



NORTHWEST FOOD SECURITY PARTNERSHIP

May 2018

MY STORY

Grew up in Toronto, moved to BC 26 years ago, and to Northwest BC 20 years ago.

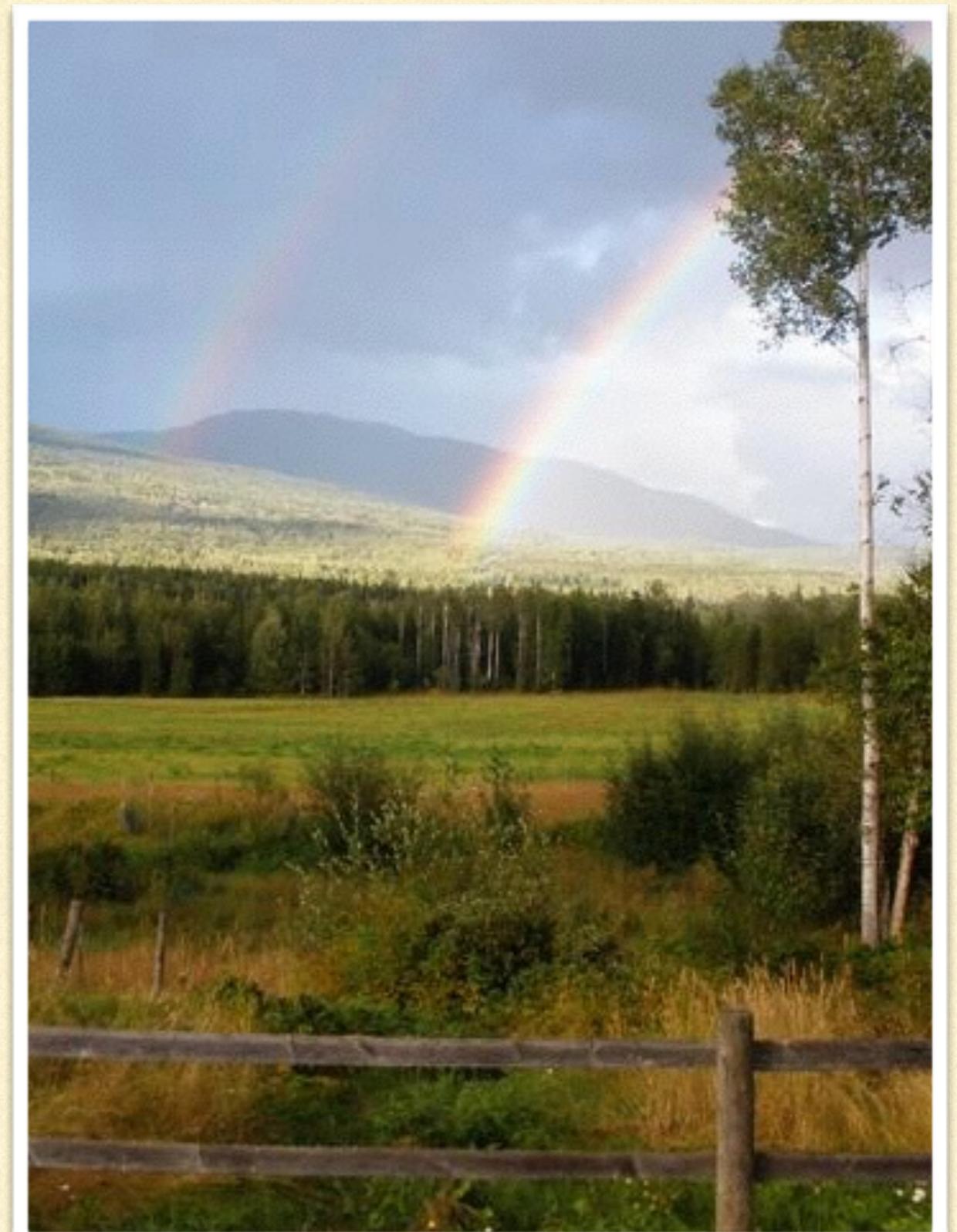
Built a career based on living sustainably on the planet - long range plans, transition strategies, and pilot projects at the provincial, regional and community level.

Old Dream: live on a chunk of land and see how far I can take it.

Moved to Bulkley Canyon Ranch 8 years ago with my partner - off-grid, solar panels, hops, sheep, music, and about 75% food self-sufficient.

New volunteer with New Hazelton ESS team and our farm is a supplier.

New dream: long-term food security in Northwest BC - can we be 75% food self-sufficient as a region?



IN THE BEGINNING

Started out as a Bulkley Valley project,
Houston to Hazelton

We made a list of who the local players
are in the food system:

Producers, Processors, Distributers,
Retailers, Consumers and added in Non-
Profits with a focus on food.



FOOD SECURITY FORUM 2017



- focus on emergency preparedness: what if the roads were closed for more than a day?
 - what happens when a community doesn't have a grocery store for more than a year?
 - financial support provided by RDBN and MP Nathan Cullen
 - 37 people attended
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STATE OF FOOD SECURITY IN BV

- **strengths:** significant and varied land base for a wide variety of food production, well established farmers markets....
 - **weaknesses:** food processing infrastructure, cold storage capacity for small retailers and producers, imported food is expensive ...
 - **opportunities:** new industries for preserved local food, purchasing policies for commercial and institutional customers, increase in frost-free days...
 - **threats:** natural hazards, power outages, development encroaching on wild food sources, salmon, and agricultural land not used for local food
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PANEL PRESENTATION

Types of scenarios we need to prepare for:

natural and technological - wildfires, floods, ice and snow storms, road closures, train derailments, power outages, reduced supply of food from southern locations and/or price increases

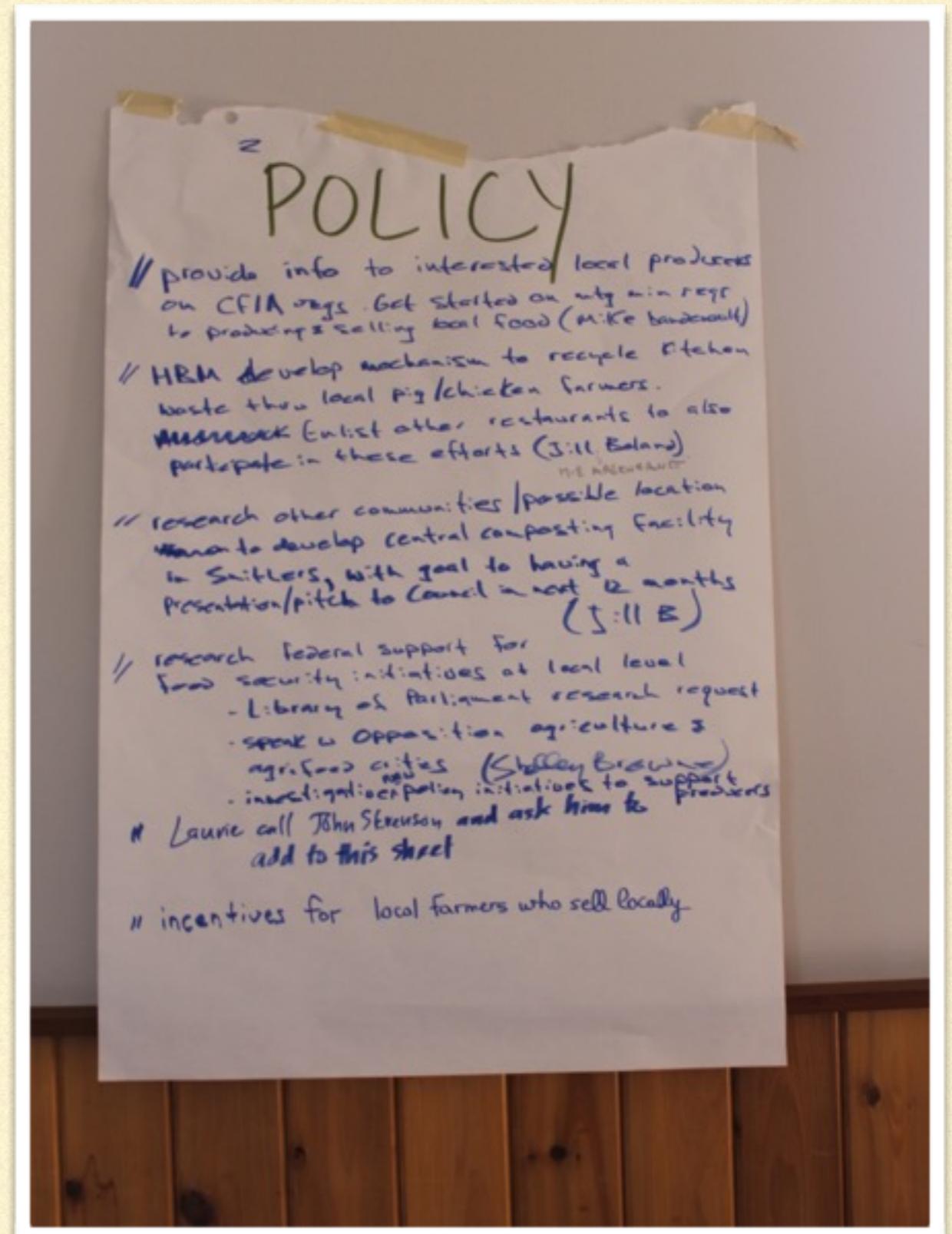
And solutions:

regulatory supports, market coordination, need for more infrastructure, need for more producers



ACTION PLANNING

- Education: cooking lessons; marketing eat local (NFLD short growing season and hard growing conditions)
- Policy: building codes to require a room for cold storage in new housing starts; more urban agriculture; 25% increase in local food for sale and in our diets
- Infrastructure: Root cellars, food dryers.
- Energy alternatives: more off-grid energy systems



OUTCOMES

- strengthened the network of individuals and agencies engaged in Food Security from Terrace to Burns Lake (boundaries were already expanding!)
 - foundational work on a Short and Long Term Sustainable Food System Action Plan on the themes of Policy, Energy, Education, and Infrastructure with over 35 recommendations
 - noted that food system is already failing many people in the valley, particularly low income residents
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NEXT STEPS FROM 2017

- produce a Summary Report and distribute it
 - find resources to develop and implement a proper Action plan that engages all sectors and builds on ideas from the Forum
 - present this report to agencies that make policy
 - works with RDBN to discuss the importance of food security and the need for a coordinated and properly resourced regional action plan
 - organize a follow-up forum in the Fall or early April
 - create a toolkit for delivering these events in other communities
 - integrate food security for First Nations into future efforts
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HAS ANYTHING CHANGED?



- our understanding has deepened as we connect with agencies with more experience and broader scopes (e.g. Provincial Health Authority, First Nations Health Authority)
 - our approach is more strategic and realistic: Better Together! Economies of scale therefore more producers, more processors, more distributors, more consumers
 - wildfires of 2017 highlighted need for better preparedness and value of interdependence between communities
 - BUT local capacity has not changed much for implementing solutions and the need is urgent.
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STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP

- seven person Forum Planning Team with temporary helpers and advisors (Alison, Denise, John, Laurel, Josette, Bryan, Laurie + Claire, Shelley, Mark, Linda)
 - partnership with the Music and Agritourism Society of the Hazeltons to be eligible for grants and sponsorships
 - time for a formal structure and inclusive membership able to address complex issues including cross-jurisdictional boundaries, decolonization and reconciliation, climate change, and emergency preparedness
 - envision a FTE 1/2 time paid coordinator and contractors for moving forward
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MANDATE

To build on the outcomes from 2017 Forum; and

To build capacity across northwest BC for greater food security by:

- acknowledging and celebrating all the great work underway
 - providing networking and learning opportunities
 - providing administrative and fundraising assistance
 - designing and implementing pilot projects
 - staying open to new ideas and partnerships
 - prioritizing the sustainability of our organization
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Never doubt that
a **small group**
of thoughtful,
committed citizens
can **change the world.**
Indeed, it is the only
thing that ever has.

- MARGARET MEAD

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