



Climate Action West Shore (CAWS) Update



Submitted by Cindy Moyer

Interest in local food and agriculture is growing on the West Shore. Since the start of the year, our community has welcomed a variety of food-related changes and we're looking forward to having some fun as we continue to learn to live more sustainably. Here's a small sample of what's been happening ...

WestShore Teaching Garden

The WestShore Teaching Garden on Sooke Road in Colwood is a special place where school age youth, young adults, elementary children and community members of all ages can learn sustainable gardening practices through meaningful hands-on lessons and projects, throughout the entire year. The Teaching Garden integrates a blend of learning opportunities and interests including organic gardening and farming practices, native and indigenous plants, landscape design, food preparation, carpentry, media arts and fine arts for youth. By involving various WestShore community organizations and businesses committed to sustainability, the Teaching Garden is working to become the "go to" venue for engaging and educating both the local community and our youth in sustainable growing practices. *For more information on the Teaching Garden, including secondary school credit courses available through their innovative summer options, visit www.learnforlife.ca*

West Shore GO LOCAL Food Summit, March 28th

About 50 people representing a range of interests took part in the 2nd Annual GO LOCAL Food Summit on the West Shore. Farmers' Markets Canada's **Brent Warner** kicked off the day with a sobering look at food and agriculture in Canada, and ways we can find the upside of down.

Working groups explored actions we can take as a community during the current growing season. **Ideas included: supporting local farming** by developing community networking resources that make it easier for farmers to farm, increasing public education on the many benefits of eating local, and lobbying the government to increase access to extension workers; **finding a workable way to get local food on the local government agendas** through the establishment of an Intermunicipal Food Advisory Planning Committee (or similar body) to optimally extend from View Royal through to Sooke/Port Renfrew; **empowering more people of all ages and abilities to grow more food at home or in their communities**, by connecting them with each other and the resources they need to succeed; education and outreach actions focused on film as an effective and accessible platform for connecting young and old to what is happening in the world of food and sustainability. Modest 'seed' funds through Capital Families Assn. have been made available to get projects launched and completed by the fall. *For more info, please contact David Stott at 250.391.4320 ext. 364 or click www.westshoreharvest.ca*

Café FRESH at JdF

On April 2nd, West Shore Parks & Recreation's Juan de Fuca Centre joined only a dozen BC recreation centres selected to be a Mentor for the Healthy Choice Food & Beverage Program. Part of a new provincial initiative to make BC the healthiest province in Canada by 2010. Café FRESH at JdF will feature local, seasonal, natural and organic food choices. *For more information visit the Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre at 1767 Island Highway in Colwood, or click*

www.jdfrecreation.com JDF will also be the new home of the Colwood Farmers' Market (kicking off Wednesday evening, June 3rd) www.colwoodmarket.com

Colwood Tomato Challenge #2 - BIGGER AND REDDER than EVER!!

This second annual growing challenge has kicked off with a vengeance now that RRU President Allan Cahoon has thrown down the gauntlet and challenged Colwood Mayor Dave Saunders and local developer and West Shore Parks & Rec Chair, Les Bjola to a growing contest. Hundreds of organic heritage variety plants have been distributed, and there's still more to come! The first Tomato Challenge was a real hit last year, and now Colwood is again hard at work engaging people in conversations about local food and inspiring folks to 'grow their own'. It's all linked to the Colwood Community Place Project and the city's mission to reduce the community's greenhouse gas emissions by doing simple things like growing and celebrating more local food. *For more info on the Tomato Challenge, or to sign-up to take part, click www.colwoodmarket.com*

[Click here](#) to read about the rules of the Tomato Challenge

Island Chefs' Collaborative Local Food Festival DEFENDING OUR BACKYARD

The 2nd Annual Island Chefs' Collaborative Local Food Festival: Defending Our Backyard celebrates Island foods, farms and flavours at the picturesque Fort Rodd Hill & Fisgard Lighthouse National Historic Sites in Colwood on Sunday, May 31st. The event is one of the highlights of Vancouver Island's festival year. Chefs from some of the finest restaurants on Vancouver Island are working together to raise public awareness of the importance of local food and supporting local farms.

In the first year, Defending Our Backyard brought together over 600 people. This year they're expecting over 1,000! The event has expanded to feature more local food, music, information and activities. This year's entertainment line-up features excellent local talent with Kings Without, Children of Celebrities and The Ecclestons. Defending Our Backyard focuses on personal experience, and beyond sampling some fabulous flavours of the Island, participants will also learn about growing more of their own food, composting, the ethical harvest of seafood, local wineries and breweries, the work of food-related special interest groups and connect with representatives from the region's many farmers' markets. *For more information on Defending Our Backyard, visit the ICC's website at www.iccbc.ca*

For more information on Climate Action West Shore (CAWS) and our integrated network of organizations working together to take community climate action, please contact Cindy Moyer at 250.474.7390 or email climateaction@westshore.bc.ca