

Sooke Food Chi Update - June 2010

Year at a Glance - our 3rd year: A year to go beyond the "talk"

We apologize for the recent absence of Food CHI email updates... But we have been busy indeed! Here is an overview/update of the past 8 months of work, written by Phoebe. If you are interested in getting more involved with a project, feel free to get in touch! If you haven't already, we encourage you to stop by the Sunriver Allotment Garden on Phillip's Road. YOU WILL BE AMAZED!

October - VIHA 6 month contract signed, Jessica Boquist appointed part time Food Chi coordinator.

-Funding secured for Farm Mentorship program, ten farm mentors and ten farm protégées selected. FArmFolkCityFolk, Juan de Fuca EDC and mentoring fees.

-Harvest Feast and pit cook at T'Sou-ke Nation for foodie volunteers from 3 community gardens.

November

- AGM, orientation for new Board directors

- 2010 goals and objectives defined by members

-promotion for Sunriver Allotment gardens begins

-Farm Mentorship coordinator contracted - Keeley Nixon. Program designed with ALM farm input

December - Sunriver 2.5 acre site planning begins - survey, drainage plans, development and design options, funding plan

January - working partnership with District of Sooke planning and engineering staff defined re Sunriver Allotment Gardens.

Food Chi general meeting - work plan established for 2010

February - District council approves Food Chi license to occupy the Phillips Farm site - Sunriver gardens. Development of site begins Feb 20.

Insurance for Sunriver volunteers secured.

Seedy Saturday - Feb 27th at SEAPARC, workshops

March - Film Awareness night, SOIL, and promotion of seed diversity. EMCS community theatre. Mentorship program finishes end of March - 4 months. Booklet written - **So Ya Wanna Farm in Sooke**. **VIHA contract expires**.

March and April: Infrastructure at Sunriver Gardens installed - fencing, irrigation, gates, roadways, parking lot, paths, soil enhancement program begins. Over 40 garden volunteers contribute.

Field finally gets last rotovate April 28th - one month late because of wet spring. All sod turned under. Over 65 plots surveyed and assigned.

New funding relationships cultivated - site visits, orientations to Sooke Food Chi

May: Engagement of Sunriver gardeners initiated. Support given to engage experienced gardeners with the novices. Info sessions offered - 3 workshops - Planning your plot; Preparing Your soils, Building the Composts. Volunteer base strengthened. Planting begins in spite of cold rains and slugs.

Donations now exceed support from over 30 small businesses and trades.

Work parties and info sessions 2 evenings a week and weekends at Sunriver empower the gardeners. Communal sharing of seeds, soil enhancers, plants and plots - blueberries, potatoes, 3 sisters.

Planning for August 8 Working Farm and food garden tour begins

Insurance and coordination for Fruit Tree Food Recovery sought

2nd revision and printing of Sooke Food and Farm guide begins, sponsorship of 2nd printing confirmed

Sunriver garden website developed. www.sunrivergardens.org
Documentary video production begins, on line.

June: Community development of garden continues- garden council formed, more groups sign on - 2 schools - Journey and EMCS ED WEST, communal plots planted, for others in need; Developmentally challenged group arrives to participate - own plot, and watering of others.

Raw foods group signs on, the back 40 plot, nettle patch etc

Haying - for plot mulching, compost building June 17

Heritage Orchard planned by benefactor, Berm design. Trees purchased for fall planting.

Farm Mentorship Year 2 planning begins

3 Kludahk San Juan Ridge lily walks completed June 4, 6 and 8 - over \$1500 raised to cover costs of growing food for others at Sunriver.

Fundraising for Sunriver Garden infrastructure completed.

Working Farm and Food Gardens Tour promotion funding secured. All funds raised will go to Farm Mentorship program.

Funding Goals for 2011 defined - securing land for new farmers to use, developing farm land operation models, farm mentorship-year 2, Food recovery, Seedy Saturday,

Sunriver Gardens dedication, opening, Solstice Potluck supper - June 19th 6 pm

CR FAIR roundtable lunch - hosted by Sooke Food Chi - gazebo, Sunriver allotment gardens. Monday June 21st 11 am to 1 pm

How to Farm in Sooke booklet distributed by months end and will be available on line wwwsookefoodchi.ca