context of this report are:

- [ACRD Disaster and Emergency Management Plan](#). (2024). Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District.
- Summary Report and Conclusions from a Multiple-Community Roundtable Discussion. (2024). Island Indigenous Foods Gathering.
- [Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Region's Vital Signs Report](#). (2023). Clayoquot Biosphere Trust.
- [Sovereign at heart: photovoice, food mapping and giving back in Alberni-Clayoquot](#). (2023). Curtis, M. J., Bulkan, J., & Soma, T.
- [Risk and Vulnerability Assessment to the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District](#). (2023). Calian Emergency Management Solutions.
- Nuu-chah-nulth Food Sovereignty - Learnings of the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District. (2022). Keefer Ecological Services Ltd.

- Octopus Garden Summary Package. (2021). Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District.
- [Strategic Priorities and Plan, 2020 and beyond](#). (2020). ACRD: Coastal Agricultural Roundtable.
- [Vancouver Island Adaptation Strategies Plan](#). (2020).BC Agriculture and Food Climate Change Adaptation Program.
- [Coastal Addendum to the Alberni Agriculture Plan](#). (2018). Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District.
- [Support for Shellfish and Marine Plant Culture in the ACRD](#). (2016). Robert Gunn.
- [Clayoquot Biosphere Region Food Action Plan](#). (2010). Ucluelet Community Food Initiative, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust.

2. What We Heard – Engagement Summary Report

This report outlines the engagement activities carried out during the project since the project kick off in June 2024. Engagement activities including in-person events (Figure 3) hosted, meetings and surveys are presented in chronological order. Key themes, gaps and opportunities identified through these engagement activities are organized by region, with separate sections for Alberni Valley and West Coast, and specific subsections for each collaborating municipality and First Nation. Finally, the report outlines the next steps for engagement, during which the project team will present a draft of the FSEP to communities and invite their feedback.



Figure 3. Engagement event in Ucluelet.

2.0 Geographic and Food Security Context

The West Coast communities in the ACRD are home to a population of approximately 7,200 residents.⁹ The region includes Electoral Area (EA) 'A' (Bamfield) and EA 'C' (Long Beach) and the District of Ucluelet and District of Tofino (Figure 4). The Districts of Tofino and Ucluelet are the major population centres that serve as service hubs on the coast. The traditional unceded territory of several Nuu-chah-nulth speaking First Nations overlap with this project's area and three Maa-nulth Treaty Nations - Toquaht Nation, Huu-ay-aht First Nations and Ucluelet First Nation - have territorial claims along the West Coast and many residential villages and cultural assets are located in this area. The region is an internationally recognized tourist destination and designated as a UNESCO biosphere region; as such, hundreds of thousands (600,000-750,000) of visitors come to the region annually.¹⁰

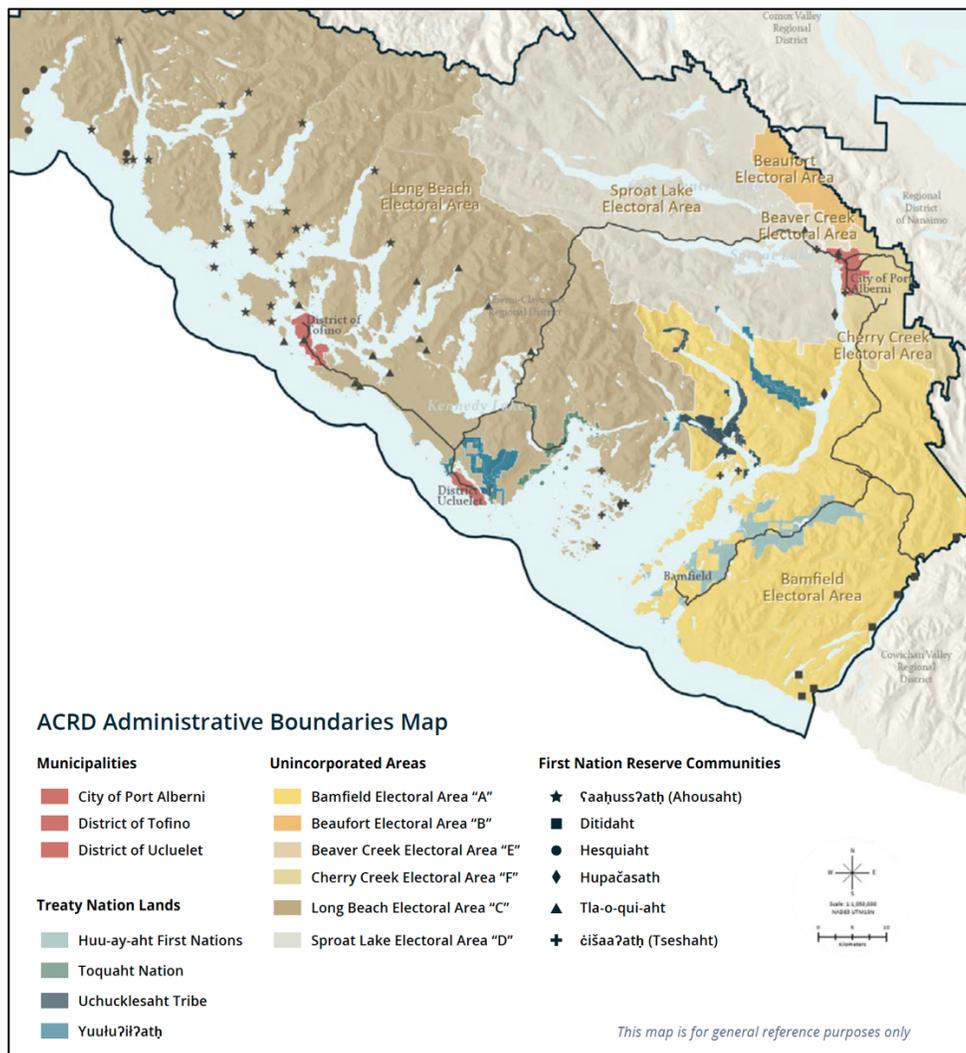


Figure 4. ACRD Administrative Boundaries.¹¹

⁹ Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District. (2021). [Population Statistics](#).

¹⁰ Dodds, R. (2023). [Sustainable Tourism: A Hope or a Necessity? The Case of Tofino, British Columbia, Canada](#).

¹¹ Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (2024). [ACRD Strategic Plan](#).

2.1 Food Security Infrastructure and Organizations

The West Coast region faces distinct food security challenges and opportunities due to its coastal location, limited agricultural capacity, dependence on a single access road, and large seasonal tourist population. Only one active farm produces a small amount of vegetables, as soil, topography, and climate limit land-based agriculture. Nonetheless, some food is grown in community gardens and backyards, often with the use of greenhouses and small hoop houses. The coastal location provides access to diverse seafood species, which could greatly enhance local food security, but regulatory, economic, and processing barriers restrict the availability of locally caught seafood for local consumption. This section describes some of the current food retail and infrastructure, as well as organizations supporting food security in West Coast communities.

Several initiatives and organizations work region-wide to support food security. These include:

- The Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (CBT): CBT supports food security in the region through initiatives like Eat West Coast (CBT-EWC), promoting food preservation, sharing of Indigenous and local food knowledge, and community capacity building to ensure year-round access to healthy and traditional foods. A key infrastructure asset that is in the process of being constructed is the Clayoquot Biosphere Centre, which will include a teaching kitchen designed to support food education, preservation, and local food system development, overall strengthening community resilience and food sovereignty.¹²
- The Coastal Foods Roundtable (CFR): this working group is facilitated by the Tofino Community Food Initiative with support from the ACRD and meets regularly to bring members of the region together to discuss challenges and opportunities to support coastal food security and agricultural growth.¹³
- The Tofino Community Food Initiative (TCFI): TCFI develops and delivers programs that increase food growing and food security for people of Tofino and surrounding communities. They deliver educational programs, coordinate and host public events, increase access to locally grown foods and promote food security in the Clayoquot region.¹⁴
- The Tofino Ucluelet Culinary Guild (TUCG): TUCG connects local farmers, fishers, and food producers with restaurants, businesses, and households in Tofino and Ucluelet. Through its cooperative buying programs, online market, and community initiatives like the Seasonal Box Program, TUCG makes fresh, local, and affordable food more accessible while supporting small-scale producers and reducing food waste. Beyond distribution, TUCG fosters food literacy and community resilience by hosting workshops, donating to food banks and hospices, and promoting sustainable, seasonally driven eating practices that strengthen the region's local food system and cultural food knowledge.

District of Tofino

There is one main grocer in Tofino, the Co-op, and a few other smaller specialty grocery stores serving residents and the high influx of seasonal tourists. The Co-op is a locally run business which prides itself on providing food to the community. During the 2023 Cameron Lake Wildfire, the Co-op was quick to bring supplies in through the alternate transportation route once it was established. While it's challenging to quantify the number of food businesses in Tofino, Tourism Tofino lists 53 businesses under the food & drink

¹² Clayoquot Biosphere Trust. (2025). [Eat West Coast](#).

¹³ Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District. (2024) [Terms of Reference: Coastal Foods Roundtable](#).

¹⁴ Tofino Community Food Initiative. (2025). [About Us webpage](#).

category and over 90 locations available for lodging near the town, which serve tourists year-round.^{15,16} Some of the tourist accommodations have commercial kitchens for food preparation and storage. Multiple seafood processing facilities are located in Tofino, with some selling locally. The majority of the fish caught and seafood harvested in the waters along the West Coast are transported directly to Vancouver for processing.

Organizations working to support food security include the Tofino Community Food Initiative (TCFI) and the Fish and Loaves Food Bank. The TCFI is a local nonprofit that actively promotes collective knowledge around growing food and sustainable food practices and runs the Wickanninish School garden. TCFI supports good-growing programs and community gardens (Figure 5), helping residents increase local food production despite challenges posed by limited soil quality and high land costs. Additionally, Tofino's Fish and Loaves Food Bank serve the community by providing free food; open to the public weekly, it offers a variety of fresh and staple foods and also delivers to those unable to attend in person, ensuring broader access to vital resources for vulnerable individuals and families.¹⁷



Figure 5. Tofino community garden, used for educational programs and skill building.¹⁸

With respect to emergency food security and preparedness, the Tofino Community Hall is the designated emergency reception centre and has a fully equipped commercial kitchen.¹⁹ Freeze-dried food supplies are stored nearby at the local hospital to support local food security during a prolonged emergency. If an emergency occurs during the seasonal influx of tourists, the emergency reception centre and food system would likely be strained since many tourist accommodations (e.g. Airbnb's, accommodations without a

¹⁵ Tourism Tofino. (2025). [Food & Drink](#).

¹⁶ Tourism Tofino. (2025). [Find a Business: Accommodation](#).

¹⁷ West Coast Community Resources Society.(2025) [Fish & Loaves](#).

¹⁸ Tofino Community Food Initiative. (2025). [About Us webpage](#).

¹⁹ District of Tofino (2025). [Emergency Reception Centre](#).

commercial kitchen) don't have onsite emergency food storage for guests, so would be reliant on the limited food retail options in Tofino or would register at the reception centre.

District of Ucluelet

Central to local food retail in Ucluelet is the Co-op Grocery Store, which offers groceries, fresh produce, a deli, a meat department, and additional services such as a pharmacy and garden center, serving as a key food hub in the community.²⁰ The Co-op has recently acquired a Growcer modular hydroponic unit, used to grow fresh produce in a temperature controlled environment.²¹ The unit aims to provide year-round access to fresh greens and contribute to raising community awareness and engagement around local food production. There is also a local microgreens business providing fresh, on-demand microgreens to customers.²² Numerous restaurants, cafes, bakeries, and food trucks contribute to an active culinary scene featuring locally-sourced seafood, foraged goods, and regional agricultural products.²³ A few seafood processing and retail businesses are operating which sell fish and seafood locally. Discover Ucluelet has listed over 90 businesses available for accommodation in the District, with some having commercial kitchens to serve their guests.²⁴ The District of Ucluelet has provided land for the construction of a new facility for Food Bank On the Edge. This new food bank facility will be larger to serve more of the community and is located outside the tsunami inundation zone.²⁵

In terms of emergency food security and preparedness, the District of Ucluelet has designated their community centre as the emergency response centre and there is a fully equipped kitchen and space for food storage. However, because the community centre lies within the tsunami inundation zone, the high school, located on higher ground and also equipped with a full kitchen, has been designated as the emergency response centre in the event of a tsunami.²⁶ The firehall has storage of some freeze-dried emergency food to be distributed in the event of an emergency. If an emergency occurs during the seasonal influx of tourists, the emergency reception centres and food system would likely be strained, as many tourist accommodations don't have onsite emergency food storage for guests, so they would be reliant on the limited food retail options in Ucluelet or would register at the reception centre.

Electoral Area 'C' (Long Beach)

Electoral Area 'C' (Long Beach) is located between Tofino and Ucluelet and includes smaller settlements and Indigenous communities, with a mix of residential and rural land uses. While food stores are not present within Area 'C' itself, residents have access to food retailers and services nearby in Tofino and Ucluelet. There is currently a small-scale farm operating on the airport lands owned by the ACRD in this region. The farm produces vegetables for sale locally. Unlike other EAs in the ACRD, Long Beach does not have a designated community centre, secondary school, or other infrastructure which often contains a large-scale kitchen that can be used for emergency food preparation. There are no food storage facilities, such as commercial cold storage units or food warehouses, within the Long Beach area itself. This is, in part, because much of the area is within the Pacific Rim National Park and crown provincial land. During the

²⁰ Discover Ucluelet. (2025) [Ucluelet Co-op Grocery Store](#).

²¹ Ucluelet Co-op (2025). [Growing Green: Welcoming Growcer](#).

²² Nyce Nursery (2025) [Home website](#).

²³ Wanderlog (2025) [Where to Eat](#).

²⁴ Discover Ucluelet (2025) [Accommodations in Ucluelet](#).

²⁵ Tofino Ucluelet Westerly (2025). [Ucluelet cheers as new food bank lands in Ucluelet](#).

²⁶ District of Ucluelet. (2025) [District of Ucluelet Community Map](#).

summer months thousands of tourists visit this region each day, a small number camp at designated camping areas, but most return to their lodgings in Tofino or Ucluelet. This EA is also home to the West Coast Landfill, which collects refuse from the region's organics diversion program and turns it into compost which can then be purchased by area growers and gardeners to supplement the area's low fertility native soil.

Electoral Area 'A' (Bamfield)

Electoral Area 'A' (Bamfield) is accessible only by boat, floatplane and a chip-sealed logging road (from Port Alberni) or graveled logging roads (from Cowichan Valley) via and home to both a year-round population and seasonal residents and tourists. The community is unique in that its main street is the Bamfield Inlet, which connects to Barkley Sound, meaning that road access only exists to the east side of Bamfield and the west side of the community is boat-access only. This can further complicate food access and distribution. Bamfield is surrounded by the Treaty lands of Huu-ay-aht First Nations (see section 7.2 for more details about HFN).

Bamfield has a modest but vital set of food security assets within the community. The main food retail option for residents and visitors on the east side is the Market & Café, a fully licensed grocery store that operates year-round and offers a limited selection of groceries, baked goods, and other provisions as well as a walk-up restaurant.²⁷ This store serves as a central hub for food access in the community, also providing essential amenities such as public toilets, a pay phone and an ATM. Located in West Bamfield, the Bamfield Mercantile and Marine is the other available food retailer, also licensed, and the community also has a couple of restaurants, Flora's and the Bamfield Wreckage. Food supplies are delivered into both East and West Bamfield by the ship Frances Barkley, weather permitting.²⁸ The Frances Barkley plays a critical role in maintaining consistent food access, particularly during periods when road travel is unsafe or unavailable. To accommodate tourism in Bamfield, there are 10 facilities listed by Visit Bamfield for year-round accommodation and the Pachena Bay campground for additional tourism in the summer.²⁹

Its coastal location and reliance on marine and limited road access make it particularly vulnerable to disruptions in food delivery and emergency services, which is why important steps towards storing emergency supplies of food in the community have already occurred. Emergency preparedness infrastructure in Bamfield includes several key assets distributed across the community. While the new community centre under construction is expected to contain a shared-use kitchen and food processing space, details regarding emergency features like generators or backup storage remain unconfirmed.

The Bamfield Community School, designated as the community's emergency response centre and helicopter landing zone, has a small stockpile of emergency supplies, including over 200 freeze-dried meals, cots and a satellite phone. The school runs a hot-lunch program supported by a full kitchen equipped with a dishwasher and sanitizer, despite its small size. It also has a small teaching garden (Figure 6) and plans for a greenhouse to increase food production for its student meal program. Although the school is an important food and emergency hub, it is located within the tsunami inundation zone. Additional emergency limitations include a lack of wiring to support a generator and a tsunami siren that is reportedly too quiet to hear from the school yard.

²⁷ Visit Bamfield (2025). [The Market & Café](#).

²⁸ Lady Rose Marine (2025). [Sailings information webpage](#).

²⁹ Visit Bamfield (2025). [Places to Stay](#).

The Bamfield Fire Hall is also identified as an emergency asset, storing Island Health supplies and functioning as a temporary emergency clinic, as well as housing some of Bamfield’s emergency support services (ESS) supplies. They have plans to house enough food and water to support both residents and tourists for 3-4 days. Water filtration resources include a large community-sized LifeStraw.

Though not typically accessible to the public, the Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre (BMSC) represents a critical asset for emergency food response and preparedness planning. The BMSC has significant infrastructure including a large commercial kitchen, walk-in fridge and freezer, chest freezers as well as fuel and water systems, including a 120,000-litre freshwater tank with plans to expand water storage capacity. The cafeteria building has a meal service capacity for up to 150 people and is located above the tsunami zone (20 metres). In addition to food and water stores, the BMSC has accommodations, a fleet of boats, an outfitted nursing room, AEDs and vehicles that can transport patients in emergencies. The BMSC team has participated in provincial drills like the BC Shakeout and has space available to host a 20-ft emergency seacan. The school, fire hall, community centre and BMSC are all located on the east side of Bamfield, inaccessible by west side residents except by boat. During the 2025 Mount Underwood fire, the BMSC became a provincially funded resilience centre, offering residents shower facilities and other supports.



Figure 6. Bamfield Community School garden, April 2025.

3.0 Emergency Management Planning and Hazard Impacts to Food Security

In 2024, the ACRD updated their regional Disaster and Emergency Management Plan. The document serves as a critical guide, providing clear direction on how ACRD and relevant partners will work together to respond effectively, manage resources, and support those affected during and after an emergency.³⁰ Emergency management encompasses four phases, including mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. Effective emergency management is a shared responsibility and requires an all-sectors approach, necessitating collaboration across a broad spectrum of agencies and organizations at all levels of government. Best practices in disaster and emergency management emphasize the importance of collaboration and cooperation between local governments, First Nations, partner agencies and provincial bodies. This document, *West Coast FSEP*, aims to complement the Disaster and Emergency Management Plan by focusing on increasing food security and food access before, during and after an emergency.

Due to the geographic location of the West Coast and the impacts of a changing climate, there are numerous environmental hazards and other events that pose a threat to food security. The scope of this project includes examining the following hazards and disruptions: flooding (including tsunami), wildfire, drought and supply chain interruptions. Table 2 describes how these hazards may impact the food security of West Coast communities. While each event presents its own unique impacts on food security, overall, these events are similar in that repairs and recovery from each event may take time, affecting continued access and affordability of food.

Table 2. Hazards and potential impacts to food security in the West Coast communities of the ACRD.

Event	Potential Impacts to Food Security
Flooding: Tsunami, Overland, Riverine and Dam Breach flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation routes such as Highway 4 and the road from Port Alberni to Bamfield could be closed, limiting food access, while prolonged disruptions could impact water quality and seafood processing facilities, leading to both immediate and long-term food security challenges. Tourism driven demand spikes during summer months can worsen food shortages during supply chain delays. • Flooding can cause localized damage to food security infrastructure such as retailers, food storage and processing facilities, and food distribution centres/organizations. • Saltwater intrusion and debris from flooding or a tsunami could contaminate freshwater sources used for drinking, food preparation, and small-scale agriculture. • Power outages could lead to refrigeration failure and food loss. • Tsunamis, atmospheric rivers and king tides can cause large amounts of debris in the water, preventing boats from going out fishing or harvesting and from assisting boat-access only communities that may need help. The ocean is the closest large scale food supply for the ACRD should supply chains be interrupted long term, but harvesters need boats, fuel and safe passage to access harvesting grounds.
Supply Chain Disruption Events: Earthquakes, Landslides/ Debris flows, Severe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These events can cause damage to roads and critical infrastructure leading to supply chain disruptions. • Grocers may face delays/shortages in food supply, while damage to water systems/infrastructure could also impact local food processing. • Remote communities like Bamfield, which rely on some boat or floatplane access, are especially at risk of prolonged shortages during storms or marine transport disruptions. • Power outages could lead to refrigeration failure and food loss.

³⁰ Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District. (2024). [Disaster and Emergency Management Plan](#).

Weather, Global Pandemics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortages in essential items and increased prices could reduce food access. • Labour limitations for processing and transportation, as seen during COVID-19 could exacerbate issues, leading to prolonged food supply instability.
Wildfire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildfire along Highway 4 or the road from Port Alberni to Bamfield may cut off the West Coast from the rest of the Island, including Port Alberni. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This could cause disruptions to supply chains and limit access to food supplies, delaying food transport and deliveries (as seen in the 2023 Cameron Lake fire and the 2025 Mount Underwood fire). ○ Food retailers may face delivery shortages, and increased demand could impact affordability. • There are limited alternative evacuation routes from the Tofino-Ucluelet corridor and Bamfield, and the road conditions of the designated evacuation routes may make evacuation challenging, particularly during the seasonal influx of tourists.
Drought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Droughts occur during the high tourist season, which puts stress on local water systems. Water restrictions can limit water for community gardens, home food plots, and small-scale agriculture; reducing the small amount of locally grown fruits and vegetables available to residents. • Prolonged drought may reduce water availability for seafood processing businesses. • Prolonged drought and extreme heat conditions can significantly increase the risk of wildfires and intensify their associated impacts, as well as negatively affect spawning salmon, which are a keystone species of the ecosystem and food system, and adversely affect foraged seafood such as clams and oysters. • Droughts affect supply of forest-foraged foods, including mushrooms and berries, that are an important part of resident and Indigenous diets.

3.1 Impacts and Lessons Learned from Recent Emergency Events

Two recent events—the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2022) and the Cameron Lake wildfire (2023) — impacted West Coast communities and threatened regional food security. Their effects and the gaps they revealed offer important learning opportunities and help identify the supports needed to strengthen food security in the region. At the time of writing, the full effects of the Mount Underwood and Wesley Ridge wildfires had yet to be determined. The ACRD hosted a post-emergency meeting in October 2025 to discuss lessons learned, and the key findings from that report should inform the implementations of the recommendations presented in this West Coast Food Security Emergency Plan.

Global Pandemic: 2020-2022 COVID-19

From 2020 to 2022, the COVID-19 pandemic showcased the ease with which human disease can spread. It also exposed many vulnerabilities within critical supply chains, health systems, business and government operations, and produced significant global challenges. These geographically remote communities rely heavily on regular shipments for food and essential supplies. During the pandemic, transportation delays, ferry service interruptions, and supply chain disruptions made it difficult to maintain consistent access to food, particularly in smaller communities like Bamfield. The pandemic further exposed vulnerabilities in food supply chains, especially due to the temporary closures of processing plants, border slowdowns, and transportation challenges, which impacted the delivery of food to remote retailers. In addition, the

economic fallout from COVID-19 increased food insecurity across the West Coast, with particularly acute impacts on low-income households and remote communities.³¹

Residents, businesses, and food security organizations (such as food banks) in the Tofino-Ucluelet corridor and Bamfield adapted to conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic as best they could. For example, some restaurants were distributing food/meals and some fish processing facilities were making fish available for distribution locally. However, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted gaps in the regional food system that are ongoing to this day. Opportunities to fill these gaps include³²:

- Enhancing food system resilience through improved transportation networks and investing in cold chain infrastructure.
- Supporting local seafood and food processing businesses.
- Increasing dry and cold storage capacity.
- Supporting food banks and non-profits, and ensuring equitable access to nutritious food.
- Accelerating rural broadband deployment and cell service in rural areas.

Wildfire Events: 2023 Cameron Lake Wildfire and the 2025 Mount Underwood and Westly Ridge Fires

In recent years, key routes such as the Highway 4 and Franklin River Rd have been closed for multiple weeks due to wildfires. Although alternate routes are established for essential travel and movement of goods, these secondary roads and/or marine routes cause significant delays and restriction to the movement of goods and people. Temporary impacts to the food sector included a reduction in customers at local restaurants, challenges getting local seafood products to external markets, and reduced demand for regionally produced foods from tourists. Panic buying also occurred, leaving some shelves empty until supplies were brought in through the detour route. However, there was a sense that community members helped each other, demonstrating a strong spirit of sharing and support.

The economic impacts were significant. The road closure associated with the 2023 Cameron Lake Wildfire severely affected the tourism, hospitality, and supply chain sectors, resulting in an estimated \$14.5 million in lost revenue for Ucluelet area businesses and \$31.2 million lost in Tofino.³³ The event emphasized the critical need for infrastructure resilience, highlighting the vulnerability of the region to transportation disruptions and the economic strain on local businesses and residents. The three Chambers of Commerce in the ACRD commissioned a report that analyzed the impacts of this event on businesses and identified several solutions and next steps, including:³⁴

- Developing alternative business models that reduce the seasonality of local economies, especially in tourism and agriculture to help businesses be less vulnerable to seasonal hazards.
- Expanding emergency detour capacity and strengthening key sections of Highway 4; exploring alternative transportation options like ferry and air services to maintain connectivity during closures.
- Creating/strengthening interagency governance, logistical and communications systems and providing training and contingency planning.
- Establishing financial assistance and recovery programs for affected businesses.

³¹ BC Centre for Disease Control. (2024). [Examining the Societal Consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Provincial Health Officer's Annual Report](#).

³² Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District. (2020) [Covid Mitigation Action Plan](#).

³³ Alberni-Clayoquot Chambers of Commerce. (2024) [Highway 4 Disruption and Resiliency Solutions](#).

³⁴ Ibid.

- Improving communication channels among businesses, residents and visitors for timely information dissemination.
- Encouraging business continuity planning to help businesses adapt to disruptions; and
- Securing both short- and long-term funding mechanisms to support economic recovery.

These recommendations for infrastructure improvements, alternative transportation options, and enhanced emergency preparedness aim to ensure continued connectivity and supply chain resilience, which could help mitigate risks to food security during future disruptions. The Cameron Lake wildfire identified a need for collaborative efforts among chambers of commerce, local food organizations, economic trusts, and all levels of government to ensure long-term economic sustainability for West Coast communities.

While the full effects of the Mount Underwood and Wesley Ridge wildfires are still being assessed, any subsequent findings should inform the implementations of the recommendations presented in this Plan.

4.0 West Coast Food Supply vs Needs Assessment

An assessment was carried out to compare the existing food supply in West Coast communities with the needs of residents and to identify potential gaps during an emergency. It examined the region’s level of food self-reliance, the extent to which local land-based and seafood producers could meet community needs, and how long current food supplies could sustain the population in an emergency.

4.1 Estimating Food Availability in the Region

At any given moment, there are several locations where food is available and/or stored in West Coast communities, including:

- Individual households (e.g. backyard gardens, food from hunting, fishing, or foraging, and household pantries, refrigerators, and freezers),
- Retail suppliers such as grocery stores (e.g. Co-ops, general stores) that carry a wide array of products,
- Convenience / corner stores that carry a narrower selection and smaller volumes of food,
- Direct from the airport farm and TUCG cooperative buying,
- Seafood processing and storage facilities,
- Food banks and community meal programs,
- Stores of emergency foods are located at some locations across the region, and
- Schools, resorts, restaurants and other institutions that may serve food.

Water Needs

With respect to potable water, the average daily requirements are about 3.7 litres for men and 2.7 litres for women. However, much of that is consumed in fruits, vegetables and other foods. Therefore, approximately 1.5 – 2.6 litres of drinking water per day is recommended per resident. Source: Mayo Clinic, 2022. For the population of the West Coast communities (approximately 7,200 residents) this means a total of 11,000 – 20,000 litres per day is required. Water is not something people often store in their houses and while grocery stores have some bottled water in stock, it would only be a small percentage of total water needs of the region. Therefore the population would continue to rely on existing municipal and regional water sources and household wells.

The amount of food available and the ability to meet community food demands during an emergency from each of these food sources is challenging to determine using available data for the following reasons:

- The food stored at a household level may sustain a family in the event of an emergency for less than a day, several days, or several weeks, depending on the volumes of stored food available.
- The Co-ops operate on a "just-in-time" inventory system, meaning they carry enough stock for normal daily demand but rely on frequent restocking. Furthermore, the volume of food available through food retailers during an emergency is highly dependent on the time of year due to the large number of tourists who are staying in West Coast communities during seasonal holidays and summer months.
- Corner stores have a small volume of food, and most of the food is not nutrient dense, but these sources could supply some calories to the residents in an emergency situation.
- There is only one active farm, a few community gardens and some backyard growing, which combined have low volumes of production relative to the population.
- The volumes of food available through seafood processing and storage facilities are challenging to estimate as these products are quickly moved to market and it would depend on the time of year.
- Food banks have some food storage capability that could be accessed during an emergency; however, food bank users would also require continued access.
- A full inventory of all local government and business emergency food stores on in West Coast communities has not been completed, so it is difficult to estimate how many people they could serve over time.
- Schools, medical centres, hotels, restaurants and other institutions likely have a few days' supply of food stored on site and that food would be directed to the people using those facilities.
- If large-scale power outages during an emergency cause failure of refrigerator and freezer systems, the amount of usable stored food will drop significantly within days due to thawing and spoilage.

The volumes of seafood harvested in the waters off the West Coast are the most logical sources of food available to sustain the local and tourist population during an extended emergency. A variety of fish and seafood species (e.g. oysters, clams, groundfish, hake, salmon, prawns, crab, halibut, geoduck, urchin, seaweed and kelp) are caught and harvested. While abundant, harvesting rights, processing, and overall access are regulated by federal, provincial, and First Nations governments.³⁵ There is no single comprehensive data set that provides volumes of fish and/or seafood caught and harvested along the West Coast and subsequently made available either directly to consumers, in food retail locations, or restaurants. However, a few sources of data were identified and used to provide some insights into volumes of seafood.

Recreational Fish and Seafood Licenses

A variety of fish, prawn, crab, oysters and mussels are available to harvest recreationally for anyone with a recreational license. A thought exercise was completed to imagine the possibility of meeting the protein needs of West Coast residents through fish and seafood.

- Assuming 60-90g of protein per day³⁶ is needed, each person would need to consume ~10 prawns per day and ~1/4 – 1/3 of a medium sized fish per day.
- This means that approximately ~3,750 prawns and 105 medium fish would be required per person annually.
- The recreational harvesting limits for Area 23 (Barkley Sound), Area 123 (open waters off of Barkley Sound), Area 24 (Tofino, Mears, Clayoquot Sound, etc.) and Area 124 (open water off of Tofino) allow for 125 prawns per day and ~7-10 fish per day (of various species such as salmon, lingcod,

³⁵ Alberni Valley Regional District. (2018). Interim Report. Coastal Addendum to the Alberni Agricultural Plan.

³⁶ O'Connor, L. (2025) [How much protein should you eat per meal](#). Health Magazine..

rockfish, etc.) per person,³⁷ however it is not possible to catch this number of fish and prawns each day of the year.

- Based on these allowable licensing limits, theoretically a person could obtain all their required protein by harvesting 30 days' worth of prawn limits (125 prawns per day) and 11-15 days of catching fish at maximum fishing limits. This would also assume that each individual would have the means to process and store the fish and seafood over the long term.
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada reports recreational catch survey data for the region, including a five-year estimated average of fish species including all salmon, rockfish, halibut and lingcod. From 2020-2024, an approximate 5-year average of 82,500 fish were caught recreationally in Area 23 and Area 123 and 12,000 fish in Area 24 and 123 (no data is available for prawn catch).³⁸
- This averages to only 13 fish per person in West Coast communities per year, or the ability to fully cover the protein needs of 700-900 people a year (approximately 9%-12% of the permanent resident West Coast population).
- Due to the fact that these recreational fishing numbers include recreational fishers from outside of the region and residents of the Alberni Valley fishing in Areas 23 and 123, in reality the proportion of the West Coast population currently being fed by fish and seafood is likely much lower.

Commercial Fishing

Consolidated commercial fishing data for the ACRD region is difficult to access; however, a study by Kwantlen Polytechnic University estimated that there are over 15,000 tonnes of surplus fresh and frozen fish and seafood caught in the region annually and then exported.³⁹ Thus, *in theory*, commercial fishing could provide the entire ACRD with all its protein needs annually if 25-35% destined for export was redirected to local markets.⁴⁰ However, as expanded upon in the Background Report, there are major challenges to keeping the fish and seafood harvest in the region. These include a lack of processing and cold storage facilities, and economies of scale in the region. In addition, seafood processors must comply with rigorous safety protocols and reporting standards, and small-scale fishers experience challenges in meeting the standards required for retail markets.⁴¹ There are opportunities for fishers to make direct sales from their boats under a Fisher's Vending Licence, which mitigates processing needs and transportation logistics if customers purchase direct from dock.⁴² However, the volume of fish sold via local markets to local consumers is unclear.

First Nation Fisheries

First Nations on the West Coast have separate licences for fishing. These are for fisheries for food, social and ceremonial purposes which are authorized by a Communal Licence issued to individual First Nations organizations by Fisheries and Oceans Canada under the Aboriginal Communal Fishing Licences Regulations.⁴³ Data related to the volumes of seafood harvested by each Nation and what that means with respect to food security and cultural values for First Nations is not publicly available.

³⁷ Department of Fisheries and Oceans. (2025). BC tidal areas 23 and 123 - Bamfield, Port Alberni and Ucluelet: Recreational fishing limits, openings and closures.

³⁸ Department of Fisheries and Oceans. (2024). [South Coast Assessment Bulletin, 2024 Creel Survey Update, Recreational Fishery South Coast Tidal Waters](#).

³⁹ Kwantlen Polytechnic University data, unpublished.

⁴⁰ Assuming 60-90g of protein/day/person and 20% of a fish's weight is protein.

⁴¹ Gunn, R. (2016). [Support for Shellfish and Marine Plant Culture in the ACRD](#).

⁴² Government of British Columbia (2025). [Seafood Licensing](#).

⁴³ Department of Fisheries and Oceans. (2025). [First Nations, recreational and commercial salmon licensing](#).

Theoretical Seafood Needs for the West Coast Communities

A thought exercise was conducted to estimate how many fish are needed to meet the caloric needs of West Coast communities during a one-week emergency food supply disruption.

- Approximately 7,200 people live in West Coast communities.
- The average adult requires 1,800–2,400 calories per day, which equates to 13–17 million total calories per day for the region, or 90–120 million calories over a full week.
- A medium-sized fish provides about 1,200 edible calories, meaning one person would need around 2 fish per day to meet their caloric needs.
- To feed the entire population for one week using only fish, approximately 100,800 fish (274 tonnes – 366 tonnes, assuming the fish is 6-8lbs) would be required.
- This means that if even less than 2.5% of the fish currently exported were retained, the local population could be fed for an entire week in an emergency, assuming the fish is preserved and stored appropriately.

Depending on the season, and assuming export-bound fish could be redirected for community use, the region could sustain itself on fish alone until additional emergency food supplies arrive. Importantly, fish are not the only marine food source available, other species like prawns, mussels, and oysters could also contribute, depending on availability throughout the year.

4.2 Overall Comments on Food Self-Sufficiency

Most households, resorts, restaurants, and institutions on the West Coast likely have several days to a week's worth of food on hand. Grocery stores rely on rapid restocking cycles, making the region particularly vulnerable to supply chain disruptions such as road closures. While locally harvested fish and seafood are abundant and could theoretically provide all calories for residents during an emergency, structural and logistical barriers, such as limited local processing capacity and market systems geared toward export, restrict the ability to retain and distribute this food within the community. Food could be brought into communities by barge or air during an emergency; however, depending on the nature of the disruption, it may take several days to coordinate and deliver supplies to the region. These factors underscore the urgent need for robust emergency food planning, improved seafood processing infrastructure, and stronger support for local food storage systems. Ultimately, while West Coast communities have the natural resources to move toward greater food self-reliance, achieving this would require systemic changes in infrastructure investment, localized processing, and policy support to shift away from export-oriented models and toward local, shelf-stable provisioning.



Figure 7. Seafood processed at Neptune Seafood Market in Ucluelet.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ [Neptune Seafood Market](#). Accessed July 2025.

5.0 Community Perceptions of Food Security and Emergency Planning

Throughout the project’s timeline numerous engagement activities occurred with food and seafood businesses, food security organizations and committees and local government and First Nations staff. Engagement activities (including interviews, presentations, workshops and a survey) were critical to understanding the local context, including the nuances of emergencies, past and present food system challenges faced during emergencies, potential gaps to emergency preparedness, and response and recovery for the food sector. Engagement provided insights into food security in local communities, local food assets, needs and sources, and challenges and opportunities regarding food security.

Several key themes, gaps and opportunities arose during engagement, as summarized below in Table 3. These results include feedback from engagement efforts in the District of Tofino, District of Ucluelet, Electoral Area A (Bamfield) and C (Long Beach) and input from First Nation representatives who attended meetings and engagement events (a full account of meetings with First Nation communities is described in Section 7.0). The details of engagement activities are provided in the *What We Heard Engagement Summary Report*.

Table 3. Food security themes, gaps and opportunities heard during engagement.

Key themes	Gaps	Opportunities
Planning for Future Emergencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a gap in planning for disasters beyond earthquakes/ tsunamis, such as extreme weather, wildfires, flooding, and landslides that can lead to road closures and power outages. • There is a lack of consideration for seasonal population surges (tourism). • Creation of comprehensive emergency plans for tourism accommodations are variable. • Food storage is minimal at critical sites (schools, community centre, gardens). • There is no centralized emergency food distribution system. The roles are unclear surrounding who will be distributing food during an emergency and who (which groups) will get priority food access. • There are no formal emergency food plans among local food businesses, local organizations or reception centres; however, many businesses are community-oriented and have 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop comprehensive emergency food plans that account for seasonal population variations. These plans may be made more robust by taking other critical resources into account, such as potable water and essential medications. • Investigate the use of mutual aid agreements with food banks and local businesses (restaurants, resorts, seafood processors) to improve emergency food access and create communication plans. • Integrate emergency planning into food banks to maintain fresh, rotating, shelf-stable emergency food stocks. • Enhance fisheries' role in emergency planning, ensuring a consistent local supply and better integration with food security efforts. • Formalize processing businesses, restaurants, and

	<p>supported food access in past emergencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many businesses lack the time, money, and knowledge to prepare emergency plans on their own. • Fisheries are underrepresented in emergency planning despite the high availability of ocean-based protein. 	<p>local food organizations’ roles in emergency response through timely communication during emergencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with food retailers (e.g. Co-ops) before emergencies to secure food supplies (e.g. impose purchasing limits). • Convene meetings with resorts and other tourist accommodations to understand their needs and how they could provide assistance during emergencies.
Communication and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is currently no centralized food emergency leadership and coordination between agencies is unclear. • Residents and businesses often don’t know which local authority to contact during an emergency and are unclear on the process for receiving information from authorities during emergencies. • Communication systems are fragmented during emergencies; some regions rely on VHF radios or satellite phones, but cell towers and tsunami sirens are often unreliable, and some need upgrades. • Lack of coordinated policy support and advocacy for food security on the west coast. • Community food security needs better metrics to understand local production vs. external imports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide workshops, templates and leadership in emergency planning, including considerations for food. • Strengthen collaboration between emergency planners, local producers, and community organizations. • Train residents through programs like Connect & Prepare. • Build on existing food literacy and education for the public around food preservation, storage and emergency planning. • Encourage citizen advocacy to prioritize food security in local planning. • Leverage grant funding to expand/repair communication platforms like tsunami sirens and cell towers.
Food Storage, Processing & Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of cold storage and food processing infrastructure limits local food resilience. • Lack of meat processing services means that most livestock is processed outside of the region. • Community members need access to shared resources like tools, processing equipment, and storage facilities. • High land lease costs and infrastructure barriers (e.g. not 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct cold and emergency food storage facilities. • Fund food processing equipment (e.g. dehydrators, smokehouses). • Use airport and municipal land for food storage and processing. • Utilize seacans or other structures for emergency food storage in municipal-owned spaces to expand capacity.

	<p>enough space, no generator) hinder local seafood processing businesses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of generators and seismic upgrades for existing infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in generators at key emergency reception sites.
Local Production & Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of seafood is exported rather than retained for local use. • Land access is limited by short leases and lack of available agricultural land. • Roads and ferries create vulnerable single points of potential failure for supply chains. • A lack of coordination among seafood producers in emergency planning. • Land access for food production is uncertain, with no land-matching program in place, high land values due to tourism, and little cleared land available. • Water access for food production is unstable or non-existent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support seafood CSA models and local sales. • Advocate for agricultural land-use designations outside the ALR and incentives for farming. • Utilize available land awaiting development (e.g. the Tofino airport) for growing food. • Promote direct-to-consumer models and resilient local distribution networks. • Land use planning needs to integrate food security considerations (e.g. edible landscaping, green spaces, community gardens, airport lands). • Ensure land explored for food production comes with a water source as well.
Drinking Water Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking water infrastructure lacks redundancy (especially in Tofino and Bamfield); there is a high reliance on single-source piping and outdated infrastructure. • Water availability under multiple emergency conditions is uncertain. • There is recognition that tourist seasons drastically increase population right when water resources are at their lowest and fire risk at its highest, straining infrastructure and requiring seasonal planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen long-term water security through First Nations and local government partnerships to develop resilience and redundancy in infrastructure, as well as secure long-term water supply. • Investigate if the current water systems could meet water needs during a variety of emergencies (e.g. droughts, structure fires, tsunami, earthquake, flooding, etc.).

6.0 West Coast Food Security SWOT Assessment

The information gathered during the research and engagement of this project (Summer 2024 - Summer 2025) is presented in a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Assessment to understand overall community food security on the West Coast of the ACRD (Table 4). The strengths and weaknesses are internal, regional factors related to food security. The opportunities and threats are external influences that impact food security in the region. The SWOT assessment organizes the information to provide context for understanding current gaps and future opportunities for supporting food security.

Table 4. SWOT Assessment for food system components in the West Coast communities.

Food System Component	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Emergency Management/ Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recently updated <i>ACRD Disaster and Emergency Management Plan</i> provides details on roles, responsibilities and protocols during emergencies. Strong community commitment to improve emergency preparedness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools, fire halls, and health centres often lack clear roles or updated supplies or are in inundation zones; many do not have formalized training or emergency procedures in place. Food supply during extended emergency likely insufficient to meet tourist population. Gaps and confusion remain over communication during emergencies between local food security organizations and local authorities in charge. No organized communications plan for food distribution during an emergency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to leverage provincial funding for food system emergency planning projects when possible. Convene food system actors related to food storage, distribution and access to discuss needs during an emergency. Collaborate with other local and First Nations governments to access funding, build shared infrastructure, obtain equipment and hold regional emergency and food literacy training. Public education on the importance of personal household preparedness, including food security. Increase emergency food stores in emergency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenging to anticipate the type, timing and magnitude of emergency that may occur. Little control over emergency preparedness planning undertaken by food businesses. Heavy reliance on provincial and grant funding sources to effectively maintain and enhance emergency preparedness and planning.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Region is heavily reliant on food being trucked in through one main route, or barged in (Bamfield). Gaps in data for understanding the availability of food in the region at any given time. 	reception centres when possible.	
Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some FNs have strong internally developed food distribution and emergency planning practices. Some policy foundation for supporting food security through the <i>Coastal Addendum to the Alberni Valley Agricultural Plan and Implementation Project</i>, Eat West Coast reports and ACRD Strategic Plan. Nuu-chah-nulth communities across the ACRD have led and participated in projects leading to policy recommendations related to food sovereignty (e.g. Island Indigenous Foods Gathering Report, Nuuchahnulth Food Sovereignty Learnings of the ACRD Report). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electoral Area OCPs don't have specific information supporting some food system aspects like processing, storage, community kitchens and emergency food preparedness. No ALR land means none of the ALC's legislation applies that protects/supports agricultural land use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate or support Nations developing culturally grounded food and emergency planning policies. ACRD undergoing comprehensive updates of all Electoral Area OCPs; a chance to provide land use designation and policy support for food harvesting, processing, storage and distribution. Policies could encourage institutions (schools, hospitals) to source locally and maintain reserves of culturally appropriate and shelf-stable foods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other policy priorities (e.g. housing, economic development) may reduce government staff resources and capacity to implement and monitor food security emergency planning related actions. Little control over policies and regulations related to fisheries.
Environment/ Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to marine ecosystems providing opportunities for seafood harvesting. Access to productive forested lands with a diverse number of foods available for foraging. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only one main road transportation route into all communities, limiting resilience during disruptions. There is minimal redundancy in both Tofino and Ucluelet's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential to secure funding for water infrastructure studies and possible upgrades. Even small-scale production can be significant if it happens year-round (under 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, wildfires, floods, etc. Only one main route into and out of the community (Hwy 4

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lakes and rivers traverse the region, including salmon bearing streams. High precipitation in winter allows for significant rainfall harvesting capacity. Mild West Coast climate allows year-round production and a wide variety of crops to be grown. 	<p>water systems, and challenges with low reserves during droughts which correspond to tourist season.</p>	<p>cover such as greenhouses, row covers, etc.)</p>	<p>and/or Franklin River / Bamfield Main Road).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change may increase flooding, fires, drought and extreme weather events. Low water supply impacts ability to process seafoods.
Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous-owned businesses and fisheries promote and provide sustainably sourced and responsibly harvested seafoods. Nuu-chah-nulth knowledge regarding traditional oyster and clam gardens, as well as harvest from the forest. Many residents source protein through recreational fishing and seafood harvesting. High potential for foraged forest products such as berries and mushrooms. Continued growing interest in sustainably sourced kinds of seafood. One farm has established in Long Beach, and community and backyard gardens shows the possibility of production in the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dependent on imported food from outside the region. No agricultural land base (no ALR), very limited cleared land for agriculture, and poor soils. Some local sales of seafoods but majority of catch goes to markets outside of the region. Widespread and blanket restrictions on shellfish and/or bivalve harvesting prevents safe harvesting of culturally and economically important crops. Open net pen salmon farming set to end in 2029. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skill development resources for food production are available from the provincial government and local organizations such as the Tofino Community Food Initiative. Grants and funding available for community garden initiatives. Some businesses have diversified into kelp farming to complement fisheries. DFO, local government and First Nations collaborations can systematically test and map safe shellfish and bivalve harvesting areas and windows to increase cultural and economic access to these foods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex fisheries management policies and licensing systems create barriers for small-scale fishers and First Nations to enter markets. Restricted access to traditional fishing and harvesting areas affects food sovereignty. Climate change threatens critical habitat for wild caught seafood species, and existing aquaculture sites are at risk.
Processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some seafood processing and value-added food activities are already occurring locally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs of water required for seafood processing can be high and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal funding initiatives for food infrastructure. Seafood processing creates economic opportunities for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market dynamics and economics of processing in the region make it

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several community kitchens exist that can act as small-scale food hubs. • Indigenous-owned businesses provide value-added processing in coastal communities. • Innovative marine food production/processing initiatives are located in Bamfield, including a growing kelp industry with companies like Canadian Kelp Resources and Cascadia Seaweed combining western science with generations of Indigenous knowledge to produce kelp for local consumption and export.⁴⁵ • Existing organizations offering food processing/preservation workshops and training. 	<p>shortages occur during the summer drought.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many residents may not have knowledge in preparing shelf stable foods to have in pantry for emergency use, nor the capacity to do so. • Shortages of industrially zoned land outside of the tsunami flood zone. 	<p>remote and Nuu-chah-nulth communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential support from organizations such as the Small Scale Food Processors Association. 	<p>challenging for businesses to establish.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial foreshore lease rates for food processing businesses have significantly increased in recent years. • Oyster production must be at scale to afford local shucking infrastructure/equipment.
Distribution & Storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established food banks and distribution programs have some existing dry storage. • TUCG organizing group buying and distribution to restaurants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of coordinated/shared distribution vehicles and access to larger distributors. • Lack of local cold or dry storage options. • Limited distribution systems reduce availability of fresh food in remote communities. • Extended power outages during emergencies threaten frozen stored food. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for investment in additional infrastructure at Food Banks and TUCG and other organizations. • Room to grow direct sales dockside in community through Fisher's Vending Licence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazards like wildfires, flooding, can close Highway 4 and rural roads within the communities. • High costs of delivery. • Long distances to travel to bigger sales markets. • Distribution system to grocery stores and restaurants tailored to import markets. • Distribution costs depend on external

⁴⁵ Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre. (2025). [Kelp Forest Ecosystems and Restoration](#).

				forces such as BC Ferries.
Retail & Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing support from smaller local retailers and restaurants for local/regionally produced foods. Some seafood businesses sell dockside. Culinary tourism events including food festivals and fundraisers (e.g. oyster fest, Boat to Tailgate) spotlight west coast food systems. Strong community organizations championing local food. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmers' Market in Tofino is geared towards artisans rather than food. No food or Farmers' Market in Ucluelet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provincial trend toward institutional (e.g. schools, hospitals) local procurement. Many restaurants are interested and open to purchasing local ingredients. Large numbers of tourists as markets for products. Continued growing interest in locally sourced and sustainable seafood supports markets and restaurants. Growing interest in marketability of sea vegetable products. Initiatives like community-supported fisheries foster direct consumer-producer relationships. Ecotourism growth concerning food such as seafood tours and immersive cultural experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competitive prices for imported goods. Competition with well-known provincial and national brands. High costs of fresh seafood limit accessibility for lower-income residents. Competition from global industrial scale fisheries.

7.0 First Nations Food Sovereignty and Emergency Food Planning Considerations

During this project, the ACRD collaborated with Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ and met with representatives of Huu-ay-aht First Nations and Toquaht Nation to discuss First Nations food sovereignty both in general terms as well as specifically related to emergency planning. The aim of the collaboration was to:

- Identify opportunities for the ACRD to better support Indigenous food sovereignty in the context of emergency preparedness and response;
- Include Indigenous food sovereignty as a key priority in the Food Security Emergency Plans; and
- Include recommendations that will support community food resiliency across the region.

Collaboration took the form of many in-person meetings, delegations to chief and council, phone and virtual calls and on-site visits. The following sections outline the challenges, opportunities and recommendations for the ACRD to support Indigenous food sovereignty and emergency food preparedness.

7.1 Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ Government - Ucluelet First Nation

Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ Government jurisdiction extends over nearly 5,500 hectares of Treaty Settlement Land surrounding the community of hitaću, as well as territory north of Ucluelet, in the Effingham Inlet and along the Nahmint River. Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ Government is a member of the Maa-nulth Treaty Society and through the Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement, is a modern treaty nation operating with a government to government relationship with Canada and the province of British Columbia.⁴⁶ Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ is also one of 14 Nations that make up the Nuuchah-nulth people of western Vancouver Island.

In hitaću, there is a new community garden being built named Saasin Ččimḥiyap Garden, meaning 'Hummingbird-healing-someone' garden (Figure 8 and Figure 9). The garden has three seasonal employees who have been constructing and maintaining the garden and host community events. However, there is a lack of dry and cold storage to store the foods produced at the garden over the long-term and lack of food processing equipment such as dehydrators. The Food, Social, and Ceremony fishery program is important for food sovereignty, distributing fresh and processed seafood such as chinook, halibut, and sockeye, to all citizens annually. In the past elders provided canning workshops for fish. The emergency program has Emergency Supports trailer with supplies in case of an evacuation and distributes emergency kits.

One of the key challenges identified during discussions with YG staff is limited capacity to coordinate additional workshops, events, and training sessions focused on food growing, preservation, and emergency preparedness.

⁴⁶ Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ Government. Accessed July 2025. [Our Government](#).



Figure 8. Community garden.

A hard copy survey was distributed to community members during an event at the community garden in April 2025 where the project team attended to discuss the project. The same survey was also available online for community members to complete. Fourteen community members completed the survey.

The most important actions to increase food sovereignty and emergency food security, and the kind of help needed were identified (in order of priority) as⁴⁷:

1. Enhancing Traditional Harvesting Practices: Assistance with acquiring equipment such as freeze dryers, dehydrators, pressure canners, and traditional harvesting tools and funding for critical infrastructure development.
2. Empowering Community Education and Training: Resources and funding for developing and delivering culturally relevant training materials, and facilitation of workshops by knowledgeable community members or elders.
3. Strengthening Cultural Revitalization Efforts: Funding for cultural programs and events, resources for preserving and sharing traditional knowledge, and collaboration with cultural organizations and elders.
4. Building Collaborative Partnerships: Assistance with advocacy efforts, representation in policy-making processes, and funding opportunities for collaborative projects and initiatives.
5. Promoting Sustainable Resource Management: Resources for emergency planning and response, coordination with emergency management agencies, and capacity-building for community resilience.
6. Advocating for Indigenous Rights and Policies: Assistance with policy analysis and advocacy, representation in decision-making processes, and collaboration with Indigenous rights organizations and legal experts.

⁴⁷ The options included in the survey were identified during the Island Indigenous Food Sovereignty Meeting in March of 2024.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the discussions with YG staff and results from the survey.

1. Continue to have community meetings related to emergency food security and distribute more emergency ration kits with dehydrated foods, as needed.
2. Explore stable financial sources to support additional staff capacity to coordinate and deliver workshops related to food sovereignty, food preservation, and food production. Examples of workshop topics could include:
 - i. Food preservation using a variety of techniques such as dehydrating and canning.
 - ii. Cooking workshops using produce from the garden.
 - iii. Sharing traditional knowledge related to foods and medicines.
3. Pursue grant funding to expand infrastructure, and equipment to support food security and sovereignty—both in emergencies and for long-term resilience. Priority grant focus areas include:
 - i. Constructing dry and cold storage spaces for storing foods produced at community garden.
 - ii. Purchasing dehydrator(s) for food preservation.
 - iii. Maintenance or repairs (if needed) for existing commercial canning equipment.



Figure 9. Youth viewing photos of the Saasin Čačimhiyap Garden.

7.2 Huu-ay-aht First Nations

Huu-ay-aht First Nations (HFN) is a self-governing, modern treaty Nation whose lands are located in the Barkley Sound region on the West Coast of Vancouver Island, at the entrance to Alberni Inlet. HUU-ay-aht First Nations, centred in the community of Anacla near Bamfield, have made food security and supporting infrastructure a priority through various initiatives and planning efforts. They have emergency supplies to support approximately 400 people, including residents of Upper and Lower Anacla and visitors from the Pachena Bay Campground, for 3 to 4 days. Their FoodFish program is important for food sovereignty, distributing vacuum-sealed and canned seafood such as chinook, halibut, sockeye, and prawns to all citizens annually, with some surplus stored for emergency use. They also operate a propane-fueled commercial kitchen and support small-scale community food production at the community garden in Lower Anacla (Figure 10). However, this community garden is located in the tsunami zone and the community is looking to obtain support to move the garden to Upper Anacla, which is outside of the tsunami zone.



Figure 10. HUU-ay-aht community garden located in Lower Anacla.

Despite this preparedness, the regional Emergency Centre is far from most residences, requiring driving in a crisis. With limited external funding, most programs are internally supported and there is a recognized need to collaborate with community stakeholders like the ACRD and Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre for resource sharing in an emergency. Finally, the Nation is interested in developing a household-based inventory system to track available community resources.

Recommendations

Through the project's timeline there were several meetings with HUU-ay-aht First Nations staff to discuss the project, and gaps, challenges and opportunities related to food sovereignty and emergency planning. From these conversations the following recommendations are identified:

1. Pursue grant applications for funding for food security equipment, and infrastructure. For example, food preservation and processing equipment, refrigerated and freezer storage, and generators for storage facilities.
2. Explore stable financial sources to support additional (permanent) staff capacity to increase programming related to food production, preservation and food sovereignty.
3. Pursue support through grants, or in-kind assistance, for establishing a new community garden (with water infrastructure) in Upper Anacla outside of the tsunami zone.
4. Investigate options for increased access to food for community members during emergencies when roads are closed for extended periods of time.

7.3 Toquaht Nation

The łukʷaaʔatɥ are the people of Toquaht Bay, Mayne Bay and western Barkley Sound, and are one of the Nuu-chah-nulth Nations who have lived along Vancouver Island's west coast for over 10,000 years.⁴⁸ Toquaht Nation's main community is Macoah, which is accessible off Highway 4 along Kennedy Lake. The Toquaht Nation (TN) has two recent strategic documents that include priorities related to food sovereignty and emergency food security: Toquaht Strategic Plan and Food Security Plan.

- The Toquaht Strategic Plan completed in 2025 identifies several priorities related to food security and emergency management. These include improving emergency management through sourcing funding to build a new Food Security Building and locating it in close proximity to the permanent muster station, and to build a Nutrition and Food Security Program to increase access to traditional foods and reinvigorate the community garden.⁴⁹
- The Food Security Plan 2025-26 was completed in early 2025 and identifies goals, objectives, strategies and outcomes. The goals are:
 - Provide a variety of programs and services that address food security,
 - Increase access to traditional foods and medicines and improve cultural knowledge of the variety of foods available on TN lands,
 - Reinvigorate the community garden and
 - Develop a plan for a proposed Food Security Building proposal.

Recommendations

Based on the recent strategic documents and conversations with the Education and Community Programs Coordinator, the following recommendations related to food sovereignty and emergency planning are identified:

1. Pursue grant applications for funding for the Food Security Building and associated equipment (e.g. food preservation and processing equipment, refrigerated and freezer storage, and a generator).
2. Pursue support through grants or in-kind assistance, for reinvigorating the community garden.
3. Explore stable financial sources to support additional staff capacity to coordinate and deliver workshops related to food sovereignty, food preservation, and food production. Examples of workshop topics could include:
 - Food preservation using a variety of techniques such as dehydrating and canning.
 - Cooking workshops using produce from the garden.
 - Sharing traditional knowledge related to foods and medicines.

⁴⁸ Toquaht Nation. (2025) [About Us.](#)

⁴⁹ Toquaht Nation. (2025) [Strategic Plan 2025-2030](#)

8.0 Food Security and Emergency Food Planning Recommendations

The recommendations in Table 5 have been crafted based on background research and engagement with food system actors in the community. The recommended actions are organized into three categories:

- **Food Security Emergency Management Planning and Preparedness Actions**
 - These actions focus on emergency preparedness, response, and recovery planning, and communications to help manage food security during a crisis. Appropriate planning and preparedness ensure a community can respond effectively to food disruptions when they occur.
- **Long-term Food Security Actions for Increased Community Food Resiliency**
 - These actions focus on long-term solutions to reduce food insecurity risks at the community level. They focus on supporting increased resilience of the local food system and supporting organizations and committees working towards enhancing regional food security.
- **Actions to Support First Nations' Food Sovereignty and Emergency Food Security**
 - These actions focus on how the ACRD can support First Nations in long-term food sovereignty and shorter-term emergency food security.

The recommendations are tailored to what regional and local governments can do within their authority and jurisdiction. As such, the ACRD and DoT and DoU are identified as lead actors for implementation, while other local organizations and institutions are listed as supporting actors.

Because of the FSEP's broad scope, many actions will need additional research, engagement, and planning before implementation. When scoping and carrying out each action, the following principles should be considered:

1. **Advance Reconciliation:** Seek opportunities to partner with and strengthen relationships with First Nations on the West Coast as part of the implementation phase.
2. **Collaborate across sectors and with other levels of government:** Bring all interested and affected organizations together to identify collaborative solutions.
3. **Use resources effectively:** Build on existing initiatives and partnerships for efficiency and impact.
4. **Engage agri-food businesses and food security organizations:** Ensure agri-food businesses (including seafood) and food security organizations are engaged throughout implementation as required.

Table 5 also identifies implementation timelines, estimated resource levels and priority level for each action.

Timeline for action completion (assumes adequate resources are available):

- **Ongoing:** already underway and will require maintenance over time.
- **Short:** should be initiated within 1-2 years.
- **Medium:** should be initiated within 3-5 years.
- **Long:** should be initiated within 5+ years.

Resource Level:

- **Low:** may be completed within existing staff workplans.
- **Medium (<\$50k):** requires addition into staff workplans or annual budget request.
- **High (>\$50k):** requires sourcing grants and/or the assistance of a consultant or short-term contractor.

Priority:

- **Low Priority:** Actions that are beneficial but not urgent and can be addressed after higher priorities without significant negative impact.
- **Medium Priority:** Actions that are important to advance food security and emergency preparedness and should be implemented in the near term, but can be delayed briefly if higher-priority needs arise.
- **High Priority:** Actions that are critical to achieving food security and emergency preparedness objectives, requiring prompt attention and resource allocation. High priority actions may also be those that must be tackled as a first step to initiating medium and lower priority actions.



Figure 11. Greenhouse on the West Coast.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Tofino Community Food Initiative. Accessed 2025. [Facebook Page](#).

Table 5. Recommendations for supporting food security and emergency planning in West Coast and First Nations communities.

Action ID	Action	Description	Lead Actor(s)	Supporting Actors	Timeline	Resource Level	Priority
Food Security Emergency Management Planning and Preparedness Actions							
1	Create a food distribution strategy between local governments, hotels and resorts, restaurants, food banks, food security organizations and other actors to activate during an emergency.	<p>Development of a comprehensive strategy for the inclusive and effective distribution of food and water during emergencies. This strategy should identify clear locations for distribution or outreach, incorporate safe and accessible distribution techniques, and outline procedures for prioritizing vulnerable populations when resources are limited. Particular attention should be given to ensuring equitable access for marginalized populations, as well as individuals with mobility, health, or transportation challenges. Establishing these guidelines in advance will help ensure that critical resources are distributed fairly, transparently, and in a manner that maintains community trust during times of crisis. Consider including seafood businesses to determine if they could play a role in emergency food distribution to provide local protein sources. Consider conducting “dry-run” or “test” scenarios that mimic an emergency to troubleshoot the plans and/or processes. Establishing MOUs with organizations as part of this strategy is a critical step.</p> <p>This action should include recognition of the importance of potable water needs for consumption, for the rehydration of dried food, and for the use in baby formula.</p> <p>The communications components of the food distribution strategy could involve identifying primary points of contact for each party, communication channels for real-time updates during an emergency and defining roles, commitments, and expectations related to food access and distribution during</p>	ACRD DoT DoU	Salvation Army Food Bank on the Edge Fish and Loaves Tofino Interested First Nations TUCG TCFI BCSA BMSC Island Health Authority Restaurants Others as deemed appropriate	Short	High	Medium

Action ID	Action	Description	Lead Actor(s)	Supporting Actors	Timeline	Resource Level	Priority
		<p>emergencies between all involved parties. Refer to the ACRD Emergency Communication and Public Notification Plan for existing communications protocols and ensure alignment between the two documents.</p> <p>Partnerships with water purveyors and municipalities may offer additional supports during an emergency.</p> <p>Consider referring to municipal drinking water plans that address emergency planning for potable water if applicable and available.</p> <p>Consider recommendations from the Mount Underwood post-emergency report.</p>					
2	<p>Advocate for more cell service and broad band connectivity throughout the Highway 4 corridor, Pacific Rim Highway, Franklin River Road, and Bamfield, and tsunami siren upgrades in Bamfield.</p>	<p>Advocate to the Province and to service providers to increase rural broadband deployment and cell phone connectivity (e.g. communications towers) in rural areas.</p> <p>Leverage grant funding to expand/repair tsunami sirens in Bamfield.</p>	ACRD	DoT DoU	Short	Low	High
3	<p>Consider if food storage needs and distribution logistics are adequate at Emergency Reception Centres.</p>	<p>Tofino-Ucluelet Corridor: Convene the ACRD Protective Services Department, DoT, DoU, Salvation Army, and food banks to discuss organization and logistics of food access at emergency reception centres (Tofino Community Hall and Ucluelet Secondary School), which may include the need for food storage on-site.</p> <p>Bamfield-HFN: Convene the ACRD Protective Services Department, Fire Hall Staff, HFN, BCSA and BMSC and other potential organizations to discuss organization and logistics of food access at emergency reception</p>	ACRD DoT DoU	<p>Salvation Army</p> <p>Food Bank on the Edge</p> <p>BMSC</p> <p>BCSA</p> <p>HFN</p>	Short	Medium	High

Action ID	Action	Description	Lead Actor(s)	Supporting Actors	Timeline	Resource Level	Priority
		centres (Bamfield Community School), which may include the need for additional food storage on-site. Consider recommendations from the Mount Underwood post-emergency report.					
4	Explore emergency food storage on Airport Lands at Tofino-Long Beach (YAZ) and at the water aerodomes in Tofino, Ucluelet, and Bamfield.	Determine the feasibility of installing shipping containers (e.g. sea cans or other storage structures) to store shelf-stable food (and other emergency supplies) on airport lands at Tofino-Long Beach (YAZ) and at the water aerodomes of Tofino, Ucluelet, and Bamfield. Consider who will manage and maintain the supplies and distribution during an emergency.	ACRD	Airport and water aerodome users / members.	Short	Low	High
5	Engage with the tourism sector about emergency planning and food needs.	Convene restaurants, resorts and tourist lodgings in Tofino, Ucluelet and Area C to discuss emergency planning, communication and food access and storage needs. Consider determining appropriate communication avenues between parties during an emergency (including protocols for short-term road blockages and power outages). Consider the use of MOUs or LOUs where appropriate.	ACRD DoT DoU	Restaurants Resorts/ tourist lodgings	Short	Medium	Medium
6	Engage with the BMSC about emergency planning and food needs.	Engage with the BMSC about the possibility of entering into an agreement or MOU to utilize their kitchen facilities to feed residents during an emergency. This may also require engaging with the BC Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR).	ACRD	BMSC EMCR	Short	Low	High
7	Advocate for alternative emergency routes into and out of West Coast communities.	In alignment with the ACRD 2024-2027 Strategic Plan , advocate to the Province (Ministry of Transportation and Transit) and other relevant authorities on alternative emergency routes including but not limited to Hwy 4, improvements on routes to Bamfield from Port Alberni and Youbou, and consider marine and air-based travel during emergencies.	ACRD	DoT DoU	Medium	Low	High

Action ID	Action	Description	Lead Actor(s)	Supporting Actors	Timeline	Resource Level	Priority
8	Collaborate with relevant partners to support food business continuity planning efforts.	<p>Work with the Chambers of Commerce to understand how local governments could best support the solutions and next steps outlined in the Highway 4 Disruption and Resiliency Solutions Report.</p> <p>Consider developing a spreadsheet and/or checklist for food-related businesses of actions that can be taken to prepare for, and recover from, emergencies.</p> <p>Provide support in the form of inspections of facilities and assessing safety of food operations after emergencies (in partnership with Island Health).</p>	ACRD CPA	Chambers of Commerce Island Health's Environmental Public Health Team	Long	Low	Low
9	Conduct a post-disaster assessment of impacts to food security.	After an emergency has occurred, convene all relevant parties related to food security to discuss lessons learned and opportunities to increase resiliency to future emergencies.	ACRD DoT DoU	Food security & access orgs Interested First Nations Chambers of Commerce	Ongoing	Medium	As needed
10	Support funding for backup generators/ secondary power sources for cold storage, emergency reception centres and other critical food assets.	<p>Support organizations in applying for grant funding for off-grid (solar) and back-up generators for critical food assets such as cold storage (refrigerated and frozen), community kitchens, community halls, and emergency reception centres. This would allow food storage facilities to have reliable backup power in case of outages.</p> <p>For example, Tofino Community Hall (TCH), Bamfield Community School (BCS) and BMSC.</p>	ACRD DoT DoU	TCH BCSA BMSC SD70	Ongoing	Low	As needed

Action ID	Action	Description	Lead Actor(s)	Supporting Actors	Timeline	Resource Level	Priority
Long-term Food Security Actions for Increased Community Food Resiliency							
11	Promote increased utilization of publicly-owned land for agriculture and food growing.	<p>Continue to support community gardens with fencing, irrigation and infrastructure. Establish new community gardens when possible and where there is interest.</p> <p>Develop guidelines for local government staff to plant food crops within public land and parkland. For example, when planting fruit trees in parks consult the Wildsafe BC program/coordinator. Allocate maintenance capacity to care for edible plants in Parks Department budgets and workplans.</p> <p>Provide long term leases and/or other forms of commitment and support to farms located on publicly-owned lands.</p> <p>Allow local government land awaiting development (e.g. at the Long Beach airport) to be used for intensive food production (e.g. market gardens/greenhouses). Amend the Tofino-Ucluelet Airport Land Use Plan, Area C and Area A OCPs to include wording specific to supporting agriculture on surplus land. Consider including this land under an agricultural land designation in both EA OCPs.</p> <p>Consider leasing public land to producers when feasible - using affordable, long-term leases to support farm business planning and continuity.</p>	DoT DoU ACRD	TCFI CBT-EWC Bamfield Community School Association (BCSA)	Ongoing	Medium	High
12	Support existing and new food and seafood processing businesses	<p>Provide the following support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • letters of support for grants, • assistance with zoning and permitting processes, • water and electrical hook-ups. <p>Consider priority to processing businesses that also contain cold (refrigerated and frozen) storage with generator backup.</p>	ACRD DoT DoU	Tofino, Ucluelet and Bamfield Chambers of Commerce Island Health	Ongoing	Low	High

Action ID	Action	Description	Lead Actor(s)	Supporting Actors	Timeline	Resource Level	Priority
		Work with Island Health’s Environmental Public Health Team to support with inspection of facilities and permitting processes. Work with Island Health’s Healthy Built Environment and Community Development team for referrals regarding OCPs and Zoning Bylaws and associated amendments.					
13	Continue to support organizations working on public education related to food security and advisory committees.	<p>Provide support (for example, letters of support for grants, funding, advertising, or in-kind) to organizations hosting workshops, events, and working with students, related to food security (e.g. food processing/preservation, growing their own food, and other topics). For example, the CFR, CBT, TCFI, TUCG, BCSA.</p> <p>Support the continuation of the Coastal Foods Roundtable co-facilitation partnership. This group may wish to meet more than twice annually in order to provide additional implementation support for these recommendations.</p>	ACRD DoT DoU	CFR CBT-EWC TCFI TUCG BCSA CFR	Ongoing	Medium	High
14	Work towards long-term water security.	<p>Collaborate with DoT, DoU, and First Nations to secure long-term water sources for drinking water and food/seafood processing. Participate in discussions when necessary (e.g. for infrastructure that may require moving water through Electoral Area C (Long Beach)).</p> <p>Continue to support safe drinking water infrastructure when possible/applicable for Bamfield, and water use for food production and processing (including seafood).</p> <p>Work with Island Health, as their operational goals include supporting water security in changing climates.</p>	ACRD	DoT DoU First Nations Island Health Province of BC	Ongoing	Medium	High

Action ID	Action	Description	Lead Actor(s)	Supporting Actors	Timeline	Resource Level	Priority
		Consider providing incentives for rainwater catchment at the household level for irrigating gardens.					
15	Support the establishment of refrigerated and frozen cold storage space with backup generators outside of the tsunami inundation zone.	Support businesses, NGOs, or other local organizations wishing to establish cold storage (with generator backup) by providing letters of support for grants, and help determine appropriate locations based on utilities, services, and zoning/building permits required. In EA OCPs, consider explicitly supporting food security infrastructure developments (e.g. food processing, community kitchens, food storage) through policy statements. Include publicly accessible cold storage space in future plans for centralized markets and/or emergency infrastructure.	ACRD DoT DoU	Tofino, Ucluelet and Bamfield Chambers of Commerce Fire Halls Community Halls	Ongoing	Low	Medium
16	Showcase local organizations and businesses working towards food security	Host tours for elected officials and local and regional government staff to showcase local food security initiatives and how food processing, preservation, literacy, and local food businesses support emergency planning. For example, TUCG, CBT-EWC initiatives, local seafood processing businesses. Provide regular (e.g., annual) updates to elected officials on the state of local food production and food security initiatives. During local elections, host an all-candidates meeting on the topics of emergency preparedness and community food security. Consider working with local food organizations to host a local food fair that encourages and showcases locally produced, caught, harvested and preserved foods.	ACRD DoT DoU	CBT-EWC TCFI BCSA Chambers of Commerce	Ongoing	Low	Medium
17	Continue and expand the waste diversion program	Continue the three-stream organics diversion program in the Tofino – Ucluelet corridor. Provide finished compost back to residents. Implement reduced cost or free compost programs for commercial farms. Expand	ACRD	DoT DoU	Medium	Medium	Low

Action ID	Action	Description	Lead Actor(s)	Supporting Actors	Timeline	Resource Level	Priority
	to create high quality soil amendments.	the organics diversion program to commercial businesses if possible. Support Bamfield in developing a wildlife-safe composting facility to create compost for home food production.					
18	Support regional collaboration and learning opportunities.	Convene local organizations, community gardens, and First Nation communities to support each other with food security goals. Provide more training and programs for collaborative learning opportunities. For example, initiatives like the Coastal Community Garden Gathering in 2021 that presented the Octopus learning model.	ACRD	YG, HFN, TN CBT-EWC CFR TCFI BCSA Others as deemed appropriate	Medium	Low	Low
Actions to Support First Nation Food Sovereignty and Emergency Food Security							
19	Explore permanent funding sources for staff positions to increase programming related to food production, preservation and food sovereignty.	For all nations additional staff/capacity would be required to increase food sovereignty and emergency food security programming. Programming could include food preservation workshops, traditional food and medicines harvesting and preservation, cooking workshops, etc. Local government support could include letters of support, assistance with grant writing, or sharing of appropriate funding sources.	YG HFN TN	ACRD DoU DoT	Ongoing	Low	High
20	Pursue grant funding applications to expand infrastructure, equipment and training	Support applying for grants in the following focus areas, as needed by each nation: o Food preservation and processing equipment (e.g. dehydrators, canners, refrigerated and freezer storage, and generators).	YG HFN TN	ACRD DoU DoT	Ongoing	Medium	High

Action ID	Action	Description	Lead Actor(s)	Supporting Actors	Timeline	Resource Level	Priority
	related to food sovereignty and emergency food security.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Repairing/maintaining/enhancing community gardens. ○ Training for small-scale intensive food production, compost creation and other related topics. <p>Local government support could include letters of support, assistance with grant writing, or sharing of appropriate funding sources.</p>					

9.0 Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

A monitoring and evaluation framework is helpful in guiding progress of the implementation of actions and in measuring success. Tables 6 and 7 present descriptions of indicators along with examples of success (what is being measured), evaluation mechanisms (how it is being measured), and data sources for each.

The indicators are presented as “performance” or “process” related:

- “Performance” indicators note the overall success of the plan as actions play out on the ground.
- “Process” indicators signal the overall implementation of specific actions over time.

Table 6. Monitoring and Evaluation: Performance indicators.

Indicator	Measure of Success	Evaluation Mechanism	Data source
1. Increased food security during emergencies for the West Coast Communities.	Number of workshops/training related to food preservation and emergency preparedness.	Outreach to community organizations to confirm participation.	ACRD staff
	Increase in food storage facilities (with backup generators) within the region.	Change in number of food storage facilities.	Community organizations
	Communication and food distribution plans in place to activate during emergencies.	Test communication methods/distribution plans using dry-run exercises.	Post disaster reporting
2. Increased long-term food security for the West Coast communities.	Increase in community gardens, public land leased for farming and food grown on public spaces.	Track the number/area of new food growing spaces under production: - Total area in production, - # of community gardens, - # of publicly owned parcels where food is grown.	ACRD, DoT and DoU parcel data
	Increase in seafood businesses providing food to local residents and tourists.	Number of new businesses.	Business licence data.

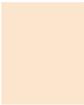
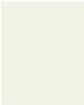
Table 7. Monitoring and Evaluation: Process indicators.

Indicator	Measure of Success	Evaluation Mechanism	Data source
3. Number of ACRD mitigation and preparedness initiatives underway that support the food-system sector organizations and businesses.	<p>Success of grant applications.</p> <p>Number of contracts established.</p> <p>Number of letters of support signed.</p>	Comparison of project numbers annually.	ACRD staff
4. Annual Budget allowance for implementation of the FSEP.	Budget allocated each year for implementation.	Track ACRD budget allocations for specific direction/projects related to plan actions.	ACRD Board commitments for budget.
5. Number of FSEP actions completed.	Number of actions completed within 5 years of adoption (excluding ongoing actions).	Tracking of actions completed over time.	<p>Updates and amendments to bylaws and other ACRD policies.</p> <p>Any new projects emerging.</p>

Appendix A. Electoral Area Policy Analysis

An analysis of the strength of food security policy for the Official Community Plans (OCPs) of Electoral Areas A and C are presented in the tables on the subsequent pages. The goal of the analysis was to identify any gaps within the OCP regarding food security and local government policy. An evaluation tool has been developed by the project team. This framework uses a food system lens to ensure comprehensiveness but not necessarily exhaustiveness. The analysis focuses on policy only and does not consider implementation. This framework is based on over 40 years combined experience working in agriculture and food system planning and is informed by the work of [Food Secure Canada](#) and BC Centre for Disease Control's (BCCDC) Conceptual Framework for Food Security Indicators (2019).⁵¹ Unfortunately there is no comprehensive policy framework in Canada designed to address food insecurity either federally or at the provincial or territorial level.⁵² This lack of an existing framework to guide the development of food security indicators is also noted in the 2019 BCCDC report.

The policy assessment tool is aimed at measuring the strength of community food security policy in local government plans and strategies. It should be noted that while having a strong rating on all food security elements could represent a best-case-scenario, it is also recognized that unique attributes of each community may influence this rating in various ways (e.g. limiting urban agriculture due to a desire not to create an attractant for wildlife).

Strong		The policy is comprehensive and integrated, addressing multiple dimensions of community food security.
Medium		The policy has multiple links to food security but may be missing some key dimension of food security.
Light		The policy has few to no strategies that link directly to food security and is missing many key dimensions of food security.
Not present		The policy does not explicitly cover the food security dimension.

⁵¹ [Conceptual Framework for Food Security Indicators](#), 2019. BC Centre for Disease Control, Provincial Health Services Authority.

⁵² PROOF: Food Insecurity Policy Research, 2019. University of Toronto. <https://proof.utoronto.ca/resources/research-publications/public-policy-and-public-programs-to-address-food-insecurity/>

Table 8. Assessment of Electoral Area C (Long Beach) OCP with respect to food security.

Food Security Dimension	Policy assessment				Potential gap/opportunity	Notes
	Strong	Medium	Light	Not present		
1. Food security in built environment & development plans					Likely not relevant as community can go to Ucluelet.	Food processing in home businesses supported. Food services not permitted within areas designated for Mixed-Use.
2. Agricultural land protection and food production					Consider encouraging agriculture on lands awaiting development and on public lands. Consider support for non-timber forest product harvesting with landowner permission and respecting First Nations sovereignty rights.	OCP encourages agriculture on private forest lands on parcels over 20 ha.
3. Climate adaptation					Consider planting fruit trees in public spaces to sequester carbon, provide food, support pollinators, absorb stormwater and increase canopy cover. Include climate resiliency considerations in any future water utilities development in the OCP.	Not mentioned.
4. Salmon, migratory water bird, habitat protection						Ecological corridors, riparian zones and fish habitat protections acknowledged in OCP.
5. Soil health					Consider supporting soil BMPs for any future agriculture operations through applications to funding.	Natural resource and development policies directly support protection of soil integrity and erosion control.
6. Composting					Residential curbside composting pick-up in Port Albion and Millstream. Expand organics diversion to commercial/restaurants.	Composting facilities have to be bear proof.

Food Security Dimension	Policy assessment				Potential gap/opportunity	Notes
	Strong	Medium	Light	Not present		
7. Farmers' markets					Likely not relevant as community can go to Ucluelet or Tofino.	No evident support for farmers' markets or farmgate sales.
8. Farm gate stands					Consider allowing farm gate stands with appropriate wildlife safety measures in place.	No language in support of farm gate sales.
9. Emergency preparedness					Consider including reference to the ACRD Disaster and Emergency Management Plan.	Emergency planning considerations included, but not specific to food access.

Table 9. Assessment of Electoral Area A (Bamfield) OCP with respect to food security.⁵³

Food Security Dimension	Policy assessment				Potential gap/opportunity	Notes
	Strong	Medium	Light	Not present		
1. Food security in built environment & development plans					Consider supporting food security infrastructure developments (e.g. food processing, community kitchens, food storage, food banks).	Sustainable property development is supported, but not explicitly tied to food. Development of the new community hall with markets as a use is described, but no mention of kitchens or food storage.
2. Agricultural land protection and food production					Consider including support for local seafood processing and availability of local seafood.	No agricultural land in Electoral Area A. However strong policy support for food production in any land use designation and innovative growing methods for the West Coast.
3. Climate adaptation						Climate resiliency is mentioned through GHG reduction and water conservation.
4. Salmon, migratory water bird,						Strong policy statements related to natural environment protection and stewardship.

⁵³ [Bamfield Official Community Plan](#). Adopted: October 2014, Amended: November 2022 (Bylaw P1445). Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District.

Food Security Dimension	Policy assessment				Potential gap/opportunity	Notes
	Strong	Medium	Light	Not present		
habitat protection						
5. Soil health						Natural resource and development policies directly support protection of soil integrity and erosion control.
6. Onsite composting						Supporting development of compost area for use by residents and parks is mentioned as policy statement.
7. Farmers markets						Development of the new community hall with markets as a use is described.
8. Farm gate stands					Consider allowing farm gate stands with appropriate wildlife safety measures in place.	No language in support of farm gate sales.
9. Emergency preparedness					Consider including reference to the ACRD Disaster and Emergency Management Plan and Bamfield Community Emergency Plan.	Policies related to emergency planning and preparedness not present.

Appendix B. Actions and Support for Indigenous Food Sovereignty

In March 2024, the Island Indigenous Foods Gathering was hosted by Ahousaht on Tseshaht territory in Port Alberni. This gathering was a significant initiative aimed at creating a comprehensive strategy for food security for Indigenous communities on Vancouver Island. By bringing together representatives from the 14 Nuu-chah-nulth Nations and other communities, the event sought to share knowledge, resources, and develop strategies to strengthen traditional food systems and resilience.⁵⁴

The following were identified as the most important actions and support required.

Enhancing Traditional Harvesting Practices

- Action: Implement integrated harvesting and cultivation strategies to protect, conserve, and regenerate Indigenous land, food systems, and cultures.
- Support Needed: Assistance with acquiring equipment such as freeze dryers, dehydrators, pressure canners, and traditional harvesting tools and funding for critical infrastructure development.

Empowering Community Education and Training

- Action: Provide training programs, workshops, and educational initiatives focused on traditional food practices, culinary skills, and food safety.
- Support Needed: Resources and funding for developing and delivering culturally relevant training materials, and facilitation of workshops by knowledgeable community members or elders.

Strengthening Cultural Revitalization Efforts

- Action: Create or enhance cultural revitalization initiatives like language revitalization programs, cultural ceremonies, and storytelling events, to strengthen connections to traditional foods.
- Support Needed: Funding for cultural programs and events, resources for preserving and sharing traditional knowledge, and collaboration with cultural organizations and elders.

Building Collaborative Partnerships

- Action: Foster partnerships and collaboration with external organizations, government agencies, and academic institutions to address the systemic barriers and policy gaps impacting food sovereignty and emergency food security.
- Support Needed: Assistance with advocacy efforts, representation in policy-making processes, and funding opportunities for collaborative projects and initiatives.

Promoting Sustainable Resource Management

- Action: Implement sustainable management practices and conservation initiatives to protect and preserve traditional food resources for future generations.
- Support Needed: Technical assistance & expertise in habitat restoration, species conservation, and sustainable harvesting techniques. Funding for conservation projects & land stewardship programs.

Building Community Resilience and Adaptation

⁵⁴ Island Indigenous Foods Gathering. March 2024. Summary Report and Conclusions from a Multiple-Community Roundtable Discussion.

- Action: Develop community-based emergency preparedness plans, response strategies, and support networks to address food security challenges during times of crisis.
- Support Needed: Resources for emergency planning and response, coordination with emergency management agencies, and capacity-building for community resilience.

Advocating for Indigenous Rights and Policies

- Action: Advocate for Indigenous rights to access traditional territories, protect food sovereignty, and address food security issues at local, regional, and national levels.
- Support Needed: Assistance with policy analysis and advocacy, representation in decision-making processes, and collaboration with Indigenous rights organizations and legal experts.

These actions identified through the Island Indigenous Foods Gathering reflect real and ongoing needs in First Nations communities. Addressing these needs, such as improved access to equipment, training, infrastructure, and partnerships, can directly strengthen local food systems. Supporting these efforts contributes to broader emergency preparedness by increasing local capacity to produce, preserve, and share food in times of disruption. This plan recognizes that Indigenous communities have an essential role to play in building food resilience in the West Coast communities, both through traditional knowledge and practical, community-based solutions.

Appendix C. Funding Opportunities

Below is a selection of funding opportunities available to local governments, Indigenous governments, organizations, producers, and businesses. This list is not exhaustive, and funding windows may open and close at different times throughout the year.

General Grants

- [Real Estate Foundation of BC](#)
- [Rural Economic Diversification and Infrastructure Program](#)
- [Vancouver Foundation](#)
- [ACRD Grant-in-Aid](#)
- [Clayoquot Biosphere Trust Grants](#)
- [Knowledge Transfer and Technology Program](#)
- [Co-op Community Spaces](#)
- [Agri-Spirit Fund](#)
- [Island Coastal Economic Trust](#)
- [Youth Employment and Skills Program](#)
- [Canada Summer Jobs wage subsidy](#)
- [Farm 2 School BC Grants](#)

Agri-Environmental Grants

- [Agri-Ecosystem Stewardship Initiative \(AESI\)](#)
- [Agriculture Water Infrastructure Program \(AWP\) Stream 3: Assessments, Engineering Studies or Plans](#)
- [Climate Agri-Solutions Fund \(CAF\)](#)
- [Environmental Farm Plan \(EFP\)](#)
- [Scaling the Implementation of Riparian Restoration \(SIRR\)](#)
- [Investment Agriculture Foundation](#) – various agricultural and environmental grants
- [Tree Canada](#)
- [TD Friends of the Environment Foundation](#)
- [Watershed Security Fund](#)
- [Farm Credit Canada Community Grants](#)

Agri-Food Industry Specific

- [Livestock Waste Tissue Initiative \(LWTI\)](#)
- [Agri-Stability](#)
- [B.C. Land Matching Program](#)
- [Agriculture Wildlife Program](#)
- [Food Storage, Distribution and Retail Program](#)
- [Food Processing Growth Fund](#)
- [Production Insurance](#)
- [Livestock Price Insurance](#)

Emergency Planning and Preparedness

- [United Way](#)
- [Disaster Financial Assistance](#)

- [Indigenous Engagement Requirements Funding Program](#)
- [Community Emergency Preparedness Fund](#)
- [Disaster Resilience and Innovation Funding program](#)
- [Green Municipal Fund](#)
- [Union of BC Municipalities](#)

Indigenous Applicants

- [New Relationship Trust - Food Sovereignty Fund](#)
- [Indigenous People's Resiliency Fund](#)
- [Telus Indigenous Communities Fund](#)
- [Thriving Indigenous Food Systems](#)
- [Indigenous Pathfinder Service](#)

Loans

- [Community Futures](#)
- [Farm Credit Canada BC](#)