



CENTRAL
KOOTENAY

FOOD POLICY
COUNCIL



ANNUAL
REVIEW
2021



ABOUT THE CKFPC

Mission

The mission of the Central Kootenay Food Policy Council is to build a just, sustainable and prosperous food system in our region by identifying challenges and opportunities and by advocating for effective policy.

Our Council members represent communities, business, food-related sectors, non-profits, and local governments across the Central Kootenay, ensuring that there is a constant, two-way flow of information that guides our work and helps to determine our priorities.



Purpose

We make policy recommendations and broker best practices and knowledge about food systems in the Central Kootenay.

2021 Council Members

Patrick Steiner (President), Kaslo area, North Kootenay Lake Community Services Society

Hailey Troock (Executive), Nelson, Young Agrarians

Mick Wilson (Executive), New Denver, Earthly Pleasures Organic Farm

Nyree Marsh (Treasurer), Regional, Basin Business Advisors Program

Tara Stark (Executive), Regional, Interior Health

Alys Ford, Winlaw, Ravine Creek Farm

Anneke Rosch, Nelson, Kootenay Co-op

Ari Derfel, Kootenay Co-op, Nelson

Elizabeth Quinn, Creston, Fields Forward

Kevin Murphy, Creston/Regional, Ministry of Agriculture

Leah Main, Silverton, RDCK Director - Village of Silverton

Montana Burgess, Nelson, EcoSociety

Nadine BenRabha, Nelson, SD8 and 20 & CBEEN

Nicolas Walser, Creston

Nicole Schreiber, Crawford Bay, East Shore Food Roots

Paris Marshall-Smith, Nelson, RDCK

Paul Peterson, RDCK Area K, RDCK Director - Area K

Rachael Roussin, Regional, Kootenay and Boundary Farm Advisors

Ramona Faust, Regional, RDCK Director - Area E

Rosemary Hughes, Arrow Lakes Valley, Old Fire Hall Collective Society

Sally Titasey & Rob Hay, Winlaw, The Valley Kitchen

Shauna Fidler, RDCK Area H, Design Farm and West Kootenay Permaculture Co-op

Valerie Cowan, Lardeau Valley, Lardeau Valley Opportunity LINKS Society



Land Acknowledgement

The Central Kootenay Food Policy Council acknowledges that the land we live and work on the homelands of the ngaytskstx tum-xula7xw (Sinixt), ʔamakʔis (Ktunaxa) and Syilx tmixw (Okanagan) peoples. The arrival of settlers and colonialism disrupted their sovereignty and food security and compromised the landscape and waterways they have stewarded since time immemorial. We hold the truth of these historical wrongs in our interactions with this land and its people as we engage with deep respect and humility in the process of truth and reconciliation.

Anti-Racism & Equity Statement

The Central Kootenay Food Policy Council condemns racism, violence and injustice against Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour in our region and around the world. We recognize that our society is dominated by policies and practices which perpetuate these harms and that they are widespread and insidious, from micro-aggressions and overt violence, to disproportionately high levels of poor health, lower educational attainment and job opportunities, and higher levels of food insecurity amongst racialized individuals. Mainstream food systems in North America have been built on racism, from the stealing of land from Indigenous Peoples to the historical and ongoing exploitation of Black and other People of Colour.

As a Food Policy Council, we work to better incorporate and prioritise a justice lens that recognizes the historical and ongoing harm of systemic racism as it is manifested in our food systems. We will continue to work on our own learning and to transform our organisation – how we come together, who leads and participates, what we do together, and the vision we seek to achieve through our programming and practice. We commit, with humility, to learning about and taking action against racism.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Over the past year our board has worked hard to support our ED and staff, providing guidance and feedback on our strategic direction, staffing, fundraising, and service delivery. Last October we were delighted to welcome Nyree Marsh to our board, who made an immediate impact by stepping into the role of Treasurer.

In 2021, the council revived working groups that engage our members on themes important to the work we do, such as Systemic Racism, Communications, and Cannabis. Council members, staff and board members have participated in these working groups by engaging in extended conversations that add value to the Food Policy Council's work and deepen our impact.

2021 saw several departures from the Council and we extend our sincere gratitude for their service and contributions: Rob Hay and Sally Titasey were founding members of the Food Policy Council and brought their entrepreneurial expertise and deep connection to the food scene in the Slocan Valley. Paul Peterson was appointed to the Council by the RDCK Board in 2019 and served a two year term. Paul is deeply rooted in the community he serves as the Director for Area K and brought his pragmatic and knowledgeable perspective to the activities and conversations at the Food Policy Council. Nicole Schreiber joined the Council in 2018, bringing the unique perspective and needs of East Shore residents to our shared work. Rosemary Hughes served one year on the Council before resigning to refocus her energies on her longstanding food systems work in the Nakusp area. Kevin Murphy retired from the Ministry of Agriculture in late 2021 and so left the Council after contributing his valuable time and expertise to the Council since 2017. Last but not least, Valerie Cowan joined the Council in early 2021 on behalf of the Lardeau Valley Opportunities LINKS Society. Valerie has left her position with LINKS but we were happy to welcome Chelsey Jones in her place.

Being a Council member is a great opportunity to network with key actors involved in food systems throughout the RDCK and be inspired by the work being done across the Kootenays. It is also an important vehicle for breaking down the isolation that can often exist in small communities scattered across the landscape such as we have in the Central Kootenay. All the work of keeping our communities healthy and resilient is made easier when we come together and find common cause, peers, and opportunities for collectively meeting our needs.



Patrick Steiner



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Despite the feeling of perpetual sameness generated by the ongoing pandemic, 2021 was a busy year of change for the Council. Our regular activities and programs continued but we sought to revisit and revise our practice through a greater focus on justice and unlearning white supremacy as it is manifested in so many of our societal structures and conventions. This pointed to the need to change how we come together when we meet. While we were meeting virtually under public health orders, we sought to adapt our meeting structures and content so that they were more welcoming of diverse cultures and less aligned with traditional “Roberts Rules” meetings.



Abra Brynne

This resulted in dynamic and intriguing meetings that brought together Council members and guests to share information and support each other. Participants at our May 2021 meeting were also enthralled by Shayna Jones, who performed Traditional Oral Storytelling of African and Afro-Diasporic Folklore, interspersed with the business of our Annual General Meeting. In September, our meeting coincided with the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and featured Nasookin Joe Pierre relating the Ktunaxa Creation Story. This profound story also enthralled meeting participants, leaving each with much to ponder.

We continued to provide support to area nonprofits, business owners, and others who are engaged in the agriculture and food systems of our region. Our ongoing collaboration with and support from the RDCK is a treasured part of our work. Through the Sustainability Service of the RDCK, we are able to devote time to helping enable positive policy and programs that can foster greater food justice and resilience in our region. This takes the form of providing advice on everything from food security indicators, to organic waste management options, to leading policy work on behalf of the cannabis sector in our region. We are very grateful to the RDCK Staff and Directors for their trust in us and the ongoing opportunities to engage with our local governments on matters of importance to our region’s food systems.

Towards the end of 2021, we took the opportunity to step back and reflect on the first five years of our Council, guided by Ktunaxa ʔaq̓smaknik, Michele A Sam. It was useful to review and discuss the original vision for the Council and what we had achieved since late 2016. This session set the stage for a visioning event in early 2022, to look ahead at the next five years.

In late 2021, I announced my intention to step back from the Executive Director position of the Council. It has been a true privilege to create and guide the development of the organisation since its inception and I look forward to having more time to apply my policy expertise on behalf of the Council.



MESSAGE FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

2021 built upon some of the foundational work in 2020 by refining our communications and becoming more strategic, which resulted in expanding our reach. This was reflected in increased attendance to our online events as well as in growth across all of our communications platforms.

Our newsletter was sent out 4 times last year and our list grew by 25% in 2021. We continue to cultivate our social media presence and expand our reach. In 2021, our Instagram following grew by 53% and Facebook fan base expanded by 83%.

Our website continues to be refined and we see an average of 225 visitors a month. Popular webpages visited include About Us, What We Do, Council Members, and project specific pages such as the Food Security Action Plan and Evidence Project pages.



Amy Allcock

Did you know that our logo is a carrot seed head?

Carrots, like all other umbelliferous seed heads (those that look like umbrellas) only produce every second year. So unless you have over-wintered your carrots, you are unlikely to be familiar with this image.

Nevertheless, you may have seen the seed heads of its native relative, Queen Anne's Lace.



Newsletter list grew by 25% (113 subscribers)



Facebook grew by 83% (245 likes/followers)



Instagram grew by 53% (319 followers)



TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

Executive Director, Abra Brynne, was sought out for her expertise on food systems and food policy by academia, governments, civil society and the agricultural sector both regionally and nationally. Abra was interviewed by both regional and provincial media and was sought out over 20 times in the past year for consultations and presentations.



Highlights

Consultations:

- Mentored several Masters students on various topics, including cannabis policy and policy considerations for mobile abattoirs.
- Advised Emergency Management BC staff on enabling rural communities' food resilience in emergencies
- Created Strategic Communications Strategy for Silverton / New Denver food hub
- Provided background and context on on agriculture and food systems needs and strengths to the new Economic Development Coordinator for the Nakusp and Area Development Board

Media:

- Interviewed by multiple local and national journalists, including regular contact with Marc Fawcett Atkinson, Canada's National Observer.
- Interviewed at length for Kootenay Mountain Culture article & podcast on food resilience in the Kootenays
- Interviewed by Nicholas Wells, Canadian Press, on 3rd year anniversary of cannabis legalisation and impact on Kootenay producers

Presentations

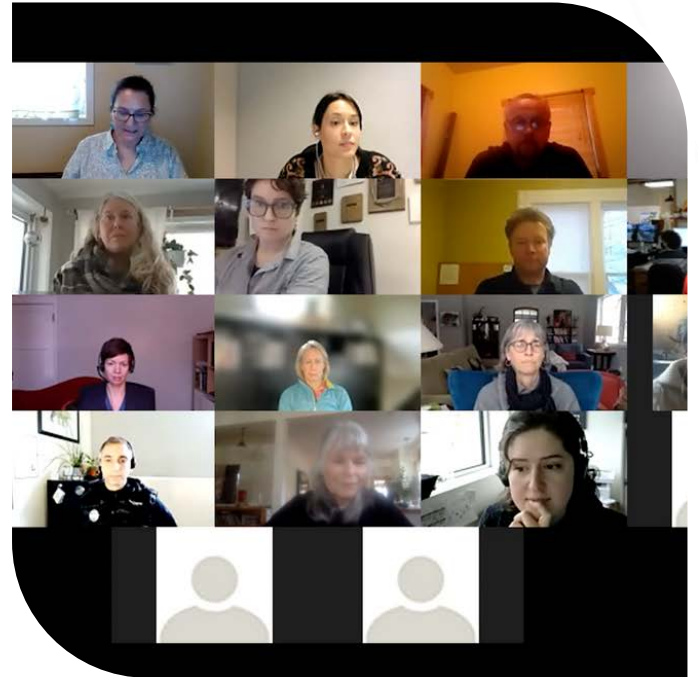
- Presented keynote presentation on the complexities of localizing the food system at the Basin Food & Buyers Expo
- Part of a panel discussion on local food security and resilience through the lens of producers and communities at the Bridging Silos Conference hosted by Selkirk College



FOCUS AREAS

Connect: by connecting people with each other, with information and with the broader community, we can better understand, appreciate and support each other in our sectors, communities, and needs.

- Held 4 full Council Meetings, including our Storytelling AGM featuring Shayna Jones, a telling of the Ktunaxa Creation Story by Nasookin Joe Pierre and a special council Reflection session facilitated by Michele A Sam.
- Welcomed four new Council Members - Nyree Marsh, Rachael Roussin, Anneke Rosch, and Valerie Cowan
- Continued to host COVID Roundtables through early 2021



Collaborate: everything works better when we work together. From our founding, the Council has committed to not being in competition with our members and partners but rather to find ways to collaborate and to enhance each other's work.

- Continued to participate in Intercultural Kootenays as a board member
- Worked with Rachael Roussin from KBFA on Farming in a Pandemic Survey questions
- Collaborated with Selkirk College and Kootenay Rockies Tourism on Cannabis Tourism research project
- Joined a grant application as a Community Partner in a Resilience and Food Security Project led by Phil Loring, Arell Chair in Food, Policy, and Society at the University of Guelph



FOCUS AREAS

Educate: Our Food Systems Literacy programming seeks to deepen the understanding of food systems and to enhance the opportunities for food citizens to take action. We also share our expertise through mentoring, developing materials, problem solving, and presentations.

- Published the fourth annual Farm & Food Directory which includes cannabis producers
- Mentored 2 Food Policy Councils
- Created Relocalizing Food Action Grid
- Launched Foodshed Fanfare series in our newsletter and website where we celebrate the many wonderful people who reside in the Central Kootenay and who quietly contribute so much to our region's food systems.
- Presentation to FarmFolk CityFolk staff on relocalizing food systems

Advocate: advocacy fully-grounded in the lived reality of people, of businesses, of ecosystems, and of communities will create policy that can best serve our needs in the present and the future.

- Presented the Evidence Project outcomes to the RDCK Rural Affairs Committee
- Completed and submitted Food Security Action Plan for RDCK
- Met with two Members of Parliament, Rob Morrison and Richard Cannings, to discuss the needs of our area's cannabis sector
- Cannabis Consultation submission (with CEDC members) for Health Canada
- Farm Gate & Direct Delivery to the BC Cannabis Secretariat
- Cannabis Regulatory Needs overview for RDCK

“The RDCK Board would like to extend their thanks to you and the CKFPC for your considerable efforts in advocating for the recently-announced changes to the meat licensing system. The changes to the BC Meat Inspection Regulations in 2007 resulted in a significant loss of locally grown and processed meat in the RDCK. Since then, you have worked tirelessly with producers, abattoir operators, health authorities, the RDCK and Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries staff to re-establish access to local meat. The changes this year mean residents can once again buy meat at farmgate or farmers' markets and producers have great process options across the province. This is an important move to further strengthen our local foodshed and building a resilient regional food system”

– Aimee Watson, RDCK Board Chair



FOOD JUSTICE

Our Council's tag line is "Fostering a just and vibrant food system". We understand "just" to mean equitable and fair. And we also understand that creating equitable, fair food systems and communities necessitates a reckoning with Canada's colonial structures and systemic racism that has wrought trauma on generations of Indigenous, Black and other People of Colour that continues to this day.



At the Food Policy Council, we remain committed to our own learning journey and to transforming our organisation to better incorporate and prioritise a food justice lens that recognizes the historical and ongoing harm of systemic racism as it is manifested in food systems. Throughout 2021, our Anti-Racism Working Group met monthly, advancing our individual and collective understanding and identifying appropriate steps and actions for the Council to take.

As founding members, we support the work of Intercultural Kootenays to build and maintain inclusive and non-discriminatory communities by addressing the root causes of racism, hate and discrimination. Intercultural Kootenays does this by building intercultural competencies and supporting people experiencing inequitable treatment.

We also developed a grant application seeking funding for a dedicated Anti-Racism and Justice Coordinator for the Food Policy Council. While we were not successful in that submission, we continue to advance this vision and hope to have this vital position in place by the end of 2022



PROJECTS

We deliver our programs through a range of projects and ongoing activities.

Farm & Food Directory

2021 saw the publication of our fourth annual Farm & Food Directory. The 2021 edition continues the trend of past years with an almost 20% increase in the businesses listed.

New to this year was an opportunity for business owners who are youth, Black, Indigenous, People of Colour or LGBTQ+ to self-identify in the Directory (online and print version). This will make it easier for those wishing to direct their dollars to support diverse business owners, and is but one small and meaningful way to help counter the extra barriers faced by youth, queer and BIPOC entrepreneurs. 2021 also saw the first listings for area Cannabis producers.



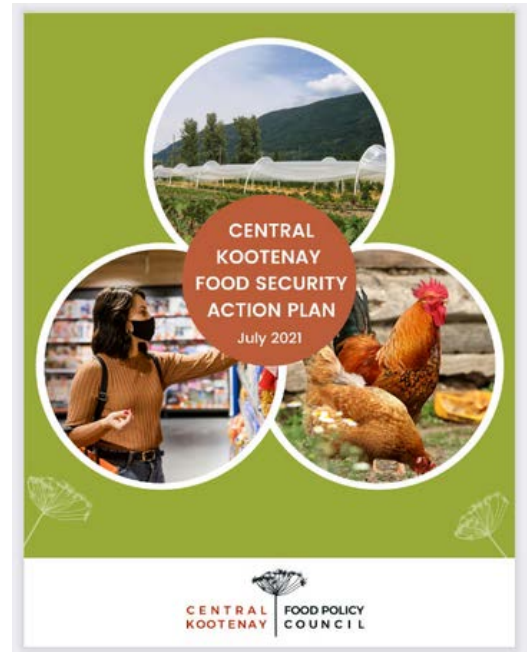
Launched with initial funding in 2018, the online and print version of the Directory is a self-funded regional guide to local food that has received wide acclaim. The initial project funding allowed the Council to establish the infrastructure to enable future editions to be funded through advertising revenue generated by our partner, KS Perry Publishing. This ensures that there is no cost to any farmer or food producer to participate in the Directory. As a result, we have seen a steady increase in Directory listings each year.

Not only does it look great, it serves multiple purposes:

- Promotes farms and food producers in the Central Kootenay, enabling consumers and buyers to more readily purchase local food
- Enhances an understanding of scope and scale of the Central Kootenay food economy
- Identifies gaps for entrepreneurs to establish or expand agri-food businesses
- Provides the context for the development of supportive public policy.

Food Security Action Plan

The Food Policy Council was in close contact with the Emergency Operations Centre of the RDCK in the early months of the pandemic. It was clear that the pandemic was going to impact food security in our region and around the world. The Regional District of Central Kootenay chose to be a leader in the province, seeing the need to understand the vulnerabilities and to take action to foster food resilience in our region, not just in the face of the pandemic but for every event that will challenge our food security in the future.



Our Council was hired to research and create a Food Security Action Plan tailored for our region. The final report was submitted to the RDCK in mid 2021 and includes a set of recommended actions for implementation. The Implementation Plan includes 46 recommendations, each accompanied by suggested leads and supports that identify various community partners as well local and provincial governments. As the RDCK has done with the Agricultural Plan, they have embraced the Food Security Action Plan and are moving forward on recommendations for which there are resources and support. The Council is pleased to continue to work with the RDCK on implementing the recommendations in the Food Security Action Plan.

Pandemic Roundtables in 2021

Launched in March 2020, the Council hosted regular COVID Roundtables into early 2021. While many had become sadly accustomed to life in a global pandemic, there were still surprises and uncertainty facing the food sector, our local producers, and our food resilience. We wound up the monthly meetings in the spring of 2021, knowing that the relationships established through the Roundtables across the Columbia Basin were strong, enabling individuals to reach out and gain support and exchange information as and when necessary. Participants regularly commented on how important and valuable the networking function of the Roundtables was for them.

Cannabis

Cannabis has long been a vital part of the agricultural economy in the Central Kootenay. With ongoing support from Community Futures, funding from RDCK Directors and ETSI-BC, Abra continues to coordinate the Kootenay Cannabis Development Council and lead the effort to improve the policy landscape for our region's cannabis producers. The Cannabis Council brings people involved in and supportive of the sector together to identify needs and find solutions to the many challenges. Over the course of the year, in collaboration with Cannabis Council members, a total of five policy documents were produced for three levels of government (local, provincial and federal). Abra also created an overview of steps and benefits to creating an appellation for cannabis in BC, similar to the VQA program for BC wines. The Cannabis Council has built a reputation for quality work, collaboration, and proposals well-grounded in the needs of rural producers seeking to be part of the newly legalised cannabis market.



Forest Values



2021 saw a lot of groundwork done to advance our Forest Values project. The project goal is to generate the public and political will to support key changes in how we view and manage our forest ecosystems. We envision a multi-year, collaborative effort that will leverage more progressive policy and management changes so that our forest ecosystems can better serve diverse values, including water security, recreation, climate change mitigation and reconciliation. The Food Policy Council was able to form alliances with key partners, including Living Lakes Canada and the BC First

Nations Forestry Council, and to secure a grant from the Real Estate Foundation. The Food Policy Council continues to engage with key partners working on water issues, including the Polis Water Sustainability Project and the Environmental Law Clinic at the University of British Columbia. And we are actively supporting our project partners in the work of securing additional grants in order to fully launch the project.



Exploring Food Systems Through the Arts

Drawing inspiration from our work in 2020 with artist, Mercedes Minck, we launched the Exploring Food Systems Through the Arts program.

This project will bring together artists from various backgrounds and mediums to explore the diverse and complex food system in the Central Kootenay region. Through the eyes of emerging and experienced artists, this project will empower artists to create original artwork that explore the ways in which our food choices and practices help to create food, where and how it was produced and how it impacts ecological, social, and racial and climate justice.

We have a seed grant from the Kootenay Coop of \$2500 and are seeking matched funding from other businesses and funders in the area. We will launch the program in 2022 once we have hit our initial fundraising goal of \$10,000.



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The first five years of our Council has seen a lot of foundational work and some important collaborations and learning together. As we head into our 6th year, we are looking forward to a year of growth and evolution, including welcoming a new Executive Director in 2022 and adding a dedicated Policy Director position. We will continue to deliver our Food Systems Literacy Program, providing educational materials and opportunities on climate change and racism as they intersect with food systems. Collaborating with the many wonderful organisations and other groups working on food systems, we will seek to engage area youth, artists and other creative individuals in advancing our collective thinking about food justice.

2022 will see the continuation of our work on systemic racism and food systems as a priority program area for the Council. This will be manifested in how our Council meetings happen as well as their content, in our participation on the Intercultural Kootenays board, through our monthly Anti-Racism Working Group meetings, and in our ongoing fundraising efforts. Our 2022 Annual General Meeting will be combined with a facilitated session with Michele Sam to reflect deeply on the Ktunaxa Creation Story. We are seeking to learn key principles from the story that can inform the work of the Food Policy Council and everyone who lives and works on this land.

We will continue to support the region's cannabis sector through the Kootenay Cannabis Development Council. As a long time key contributor to our region's agricultural economy, it is both gratifying and important to help cannabis cultivators in the challenging transition to the legal market. This work will be integrated into our broader food systems efforts, from farms to processors, retailers and emergency service providers. As a Council we seek to be responsive as well as proactive on the needs of Central Kootenay residents, businesses and ecosystems.



GRATITUDE

Thank you to our generous funders:



Thank you to our supporters & collaborators:



KOOTENAY FOOD



Basin Business Advisors Agricultural Specialist
Community Connections Revelstoke
Intercultural Kootenays
North Slokan Valley Community Food and Co-work Centre
Lardeau Valley Opportunity LINKS Society