



Bulkley Valley Food Security Forum

May 19, 2017

Smithers, B.C.

Summary Report

prepared by Laurie Gallant and Lilliana Dragowska

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Acknowledgements and Gratitude

This forum was an ambitious undertaking and could not have happened without the financial support provided by the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako and MP Nathan Cullen.

The advice, event planning assistance, and resources that supported the planning and delivery of our event contributed immensely to the success of our goals. Thank you to Nathan Cullen for planting the seed on New Year's Eve and having faith in me to pull this off, Liliana and Shelley for their work on the invitation list, John Stevenson at the BC Min. of Agriculture (Smithers) for printing, flipchart use and links to great reference materials, the BC Emergency Management Program for wise counsel and encouragement in the early stages of theme development, Mike Dandenault at BV Wholesale for an inspiring solutions-oriented session in his office, Flo, Marianne and Shane at Northern Health Authority for being fully engaged and providing support materials, Eric and Peter at the BV Museum for making our venue rental so smooth, everyone on our Speakers Panel (Marie-Eve Arseneault, Mark Fisher, Joe Hug, Crystal Nelligan, and Mike Dandenault), and most of all to my planning team that met faithfully for two months and really stepped up on the big day: Liliana Dragowska (this women seriously rocks!), Bryan Swansburg, and Dan Mesec.

Lastly, a shout out to our amazing caterer, Sweet and Savoury Culinary Creations (Joan Lecourt) and to my partner Bill Crosson and intern Elias at Hazelton Hops for picking up the slack in the field and our kitchen while I was busy working on community food security.



Joan LeCourte reveals the ingredients to the delicious local lunch and discusses the challenges and rewards of planning a local lunch mid-May in the Bulkley Valley.

Executive Summary

On Friday May 19th, 2017 a select group of local government representatives, First Nations, Provincial Government employees, Food Supply Chain representatives, Farmers, Service organizations and empowered food security individuals met at The Old Church in Smithers to discuss personal and community resiliency in the event of a food supply disruption during winter months.

The event started with an acknowledgement of the unceded Gitdumden, Bear Wolf Clan, territory and a blessing by Chief Timberwolf, Mabel Forsythe of the Witsuwit'en Nation. Opening remarks were provided by Shelley Browne on behalf of Member of Parliament Nathan Cullen who planted the seed for a food security project in his riding and provided financial assistance for the event. Next a local food lunch was served, catered by Joan LaCourte from Sweet and Savoury Culinary Creations. The meal was followed by an interactive activity called "What's on my plate?" where participants guessed which ingredients of the lunch were local and which were not, and then the caterer revealed the truth behind her sourcing and challenges she faced. This led to a group discussion on alternatives and solutions for imported items like vegetable oil, vinegar, butter, flour and salt.

Laurie Gallant presented next, beginning with a definition of community food security provided by Northern Health. *A community is "food secure" when everyone obtains a safe, personally acceptable, nutritious diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice.* The concept of a "sustainable local food system" and its various components was reviewed: Produce, Process, Distribute, Access, Consume, and Recover. A short analysis on the State of Food Security in the Bulkley Valley followed using a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats framework and identifying key research completed in our region and the province in the last ten years (*see Appendix B and C*).

A speaker panel was up next consisting of Crystal Nelligan (Groundbreakers), Mark Fisher (RDBN Electoral Area "A" Director and local farmer), Marie-Eve Arseneault (Food and Beverage Manager for Hudson Bay Mountain), Mike Dandenault (Manager for BV Wholesale), and Joe Hugs (local farmer - Healthy Hugs Organic Farm). The panel shared their perspectives on the type of scenarios we need to prepare for as a community with topics such as climate change, regulatory supports, market coordination and the need for infrastructure development. "We need more farmers" was a strong theme that emerged while coupled with stories of current organizational and business initiatives already in place. Speaker highlights can be seen in *Appendix F*.

Questions from the floor followed that dovetailed into the final activity of the forum: Action Planning. This activity used the major themes from the panel discussion and included: Infrastructure, Education, Policy, Energy Systems, and Miscellaneous/Other. Participants were asked to group themselves by the

theme they are most passionate about and commit to one action they will personally undertake or would like to see addressed in the next 12 months.

The event was concluded with door prizes and a statement of Next Steps including distribution of proceedings by mid-June, direct follow up with participants and those who sent regrets to flesh out the Action Plan over the next two months, exploring opportunities to include more communities in our Food Security Network, and planning for a follow-up forum in the fall.



Liliana Dragowska moderating the speakers panel, with her drawing of a sustainable local food system in the background.

Background

The Bulkley Valley has long been an agricultural hub in the Northwest, providing local residents with produce, dairy and meat products for over a century. However, changes in policy and land use over the past two decades have transformed the local food system to the point where delays in imported food supplies to grocery stores, particularly from December to May, created panic-buying and empty store shelves. This has been compounded by the closing of the main grocery store in the District of Houston, frequent but short power outages that also lead to temporary store closures, and annual flooding threats that close off access to the Bulkley Valley through Prince George. The wildfire in Fort McMurray last year also reminded us of how emergency preparedness or lack thereof affects food security.

These disruptions have highlighted how dependent and vulnerable northern communities are on regular food shipments from supply chains hundreds, and sometimes thousands of kilometres away but also on grid-tie energy systems that power cold storage. The short-lived success of a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) food box led by Groundbreakers created hardship for producers who had ramped up production to meet contract demands only to have them cancelled. Precise and demanding procedures for selling local food in major grocery stores that must abide by Canadian Food Industry Association standards have intimidated some producers, while smaller independent outlets like Nature's Pantry in Smithers sell out of fresh produce so fast that a whopping \$14000 revenues for carrots from Haida Gwaii could have been doubled if only more produce was available to be sold.

Of great concern to many we can also add the establishment of new large-scale GMO crops, for export only agricultural production, and mismatched land uses for valuable agricultural land such as tree farms.

The "Carrots to Cattle" conference organized by the Smithers Farmers Institute for the last two years have explored important themes such as the impact of climate change on agricultural practices and yields, and the impact of increasing local food consumption on the local economy.

With a highly successful and popular Farmers Market in Smithers and smaller but wonderful markets in Hazelton and Houston buoyed by the distribution of fresh food coupons for local income households and a growing marketplace disdain for processed, poisoned, and well-travelled food, the time is right to examine our food system.

Outcomes in Brief

1. The forum was successful in strengthening the network of individuals and agencies engaged in Food Security from Terrace to Burns Lake, with the emphasis on Hazelton to Houston for this particular event. See the Attendance list as well as Regrets in *Appendix D*
2. Solid work on the foundation of a Short and Long Term Sustainable Food System Action Plan around the themes of Policy, Energy, Education, and Infrastructure was begun. The activity instructions were to divide into groups using the theme areas, and create a list of short term actions (1 year). Where possible, a project lead is identified. Where no lead was identified, facilitators have made a suggestion.

Food Security Policy Action

Action	Short/long term Action	Individual identified	Affiliated organization
Meaningful incentives for local farmers who sell locally. e.g. Farmers lobby federal and provincial government for coordinated Buy Local programming.	Long	Shelley Browne	MP office
Investigate new policy initiatives to support producers.	Short/Long	Shelley Browne	MP office
Develop central composting facility for food waste in Smithers: Research best practices, ID location.	Short	Jill Boland	Hudson Bay Mountain
Develop mechanism to recycle kitchen waste through local pig/chicken farmers.	Short	Jill Boland and M-E Arseneault	Hudson Bay Mountain
Provide information to interested local producers on Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) regulations. Get started on meeting minimum regulations to producing and selling local food.	Short/Long	Mike Dandenault	BV Wholesale
Inventory the food security continuum (food system) in the Bulkley Valley, identify Gaps and create a coordinated action plan with participation from local governments, service groups and organizations working towards food security.	Short/Long	needs leader	RDBN?

Energy/Power Supply Actions

Action	Short/long term Action	Individual identified	Affiliated organization
Research availability of sewage & farm waste for biogas/methane production.	Long	Bryan Swansburg	Smithers Farmers Institute
Provide advice and consulting on renewable energy.	Short	Kevin Pegg	Energy Alternatives
Research and share information on ways to extend the growing season in a greenhouse.	Short/ Long	Adriana Almeida	
Keep alternative energy and other systems part of the conversation.	Short/ Long	Megan D'Arcy	BV Ec Dev Assoc.
Explore possibility of solar panel pilot project for a grocery store.	Short/ Long	Laurie Gallant	

Education Actions

Action	Short/long term Action	Individual identified	Affiliated organization
Develop Agriculture Coordinator Position at Regional District to help bring all levels and groups together.	Short/long	Mark Fisher	RDBN
Continue work of Groundbreakers - Kids Dig Food Camp, School Garden Club and workshops (topics: food security issues, how to care for soil, local and global food systems, how to plant and care for plants, plant identification, composting, how to harvest, prepare and store foods).	Short/long	Crystal Nelligan	Ground Breakers
Organize Farm to Table cooking lessons.	Short	ME Arseneault	Hudson Bay Mountain
Professional Agrologist yard crawl with focus on urban farming - bring food security into conversation.	Short	Ryan Holmes	P. Ag./Min. of Agriculture
Young Agrarian Youth Employment Program - educational video.		Allie Dick	Young Agrarians

Local farms tours and learning from the ground up.	Short/long	needs leader - Laurie G will organize for Hazelton	Min.of Ag./ RDBN?
Create list of available farming mentors - elders in our community who can help new farmers	Short	Curt Gesch and Laurie Gallant	
Start a Culture Club (sourdough, kefir, fermented foods etc) where each household maintains and shares a type of culture and educates community groups about these value-added processes	Short	Jeannie Boyce	
Offer wild crafting classes - edible and medicinal plants.	Short	Laurie Gallant	

Infrastructure Actions

Action	Short/long term Action	Individual identified	Affiliated organization
Community root cellar in Hazelton - investing, building, managing.	Short/long	Josette Weir	
Compile an inventory of existing infrastructure and identify gaps	Short	leader needed	BVEDA?
Investigate inbound routes for food supply in case of road closures - consider road, rail and water.	Short	Laird Longman)	Bandstra
Community food cache - one month worth of food using locally produced and preserved items (dehydrated, canned, non-perishable ready to eat or just add water) - as an economic development project.	Short/long	Laurie Gallant	BVEDA?
Identify different infrastructure models to a) support producers b) support individuals c) support neighbourhoods or whole town seed library	Short	leader needed	RDBN
Develop a local seed library and bank.	Short/long	leader needed	RDBN?

Continue the Producers to Consumers (Local Food Directory) and build upon the local food economy currently existing; Optimize the Directory by following trade patterns instead of Regional District boundaries.	Short	Laurie Gallant and Deklan Corstanje	RDBN/ RDKS
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In addition to the list of actions above, the Food Security Forum identified key groups and organizations that will be key to the success of the development of a local food action plan. These organizations include and are not limited to the following list:

Town of Smithers	RDBN	District of Hazelton
District of Houston	Northern Health – Food Security Lead and Protection	Village of Telkwa
School District 54	Office of the Wet’suwet’en	Gitxsan Government Commission
MLA	Ministry of Highways and Agriculture	MP’s Office
Restaurants	Grocery Stores	Shipping companies
Farmers/Producers	Service Provider Groups i.e. Salvation Army, Grendel, High Roads....	Smithers Chamber of Commerce and BV Economic Development Association
Smithers Farmers Institute	Farmers Market associations	Groundbreakers
UNBC	BV Social Planning Society	

Next Steps

In order for this initiative to move forward, a proper planning process will need to be resourced or organized by an identified organization. There are some great models of BC communities who have resourced and completed successful food action plans, with Bella Coola, North Cariboo, and Creston Valley leading the way for rural communities.

The forum on May 19th clearly demonstrated interest and enthusiasm in the valley for a coordinated food action strategy. Concern was expressed by producers in the area leading up to the forum that past attempts to coordinate food security have failed and that participating in these events is a waste of time. It is imperative that the trust and confidence of producers is restored, otherwise a sustainable food system is a hopeless goal.

The next steps will require leadership and momentum from all participating individuals and organizations to ensure continued success.

1. Find resources to develop and implement a proper Action Plan that engages all sectors and builds on ideas and actions from the Forum.
2. Present this report to agencies that make policy - all levels of government, Northern Health, etc. This can be done by Laurie and Liliana and resources already exist for this step.
3. Work closely with the regional district to discuss the importance of local food security and the need for a coordinated regional action plan that is supported and resourced by an official organization and provides resources to farmers, business, and community members.
4. Organize a follow-up forum in the Fall.
5. Create a toolkit for delivering these events in other Northwest BC communities, beginning with Terrace as there is already a leader willing to take this on.

Appendices

Appendix A: Sustainable Food System



Appendix B: State of Food Security in Bulkley Valley - SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • significant and varied land base (aspects, altitudes) • diversity of soil types and microclimates means diversity of crops outside of normal climatic zones • many elders with farming experience and wisdom • self-reliance spirit/ hunting and fishing • well established farmers markets • good foundation of research already completed • recognition of the value of agriculture to economic development and stability i.e.. RDBN Land Use Survey • entrepreneurs willing to innovate • excellent gardening section in public libraries • increasing awareness of need to be good land stewards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • food processing infrastructure for small scale farmers • cold storage capacity for small retailers and producers • food distribution system gets bottle necked at Prince George • dependence on southern growing regions for winter produce • low level of multi-tier and inter-agency coordination • low level of shoulder and winter season growing • low level of food waste recovery on commercial scale • dependence on grid-tie energy and fossil fuels • low level of water collection and storage systems to prepare for dry, hot summer months
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new industry for preserved local food - preserved, frozen, dried • new business in seed saving and distribution • development of alternative energy systems and training in the trades • purchasing policies for commercial and institutional customers to prefer local food • increase in frost-free days due to climate change • increased collaboration between levels and departments of government • learning from traditional First Nation ways and observance of “Cultural Days” for wild food harvest and preservation • cost of food is high in northwest BC due to imported foods; local foods can keep food affordable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • natural hazards - floods, wildfires, mudslides, rock slides that result in highway closure • power outages that close down gas stations and payment systems • decreasing yields of crops produced in southern regions means northern customers get a smaller share at higher prices • lack of time to grow, harvest and process food on individual level • development on agricultural land not related to local food production • development on Crown land and unceded territory that threatens wild food sources and salmon

Appendix C: Food Security Forum Resources

Bella Coola Valley Sustainable Agricultural Society. 2008. *Bella Coola Valley Foodshed Analysis Project (2007)*. Bella Coola, BC. http://www.ccrd-bc.ca/edo/Foodshed_Analysis_Report_2007_-_Fwd.pdf

Bella Coola Valley Sustainable Agricultural Society. 2008. *Bella Coola Food Action Plan*. Bella Coola, BC. https://www.vch.ca/media/CFAI_Full_Bella_Coola.pdf

Connell, David. May, 2015. *Agricultural Land Use Planning in Northern British Columbia Final Report: Smithers Telkwa Rural Area Case Study*. University of Northern British Columbia.

Gunner, Andrea, P.Ag. and Watt, Gillian. February 2012. *A Regional Food System Assessment & Value Chain Opportunity Analysis*. Beyond the Market, Ag Consulting, Thompson Rivers University.

Health Canada. 2007. *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide, First Nations, Inuit, and Metis*. Ottawa, Ontario.

Health Canada. 2007. *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*. Ottawa, Ontario.

Herriot, Carolyn. 2010. **The Zero-Mile Diet: A year-round guide to growing organic food**. Harbour Publishing, British Columbia.

Jabbour, Niki. 2011. **Year-round Vegetable Gardener, How to grow you own food 365 days per year no matter where you live**. Storey Publishing, North Adams, MA USA.

Peters, Sheila. 2017. *"Still Growing"* published in Northword Magazine No. 68. Smithers, BC.

Provincial Health Services Authority. 2016. *Northern Health: Household Food Insecurity in 2011-2012*. Provincial Health Services Authority, Population and Public Health Program. Vancouver, BC.

Provincial Health Services Authority. February 2016. *Food Costing in BC 2015*. Provincial Health Services Authority, Population and Public Health Program. Vancouver, BC.

Provincial Health Services Authority. February 2016. *Agriculture's Connection to Health: A summary of the evidence relevant to British Columbia*. Provincial Health Services Authority, Population and Public Health Program. Vancouver, BC.

Public Safety Canada. 2008. *Your Emergency Preparedness Guide, British Columbia*. Her Majesty the Queen, Canada.

Town of Smithers, Northern Health and the Bulkley Valley Social Planning Society. 2016. *Smithers Community Vitality Report Card 2016*. Smithers, BC.

Peters, Sheila. 2017. *"Still Growing"* published in Northword Magazine No. 68. Smithers, BC.

Wheeler, Robin. 2008. **Food Security for the Faint of Heart - Keeping your larder full in lean times**. New Society Publishers, Gabriola Island, BC.

Appendix D: List of Attendees

	Name	Affiliation
1	Almeida, Adriana	Researcher, Smithers (works at MOE)
2	Anonuevo, Christine	ED at Upper Skeena Development Centre, Hazelton
3	Arsenault, Marie Ev	speaker, Food and Beverage Mgr for HBM
4	Bachrach, Taylor	Mayor, Town of Smithers
5	Bajer, Magdalena	Farmer, Smithers rural area
6	Boland, Jill	HBM, Marketing
7	Boyce, Jeannie	individual
8	Browne, Shelley	MP Office, opening remarks, sponsor
9	Chapman, Rachel	Salvation Army - Houston Food Bank
10	Corstanje, Deklan	RDKS, Ec. Dev.
11	Dandenault, Mike	speaker, Manager BV Wholesale
12	Darcy, Megan	Director for BV Economic Development Assn
13	Dewit, David	Natural Resources Mgr, Office of the Wet'suwet'en
14	Dick, Alexanne (Ally)	Mgr, BV Farmers Market
15	Dragowska, Liliana	organizing team
16	Fisher, Mark	speaker, Director for RDBN Electoral Area A
17	Forsythe, Mabel	Chief Timberwolf - Blessing
18	Gagnon, Denise	Terrace food security network
19	Gallant, Laurie	organizing team
20	Gesch, Curt	Just Farmers publication
21	Hegan, Jennifer	Groundbreakers
22	Holmes, Ryan	Min. of Agriculture
23	Howard, Ali	Nature's Pantry
24	Hug, Joe	speaker, Healthy Hugs Organic Farm
25	Lecourt, Joan	Caterer, speaker
26	Mesec, Dan	organizing team
27	Miller, Bill	RDBN, Chair of the Board, Burns Lake
28	Monds, Melanie	Positive Living North

	Name	Affiliation
29	Nelligan, Crystal	speaker, Groundbreakers
30	Nugent, Joanne	Smithers Community Services
31	Ongman, Liard	Bandstra Transportation Systems Ltd
32	??, Paul	Salvation Army - Smithers Food Bank
33	Pegg, Kevin	Energy Alternatives Ltd.
34	Swansburg, Bryan	organizing team
35	Vandenberg, Daryl	Moose FM media
36	Weir, Josette	individual
37	Wittwer, Manfred	W Diamond Ranch, Telkwa

Regrets:

Wadden, Shane	Environmental Health Officer, Northern Health Authority
Bloudoff, Marianne	Population Health Dietitian, Provincial Health Authority
Stecko, Keith	Fire Chief, Town of Smithers
Cullen, Nathan	Member of Parliament, Skeena-Bulkley Valley
Donaldson, Doug	Member of Legislative Assembly, Stikine Region
Hurst, Maurie	Regional Manager (Northwest), Emergency Management BC
DeMaio, Beth	Executive Director, Storytellers Foundation
Lalonde, Angelique	Community Organizer for Food Action, Storytellers Foundation
Hunt, Wendy	CAO, District of New Hazelton
Maitland, Alice	Mayor, Village of Hazelton
Stevenson, John	District Agrologist, Min. of Agriculture (Smithers)
Beaudoin, Jeremie	Telkwa Volunteer Fire Dept., CEO, National Emergency Safety Service
Larsen, Lindsay	United Way, Community Development & Campaign Officer of the Northwest
McGhie, Debbie	Hazelton entrepreneur with farm animal auction business concept

Appendix E: Detailed notes form the Action Planning Activity

ACTION PLANNING ACTIVITY: WHAT CAN WE DO IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS TO IMPROVE PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCY IN THE EVENT OF A SYSTEM FAILURE?

It was noted that the system has already failed many people in our valley, particularly those on a low income.

Policy

- incentives for local farmers who sell locally
- Laurie call John Stevenson and ask him to add to this sheet
- research federal support for food security initiatives at local level; Library of Parliament research request; speak with opposition agriculture and agrifood critics (Shelley Browne)
- investigate new policy initiatives to support producers (Shelley Browne)
- research other communities and possible location to develop central composting facility in Smithers, with goal to having a presentation/pitch to Council in the next 12 months (Jill Boland)
- Hudson Bay Mountain to develop mechanism to recycle kitchen waste through local pig/chicken farmers
- Enlist other restaurants to also participate in these efforts (Jill Boland and M-E Arseneault)
- provide information to interested local producers on CFIA regulations. Get started on meeting minimum regulations to producing and selling local food (Mike Dandenault, BV Wholesale)

Energy

- research availability of sewage & farm waste for biogas/methane production (Bryan Swansburg)
- take advantage of Bryan's expertise to grow more chickens with less reliance on hydro (Megan D'Arcy)
- keep alternative energy and other systems part of the conversation (Megan D'Arcy)
- provide advice and consulting on renewable energy (Kevin Pegg, Energy Alternatives)
- research and share information on ways to extend the growing season in a greenhouse (Adriana Almeida)

Education

- organize Farm to Table cooking lessons ME Arseneault
- Professional Agrologist yard crawl with focus on urban farming and follow up conversations from BV Food Forum (Ryan Holmes)
- Young Agrarian Youth Employment Program - educational video (Allie Dick)
- Develop Agriculture Coordinator Position at Regional District to help bring all levels and groups together (Mark Fisher)
- Understanding the full spectrum of food security/insecurity; not always a top down approach, learn from each other (Joanne Nugent and Melanie Monds)
- Local farms often have an open door policy for school tours (and it's free)
- Get the word out that BV Wholesale supports producers to sell at grocery store
- Need support for businesses to link into local markets e.g. butcher

- Create list of available farming mentors - elders in our community who can help new farmers. (Curt Gesch and Laurie Gallant)
- Continue work of Groundbreakers - Kids Dig Food Camp, School Garden Club and workshops (topics: food security issues, how to care for soil, local and global food systems, how to plant and care for plants, plant identification, composting, how to harvest, prepare and store foods) (Crystal Nelligan)

Infrastructure

- we need a community root cellar in Hazelton - investing, building, managing (Josette Weir)
- allow for redistribution of surplus
- compile an inventory of existing infrastructure and identify gaps
- need short term and convenient cold storage - refrigeration
- need long term cold storage - root cellars - where, how big, who manages, who pays?
- different infrastructure models to a) support producers b) support individuals c) support neighbourhoods or whole town
- investigate inbound routes for food supply in case of road closures - consider road, rail and water (Laird Longman)
- community food cache - one month worth of food using locally produced and preserved items (dehydrated, canned, non-perishable ready to eat or just add water) - as an economic development project (Laurie G.)

Other

Wildcrafting: value-added medicines - Chaga, Devil's Club - focus on sustainable harvesting
start a Culture Club (sourdough, kefir, fermented foods etc) where each household maintains and shares a type of culture and educates community groups about these value-added processes (Jeannie Boyce)

Follow up to Forum

- produce proceedings report and find a home on a website by May 31 (Laurie G.)
- contact people who wrote an action item with their name beside it to clarify the project and see if we can offer support (Laurie G.)
- contact people who wanted to come to forum but could not (Laurie G.)
- start a contact list for a network (need permission) (Laurie G.)
- create a video of May 19 forum to help promote future initiatives (Dan Mesec)
- create a Facebook group and find 3 moderators (Laurie G)
- reach out to other communities - do you want a similar workshop? (Laurie G)
- plan a Fall Event to follow up on Action Plan work
- produce a Local Food Champions Directory in partnership with RDBN and RDKS and Storytellers Foundation (Laurie G.)
- offer another rocket camp stove making workshop so that more people have a back up emergency cooking stove that doesn't require power or fuel (Laurie G.)

Appendix F: Highlights from the Speaker Panel

1. What can you/your organization do to contribute to food security in a short-term crisis (1 day to 3 weeks)?

BV Wholesale carries more inventory than other grocery stores and has an emergency plan in place e.g. for power outages, they rent reefer trucks from Bandstra so as long as there is fuel, existing food supplies can be kept at food safe temperatures. They have two distribution centres, one in Alberta and one in BC, this helps reduce vulnerability due to road closures. They have worked with government before in emergency situations, such as the Fort McMurray wildfire in 2016, to deliver food where it is needed.

2. What regulatory support are you aware that can benefit our efforts? What new regulations could be examined?

- *food safety and food security are closely related, a factor which makes regulations and appropriate precautions necessary;*
- *regulations for sale of retail foods involves very complicated regulations administered through the Canadian Food Inspection Agency*
- *would it be possible for a building code to require new housing starts to include a “cold room” for food storage?*
- *land use regulations that control how agriculture land is used to maximize production value and ensure local food needs are met before exporting*

3. What infrastructure are you aware that can benefit our efforts? What new infrastructure could be examined?

- *power trouble (electricity) is a big problem in maintaining a local food supply and transportation - incorporating more off-grid power sources would be helpful.*
- *there is a need for commercial root cellars and other cold storage for the many winter vegetables that are or could be produced in the Bulkley Valley.*

4. What are some long term strategies you/your organization currently follow or would recommend for increased personal or community food security resilience?

- *the local area has not seen much development of urban agriculture, i.e., food production on lawns, empty lots, and so on.*
- *teach kids how to grow food*
- *teach people how to cook with raw fruits and vegetables*
- *local food retailers could investigate the way Sobey's, Bidgood's, etc., market locally-produced food in St. John's, NFL.*

5. What are some of the scenarios that we should be preparing for?

- *Flooding, power outages, forest fires, winter storms that close down highways, rising food costs for imported foods, food shortages in major food producing areas affected by uncharacteristic droughts or heavy rains*
- *a change of government and subsequent policy factors may help or hinder local food security;*

- *the present federal government seems to be emphasizing export of food over local production and consumption.*
- *“natural” market forces affect the ability of supermarket chains and other retailers to handle locally-produced food;*
- *“worrying about food security” will be unnecessary if we are prepared for eventualities;*

6. What impact do you think a 25% increase in local food sources would have on the the local economy?

- *a huge impact! more money would stay in the local economy*
- *restaurants and caterers can incorporate local ingredients into their menus - sometimes cost is an issue but a 25% increase is possible, 100% would be tough to do in today’s reality*
- *we see seasonal increases, but to achieve this year-round would require infrastructure changes and way more producers than we have right now.*

Appendix G: Forum Planning Documents

Agenda, Speaker Information, Placemat/Activity sheet, Press release





Speaker Information Update May 15, 2017

Bulkley Valley Food Security Forum

May 19, 2017 ⇒ 12:00 pm- 3:00 pm The Old Church, 3704 First Ave, Smithers BC

The Bulkley Valley Food Security Forum aims to address personal and community resiliency in the event of a food supply disruption, particularly during winter months. Please arrive by 11:45 am. A table will be reserved for speakers and facilitators.

Who is on the Speaker Panel?

1. Mark Fisher, Director for Electoral Area A for Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
2. Mike Dandenault, Manager, Bulkley Valley Wholesale
3. Marie-Eve Arsenaault, Food and Beverage Manager, Hudson Bay Mountain
4. Joe Hug, Farmer - Health Hugs Organic Farm
5. Crystal Nelligan, Groundbreakers - local non-profit working on food security education in the schools

How long is the session?

The session will be 45 minutes in total so each speaker should be prepared to have 5 minutes each. You may wish to focus on only 2 or 3 questions.

What are the questions?

1. What can you/your organization do to contribute to food security in a short-term crisis (1 day to 3 weeks)
2. What regulatory support are you aware that can benefit our efforts? What new regulations could be examined?
3. What infrastructure are you aware that can benefit our efforts? What new infrastructure could be examined?
4. What are some long term strategies you/your organization currently follow or would recommend for increased personal or community food security resilience?
5. What are some of the scenarios that we should be preparing for?
6. What impact do you think a 25% increase in local food sources would have on the the local economy?

Who is organizing this event? This is an independent initiative organized by Laurie Gallant of Hazelton Hops, New Hazelton, BC with the help of a volunteer action team (Liliana Dragowska, Dan Mesic, Bryan Swansburg, Shelley Browne), advisors, including Nathan Cullen, Northern Health Authority (Flo Sheppard and Marianne Bloudoff), and BC Emergency Program staff. Financial support provided by Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako and MP Nathan Cullen.

WHAT'S ON MY PLATE?



At your table take a moment to introduce yourself and share your thoughts on where you think the food and ingredients came from today. i.e. where was it grown, purchased, processed...

Appendix H: Media Relations

Press Release

May 16, 2017

BULKLEY VALLEY FOOD SECURITY FORUM AIMS TO BUILD COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY STRATEGIES

SMITHERS, B.C. – The Bulkley Valley has long been an agricultural hub in the Northwest, providing local residents with produce, dairy and meat products for over a century. However, grocery stores selling imported food do a thriving business, and on average 70% of all food consumed in BC is imported. On the surface this may not seem like a problem, but what happens during a system failure when grocery store shelves are empty?

In February 2017, road closures in the Lower Mainland caused a stir in Northern B.C. groceries stores. After only two days, shelves of fresh milk, eggs and meat were beginning to look scarce as resupply shipments were hindered by road closures. It highlighted how dependent and vulnerable northern communities are on regular food shipments from supply chains hundreds, and sometimes thousands of kilometres away.

Laurie Gallant, lead organizer for the Bulkley Valley Food Security Forum, says the hope of the forum is to start a conversation that gets people thinking about local solutions for creating greater resilience in our local food systems.

“Any number of scenarios can create a three day or longer disruption in deliveries - flooding and snow storms, even earthquakes are all possibilities”, Gallant said. “Not everybody has a well-stocked pantry or freezer, and if the power goes out, food can spoil. We’d all be better off having at least three weeks’ worth of food and water, preferably in non-perishable formats.”

Gallant points out there are several examples to inspire food sustainability programs in the Northwest, such as the Bella Coola Food Action Plan, and the Fields Forward project in Creston. The Provincial Health Authority published research on food costing in Northwest BC, finding it is the most expensive region in the province to buy food, according to the *Provincial Health Services Authority Food Costing in BC (2015)*.

Climate change figures prominently in their analysis since BC will experience increases in temperatures and frequency of weather events, which have the potential to negatively impact crop yields in some regions of the province and regions further afield that stock our shelves.

“The forum will focus on solutions, and will examine questions around regulatory support and available infrastructure. We have a great panel of speakers lined up to address food supply questions such as what do grocery stores do when the power goes out for 24 hours? How can restaurants support community food security through menu design? What actions can we take in the next 12 months to be better prepared in case of road closures next February? And how can we have more control over our food supply in the face of climate change?” Gallant said.

The Bulkley Valley Food Security Forum will be held on May 19th between 12-3pm at the Old Church on First Ave in Smithers and is by RSVP only since lunch is being served.

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Media Contact:

Laurie Gallant – 250-847-1399 gallantlaurie@gmail.com

Media Coverage:

Pre-Forum: The Moose Radio in Smithers covered the story and featured it on their Facebook page.

Post Forum: CBC Daybreak North did a feature interview with Laurie on Tuesday, May 23 that was made in to a podcast over 8 minutes long. Here is the link:

<http://www.cbc.ca/listen/shows/daybreak-north/segment/12727993>

Coverage of the forum was also provided in the June issue of “Just for Farmers” monthly newsletter distributed by local farmer and mentor Curt Gesch.