

Cultivating common ground with community

by Judith Alexander, Food Council facilitator

With upwards of 20 members and about a third of those members rotating annually on the Jefferson County Local Food System Council (Food Council), there is always some transition, but we are finding our way to this year's newsletter's theme: Cultivating Common Ground. Our internal process is more connected and effective than in the past and we are seeing a wonderful thing: collaborative food conversations and projects happening, County-wide!

While the Food Council is not central to driving every project mentioned herein, – we all have to eat, after all - we do try to keep abreast of what is happening and lend Food Council support where possible.

The Food Council is thrilled to have this newsletter highlight some of those conversations and projects. Links are provided where possible so you can learn more and even volunteer where appropriate.

Read about the new Eat Local First (ELF) campaign (Amanda Milholland's article) and the Local Food Expo (Alison Hero's article) scheduled for November 4th at the PT Community Center, where local restaurateurs will be able to place their direct orders with the local farmers to grow their annual supply of something like salad greens, or potatoes! The public can also sign up early for their favorite farm CSA program.

If you are interested in bringing food savvy to our school system, see the articles by Stacey Larsen, the Port Townsend School District Food Service manager. With the opening of the Salish Coast Elementary School this fall, many gardening and food-related opportunities are emerging.

Being a relatively young organization, we had to ramp up quickly these past two years when tasked by the county Planning Commission with making recommendations for significant updates to the Comprehensive Plan. It felt a bit like jumping from elementary school to college overnight, but our intrepid Policy Committee rose to the challenge and responded with several significant recommendations that found their way into the current document. We hope those recommendations make farming more accessible for the upcoming generation of new farmers! (See Dave Seabrook's article.)

And if you are curious about the commitment to community collaboration happening at the Port Townsend Preservation Alliance, check out the plans being crafted for a farm and commercial kitchen on the property previously owned by the Nomura family. (See Celine Santiago's article).

If you want to learn more about food in a way that connects you with others, sign up this fall for a Menu for the Future course (see www.nwei.org) with your friends or neighbors. Thought provoking and inspiring, it is guaranteed to bolster your food IQ. Or check out next winter's Farm Film Festival free movies. See more on both in the 2018 Highlights section.

Lastly, as of January 2018, the Food Council is an official Action Group of Local 20/20! See www.L2020.org for more on the larger organization committed to sustainability and resilience here in Jefferson County. This connection provides us 501-C3 status, and the ability to leverage where Food Council priorities intersect with other Local 20/20 Action Groups.



Spring Rain Farm

Cultivating Common Ground (continued from page 1)

Please stop by our booth at the 2018 All County Picnic, Sunday, August 19th from 11 – 4 pm at HJ Carroll Park. You will find us co-mingling with other Local 20/20 Action groups in a triple sized booth. We'd love to see you there and share our enthusiasm for all mentioned above!

It is definitely an engaging time for the Food Council to be active in our community. New members are selected based on sectors needing representation on the Food Council. Members serve 2-year terms, starting in January each year. If full Food Council membership seems daunting, stick your toe in the pool by joining one of our committees – Policy or Education and Outreach, each of which usually meets monthly. To request a Statement of Interest in joining the Food Council, or desire to join a committee, email jclocalfoodsystemcouncil@gmail.com.

2018 highlights

- **The Food Co-op Annual Meeting program featured 5 speakers, all members of the Food Council**, each covering different project efforts in 2018, and having authored articles in this newsletter about those projects. <http://foodcoop.coop/?s=2018+Annual+Meeting>
- The **Food Council submitted a wealth of innovative feedback to the Planning Commission and county commissioners** for the Comprehensive Plan 20 year update.
- **Local food donations from the dedicated Food Bank Gardens afford Jefferson County Food Banks healthy access to fresh, nutritious food** for the food insecure to the tune of 20,000 pounds of food over the past 5 years. Several Food Council members are actively involved with the Food Banks and the garden operations. Additionally, more food is donated from community gardens, and people's private gardens, throughout the county. <https://ptfoodbankgarden.com/>
- The **Quimper Community Harvest volunteers annually pick 4 tons of otherwise unharvested fruit** from Jefferson County trees (<https://l2020.org/local-food/community-harvest/>). Gleaners keep some and deliver the rest for free to local schools, senior housing, the local food banks, the Boiler Room, and others. To volunteer as a harvester or tree donor, contact: setholland@gmail.com
- The **Port Townsend High School garden functions in the summer as a hybrid garden**, sending food contributions to the Port Townsend Food Bank while also harvesting and preserving produce for the school year lunches (<https://ptfoodbankgarden.com/pt-high-school/>). To volunteer, contact zach.gayne@gmail.com.
- The Food Council's **Education and Outreach Committee sponsored a 10-movie Farm Film Festival** at the Jefferson County Library in the winter of 2018 <https://l2020.org/farming-food-festival-2018/>.
- The **Education and Outreach Committee also instigated 10 "Menu for the Future" 6-week courses** hosted by community members, each with its own farmer or food producer as participants. See more about the course <https://www.nwei.org/discussion-course-books/menu-for-the-future/>. More will be starting soon. If interested contact Sonja at menuforthefuture@L2020.org
- **Greg Reed**, a former farmer, is an **English teacher at Chimacum High School who is excited to be taking over the horticulture class at the school this year**. He plans to grow food with his students that will then be prepared and consumed by two different classes of Gary Coyan's culinary arts students.
- **Chimacum Schools recently passed a Wellness Policy** and promptly posted a job description for a new food service director!
- **Food Council members took a tour and enjoyed a potluck at a new farm, Natambea**, on July 5th. This farm is an incubator for several new farming operations and hosts a 100-tree orchard of nut trees, including filberts, and chestnuts.
- Our local **Food Co-op bought food products from 122 different local farmers and producers**; purchased over **\$1.2 million** in goods from local producers; highlights the amount of dollars you spent locally on your register receipt; and gave **micro loans totaling \$10,000** to two local farms.

- A connection has been initiated between the South Whidbey School District and our local schools, to have our teachers learn a science curriculum for place-based learning in school gardens for elementary students. See <https://whidbeyschoolgardens.wordpress.com/>

Upcoming events

- You can become more intimately acquainted with our local farms by **volunteering at the fall Farm Tour**, scheduled for September 15-16. To sign up please fill out the Volunteer Application Form at <https://tinyurl.com/farmtourvounteer>.
- The Food Council's Education and Outreach Committee will sponsor another **Farming Film Festival** in the winter of 2019. Watch for details in the Local 20/20 announcements this fall.
- The Education and Outreach Committee will be sponsoring another series of "Menu for the Future" discussion courses this fall. To express interest, email menuforthefuture@L2020.org.
- The **Local Food Expo** for farmers, chefs, institutional food service managers, from 10 - 11 am, and the 2nd half for the public to sign up for CSAs 11:30 am - 12:30 pm will be at the PT Community Center, Sunday November 4th (see article on page 5).
- This year's **Farmer Convergence** is scheduled for Finnriver Cidery on Saturday, November 17th. Save the date!

Policy Committee offers innovative concepts to county Comp Plan

by Dave Seabrook, JCLFSC member

The Food Council encouraged the County Commissioners to recognize food production as a central policy concern when updating the County's Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan). From 2017 and into 2018, the Food Council Policy Committee focused on participating in the County's periodic review and update of the Comp Plan; the state-mandated plan as required under the Growth Management Act that is the touchstone for land use policies.

The Policy Committee's focus was on those aspects that addressed agricultural use. Through multiple meetings, we discussed obstacles to more (and especially younger) farmers getting involved in farming. Our endeavors resulted in what we called a Position Paper that was vetted through the Council and submitted to the County in the Summer of 2017.

Although we stirred up some controversy around encouraging the County to be more innovative in their Land Use regulations, we believe this debate was a healthy one and helped us on the Food Council refine our process going forward into 2018. We had further input as the Planning Commission took up the challenge of sorting through community input and forming their recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners.

Ultimately, this land use recommendation was one of many that were newly incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan: NR-P-8.10 Consider allowing tools that support current and new generation farmers with access to land and housing.

The final document is slated to be submitted to the State sometime this fall after the adjustments made by the BOCC are incorporated by County staff.

We realize the Comp Plan is but a guideline, however, we believe we were successful in getting the County to recognize that food production should be incorporated in to the Comp Plan as a central policy concern. In addition we helped enhance the Local Food System Council's reputation as a solid partner for food policy development going forward into the future for eastern Jefferson County.

ELF: Eat Local First

by Amanda Milholland, Jefferson County Farmers Market manager

When we choose local food first we support our personal health, that of local farms and our local food system as well as for the growth of our regional economy and jobs. Partners including the Jefferson County Farmers Markets, the Food Co-op, Washington State University Jefferson County Extension, The Olympic Culinary Loop, Jefferson County Local Food Council, North Olympic Development Council and others are collaboratively developing an Eat Local First Campaign. The Eat Local First (ELF) campaign strengthens Olympic Peninsula farms and producers by engaging the community through education, promotion and access to build a diverse and vibrant local food economy.

Campaign goals:

- Grow and sustain sales for local farmers and food producers
- Grow sales for locally owned food business i.e. grocery stores, bakeries, restaurants, fisheries, and wine, cider and beer makers
- Minimize barriers for institutional food buyers i.e. hospitals, schools, large employers and community organizations
- Increase access to local and regionally sourced food for low-income and rural populations
- Serve as the trusted community resource for finding seasonal, local, and regional foods from the Olympic Peninsula region
- Educate consumers on how to use local crops and when they are in season

The Olympic Peninsula is home to a vibrant farming community and hosts five farmer's markets. The landscape of the local food system across the Peninsula is diverse. It is a region that provides a bounty of ingredients ranging from vegetables, to grains, salmon, shellfish, and craft beverages throughout the calendar year. As consumers our choices can ensure that the local and regional food system continues to be resilient and accessible to all. Filling our table with food from both local food providers and regional ingredients is a delicious way to support food businesses in our community.

Ask for local food at your favorite restaurant or local grocery store. You might also wonder if your child's school, a hospital or food banks have access to local food. Ask, encourage, and help break down barriers to purchasing or receiving donations of healthy local and regional food.

Eating well and providing access to local and regional food for all is just one important way to create a strong local food system. By choosing to Eat Local First we can all use the power of our food dollars and our strength as active engaged citizens to create a better world.



Local fare at Finistere restaurant in Port Townsend

Local Food Expo

by Alison Hero, Silverwater Café owner

In the fall of 2017 Amanda Milholland (Farmers Market director), Dan Ratigan (executive chef at the Inn at Port Ludlow), Steve Shively (Culinary Loop director), and Alison Hero, (Silverwater Café owner) convened with the intent of narrowing the gap between chefs, restaurateurs, institutional food service managers, and local food producers. The goal was to develop an easier path for restaurants and food service managers to use more locally produced foods, which, in turn, strengthens our local food economy and showcases the abundance of wonderful food available to a wider audience.

After several meetings of both chefs and farmers, and with many follow up questionnaires, we are developing a Local Food Expo at which the food producers will each have a booth to exhibit their offerings. The first hour of the event will be open to restaurants and institutional food service managers to place their orders for the spring with food producers. This will provide farmers and meat producers a firm idea of the needs of the industry. The second half of the event will be open to the public to place orders for CSA's, (Community Supported Agriculture), ordering quantities of meats, cheeses, and value-enhanced products, and to explore the wide array of locally produced goodness.

The event will take place on Sunday, November 4th at the Port Townsend Community Center. From 10:00 to 11:00am farmers will meet with restaurateurs and food service managers, and from 11:30am-12:30pm farmers will interact with the general public.

Since this event happens well in advance of the growing season's start, it will give farmers and value-added producers a clear idea on the quantities they will need to grow and produce, providing for greater food economy and security for all involved. This will result in larger quantities of healthier, fresher, locally accessed food to enjoy and savor.

For more information on this event, feel free to contact: jclocalfoodsystemcouncil@gmail.com. And look for more coverage on this as November approaches in the Port Townsend Leader.



Blue Heron School's after-school enrichment club

by Stacey Larsen, Port Townsend Schools food service director

During the winter two teachers at Blue Heron Middle School put together a grant with federal funding for an after-school enrichment club. Volunteers tutored 6-8th graders for 50 minutes followed by a snack provided by Port Townsend High School teacher Jennifer Kruse and her culinary arts students.

The instructors for the cooking class enrichment option included Arran Stark, Stacey Larsen, Jessie James Watson, John Edwards and more. Students learned how to butcher a chicken, filet a fish, make hummus, crackers, healthy smoothies, chia seed pudding, almond butter oatmeal no bake cookies, raspberry jam and more.

The kids gained skills they need in order to provide healthy snacks for after school and dinner for their families.



2018 FOOD COUNCIL MEMBERS

Judith Alexander	Food Council facilitator
Steve Baker	Homesteading/permaculture
Teresa Cofone	Concerned citizen
Mark Cooper	Local 2020 council member
Jenna Dern	Retail/distribution
Joanmarie Eggert	Concerned citizen
Logan Fields	Farming/orcharding/food security
Kellie Henwood	WSU Cooperative Extension
Alison Hero	Restaurateur
Sam Lillie	Distribution/food security
Laura Llewellyn	Retail/distribution/farming
Meghan Mix	Farming/value added
Michael Pilarski	Permaculture
Bill Putney	Port of Port Townsend
Kathy Ryan	Food security
Dave Seabrook	Food security
Samantha Sparks	Retail/distribution
Stuart Whitford	Jefferson County Public Health

Gardening from the ground up!

by Stacey Larsen, Port Townsend Schools food service director

Salish Coast Elementary School students are involved in the entire process of developing a new and renovated garden at Salish Coast in the hope that they will feel connected to the garden and the art of growing food. The Port Townsend School District, community members, and students entering 4th grade this fall are designing the new garden together. Knowing that construction meant the garden would be relocated and expanded, students, staff, and community members started working on the project in the spring of 2018.

Elementary students took a field trip to the Port Townsend High School garden and with the 9th grade high school students drew and envisioned what they would like in the new 5,000 sq ft garden.

After the field trip, the students continued their drawings with their art teacher. Working with the district math consultant they figured out how many feet of deer fencing was required and the number of cubic yards of compost and soil amendments needed to enrich the soil.

In the fall they will be focusing on the 5,000-square foot teaching garden and then move onto the 9,000 square foot production garden. The raspberries have been moved from the Grant Street garden and will be transplanted to the new Salish Coast garden. The school district will work with members of the community and the students to develop a planting plan for other crops and flowers. In the winter there will be cooking classes, and in the spring the school will focus on implementing the garden plan.



Cooperative agriculture at San Juan and Discovery

by Celine Santiago

Imagine a vibrant, productive, urban farm that promotes cooperation among farmers and agricultural education within the heart of Port Townsend.

Port Townsend Preservation Alliance, managed by Celine Santiago, purchased the 12.9-acre property, formerly owned by the Nomura family, with the intent of creating a multigenerational village based in permaculture.

On Sunday, July 15th, Celine, her daughter Adrianna Santiago and the design team permaculturist, Kateen Fitzgerald hosted a place making session at Compass Rose Farm. The food and farm focused attendees discussed the agricultural component of the project. The meeting was facilitated by project manager Malcolm Dorn. He posed questions to the group on the best use of the land designated for agricultural purposes. Richard Berg, the lead architect, gathered information to enhance the process of creating and presenting an effective farm design.

The current plan calls for approximately 3 acres of green space to be set aside for farming and edible landscaping. The practices such as beekeeping, medicinal herbs, CSA, flowers, green roofs, and a certified kitchen were among the many topics discussed during the place making session.

With the information presented by participants, it became evident that a small farm will need high agricultural productivity overall. Most importantly, it will need to engage many community facets such as educational programming, culinary, and other on-site services, to be self-sustaining. The project is still in a data collection phase. Project leadership continues to work with the community to design and develop an effective and sustainable program.

The Co-op Cooking Club: A partnership between the Port Townsend School District and the Port Townsend Food Co-op

by Stacey Larsen, Port Townsend Schools food service director

During a discussion this fall with a group of community members about strengthening our local food systems, it was mentioned that sometimes it is hard to find an adequately trained chef that cooks with local ingredients from scratch.

I said that I would love to offer cooking classes to kids in the Port Townsend School District. The Food Co-op talked to me after the meeting and we set up a 6-week cooking club for kids in 4th-8th grades that was offered at no cost to the kids.

The instructors were from the Silverwater Restaurant, a local caterer, the food service director at Jefferson Healthcare, and the chef and food service director for the Port Townsend School District. Besides learning how to cook healthy foods when they got home, the kids had a great time! It was so successful we will be offering this cooking club again next school year.



Red Dog Farm at Port Townsend Farmers Market

Think eat love local

by Laura Llewellyn, Port Townsend Food Co-op produce department manager
(adapted from an article previously published in the Co-op Commons)

It can be hard to navigate a grocery store. There are so many choices and plenty of sale signs distracting you. What does local even mean? The definition differs from store to store. The Co-op defines local as our county and the four other counties that touch us.

Studies show that the nutritional value of produce diminishes as time from harvest increases. If it's local, you know it is in season, fresh and good for you! I have read that farms receive only 12% of every dollar you spend on produce. I can assure you that is not the case when it comes to buying local produce at the Co-op. We can juggle our margin across the department to bring you great deals AND pay our local farms a fair price for produce. This means that on average we pay the farmer sixty-two cents of every dollar spent on produce. Sometimes much more and rarely less. That is at least five times more than the average farmer receives nationally.

We also try to make it easy for you to find local produce at The Co-op, often by not giving you a choice! For example, when we can buy local slicing tomatoes, we buy them and don't carry the on-the-vine tomatoes that we sell the rest of the year. Same with almost every produce item grown locally. Sometimes we do give you a choice, such as with salad mix. We buy it locally whenever possible and sell it in bulk. We also bag it up in house in 5oz compostable bags instead of carrying the 5oz clamshells. We do still carry 1-lb. clamshells year-round as some customers want to buy ready to eat salad. (Local greens are washed but are not certified as washed, ready to eat salad mix). In this case, we want you to be a smart shopper and vote with your dollar. If no one bought those clamshells, we wouldn't carry them. Support us in supporting our truly local farms. Your purchase does make an impact.

With the increase of minimum wage, our local farmers are feeling the crunch. What was a high risk, slim margin game has only gotten worse. Buying directly from the farmer will always net them a greater return. If you have that option – go for it! If you don't, we will have local produce available whenever possible. Since we are open seven days a week, our sales really do add up and contribute significantly to our local farms' overall income.



Photo by Crystie Kisler

STAY IN TOUCH WITH JCLFSC!



www.facebook.com/JCLFSC/



jcllocalfoodsystemcouncil@gmail.com



<https://12020.org/local-food/>