Welcome and Agenda Overview

Erika and Heather called the meeting to order, acknowledging the Nuu-chah-nulth territories across the Region and the land’s cherished plants and people. They offered some grounding statements around the “why” of local food supports, including:

1. Because what and how we eat impacts the health of community;
2. Because when we create or gather food, locally, we are more resilient and less vulnerable to external forces;
3. Because connecting people to the history of their food creates connection to our environment and the earth; and
4. As a bonus, it also supports job opportunities, skills training, business start-up, economic development, etc.

Heather offered a simple agenda and intentions for the gathering, with a focus on witnessing some inspiring mini-presentations, and an opportunity to check in with each other, maintain connections, and share recent food-related activities on the coast.

Introductions

A round of introductions demonstrated the large variety of local food that was on our respective breakfast tables (!) as well as a strong interest in sharing and hearing from one another.

Al Anderson – Councillor at District of Tofino. He noted he reports to council to bring support for food security and local production efforts. He also spoke to his personal interest.

Bob Haugen – Director of Continuing Education at North Island Collage. He spoke to his
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foundations growing up on a farm and bee-keeping

**Bruce Greig** – Manager Community Planning at District of Ucluelet. Previous work was with agricultural community on Saanich Peninsula and has studied community agriculture. He’s got a vested interest in using community planning to support local food production.

**Dan Price-Francis** – Bodacious Oasis, a small scale farmer growing food on Tla-o-qui-aht Territory

**Erika Goldt** – Clayoquot Biosphere Trust and Tofino Ucluelet Culinary Guild

**Jeanne Keith-Ferris** – Ucluelet Local Food Society. Mentioned that CBAN (Canadian Biotechnology Action Network) has recently put out a [Call to Action](#) around Health Canada’s proposed deregulation of some Genetically Modified Organisms (GM), and requested that the info is shared with the group.

**Lorna Watson** – Ucluelet Local Food Initiative. She explained it’s a slow start this year at the Wya Point Community Garden, and that with Yuuluʔiłʔath reaching higher vaccination numbers, they’re hoping to have more gardeners involved in the coming months

**Stevie Dennis and Jordan White** – Keltsmaht Kelp. Looking forward to making a presentation

**Melinda Swan** – Ahousaht Chief and Council. She has met Erika and Heather in past meetings and got involved with this group during food security planning at outbreak of COVID-19. She overviewed work they’d done to help community members access food over the past year. She also referenced a time when Ahousaht families had more local food growing in their gardens, fruit trees, etc. She noted that Harvey Robinson had been appointed to be a part of the CAR table for Ahousaht but he has had to pull away so they are now recruiting a new representative.

**Louise Rogers** – Tofino Urban Farm Company (compost business). She is also starting a new business with Dion Olin called Long Beach Farms. They’ll put greenhouses at the airport and produce food commercially. She grew up with a giant garden in the back yard.

**Marcie Dewitt** – Coordinator for Alberni Clayoquot Health Network. She helps ACRD, municipalities, non-profits, to look at social determinants of health. Her focuses are on poverty reduction and access to services, including food access.

**Rachel Dickens** – Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, Dietitian. She works mostly with 5 nations of central coast but expanding to all NCN nations.

**Paula Robertson** – Tofino Community Food Initiative, School Garden Coordinator. Weekly they have 80+ students who are involved in garden club. Every time they come they eat straight from the garden. They have 8 garden clubs. They also have toddlers (not students yet!) participating and a senior’s club.

**Sabrina Campbell** – Ahousaht Chief and Council, works with Melinda Swan.

**Sarah Holden** - Uchucklesaht First Nation – Starting a small production farm and looking to implement fresh produce food box program. They have clam beds and kelp farms as well looking to continue producing food for the Nation.

**Stefan Ochman** – Huu-ay-aht First Nation, Anacla Community Garden – recently installed electricity to first greenhouse as well as a water tap. In the last month, they built a second greenhouse (32’ x 15’ polycarbonate). They’re starting programs for HFN youth and have ordered Mason Bees as well.

**Tessa Stiven** - Farm to School BC, Community Animator. She also is a small market gardener in the Cowichan Valley and a teacher
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Tina Windsor - Picnic Charcuterie. Most of their meat comes from VI or the lower mainland. Recently they’ve started working with a Gabriola Island farm. She studied Landscape Architecture and Organic Agriculture before working in grass-based livestock production. Then she settled in Tofino and started Picnic 7 years ago. She also just started a radio show called “Snack Time with Tina” where they talk about food from the eater’s perspective. Over food, they talk about projects to do with local food sovereignty, partnerships, restaurants, etc. Connect with her to get involved in radio show at picnic.charcuterie@gmail.com

Heather Shobe – Agricultural Support Worker on contract with ACRD and small farm owner in the Alberni Valley.

Mini-presentations: New Coastal Agri-Businesses

Steve Dennis/Jordan White: Keltsmaht Kelp

• Venture started 2 years ago when they were fishing guides at Clayoquot Wilderness Resort.
• Keltsmaht is where Stevie’s people come from and is part of Ahousaht Hahoulthee
• They wanted to conduct business in a different way and focus on harvesting wild Kelp, figuring out what they can and can’t do. Property and processing facilities were hard to find in Tofino, but recently they were able to access space at the Ice House (old North Sea plant).
• They realized that making a plant probiotic would be the easiest and most profitable/viable option for the self-funded venture.
• They have been conducting comprehensive surveys of the wild kelp supply to ensure they don’t over-harvest and will continue this summer with Ha’oom Fisheries, Cedar Coast, and possibly Hakai Institute.
• They mix and ferment kelp to create a new product that combines Kelp Extract and Activated EM (Effective Microorganisms) to become shelf-stable. They have a hydraulic press that extracts more from the kelp than their previous hand press.
• More on EMs – they’re basically like yoghurt for plants, it helps plants have a healthy microbiome that makes them more resilient and healthy.
• Gardening season and house plants have been the biggest markets. They’re now also in 8 different stores on Vancouver Island.
• Applications for the product include:
  o Increasing speed and yield of germination
  o Great for vegetative state
  o Definitely not for flowering stages
  o Good for happy healthy indoor houseplants
  o Adding to compost
  o Shelf life is about a year
  o Can be applied as a foliar spray
• You can get it directly from Jordan and Stevie and TUCG will be carrying it as of Monday and the Ucluelet Aquarium will also be carrying the product
• You can reach Keltsmaht Kelp at keltsmahtkelp@gmail.com
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Louise Rodgers/Dion Olin: Long Beach Farms

- They have signed a lease with ACRD to put in two 16’ x 50’ hoop-house greenhouses on a plot of land at the airport. They will take them down in December as these are not winter-proof greenhouses.
- The work has been supported by CBT and ACRD through a Vital Grant program.
- This will be an off-grid simplified layout, with a big rain collection tank in a sunny location below the approach area for planes.
- They get lease May 1st.
- This is a feasibility/learning project for all coastal communities.
- The hope is to sell the produce and make accessible to all communities and also through the TUCG food box program.
- They are incorporated as a business but they’re effectively a non-profit.
- Major hurdles include the off-grid aspect, sourcing soil, and lease uncertainty with the ACRD (e.g. a 10 year lease would allow them to invest with more certainty in permanent greenhouses).
- You can reach Louise at lourodgers@gmail.com

Sharing Reflections

Heather asked the group to head over to a Google Jam Board to share their reflections about what they’ve heard so far, and offer some take-away/gifts about what they are learning.

I will be tuning in to food talk radio next week, for sure.

Citizen Seed Trials Farm Folk City Folk

What did you learn?
What gift or teaching can you offer to the group?

I am looking forward to seeing farming at long beach!

keltismahtkelp@gmail.com

Partnering with all Local Food Initiatives and our 300 plus children in the area.

Really excited to see Stevie and Jordan's presentation - can't wait to try their magic elixir and see how it works in our garden.

Exciting developments in local food!!

Kelp scraps for composting

Environmental Footprint

It is possible!!!

Great things growing locally

Octopus Garden!

On the ground people power is a common challenge

What one activity/project are you most interested in engaging with in 2021 (From Nov 2020 CAR meeting)

Community Garden meetings were helpful
Mini-presentations: *Opportunities!*

**Tessa Stiven, Community Animator: Farm to School BC**

- Farm to School BC is a program of Public Health Association of BC, which is funded by Ministry of Health to do work for preventative public health initiatives
- Core elements of F2SBC
  - Local healthy food
  - Hands on learning
  - School and community connectedness
- As a community animator in the Central Island Region, Tessa works as a networking hub to host Professional Development days for the School Districts, learning circles, webinars, etc.
- She also coordinates grants – this year they funded 75 schools
- She also provides grant writing and fundraising supports
- She also facilitates a F2SBC Advisory Committee on the East coast of Vancouver Island (SD 68+69), and shared more information, with hopes that it could plant a seed for a West coast version of the same thing
  - Membership includes school district staff, community food organizations, farmers/ producers
  - There’s often a divide between policies of school districts and gardens, and they work to help strengthen policy to support gardens
- The process of starting an Advisory Committee in the coastal region would start with interested members helping to create a vision for the committee and identifying key stakeholders. It would then involve developing and actioning a Strategic Plan.
- There are various options about boundaries for the Committee, such as the entire ACRD, the coast only, and/or including more Northern NTC communities (outside of the ACRD) who have similar coastal challenges.
- Anyone interested is invited to email: tessa@farmtoschoolbc.ca
- Erika shared that there are 3 elementary schools, 2 high schools, and a range of homeschooled options on the coast. There are multiple gardens that have gone through various stages of evolutions but the schools lack capacity to access food and support themselves. Formal support from F2S to help connect the dots would do great things!

**Bob Haugen, Director Continuing Education/Contract & Training Services: North Island College**

- North Island College has a range of agricultural training programs
- Bob described NIC’s agri-related training plans for 2021/22 including:
  - Market gardener program – Port Alberni
  - Sustainable Farming Program – Comox Valley
  - Food Processing Program - Port Alberni
  - Craft Brewing and Packaging Comox Valley
  - Controlled Environment Farming – Various locations
- Market gardener training (at Shelter Farm in Port Alberni) is changing to be an 8-week
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program in 2021
  o There will be two intakes of students, for May-July and July-September programs
  o The program will include:
    ▪ Greenhouse production
    ▪ Market Garden production
    ▪ Irrigation and Pest Control
    ▪ Farmers Market sales

• In the past, North Island College typically developed programs themselves then reached out to communities to secure participants.
• They have now switched their processes, and are actively seeking community/organizational/local government partnership to develop programs that are relevant and needed from the community perspective.
• Bob invited anyone to reach out to share their perspectives and potentially work with him to co-develop or give input to new programming.
• You can reach Bob at bob.Haugen@nic.bc.ca

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Closing and Check-out

Heather noted that while there is not a set date at this time, the next CAR meeting will likely be in Fall (November) 2021.

In addition, it is expected there will be other gatherings with a specific focal point, such as occurred in June 2020 for the Policy-focused event.

The ACRD is hoping to continue work on the Fostering Collaboration Amongst Coastal Community Gardens project, with support of Tofino Community Food Initiative, Eat West Coast, and Clayoquot Biosphere Trust.

The ACRD continues to look for ways to ground the Roundtable more firmly within the Coastal Community and is working on a better engagement and communications strategy based on CAR discussions in November 2020. It is taking a bit of time to work out the delineation of roles and associated resources/funding, but we expect to see something worked out this spring so stay tuned.

Much gratitude to Clayoquot Biosphere Trust for co-hosting and supporting this initiative.

We acknowledge the traditional territories of Hesquiaht First Nation, Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations, Toquaht Nation, Ahousaht, Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ, Huu-ay-aht First Nation, Ditidaht, and Uchucklesaht First Nation in the spirit of truth, healing, and reconciliation.