

Setting Our Table

Capital Regional District Food & Agriculture Strategy

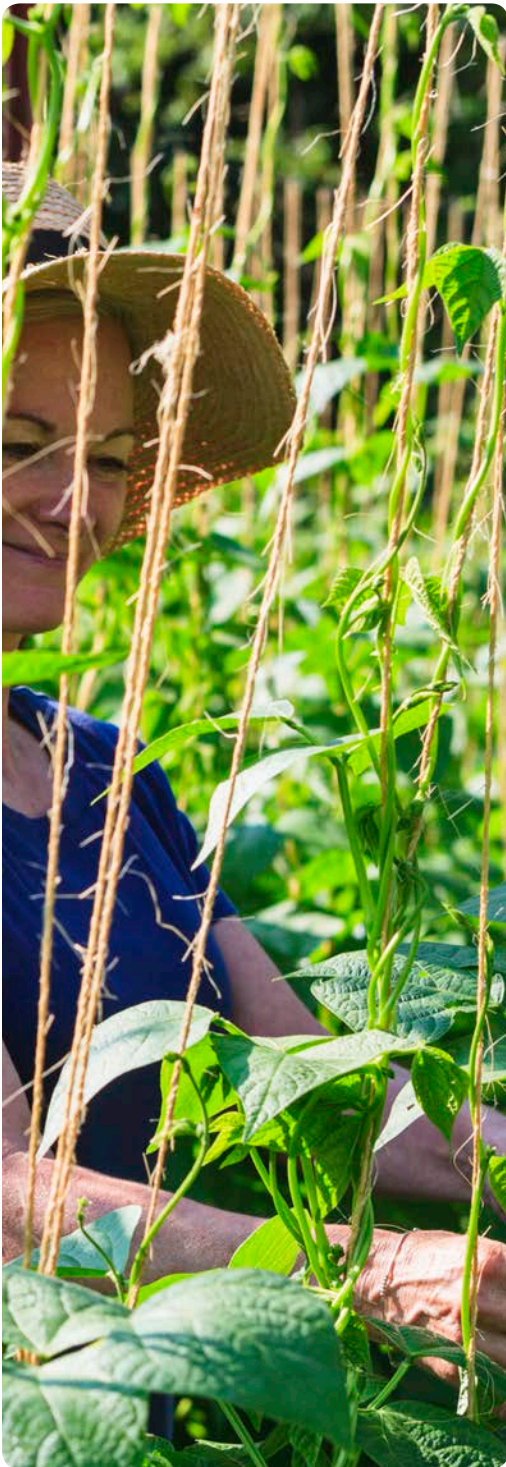


2016





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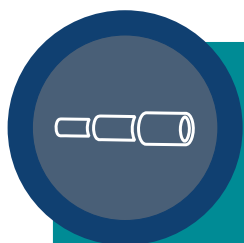
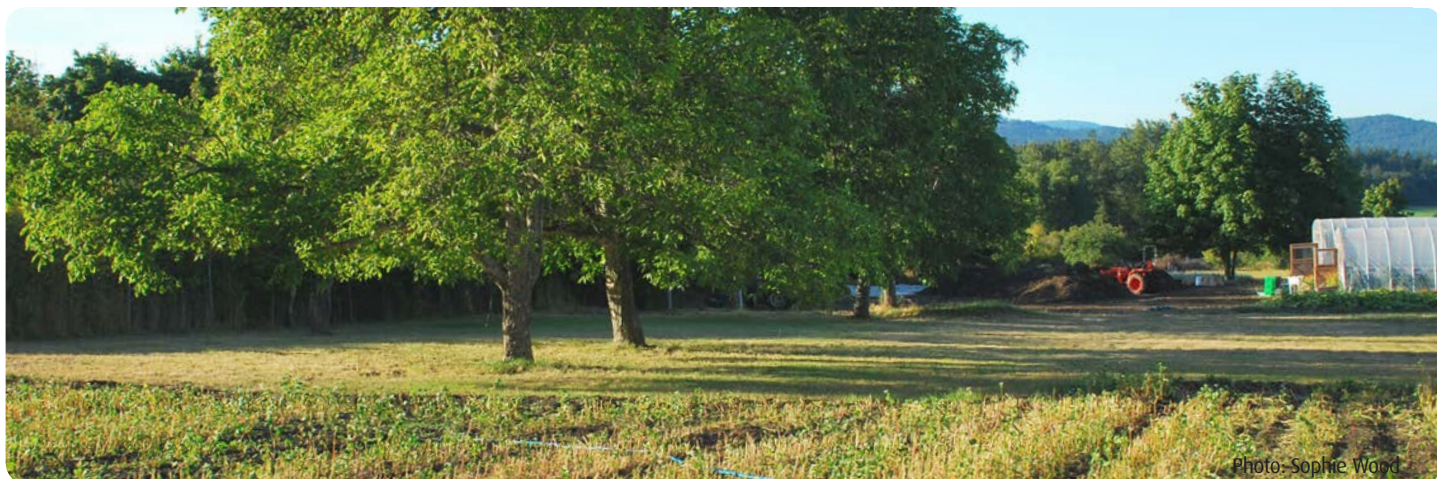
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1 | GUIDING VISION & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Capital Region has a vibrant, valued and evolving local food and agricultural economy that is rooted in the principles of interdependence, reciprocity and respect; it recalls and re-establishes the intimate and important relationships between our land and waters, our food, and our community.

The Guiding Vision for food and agriculture recognizes the importance and centrality of food and agriculture to us as individuals, to our families and our communities.

Food and agriculture are important aspects of the Capital Regional District's (CRD) history, visual identity and ongoing sustainability. Public appreciation and concern for the health and well-being of the region's food and agriculture systems is rising. Predicted changes in climate, energy costs, water availability and agricultural production have drawn attention to resilience of the region's food system.

The principal purpose of the Regional Food and Agriculture Strategy (RFAS) is to guide action and foster leadership. The RFAS identifies a continued role for the CRD in food and agriculture. The RFAS recommendations

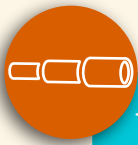
are intended to support the development and future success of food and agriculture in a way that is collaborative, strategic, systemic, and economically viable.

The RFAS can inform CRD initiatives such as the Regional Growth Strategy now under development, as well as the Integrated Water Services Master Plan, Environmental Resource Management Planning process, CRD Corporate Strategic Plan, and Aboriginal Initiatives planning. Consistent regional direction will strengthen the food and agricultural sector.

The document sets out a strategic approach with clearly articulated recommendations, associated actions, and resourcing requirements. The following infographic summarizes the ten RFAS recommendations, and their anticipated outcomes.

Setting Our Table

Capital Regional District Food & Agriculture Strategy



VISION

The Capital Region has a vibrant, valued and evolving local food and agricultural economy that is rooted in the principles of interdependence, reciprocity and respect; it recalls and re-establishes the intimate and important relationships between our land and waters, our food, and our community.



ROLES





OUTCOMES

-  Cleaner environment
-  Reintroduction of traditional plants
-  Improved population health
-  Strengthened relationships and partnerships
-  Broad participation
-  Engaged citizens
-  Increased knowledge of and access to traditional foods

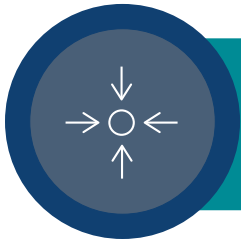


-  Economic viability
-  Sector revitalization
-  Reduced crop loss
-  Increased sustainable harvest of traditional foods



RECOMMENDATIONS

-  Support regional, cross-sector relationships, including a food and agriculture task force.
-  Improve the CRD's capacity to address regional food and agriculture issues
-  Support regional organic-matter recycling approaches that benefit food and agriculture
-  Address chronic drainage issues across the region
-  Continue to consider approaches to effectively address existing and emerging regional wildlife and invasive species issues
-  Maintain affordability and improve access to irrigation water for food and agricultural operations
-  Encourage a place-based regional food culture by building relationships between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities.
-  Support Aboriginal food and agriculture-related activities, projects and events.
-  Increase access to agricultural and food lands.
-  Support regional economic development strategies for food and agriculture



2 | CONTEXT

The Capital Regional District (the CRD or 'Region') is updating its 2003 Regional Growth Strategy (RGS). As a 'parent' document, the RGS-Update articulates a broad vision and provides a high-level strategic direction on regional matters.

During the engagement phase of the RGS-Update, food and agriculture was of high and growing public interest and concern. Food and food systems received the greatest amount of interest of the nine sustainability policy brief topics from participating stakeholder groups and members of the public. Initially treated as two separate topics, food and agriculture were brought together as inextricably connected elements for the on-going planning process.

As a sub-strategy of the RGS - Update, the Regional Food and Agriculture Strategy (RFAS) provides a more in-depth

exploration of regional food and agricultural objectives, issues and opportunities than is possible in the high-level RGS. The principal purpose of the RFAS is to guide action and foster leadership. The RFAS identifies a continued role for the CRD in food and agriculture. The document sets out a strategic approach with clearly articulated recommendations, associated actions, and resourcing requirements. The RFAS is intended to be a living document, to be regularly monitored, reviewed and updated.

The RFAS acknowledges that food and agriculture are part of a food 'system'. The Strategy therefore needs to consider all aspects of that system, including planting, irrigation, harvesting, processing, distributing, preparing and marketing, as well as consumption. Food waste management and soil nutrient management are part of the cycle.





Why are Food and Agriculture Important to the CRD?

Food and agriculture are important aspects of the Capital Regional District's (CRD) history, visual identity and ongoing sustainability. Public appreciation and concern for the health and well-being of the region's food and agriculture systems is rising.

Predicted changes in climate, energy costs, water availability and agricultural production have drawn attention to the ongoing resilience of the region's food system.

The CRD is engaged in activities connected to food agriculture, including:

- ▶ Management of problem wildlife and invasive species (on CRD lands)
- ▶ Support of local government work on watershed management and drainage
- ▶ Provision of water services across the region and maintaining agricultural water rates to rural producers
- ▶ Collection and maintenance of agriculture information¹
- ▶ Collection and distribution of climate related indicator data
- ▶ Provision of organic matter collection and recycling services
- ▶ Support for and administration of agriculture-related planning processes and policies for a number of Electoral Areas

Applicability

The RFAS applies to those areas of the CRD that fall within the Growth Management Plan Area of the RGS (the 13 municipalities and the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area). The RFAS does not apply to the Salt Spring Island and Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Areas. The RFAS framework anticipates and allows for potential future expanded coverage and collaboration.

The RFAS builds on and supports the approaches and recommendations articulated in existing and proposed municipal Agricultural Area plans,² as well as the work of the many agencies and organizations focused on building a vibrant and vital regional food and agriculture sector.³

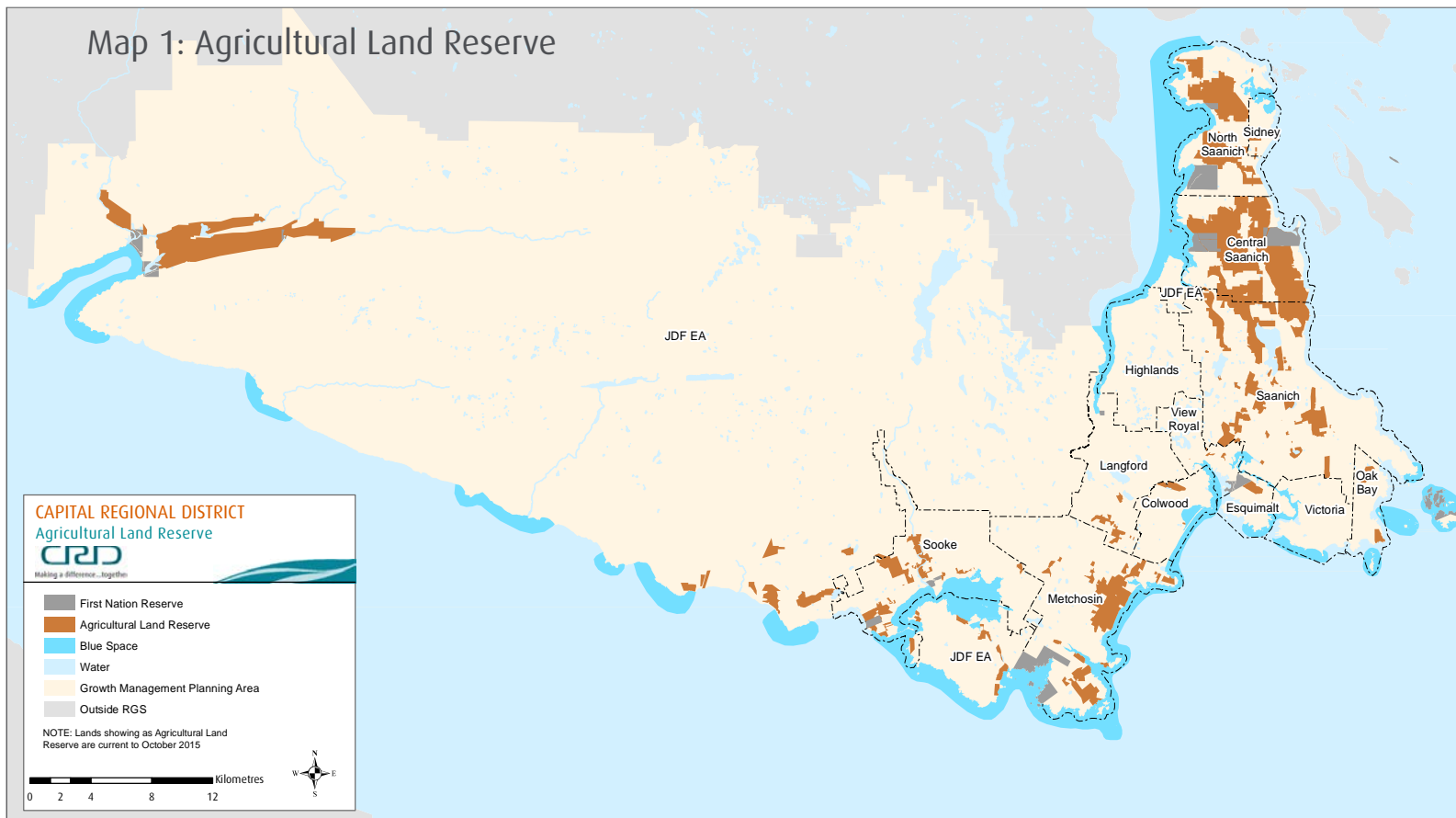
The region spans the traditional territories of 22 First Nations of which 10 have Reserves within the CRD's defined growth management planning area (GMPA), which represents the scope of the catchment area for this strategy. Although First Nations governments are not signatories to the RGS bylaw, the RFAS as a separate planning document provides a vehicle for practical collaboration and relationship building. First Nations participation in the RFAS process is not contingent on being participants in the RGS process.

¹ The CRD current collects and maintains Statistics Canada Agricultural Census data, and associated with agricultural land use inventories (ALUI).

² The District of North Saanich Ag Plan (2008) the District of Central Saanich Ag Plan (2007); Districts of Metchosin and Saanich, and Juan de Fuca Electoral Area (in progress).

³ A comprehensive list of agencies and organizations involved in regional food and agriculture issues and activities is available in the Appendix.

Map 1: Agricultural Land Reserve



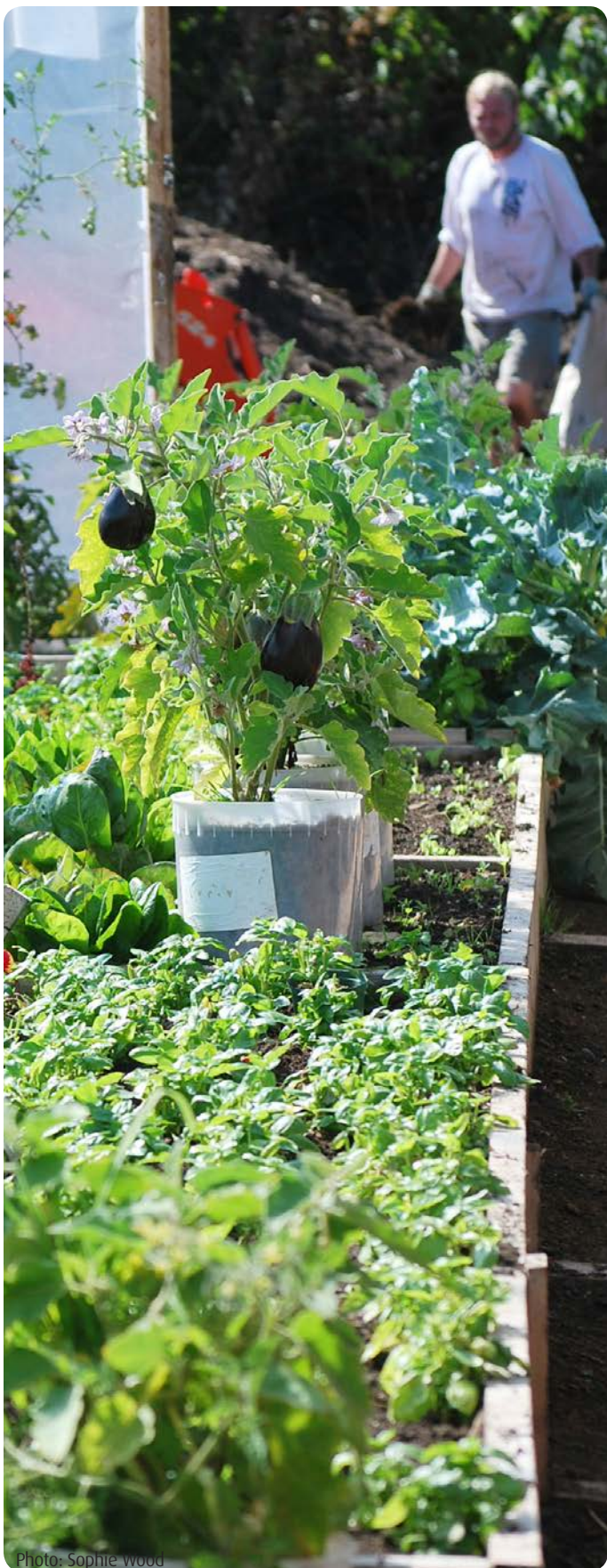


Photo: Sophie Wood

Process

The RFAS was informed by early RGS consultation undertaken in 2010. A policy brief was developed in response to interest in food security. The brief provided a snapshot of information gathered from various perspectives in the local food and farming sector and identified potential policy interventions.⁴ A Food Policy Options Paper was presented to the CRD Board, in parallel with briefs on other sustainability topics. The Board directed staff to further explore the regional interest in food security by way of a sub-strategy.

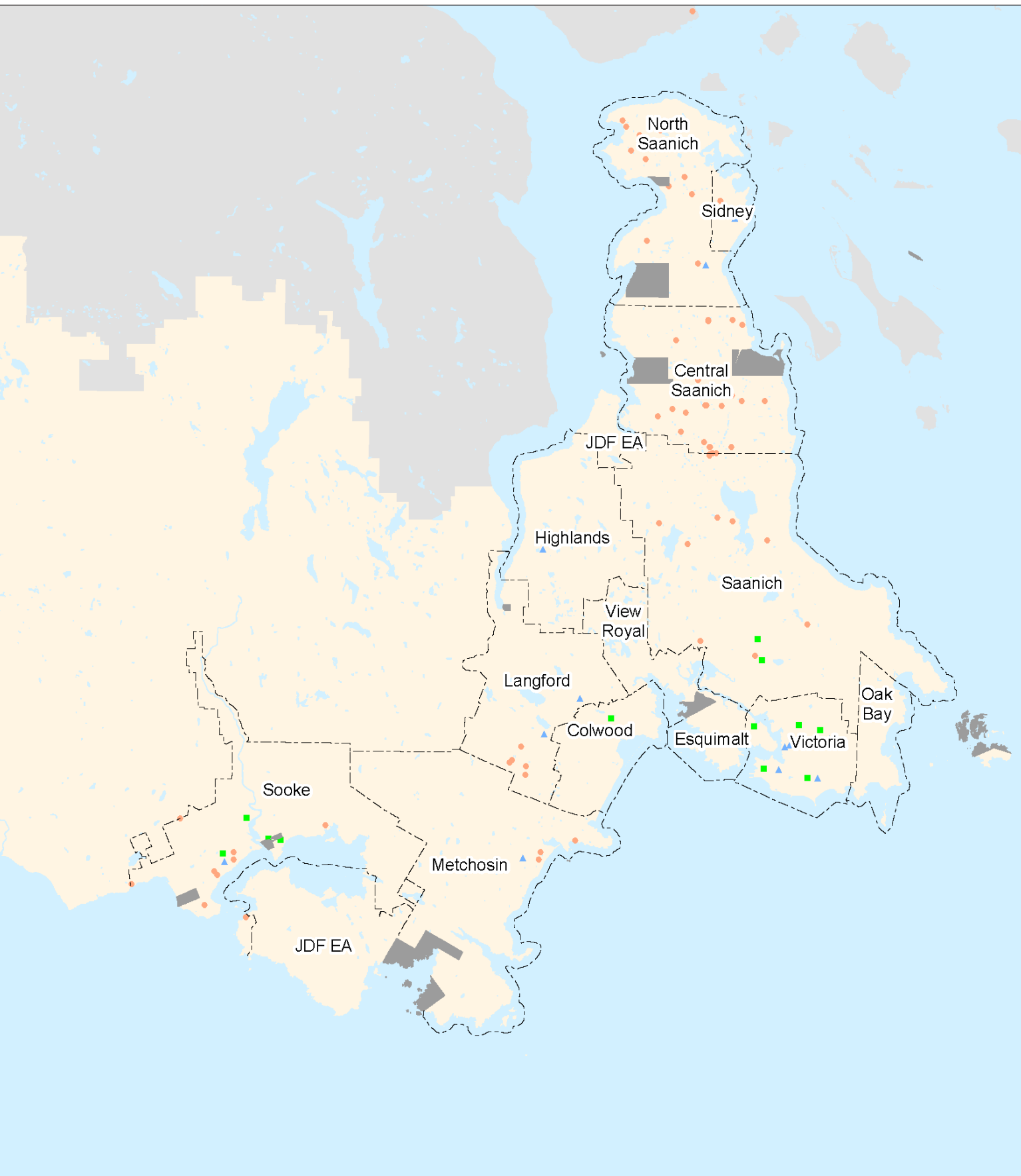
The capital region's agricultural community includes numerous organizations, agencies and individuals who, while focusing on different aspects of food and agriculture, share a common appreciation for the role food and agriculture plays in achieving social, environmental and economic health and resiliency. The RFAS process launched conversations and workshops with community leaders to establish a collaborative approach reflecting diverse interests.⁵

An informal Advisory Group embraced a flexible solution-focused process to identify and generate practical actions promising sustained and long-term success. The Advisory Group refined recommendations and the action plan based on relative and systemic impact of alternatives.

⁴ Workshops, surveys and research.

⁵ See the Appendix for list of participants.







3 | CURRENT REALITIES

Regional food and agriculture is impacted by realities that influence the current situation and/or recommended actions. These realities include:

- ▶ Food and agriculture is fundamental to the long-term sustainability, resilience and health of the region and its human communities.
- ▶ Food and agriculture require a supportive system from production to transformation and distribution to waste recovery.
- ▶ The global food system preferences cheap food over local and healthy food.
- ▶ Many food and agricultural enterprises, and the lands and families that create and support them are economically tenuous.
- ▶ The current provincial agricultural policy framework is unable to preference food production over other forms of agriculture.
- ▶ The Province and local governments have only limited ability to undertake regional approaches benefiting food and agriculture such as the acquisition and management of agricultural land, economic development, management of problem wildlife and invasive species, watershed management, provision of affordable water services and local economic development approaches.
- ▶ First Nations continue to assert their Douglas Treaty rights “to hunt and fish as formerly” on unoccupied lands throughout the region.⁶
- ▶ Predicted changes in climate, energy costs, water availability, and agricultural production have drawn attention to the ongoing resilience of the region’s food system.

⁶ <http://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/assets/FortVictoriaTreaties.pdf>

Aboriginal Interests

The First Peoples of this region have a 14,000-year relationship with food, land and sea. For hundreds of generations, local Indigenous communities have looked after the lands and waters of this territory, and in return, food was and continues to be a vital and inseparable part of Nuu-cha-nulth and Coast and Strait Salish health,⁷ culture and spirituality.

The last 150 years have seen the systematic disruption of a powerful and healthy connection to the area's food, lands and waters. Colonial and government policies limited access and ownership of land and waters and disrupted traditional harvesting practices, resulting in dramatic dietary changes and negative impacts on the health of Aboriginal communities. Settlement patterns, associated infrastructure and pollution rendered many local foods unharvestable. Many traditional land management practices were made illegal, gathering areas were converted to modern

uses, and wetlands were drained.⁸ Establishment of reserves changed harvesting and access to foods. Communities were supplied with non-traditional foods that created dependence. Residential schools disrupted and undermined the relationship to place, limited access to indigenous foods and medicines, reduced food literacy, and brought about shame regarding culture, language, and traditional foods. Whereas food was once plentiful, healthful, free and commonly traded, it is now commercialized, processed and shipped from far away.

First Nations have growing interests in and concerns regarding access to healthy and safe food sources. The WSÁNEĆ people (Saanich) have a teaching that, "when the tide is out, the table is set." For the Strait Salish and Coast Salish people, whose territory the CRD sits within, "lands and food are at the center of what it is to be indigenous."⁸ From cultivation, through to harvesting, processing, preparation and consumption, Indigenous communities recognize the important role

⁷ The majority of the region falls within the traditional territory of the Salish people, with the exception of the north-west part of the region in the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area, from Jordon River to Port Renfrew, which is the Territory of the Nuu-cha-nulth people.

⁸ Krohn 2007 8 PFPP, 2011a, p. 1



of traditional foods in fostering a strong connection between the land and the people.⁹ The majority of Indigenous communities regard the health and quality of food as inseparable from the environment in which it is located.¹⁰ Traditional foods are a central part of Aboriginal communities' culture and ceremony. First Nations have Douglas Treaty rights "to hunt and fish as formerly" over much of the region and have important traditional knowledge to share.

"If you lose your food, you lose part of your culture and it has a devastating effect on your psyche."¹¹ The current food system challenges principles of interrelatedness and reciprocity. Today, for Aboriginals and non-aboriginals alike, food comes to the region from elsewhere. We have broken our relationship to this place. Throughout the region, Aboriginals and non-aboriginals are beginning to re-establish their connection to food and culture, re-connecting people with the environment that supports life. The principles of interdependence, reciprocity and respect derived from thousands of years of living sustainably on this land, suggest a way forward that will allow all to live together sustainably.

The intent of this strategy is to help connect food, culture, people and the land and to create opportunities for inter agency partnerships to address barriers to increasing food production. This strategy focuses on how regional scale action can help achieve a productive, healthy food system in the context of global scale influences.

Role of the CRD

The Capital Regional District (CRD) is a federation of 13 municipalities and three electoral areas on southern Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. The CRD is a local government for three electoral areas and a service provider for its local municipalities, delivering over 200 local, regional and sub-regional services for the 375,000+ residents of the region. A 24 member Board of Directors, made up of municipal and local area politicians, governs the CRD. The geographical area of the CRD (the 'region')

⁹ NWIC, 2014, para 1

¹⁰ Rudolph & McLachlan, 2013

¹¹ Yakama Tribal Nurse



Photo: Sophie Wood

encompasses 237,000 hectares, including 70 Gulf Islands – a vibrant, large and diverse area renowned for its mild Mediterranean-like climate, beautiful and productive coastlines and natural ecosystems.

While regional districts, municipalities and electoral areas do not have a specific mandate over food and agriculture, many aspects of local government operations have an impact on the sector. Food and agriculture are impacted by CRD services such as water delivery, environmental protection and conservation, watershed education and drinking watershed protection and management, liquid and solid waste management (including rural septic programs), invasive species eradication / native plant restoration, and more recently, wildlife (deer, geese, beaver, bullfrog) management.

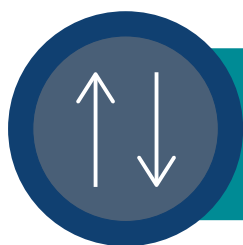
Food and agriculture are generally considered to be the sole responsibility of the Province and the Federal government. However, the Province and the Federal government have been unable to provide the level of attention and support required to see the integration and growth of a healthy, place-based local

food and agricultural economy within a developing region like the CRD. There also appear to be gaps in the current responsibility framework in areas such as the management of wildlife within developed areas, locally focused economic development, and long-term agricultural land protection.

A healthy, place-based local food and agricultural economy is a matter of regional interest. Food and agriculture, as a fundamental human endeavour, is critical for the future health and wellbeing of our community. The cultivation and provision of healthy food and the long-term development and care of local farms and farmland - regardless of whether farmland is currently used to grow food - contributes to the development of a healthy culture and a liveable, resilient, secure and sustainable community.

There is growing expectation and interest for more CRD involvement. Issues involving or affecting food and agriculture are predicted to increase and will continue to demand a regional approach.





4 | ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Achievement of the food and agriculture vision will require addressing issues and seizing opportunities.

Support and Leadership Gap

While a number of informal and formalized networks and associations exist, there is currently no overarching organization or structure that has the mandate or resources to convene and work across the diverse and expanding food and agriculture sector. Following a provincial trend, issues and opportunities connected to the food and agriculture sector are increasing - and the Region's municipalities and electoral areas are currently ill equipped to tackle them effectively¹² due in part to a lack of capacity but also because of their regional and cross-jurisdictional nature. The provincial government has not filled the gaps. There is a need and a desire for a regional approach – appropriately resourced

and managed – designed to achieve outcomes that demonstrate value and build capacity for food and agriculture in the region.

Environmental Restoration and Repair

The deep cultural connection to local food and to the waters and lands that support its production offer a remarkable opportunity to come together to address the harms and health impacts that have been committed in the name of progress. Some foods are increasingly unsafe to eat – particularly those foods harvested along the Region's shores. Access to food lands is limited. This has greatly impacted the economic, social and environmental health of residents. There needs to be

¹² Three out of five municipal agriculture plans completed in the capital region recommended the establishment of some kind of support or extension service for food and agriculture.



Photo: Sophie Wood

improved food access, affordability and adequacy so people can be nourished by food grown, harvested and produced in the CRD. There is an opportunity for healing at a variety of levels, including restoring access to culturally important food, supporting residents' food literacy, as well as encouraging the development of agriculture-related activities that build collaborative and constructive relationships among Aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities.

The lands and waters that produce the Region's diverse and growing array of food and agricultural crops are increasingly impacted by factors including: the direct and indirect effects of development; water management issues (stormwater pollution, infiltrating rain, flooding, well and aquifer management and climate change); changing regulatory environments; increasing rural-urban and farmer-neighbour conflicts; rising cost of farmland and farm activities; increasing age of farmers and agricultural land owners; and the limited economic viability of farming and lack of food literacy in the region. Together these are contributing to the gradual loss of productive farmlands, foodlands, shorelines and waters within the CRD, and greatly impacting the physical, mental and spiritual health of residents. Also impacted are the communities, groups and individuals responsible for resource stewardship and productivity.

Land Protection

While the provincial Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) (Map 1) has significantly reduced the rate at which farmland is converted to non-farm uses within the CRD, it is a type of land use zone and has a mandate to protect agricultural land, but not necessarily to enhance food and farmlands.¹³ There is an absence of organizations or agencies dedicated to the effective protection and management of operating farmland. There is strong interest and rationale for the establishment of a regional farmland trust and supporting trust fund.¹⁴ The regional farmland trust could begin to address current barriers

¹³ The ALR is a provincial land use zone in which land cannot be used for non-farm uses without provincial permission as a result its utility is limited. The powers of its governing body the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) are also limited. The ALC is not a trust and cannot directly hold or own land. It does not provide economic development or management support to ALR property owners.

While ALR has significantly reduced the rate at which farmland is converted to non-farm or urban uses in BC (since its inception in 1973 over 3000 ha of ALR land have been lost from the CRD), its ability to proactively protect and enhance food and farmlands is limited.

to farmers entering the sector such as agricultural land availability, high land costs, high startup costs and the long term preservation of agricultural land.

Secure Agricultural Land Base

The protection and enhancement of productive areas is important to the future sustainability and resilience of the region, as are the cultivation and harvesting opportunities that they afford the farmers, fishers and Indigenous peoples responsible for their ongoing stewardship. The deliberate protection, integration and valuing of these areas is seen as an act of leadership that can bring much needed attention to and appreciation of the region's working landscape.

Economic Opportunities

As the region's food and agriculture sector grows and matures it is becoming an increasingly important part of the local economy. Consequently, food and agriculture would benefit from being more deliberately

considered by local economic development initiatives and programs. In particular, new and emerging food and agriculture initiatives and ideas would benefit from such support. Economic development support could also help create the conditions necessary for innovation—encouraging regional partnerships and synergistic relationship opportunities while ensuring the effective and equitable distribution of limited resources.

The need for economic development in food and agriculture through regional support has been identified by a number of food and agriculture organizations. There are only a handful of organizations doing economic development work, and only one currently that is exploring economic development specifically pertaining to food and agriculture.

Acting on the issues and opportunities that promise positive and sustained systematic impact will connect and unite the region's food and agriculture community. The RFAS provides a regional framework and approach to reinforce current efforts and connect the region's expanding food and agriculture network.

¹⁴ In 2014, the Districts of Saanich and North Saanich passed resolutions supporting a regional consideration of this issue. A 2015 study by CR-FAIR recommended that a regional farmland trust and trust fund be established.



Photo: Sophie Woot



5 | RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below respond to identified issues and opportunities. The recommended actions are regional in nature and scope, broadly supported, have the potential to have a significant and systematic impact on the region's food and agriculture, and build on or support existing CRD activities or initiatives.

1. Support regional, cross-sector relationships, including a food and agriculture task force.
2. Improve the CRD's capacity to address regional food and agriculture issues.
3. Develop regional organic-matter recycling approaches that benefit food and agriculture.
4. Address chronic drainage issues across the region.
5. Consider establishing programs to address existing and emerging regional wildlife and invasive species issues.
6. Maintain and improve access to irrigation water for food and agricultural operations.
7. Encourage a place-based regional food culture by building relationships between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities.
8. Support Aboriginal food and agriculture-related activities, projects and events.
9. Increase access to agricultural and food lands.
10. Support regional economic development.



1

Support regional, cross-sector relationships, including a food and agriculture task force.

As a regional agency, the CRD is arguably in the best position to help convene a network of key stakeholders to realize the guiding vision and help with the delivery and outcome of the CRD's services and activities connected to food and agriculture.

ASSOCIATED ACTIONS



Establish a Regional Food and Agriculture (RFA) Task Force to develop an organizational structure that supports regional collaboration and strategic decision-making.

- ▶ Provide Board oversight/support mechanism and determine service support for RFA task force.
- ▶ Develop the interim governance structure, reporting procedures, responsibilities, and timeline, staffing and resource arrangements.
- ▶ Re-constitute and convene the RFAS Advisory Group as part of the RFA Task Force membership.



DESIRED OUTCOME

A cross-sectoral structure that can provide effective guidance for regional food and agriculture efforts and help with the implementation and development of the RFAS.



2

Improve the CRD's capacity to address regional food and agriculture issues

Incrementally improving capacity will help the CRD become a more effective and proactive participant in the emerging food and agriculture area. It will help the CRD be more strategic and prudent in its response to issues and opportunities, and to support the public awareness that is critical to a healthy, place based food system.

ASSOCIATED ACTIONS



Develop food and agricultural education, experience and expertise.

- ▶ Identify divisions of the CRD that would benefit from the addition of food and agricultural expertise.
- ▶ Work to build an appreciation and understanding of food and agriculture and its links to public health with existing resources.
- ▶ Solicit support, partnership and input from the proposed RFA Task Force, local food, agriculture and health organizations and agencies, and interested local municipalities and electoral areas.



Embed food and agricultural experience and expertise within the CRD.

- ▶ Consider increasing in-house knowledge and expertise to deliver services that meet the needs of farmers and respond to growing interest and policy work associated with the food and agriculture sector, resources permitting.

- Support the proposed RFA Task Force and help the CRD more effectively address increasing food and agriculture-related issues and opportunities connected with existing service centres (Planning, Parks and Recreation, Environmental Services, Integrated Water, etc.).



- Improved ability and capacity to effectively respond to regional food and agriculture-related issues and opportunities within existing departmental mandates.
- Improved ability for municipalities to support the of the regional vision for food and agriculture.
- Engaged, food literate citizens.
- Improved population health.
- Revitalized agricultural sector.



Maintain and improve regional food and agriculture data.

- Determine what information is required (with recommendations from the RFA Task Force), identify information gaps, and build a more complete and accurate food and agriculture-related database.
- Continue to work with and pursue partnerships with agencies and organizations such as the Victoria Foundation, Peninsula Agriculture Commission (PAC), Island Health, First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable (CR-FAIR), Ministry of Agriculture, First Nations, Greater Victoria Economic Development Authority, and others to realize efficiencies and improve the relevancy and application of the data.
- Establish and update agreements and protocols with relevant agencies and organizations to effectively and affordably acquire, maintain and share data.
- Identify measurable indicators to assess impact of implementing the RFAS recommendations.





3

Support regional organic-matter recycling approaches that benefit food and agriculture

Local urban and rural food and agricultural producers would benefit from access to clean, affordable organic matter. There is a desire to assist the CRD with its organic matter recycling responsibility to:

- ▶ Increase the fertility of the region's soils (increased security and sovereignty)
- ▶ Reduce imported soil inputs (increased sustainability)
- ▶ Sequester carbon (mitigate climate change)

ASSOCIATED ACTIONS



Consider food and agriculture interests with a goal of improving the region's soils.

- ▶ Continue to work with the food and agriculture sector – via the proposed RFA Task Force – to develop an appropriate long-term solution for the recycling and integration of the region's organic waste stream.
- ▶ Develop an approach that meets the needs of the CRD and the interests of the region's food and agriculture sector.





4

Address chronic drainage issues across the region

Chronic drainage issues were identified through the RFAS process and continue to negatively impact the following eight high fertility agricultural areas in the CRD:

- ▶ Blenkinsop Valley
- ▶ Durrell Creek
- ▶ Maber Flats
- ▶ Martindale Flats
- ▶ O'Donnell Creek
- ▶ Panama Flats
- ▶ Quick's Bottom
- ▶ Wilkinson/Hastings area of Saanich
- ▶ Tod Creek

Farms are impacted by seasonal inundation and flooding, exacerbated in recent years by upland development. Increasing environmental regulations designed to protect riparian and wetland areas are also having an impact.

Drainage issues are negatively affecting the ability of local producers to farm. Producers who have experienced flooding are feeling discouraged by local governments' apparent inability to improve the situation. Addressing this issue would improve the productivity of affected areas, enhance the livelihoods of associated producers and help re-establish positive relationships between the farming community and local government.

ASSOCIATED ACTIONS



Where possible, support municipal efforts towards watershed management with a goal to address drainage issues impacting the region's most fertile soils.

- ▶ Work with municipalities and stakeholders to identify effective approaches to address drainage issues within areas prone to flooding.



DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Reduced planting and crop loss due to chronic drainage issues across the region.
- Stronger partnerships with municipalities, provincial and federal government agencies, First Nations, and community and environmental organizations regarding flooding on agricultural land.



5

Continue to consider approaches to effectively address existing and emerging regional wildlife and invasive species issues.

Problem wildlife is an increasing burden for municipalities, residents and farmers across the region. In response, the CRD, in collaboration with municipalities, electoral areas, provincial ministries, stakeholders and farmers has developed and piloted a number of management strategies.¹⁵ This work is highly valued by local food and agricultural producers.

There is a desire to see wildlife management practices continued and expanded across the Region – including in the Electoral Areas and within urbanized communities. Opportunities exist to partner with members of the Aboriginal community, who have treaty rights and cultural connections to these animals for food and ceremonial purposes. There is also a need to expand existing programs to manage invasive plant and animal species and encourage endangered and beneficial wildlife (e.g. pollinators) which can have a positive impact on food and agricultural systems and their associated habitats.

ASSOCIATED ACTIONS



Continue to consider food and agriculture interests in regional wildlife management discussions and projects.

- ▶ Continue to provide information and tools to the food and agriculture sector.
- ▶ Facilitate First Nations access to wild game on private property through hunting and organized programs for humane wildlife management.

- ▶ Expand wildlife programs to adjacent Electoral Areas who are also dealing with these issues.



Consider emerging wildlife and environmental issues e.g. beneficial species (pollinators), invasive and problematic species.

- ▶ Providing for the ability to respond to important wildlife and environmental issues such as reducing the impact of invasive species on CRD lands (currently a CRD role) and providing educational support for residents dealing with invasive species on non-CRD lands.



DESIRED OUTCOMES

- A comprehensive consideration of wildlife issues that addresses the impact of wildlife on regional food and agriculture activities by the CRD Board.
- Increased access by First Nations to traditional food sources.

¹⁵ For example: deer (<https://www.crd.bc.ca/project/regional-deer-management-strategy>); geese (<https://www.crd.bc.ca/project/goose-management>); bullfrog; and beaver.



Maintain affordability and improve access to irrigation water for food and agricultural operations.

Access to clean, affordable irrigation water is critical to the maintenance and expansion of food and agricultural activity. The exemplary management of the region's drinking water resource under the guidance of the Regional Water Supply Commission and the citizens' Water Advisory Committee, has maintained an agricultural water rate for agricultural uses.

Growing water demands from population growth, coupled with the effects of climate change on the current (Sooke Lake) water supply for greater Victoria over the next 30-50 years, are expected to stress the water supply. The food and agriculture community hopes that despite these pressures, the agricultural water rate now provided to rural produces (i.e. the Agricultural Water Rate) can be continued and potentially expanded to urban agricultural producers. The application of the Agricultural Water Rate to Urban Agriculture would require direction and approval from CRD water commissions and in some cases, municipalities. Agricultural producers recognize the importance of water conservation and are committed to investing in efficiency measures.

ASSOCIATED ACTIONS



Continue to provide affordable water rates for rural farm operations, and through direction from the water commissions, consider extending them to urban agriculture operations.

- ▶ Continue to provide access to irrigation water and affordable agricultural water rates.
- ▶ Continue to consult and involve the food and agriculture community.

- ▶ Encourage innovation in water-conservation techniques, facilitate access to funds for investment in infrastructure (retention ponds, drip irrigation), and encourage conservation activities.
- ▶ Explore the possibility of extending agricultural water rates to urban producers.
- ▶ Encourage increased investment and innovation by producers in water conservation technologies and techniques resulting in lower water use.
- ▶ Continue to promote workshops for farmers on low-impact drainage design to capture nutrients, runoff and recharge groundwater.



DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Stable cost and availability of adequate irrigation water supply to urban and rural agricultural producers.





7

Encourage a place-based regional food culture by building relationships between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities.

The RFAS process has provided an opportunity to foster meaningful relationships with the First Nations, leading to a greater appreciation and understanding of indigenous perspectives on local foods and medicines. The Aboriginal community shares many concerns with non-aboriginals regarding food and agriculture. The phrase “we are all indigenous to planet earth” captures the concept of “indigeneity” – whereby every citizen in this region, regardless of whether they descend from settlers or the first people, has a responsibility to understand, respect and live in harmony with this place.

ASSOCIATED ACTIONS



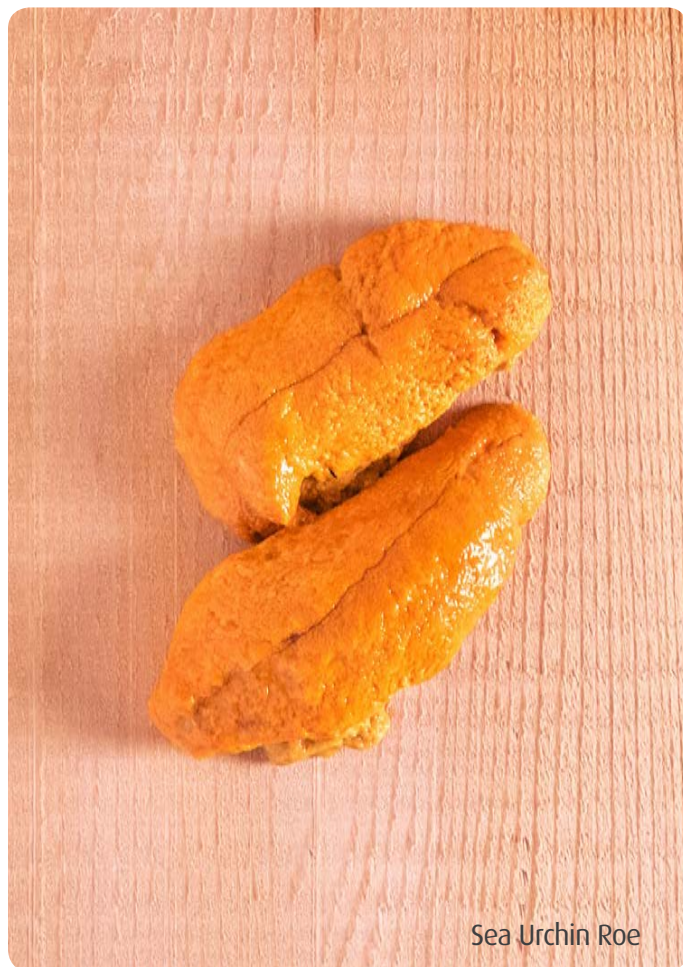
Continue to develop meaningful relationships with Aboriginal communities through regional food and agriculture discussions and activities.

- ▶ Continue to support and participate in Aboriginal food issues and agricultural activities.
- ▶ Work with local organizations, government agencies and First Nations groups to develop new initiatives.

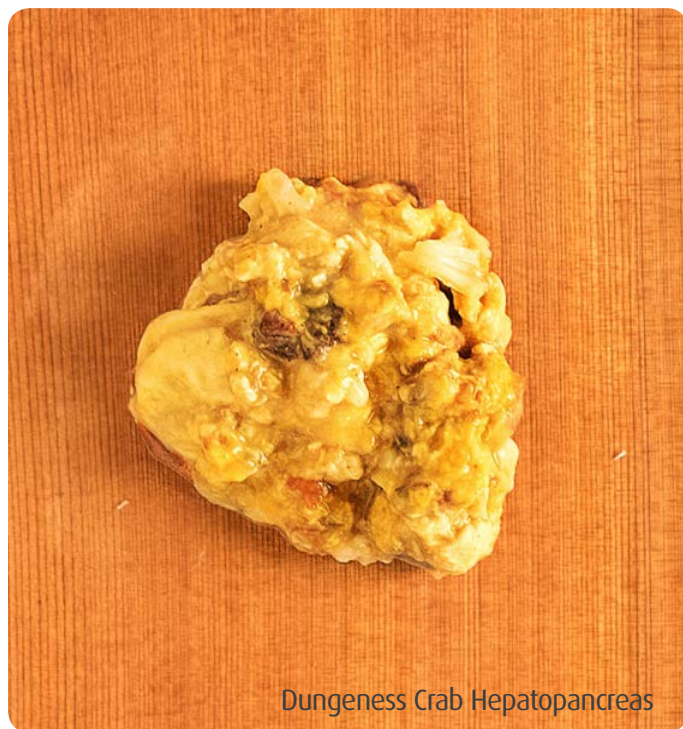


DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Improved relations with Aboriginal communities.
- Improved understanding and appreciation of traditional food knowledge.
- Greater number of successful Indigenous food and agriculture initiatives and activities.



Sea Urchin Roe



Dungeness Crab Hepatopancreas



8

Support Aboriginal food and agriculture-related activities, projects and events.

Build on existing food-related collaborative partnerships and activities occurring between Aboriginal communities, government agencies and community groups in the region.

ASSOCIATED ACTIONS



Pursue regional food and agriculture-related partnerships and activities between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities, agencies and groups.

- ▶ Participate in and support existing festivals, celebrations, feasts and ceremonies.
- ▶ Explore ways to support First Nations initiatives that aim to revive, reintroduce and restore access to traditional foods.
- ▶ Explore ways and means to accommodate access to Regional Parks for traditional and cultural uses.



DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Increased and consistent access to sustainably harvested traditional foods from the land and the sea.
- Cleaner environment e.g. reduced shellfish closures, improved monitoring results (marine and stormwater).
- Renewal of cultural practices around food harvesting and knowledge transfer to youth.
- Increased attendance by non-aboriginal community to First Nations feasts and celebrations.
- Re-introduction of rare or endangered traditional plants on public lands.



Dungeness Crab Muscle



Increase access to agricultural and food lands.

Building on the leadership work initiated by a number of local municipalities, a regional process to establish a food and farmland trust and associated trust fund could result in a mandate to protect and steward food and farmlands in a manner that:

- ▶ Reflects and responds to regional issues and interests, benefiting rural, urban, suburban and exurban communities
- ▶ Considers and manages a wide array of food and farm areas including those lands currently not covered by Provincial legislation and services
- ▶ Maintains and enhances farmland productivity
- ▶ Connects farmlands with appropriate stewards (food producers and harvesters)

Advancing the above would require additional study.

ASSOCIATED ACTIONS



Initiate a process to establish a regional food and farmland trust.

- ▶ Establish a regional process to establish a regional food and farmland trust. This could be considered by the proposed RFA Task Force or a dedicated sub-committee.
- ▶ Complete a feasibility strategy addressing the following and other items identified by the task force:
 - Determine and establish the appropriate legal structure to acquire, hold and administer food and farmland that would effectively

protect and put more farmland into production.

- Explore alternative finance models and partnerships to secure and sustainably manage lands within the trust framework.
- ▶ Establish a legal structure and supporting fund.



DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Farmland trust participation and support from local municipalities, community groups, financial institutions and investors, government agencies and First Nations.



Photo: Sophie Wood



Support regional economic development strategies for food and agriculture.

ASSOCIATED ACTIONS



Work with community and business groups to develop a regional food and agriculture economic development strategy.

- ▶ Consider involvement of the proposed RFA Task Force.
- ▶ Develop a regional agricultural economic development plan in partnership with external agencies.



Support strategic business development initiatives for the region's food and agriculture sector including agri-tourism.

- ▶ Incorporate the results of the regional food and agriculture economic development strategy.
- ▶ Support the work of community and business groups and government agencies to find a solution to the lack of an abattoir, and other related farming infrastructure, in the region or on the Island.
- ▶ Review proposals with the pending RFA Task Force.
- ▶ Develop impactful economic development initiatives and regional food and agriculture infrastructure such as agri-tourism.



DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Increased economic viability for the food and agriculture sector.
- Increased cross-sectoral collaboration and cooperation resulting in better and more sustainable outcomes.



Photo: Sophie Wood

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6 | ACTION PLAN






In keeping with the action-oriented approach of the Regional Food and Agriculture Strategy, Table 1 identifies the potential participants, general funding and resource requirements, relative timing and associated CRD service areas for each of the 10 recommendations and their associated actions.


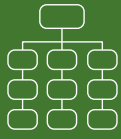
The table categorizes each action according to whether the action can be completed using existing resources, requires additional funding or whether it requires external funding.

- ▶ **Utilize Existing Resources** requires a reallocation or can be completed by divisions under their existing mandate.
- ▶ **Requires Additional Funding** needs a moderate increase in CRD resources in order to be completed.
- ▶ **Requires External Funding** needs grant funding or program fundraising from external (non-CRD) sources in order to be completed.

The Strategy was developed in such a way as to build consensus on a shared path forward. Implementation can be facilitated with working relationships that honour and support participant interests and concerns and that foster innovation and trust. It will be important to target actions, given financial and human (stakeholder time and energy) resource limitations. The recommendations in the RFAS can be implemented within current CRD mandates and provide for a targeted, flexible and responsive approach that will allow for the testing and rapid assessment of identified actions prior to scaling up and investing more resources.







ACTION PLAN TABLE


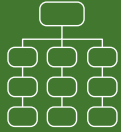
|  |  |  |
|---|--|---|
| <p>1 </p> <p>Support regional cross-sector relationships with regards to food and agriculture</p> | <p>Establish a Regional Food and Agriculture (RFA) Task Force to develop an organizational structure that supports regional collaboration and strategic decision-making.</p> | <p>CRD would host and provide staff and administration support. The RFAS Core Team, Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable and the Peninsula Agriculture Commission could be invited to participate on the Task Force.</p> |
| <p>2 </p> <p>Improve the CRD's ability to address regional food and agriculture issues</p> | <p>Develop food and agricultural education, experience and expertise within the CRD.</p> | <p>CRD would identify staff in applicable divisions and departments and create an internal departmental working group to share information on local food and agriculture activities. Local municipalities, BC Ministry of Agriculture and the proposed RFA Task Force would be invited to provide input and advice.</p> |
| | <p>Embed food and agricultural experience and expertise within the CRD.</p> | <p>CRD would provide information to staff in applicable divisions and departments and set up an internal departmental working group to discuss agriculture issues and concerns. The CRD would seek input and advice from local municipalities, BC Ministry of Agriculture and the proposed RFA Task Force.</p> |
| | <p>Maintain and improve regional food and agriculture data.</p> | <p>CRD would work with local municipalities, Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Food and Agriculture Strategy, Peninsula Agriculture Commission, Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable and other agencies with links or interests in the aggregation, improvement and sharing of food and agriculture data.</p> |

| TIMING  | UTILIZE EXISTING RESOURCES \$ | REQUIRES ADDITIONAL FUNDING \$ | REQUIRES EXTERNAL FUNDING \$ | SERVICE AREAS  |
|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| | | | | |
| 2016 / 2017 | X | X | | Legislative & Information Services Regional and Strategic Planning |

| | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|--|--|
| 2017 / 2018 | X | X | | Environmental Protection Regional and Strategic Planning Integrated Water Services Regional Parks |
| 2017 / 2018 | X | | | Regional and Strategic Planning |
| 2017 / 2018 | X | | | Legislative & Information Services database Regional and Strategic Planning |

ACTION PLAN TABLE (CONTINUED)

|  |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p>3 </p> <p>Support regional organic-matter recycling approaches that benefit food and agriculture</p> | <p>Support regional organic-matter recycling approaches that benefit food and agriculture ¹⁶</p> | <p>CRD would continue to consider organic matter recycling under the existing process and receive input from members of proposed RFA Task Force.</p> |
| <p>4 </p> <p>Address chronic drainage issues across the region</p> | <p>Consider food and agriculture interests in regional watershed management discussions with a goal to address drainage issues impacting the region's most fertile soils</p> | <p>CRD staff would continue to provide data and information to all local governments and First Nations regarding rainwater management and the flooding that affects low lying agricultural areas.</p> |
| <p>5 </p> <p>Continue to consider approaches to effectively address existing and emerging regional wildlife and invasive species issues</p> | <p>Continue to consider food and agriculture interests in regional wildlife management discussions and projects.</p> <p>Consider emerging wildlife and environmental issues e.g. beneficial species (pollinators), invasive and problematic species.</p> | <p>CRD would continue to consider providing ongoing support and information gained through the Regional Deer Management Strategy process.</p> <p>CRD would consider invasive species under the existing mandate of its current programs.</p> |

| TIMING  | UTILIZE EXISTING RESOURCES \$ | REQUIRES ADDITIONAL FUNDING \$ | REQUIRES EXTERNAL FUNDING \$ | SERVICE AREAS  |
|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| | | | | |
| Now | X | X | | Environmental Resource Management (through organics recycling) |







¹⁶ This recommendation needs to be considered in the context of other Board deliberations currently underway.


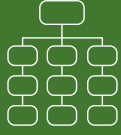
| | | | | |
|-----|---|--|--|---|
| Now | X | | | Environmental Protection (through watershed management) |
|-----|---|--|--|---|

| | | | | |
|-----|---|--|--|---------------------------------|
| Now | X | | | Regional and Strategic Planning |
|-----|---|--|--|---------------------------------|

| | | | | |
|-----|---|--|--|--------------------------|
| Now | X | | | Environmental Protection |
|-----|---|--|--|--------------------------|

ACTION PLAN TABLE (CONTINUED)






|  |  |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p>6 </p> <p>Maintain affordability and improve access to irrigation water for food and agricultural operations.</p> | <p>Continue to provide affordable water rates for rural farm operations and consider extending them to urban agriculture operations.</p> | <p>CRD will maintain the cost of agricultural water rate and consider extending or encouraging municipalities to extend an agricultural water rate to municipalities.</p> |
| <p>7 </p> <p>Encourage a place-based regional food culture by building relationships between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities</p> | <p>Continue to develop meaningful relationships with Aboriginal communities through regional food and agriculture discussions and activities.</p> | <p>CRD will continue to develop relationships with Aboriginal communities through food and agriculture discussions in partnership with Island Health and First Nations Health Authority.</p> |
| <p>8 </p> <p>Support Aboriginal food and agriculture-related activities, projects and events</p> | <p>Pursue regional food and agriculture-related partnerships and activities between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities, agencies and groups.</p> | <p>CRD staff will continue to pursue partnerships with Aboriginal communities and non-aboriginal communities and agencies regarding food and agriculture.</p> |

| TIMING  | UTILIZE EXISTING RESOURCES \$ | REQUIRES ADDITIONAL FUNDING \$ | REQUIRES EXTERNAL FUNDING \$ | SERVICE AREAS  |
|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| | | | | |
| Now | X | X* | | Integrated Water Services *for urban water provision and improved access |

| | | | | |
|-----|---|--|--|--|
| Now | X | | | Aboriginal Initiatives (through relationship building, supported by Environmental Partnerships) Regional and Strategic Planning (through education) |
|-----|---|--|--|--|

| | | | | |
|-----|---|--|--|--|
| Now | X | | | Aboriginal Initiatives (through partnerships) Legislative & Information Services (through RFA Task Force) Regional and Strategic Planning (through education) |
|-----|---|--|--|--|

ACTION PLAN TABLE (CONTINUED)

|  |  |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p>9</p>  <p>Support the establishment of a regional food and farmland trust</p> | <p>Initiate process/conversation to establish a regional food and farmland trust and fund.</p> | <p>CRD would convene a process/conversation with RFA Task Force, municipalities, local land trusts, Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable, Peninsula Agriculture Commission, financial institutions and Ministry of Agriculture to discuss a regional food and farmland trust, leading to the preparation of a feasibility study.</p> |
| <p>10</p>  <p>Support regional economic development strategies for food and agriculture</p> | <p>Work with community and business groups to develop a regional food and agriculture economic development strategy.</p> <p>Support strategic business development initiatives for region's food and agriculture sector including agri-tourism.</p> | <p>CRD staff would convene an ongoing conversation with the RFA Task Force and the Southern Vancouver Island Economic Development Association, with input from the Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable, Peninsula Agriculture Commission and the Ministry of Agriculture to discuss a regional food and agriculture economic development strategy.</p> <p>CRD staff would convene an ongoing conversation with the RFA Task Force and the Greater Victoria Economic Development Agency (GVEDA), with input from the Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable, Peninsula Agriculture Commission and the Ministry of Agriculture to support business development initiatives for food and agriculture including agri-tourism.</p> |

| TIMING | | | | SERVICE AREAS |
|-------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| | UTILIZE EXISTING RESOURCES | REQUIRES ADDITIONAL FUNDING | REQUIRES EXTERNAL FUNDING | |
| 2016 / 2017 | | X | X | Regional and Strategic Planning (feasibility study) Real Estate (land bank) |
| 2018 / 2019 | X | | X** | Regional and Strategic Planning (through education) ** RSP would be support (using existing resources) – lead presumed to be external |
| 2018 / 2019 | | X | | Regional and Strategic Planning |



7 | APPENDICES

Glossary of Terms

Aboriginal communities: Located in urban, rural and remote locations across Canada. They include: First Nations or Indian Bands, generally located on lands called reserves; Inuit communities located in Nunavut, NWT, Northern Quebec (Nunavik) and Labrador; Métis communities; and communities of Aboriginal people (including Métis, non-status Indians, Inuit and First Nation individuals) in cities or towns which are not part of reserves or traditional territories.

Aboriginal peoples: The descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. The Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups of Aboriginal people — Indians, Métis and Inuit. These are three separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.

Agricultural land: agricultural land (farm land) is the area that supports the growing, producing, raising or keeping animals and plants allowed by British Columbia's various Acts and Regulations in BC this refers to land designated as agricultural land under the Agricultural Land Commission Act or by municipal or regional governments within the land use bylaws.

Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and Agricultural Land Commission (ALC): In 1973, in response to development pressures that were seen as eroding the province's food and farmlands, the Province established the Agricultural Land Reserve along with an independent governing body, the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC). The ALR is a provincial land use zone in which land cannot be used for non-farm uses without provincial permission. Local government regulation of land in the ALR is circumscribed by the ALR regulations

and right-to-farm legislation, which together provide significant protection for designated farm activities and the agricultural land base. The ALR regulations set out what activities and uses local governments may regulate from a land-use perspective on farmland. The right to farm legislation provides that a farmer is not liable in nuisance for any noise, odour, dust or other disturbance resulting from normal farm practices. It also exempts agricultural operations from local government nuisance bylaws.

Agricultural Extension: A general term meaning the application of scientific research and new knowledge to agricultural practices through farmer education. The field of 'extension' now encompasses a wider range of communication and learning activities organized for rural people by educators from different disciplines, including agriculture, agricultural marketing, health, and business studies.

Agriculture: The cultivation of animals, plants, fungi, and other life forms for food, fiber, biofuel, medicinal and other products used to sustain and enhance human life.¹⁷

Agri-tourism: As it is defined most broadly, involves any agriculturally based operation or activity that brings visitors to a farm or ranch. It is a form of niche tourism that is considered a growth industry in many parts of the world, including Canada. Agri-tourism has different definitions in different parts of the world. In general agri-tourism includes a wide variety of activities, including buying produce direct from a farm stand, navigating a corn maze, picking fruit, feeding animals, or staying at a B&B on a farm.

¹⁷ Safety and health in agriculture. International Labour Organization. 1999. pp. 77.

Capital Regional District (CRD): A local government established under provincial legislation, providing coordinated regional services to both urban and rural areas on southern Vancouver Island, comprised of a federation of municipalities and electoral areas managed by a board of directors appointed from the local municipalities and directly elected from electoral areas.

Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiative Roundtable (CR-FAIR¹⁸): Formed in 1997, CR-FAIR is a coalition of organizations working to strengthen regional food security and our local food system, from farm gate to dinner plate. CR-FAIR's mission is to increase knowledge of and bring about positive change in the food and agriculture system within the Capital Region. CR-FAIR is the regional Island Health Food Hub, and supports the Connecting for Healthy Food in Schools Network, the Food Policy Working Group, the Food Literacy Project, Farmer2Farmer, the Flavour Trail, Incubator Farms, the Foodlands and Farmlands Trust initiative.

Community of Interest or Practice: A gathering of people assembled around a topic of common interest. Its members take part in the community to exchange information, to obtain answers to personal questions or problems, to improve their understanding of a subject, to share common passions or to play. In contrast to a spatial community, a 'community of interest' is defined not by space, but by some common bond (e.g. feeling of attachment) or entity (e.g. farming, church group). A Community of Practice is a group of people who are active practitioners.

Farmland: An alternative term for agricultural land.

Farmland Trust: A type of land trust that focuses specifically on preservation of agricultural land.

Feasting for Change¹⁹: Since May 2007, Aboriginal communities across southern Vancouver Island have sought to revive their traditional food practices through Feasting for Change activities, which have included a traditional salmon barbecue, pit cooking, berry picking, cleaning fish and crab, plant walks, making tea and so much more. One of the goals of the Feasting for Change

movement is to model ancestral Aboriginal stewardship to ensure food resources that nourish bodies and revitalize spirits are sustainable.

Field to Freezer: This Tseycum First Nation program consists of two comprehensive community food security projects aimed at providing life-long skills to sow and harvest produce in the community box gardens and green house and to also train members to harvest and process wild game such as deer, elk, and moose.

First Nations: A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word "Indian," which some people found offensive. Although the term First Nation is widely used, no legal definition of it exists. Among its uses, the term "First Nations peoples" refers to the Indian peoples in Canada, both Status and non-Status. Some Indian peoples have also adopted the term "First Nation" to replace the word "band" in the name of their community.²⁰

Foodlands: An alternative term for agricultural land that specifies the ability of producing food. During the establishment of the ALR, foodlands was used to highlight and connect the importance and value of these lands to BC residents. Today the term helps encompass those areas designated as agricultural lands as well as lands that support traditional and Indigenous harvest and gathering and therefore can include urban areas, as well as marine areas, shorelines, rivers and lakes.

Food Literacy: Food literacy is the ability to understand food and to develop positive relationships, food skills and practices across the lifespan in order to navigate, engage and participate within a complex food system, making decisions to support the achievement of personal health and to support a sustainable food system considering environmental, social, economic, cultural and political components" (Cullen et al., 2015).

Food literacy involves having the knowledge, skills and attitudes to make food decisions that support one's own health as well as the health of the community and the environment.

¹⁸ <http://crfair.ca>

¹⁹ <https://www.vancity.com/AboutVancity/InvestingInCommunities/StoriesOfImpact/Food/FeastingforChange>

²⁰ Terminology, Indigenous and Northern Affairs. 2012-10-01 <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100014642/1100100014643> Retrieved: 2016-01-06.

Food security: Having access to safe, culturally acceptable, and nutritional food. The principles of food security are sustainability, self-reliance and social justice. A sustainable community food system improves the health of the community, environment and individuals over time. Food insecurity may be caused by the unavailability of food, insufficient purchasing power, inappropriate distribution, or inadequate use of food at the household level.

Food System Infrastructure: Physical, social and economic elements necessary to support food production, processing, distribution and waste management in a given area, such as abattoirs, warehouses, vehicles, veterinarians, seed distributors and grazing pasture.

Foodshed: The geographical area between where food is produced and where that food is consumed. The concept is similar to a watershed—both encompass the flow of a substance from its origin to its ultimate destination. An alternative definition is a geographic area that supplies a population center with food. Both definitions emphasize the geographical context of food—where it comes from and where it ends up.²¹

Food sovereignty: The right of peoples to define their own food and agriculture; to protect and regulate domestic agricultural production and trade in order to achieve sustainable development objectives; to determine the extent to which they want to be self-reliant; to restrict the dumping of products in their markets; and to provide local fisheries-based communities the priority in managing the use of and the rights to aquatic resources. Food sovereignty does not negate trade, but rather, it promotes the formulation of trade policies and practices that serve the rights of peoples to safe, healthy and ecologically sustainable production.

Indigeneity²²: Is a way of being in the world: being indigenous to a place means having a depth of knowledge, understanding and connection to that place. Indigeneity also includes a sense of stewardship and responsibility for managing that place and working respectfully with its non-human inhabitants. Prior to

that shift away from agrarian society that took place with the Industrial Revolution, most people on this planet retained some degree of Indigeneity under this definition.

Indigenous foods: Categorized as plant foods, animal foods, earth elements such as salts, and water.²³

Island Chef Collaborative (ICC)²⁴: A community of liked-minded chefs and food and beverage professionals with a common interest in regional food security, the preservation of farmland and the development of local food systems. Largely through fundraising activities, ICC has generated microloans that enable local farmers to grow more food and connect with local merchants. Funds go to growers, harvesters and processors to invest in equipment and materials that allows them to increase the supply of food in the region.

Land trust: A land trust is a non-profit, non-governmental organization, usually with charitable status, that focuses specifically on land preservation.

Peninsula and Area Agriculture Commission (PAC)²⁵: An advisory committee with a mandate to advise the Municipalities of Central Saanich, Metchosin, North Saanich, Saanich, Sidney and the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area on matters involving agriculture, and, to facilitate the development of programs for implementation of the Saanich Peninsula Agricultural Strategy objectives and keep the Municipalities advised of these programs. The commission operates under the guidelines of the Local Government Act. PAC is made up of 10 voting citizens appointed by the member councils plus up to 10 non-voting members. PAC's clearly defined role under the Local Government Act limits their ability to undertake and direct work. PAC is often the place where issues affecting local agricultural and food producers are identified and discussed.

Place-based foods: Foods with a distinctive social and geographical identity whose unique tastes can be traced to the growing conditions and cultural practices of production.

²¹ http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/what_is_a_food_shed

²² <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/new-way-stewardship-mother-earth-indigeneity-180952855/?no-ist>

²³ <http://www.fao.org/wairdocs/other/ai215e/AI215E04.htm>

²⁴ <http://www.iccbc.ca>

²⁵ <http://www.saanich.ca/living/mayor/boards/pac.html>

Region: The political, government entity that is the Capital Regional District (CRD).

region: The geographic area generally from Port Renfrew through to the Southern Gulf Islands including the Victoria Metropolitan Area, that comprises the jurisdiction of the Capital Regional District.

Southern Vancouver Island Direct Farm Marketing Association²⁶: A non-profit association of more than 70 growers and producers on Southern Vancouver Island, British Columbia, who sell their farm and vineyard products directly to consumers. Many of our members also participate in agri-tourism, including farmers' markets, fall fairs, farm festivals, farm tours and bed & breakfasts. The major activities of the association include publication of the annual "Farm Fresh" consumers guide in April, management of the Farm Fresh website and participation in a special Farmers' Market at the historic Saanich Fair on the Labour Day weekend.

Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Indigenous Food Network²⁷: A collective with a shared vision of a healthy future based upon reconnecting with First Nations cultural teachings and practices. Members include culturally knowledgeable food harvesters and gatherers, health professionals, community development workers and members of the scientific community. VICCIFN is building collaborative approaches in addressing issues of traditional food access and security, and intends to research, document and share the ancestral strengths that are deeply rooted throughout Vancouver Island for the preservation for future generations.

Victoria Food Funders Network: There are many agencies that fund food systems, health, and agriculture initiatives in the Region. In an effort to better understand the issues, increase efficiency, decrease duplication, and support more strategic and coordinated investment in the Region many of these funders are coming together to develop a food funder network.

Victoria Foundation Vital Signs²⁸: An annual community check-up that evaluates the Capital Region as a place to live, learn, work and grow. It measures the health of our city and assigns grades in a number of areas that are critical to Victoria's vitality. Information included on this site has been gathered in cooperation with numerous sources that are researching and collecting data on Victoria. Community Foundations of Canada retains the Centre for the Study of Living Standards to develop common indicators for Vital Signs communities and obtain data from Statistics Canada and other institutional sources. Greater Victoria is an umbrella term that applies to different geographical areas, depending on the indicator. It can refer to the Capital Regional District, Victoria Census Metropolitan Area or South Vancouver Island Health Service Delivery Area.

Urban agriculture: The range of activities involved in growing, raising, processing, marketing and distributing food and non-food products in an urban area. These activities include backyard gardens, community gardens, beehives, orchards, greenhouses, market gardens, livestock production (chickens and other animals) and even small-scale aquaculture, hydroponic greenhouses and closed-loop buildings.

²⁶ <http://www.islandfarmfresh.com>

²⁷ <http://www.indigenousfoodsvi.ca>

²⁸ <http://www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca/vital-signs/victoria>

Regional Food & Agriculture Organizations

There are an increasing number of agriculture, food security and food system programs run by a host of organizations, businesses and individuals in the CRD. Many organizations do creative and effective work on increasing food access, supporting urban agriculture and strengthening communities. Regional food security work is implemented through informal partnerships between the CRD Roundtable on the Environment, BC Healthy Communities Subcommittee (BCHCSC), Island Health (IH) and Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable (CR-FAIR). Examples of this collaboration include pilot projects for local food procurement and urban agriculture initiatives at a number of municipalities.

The following organizations and agencies have played a critical role in the development of the RFAS. Their continued involvement is critical to the successful implementation of the RFAS and development of the sector.

CR-FAIR

Established in 1997, Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable is a coalition of organizations and individuals working to strengthen regional food security and our local food system, from farm gate to dinner plate. The Community Social Planning Council is the legal sponsor of CR-FAIR. CR-FAIR's mission is to increase knowledge of and bring about positive change in the food and agriculture system within the capital region. CR-FAIR three areas of focus include the food economy, food literacy and food access and health. They have been a driving force behind the establishment of a regional food and farmland trust.

PENINSULA AND AREA AGRICULTURE COMMISSION (PAC)

Established in 1998 as an advisory committee to the Municipalities of Central Saanich, Metchosin, North Saanich, Saanich, Sidney and the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area on matters involving agriculture, and, to facilitate the development of programs for implementation of the Saanich Peninsula Agricultural Strategy objectives and keep the Municipalities advised of these programs. PAC is made up of 10 voting citizens appointed by the

member councils plus up to 10 non-voting members including: one member of council from each of Central Saanich, Metchosin, North Saanich, Saanich and Sidney and one representative of the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area; and one member each from the Agricultural Land Commission, the Saanich Peninsula Water Commission, Agriculture Canada, and the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food. PAC operates under the guidelines of the Local Government Act. As a commission, defined under the Act, they are limited in their ability to undertake and direct work related to agriculture and food. They are one of the few regional bodies with members from the farming community.

VICTORIA FOOD FUNDERS NETWORK

There are many agencies within the region that fund local food systems, health, and agriculture initiatives. In an effort to better understand the issues, increase efficiency, decrease duplication, and support more strategic and coordinated investment in the region many of these funders are coming together to under the umbrella of a local food funder network.

ISLAND HEALTH (IH)

Island Health provides health care to more than 765,000 people on Vancouver Island, the islands of the Georgia Strait, and in the mainland communities north of Powell River and south of Rivers Inlet. In addition to overseeing food safety regulations, Island Health is involved in many food-related activities and issues as they pertain to individual and community health, and community food security on Vancouver Island.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (MA)

The Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for the production, marketing, processing and merchandising of agricultural products and food; the institution and carrying out of advisory, research, promotional or education extension programs, projects or undertakings relating to agriculture and food; and the collection of information and preparation and dissemination of statistics relating to agriculture and food.

FIRST NATIONS

The traditional territories of 22 First Nations span portions of the CRD. 11 of these Nations hold reserve lands throughout the region. Eight of these First Nations are signatories to the Douglas Treaty. First Nations interest in traditional foods and associated cultivation and harvesting practices is increasing. They are an important and powerful interest with inherent rights and title to the landscape and many local food sources. Their perspective and deep understanding of the region will help expand the understanding and appreciation of local food and agriculture.



Food & Agriculture Interests

Of the 13 municipalities in the CRD, municipalities with substantial rural and agricultural areas include the Districts of Metchosin, Sooke, Saanich, Central Saanich, and North Saanich.²⁹ Colwood and Esquimalt have smaller ALR holdings. The District of Highlands, while not having any ALR land still has significant agricultural activities and land use bylaws that reference agriculture and agricultural uses. The Electoral Areas have significant ALR holdings, although only the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area is covered by this plan. And while Oak Bay, the City of Victoria and the Town of Sidney do not have any ALR holdings, all three support increasing urban agriculture and food production activities as do the other local municipalities and Juan de Fuca electoral area.

The 2011 Agriculture Census shows that the area of farmland in some form of production has stayed relatively steady at 13,606 ha (43 ha more than 2006) out of the total 16,382 ha of land in the ALR. Since the inception of the ALR in 1973, approximately 1500 ha of the ALR have been removed within the CRD, representing an approximate decrease of 8% between 1973 and 2009 (Capital Regional District, 2010).

Over the past three decades, nearly 1,500 hectares of productive agricultural land have been removed from the region's Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) areas. As of 2009, 10,600 hectares of ALR land remained in the Region's Growth Management Planning Area (excluding the Gulf Islands or Indian Reserve lands). In 2013, there were 1,093 farms reporting farm-related income in the CRD (excluding the Gulf Islands) (Ministry of Agriculture, 2013). In total, they produced over \$50 million in gross farm receipts, up 10% from the 2006 Census. There are approximately 34 community gardens with approximately 1,000 plots throughout the CRD, some of which were established as far back as the 1970s.

²⁹ >100 hectares of ALR.

Local Oversight

There are currently seven Agricultural Advisory Committees or Commissions in the CRD.³⁰ Agricultural Advisory Committees (AACs) can be an effective way for local governments to connect with their farming communities. An AAC is appointed and functions similarly to other advisory committees of municipal councils or regional boards. Their members are predominantly drawn from the farming community and the committee focuses on agricultural issues.³¹

Agricultural Area Plans (AAPs) allow communities to develop practical solutions to issues and identify opportunities to strengthen farming and ultimately to contribute to agriculture and the community's long-term sustainability. Five communities within the CRD have completed agriculture plans³² and one has completed a food system plan.³³ Agriculture plans are currently being developed for the District of Saanich and the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area. Associated Agricultural Land Use Inventories (ALUIs) have been completed for all six of the CRD municipalities with rural lands and for each of the three Electoral Areas.³⁴

The Local Government Act makes provisions for municipalities and regional districts to develop official plans for portions of their jurisdictions - often referred to as neighbourhood or local area plans. The Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) and Ministry of Agriculture actively support local government initiatives to develop Agricultural Area Plans.

³⁰ District of Central Saanich, District of Metchosin, District of North Saanich, Langford, Juan de Fuca Electoral Area, Salt Spring Electoral Area, and the Peninsula Agricultural Commission.

³¹ <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/agricultural-land-and-environment/strengthening-farming/agricultural-advisory-committees>

³² Salt Spring Island Electoral Area (2008), District of North Saanich (2010), District of Central Saanich (2011), Sooke (2012), District of Metchosin (2013)

³³ City of Victoria (2010).

³⁴ Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area (2014); Districts of Central Saanich and North Saanich, and Juan De Fuca Electoral Area (2009); Salt Spring Island Electoral Area; and District of Saanich, Colwood and Langford (2005).



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CRD

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