

Executive Director Report for September 30th, 2021 meeting of the Food Policy Council  
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### 2021 Core Goals

1. Increase visibility and understanding of the local food economy
2. Support those facing food / ag-related policy challenges
3. Manage funded project to successful completion
4. Secure increased core and project funding
5. Increase profile and capacity of Council

This report is organized around the responsibilities categories in the Executive Director job description. Where they pertain to the Core Goals, this is noted. Activities listed are those that have occurred since our last Council meeting on July 29th, 2021.

### Leadership & Management (Core Goals 1, 2, 3 and 5)

I was off for two weeks in August and so there is less to report on. However some good progress has been made on advancing the Forest Values project. Amy and I also determined, over the course of several conversations, that aligning our projects under clear program areas will assist with fundraising and communications. We are developing project concepts and seeking out possible funding sources for a variety of projects that align with our mandate and for which there are likely funders.

Cannabis Economic Development Council Coordination: Funding was secured by Community Futures to contract the CKFPC to do this work through the end of June 2022, with a commitment to secure funding for another year or so beyond that. The contract bills out at \$65/hour.

- I met with the Executive of the Cannabis Council in August.
- I wrapped up a four year project with a first year law student at the University of Ottawa who did a deep dive research project, examining the question of how risk is understood and applied in cannabis regulation in various jurisdictions. One outcome of the project is a large archive of relevant resource materials as well as a final report by the student Matthew Halsall, which summarizes some of his key findings. This initiative cost the Council nothing other than my time, which was modest and resulted in some great resources to guide our advocacy work, particularly in the context of the legally mandated review of the federal Cannabis Act at the 3 year mark, which is October 2021.
- I chaired a meeting of the full Cannabis Council on September 9th, with a focus on assessing the current state of the sector locally and priorities for the Council's autumn work plan.
- At the request of the CAO of the city of Nelson, I created a three page overview of options and considerations in the creation of an appellation (like VQA for BC wine) to serve the licensed cannabis sector. It will inform his participation in an upcoming Cannabis Committee at the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM). We also provided to him the provincial policy overview we developed earlier this year for the RDCK, at their request, in support of their advocacy at UBCM.

Citizen Engagement in Land Use Planning: I continue to oversee the work of Matthew McClelland in his masters research (see my last report for details) and facilitate the collaboration with the RDCK. There has been an happy alignment of Matthew's research needs and the RDCK planned community engagement for an OCP and zoning review in Area I that will be mutually beneficial. We are committed to providing input, along with Matthew, on the development of the community communications and engagement. Matthew will participate to assess process and ways to enhance and increase participation while the RDCK will be seeking public input in their planning document updates, to be wrapped up at the end of the calendar year. We will help to amplify the calls for resident participation.

**Staffing:** August included time off for both staff. Nevertheless, we were able to continue to develop our communications and project ideas jointly. September's work agenda has been dominated by communications planning, preparing for the Council meeting, and ongoing fundraising efforts.

### **Communications (Core Goals 1 & 5)**

Covered in Amy's report.

### **Fundraising (Core Goal #4)**

I am regularly in meetings with various colleagues and funders to explore options for collaboration, funding and awareness raising. We also continue to be sought out for short term contracts, which is not as predictable as a funding source but has been providing a small but nice boost to our annual revenue.

- We are now formally on the roster of Advisors with the Columbia Basin Trust Non Profit Advisors Program. This has resulted in two invitations to submit a quote to support non-profits in the area on food systems related initiatives. We were successful in receiving the contract to work with the North Slokan Valley group on their food hub and co-working space initiative. I met with them on September 20<sup>th</sup> to support the creation of key messages and communications strategies for this stage of their project development. We have also submitted a quote for consideration to support Lardeau Valley LINKS with strategic and work plans; if we are successful the work will take place over the winter months. I am hoping that this will increase our options for expanding our staffing so that i can delegate and share more of the work.
- We were asked and agreed to be a collaborator with several academic institutions, including Selkirk College, the University of Guelph and Lakehead University, to explore how communities adapted to the impacts of the pandemic, including across both fisheries and agriculture. Our COVID Roundtables will prove a rich mine of data should the project receive funding.
- I continue to monitor funding opportunities that may be relevant to our work and that of our members.

### **Planning & New Programs / Projects (Core Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5)**

As indicated above, Amy and I have begun to review our activities and identify "program" areas into which our various projects fit and that will allow me to have a more holistic approach to our fundraising as well as our staffing. There will be more on this in the coming months and I anticipate that it will influence the format of our staff reports.

Systemic Racism and Food Systems: this programming was introduced in January 2020 but was muted by the impacts of the pandemic. Nevertheless, the work continues and, with funding, we hope to expand it.

- The Anti-racism Working Group took a break over the summer and reconvened on September 22<sup>nd</sup> for a rich conversation exploring meaningful engagement and actions for the Council to take. We agreed that developing internal communications and plans as an organization is a first step. A draft document will be reviewed at our October Working Group meeting.
- I continue to participate regularly in Intercultural Kootenays meetings as one avenue to inform our program addressing systemic racism in food systems.
- I am integrating a budget line item into all of our grant applications that will provide funds that we can use to compensate or hire BIPOC for related programming.
- I am very pleased to be able to report that we have been able to secure Nasookin Joe Pierre of the community of ʔaqʔam, Ktunaxa Nation to share the Ktunaxa Creation Story at our September 30<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. The motivation behind this invitation is to help to ground the Council and its members in the place where we all work, eat and play.
- We will continue to reflect on how our Council structures, staffing, meetings, and communications may be barriers or invitations to diverse perspectives and voices, with a view to making the Council as welcoming as possible to all who are interested in our work.

Balancing Forest Values Project: This was the focus of much of my work in the past months, made possible by funding support from several RDCK Directors, for which we are very grateful. This has also allowed us to cover staff costs at our key partners, primarily Living Lakes Canada. I am thrilled to be able to report that we have a new partner in the project that will fill the role of Indigenous Lead: the BC First Nations Forestry Council. They were founded in 2006 and have a governance structure that includes representation from the three main Indigenous organizations in the province: the Union of BC Indian

Chiefs, the BC Assembly of First Nations, and the First Nations Summit. They have a mandate to fully engage all Indigenous communities in the province and have a set of recommendations for law reform that aligns very well with our own.

We should be hearing in the next week or so if our funding application to the Real Estate Foundation was successful. In the meantime, I am working closely with Living Lakes Canada on fundraising, and continue to reach out to allies and advisors, including EcoJustice, and the Environmental Law Clinic at the University of Victoria, as well as the Ymir Community Watershed Society. The response to the project continues to be very positive and strong. The impact will be province wide but will address an ongoing issue for many RDCK communities. We will continue close collaboration with the RDCK, seeking to complement wherever possible their Regional Watershed Governance Initiative.

Kootenay Bioregional Food System Study Project: we have not heard anything recently from the Institute for Sustainable Food Systems (ISFS) at Kwantlen Polytechnic University for this Study. We shall respond as and when appropriate and are well positioned to be a funded and strong regional partner.

Food Systems Literacy: Artists engagement. Amy and I continue to develop a project concept to engage artists in our food systems literacy program delivery. I am delighted to announce that we have our first \$500 toward this project, from the Kootenay Coop, and we are planning a matching funds challenge in the coming weeks.

Exploring Food Systems Through the Arts: This is a very new project idea that fits into our broader Food Systems Literacy programming. Amy proposed that we document the artists we fund to create materials for our food systems literacy. The goal is to create a documentary and possible exhibit that will capture the creative process, what that experience was like for the different artists and then put on an event featuring the outcome. We are engaging various likely partners, including the Nelson District Arts Council, Touchstones, and the Civic Theatre. This is thanks to Amy's genius for creative idea generation and her links to the local arts community. More to come on this exciting project in the near future.

#### **Increasing the Profile of the Council (Core Goal 5)**

- I participated in an hour long consultation with the Columbia Basin Trust on workforce needs specific to the agriculture and food sectors.
- I participated in a session with the RDCK sustainability staff on what climate data is important to monitor pertaining to the viability of our region's food systems.
- By invitation, I presented an overview of the Council and of our Forest Values project to the RDCK's Community Sustainable Living Advisory Committee (CSLAC) at their August meeting.
- By invitation, I met with the new Nakusp Economic Development Coordinator, about opportunities for agriculture and food enterprises in the Nakusp area. This led to a follow up meeting with a new farmer entrepreneur in the Nakusp area, Lynn Short, who joined our last Council meeting.