



Tackling Farmlands Issues in the CRD Key Players Networking Meeting Report and Tools

On April 24, 2009 a gathering was held at Sea Cider Farm in Saanich. It brought together key players working on Farmland affordability and accessibility issues in the CRD to network and share information. 27 representatives from a wide range of community groups, government, and industry attended.

The meeting was initiated with a brief overview of the issues and then followed by a round of introductions from the participants who provided an overview of the types of work they were currently undertaking or developing to face issues of rising cost of farmland and ensuring accessibility and viability of these lands for farming into the future.

At the close of the meeting we summarized and what strategies were being employed and there was a brief discussion of possible follow up ideas. Participants then filled out a questionnaire asking them if they would be interested in a list serve to stay in touch, if they would be interested in being on the CRD Farmlands Advisory, providing input on the next stages of the project. All respondents of the questionnaire (17) said that the meeting was time well spent. Thank you to LifeCycles, CRFAIR, and the Islands Agri-Food Trust for supporting this networking and information sharing opportunity.

Below (and attached) you will find:

- **Summary of Key Issues**
- **Meeting Outcomes**
- **Summary of Strategies being employed in the CRD**
- **Chart 1: Listing of Agencies working on Farmland Accessibility Issues**
- **Chart 2: Identified Strategies being employed in the CRD**
- **Chart 3: Available Tools and Reports and Acts of Interest**

Summary Key issues:

- Farmland in the CRD is going for approx \$70,000-100,000 acre
- Increase in Farmland prices in BC by 14.5% in 2007, greatest increase in Canada
- Land prices are prohibitive to undercapitalized new farmers or farmers who want to expand/diversify operations

- There is an aging farm population who want to pass farms on but family can not afford to take on the farm
- Professionals buying up farmland for estates
- Development pressures and speculation are driving up farm lands (ALR and non-ALR)
- Farm viability is also challenged by increasing regulatory pressures, shifts in taxation policy and farm assessments, labour shortages, increase in input costs, competition from global food economy, subsidized industries, and “food should be cheap” mentality
- Shifting climate of consumer awareness and interest in local foods and food production. Renewed interest in protecting and supporting local farms.

Meeting Outcomes:

1. Sharing information and knowledge between the participants
2. List of organizations and contacts working on Farmland issues compiled and circulated (attached)
3. List of tools and resources considered valuable by the participants compiled and circulated (attached)
4. Summary of strategies being employed in the Capital Region and beyond (attached)
5. Communications “farmlands listserve” developed to facilitate info sharing and collaboration
6. Follow up meeting planned of key parties involved in farmer training and apprenticeship initiatives (Soil, CRFAIR, TLC, LC, Our Ecovillage, Office of Community Based Research Uvic)
7. Advisory struck to provide guidance to the Farmland Project for 2008/09

Other unintended positive outcomes also afforded by the meeting were a number of side meetings that occurred in conjunction with this meeting.

Summary of Strategies being Employed in the CRD:

There is a wide range of initiatives underway in the following areas within the CRD:

- 1. Policy and Planning:** creating Agriculture Advisory bodies and Agriculture Area Plans (North Saanich, Proposed Central Saanich), Regional Food and Health Action Plans, Regional Food Charter, policy outlined in Official Community Plans and also developing tools and resources for governments
- 2. Public Education:** on-farm education and agri-tourism, public forums, media work, research and education around the ecological and social “goods and services” that farms and farmers provide, ALR-Farmland Watch
- 3. Supportive Programs:** Ministry of Agriculture Strengthening Farmers Program, and resource of Regional Agrologist, Community Farms Programs
- 4. Development of Farmland Trusts, tenure models and leasing agreements**

Key Agencies working on	
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Farmland Accessibility Issues		Contact/ email
1.	Peninsula Agriculture Commission	Alastair Bryson Alastair_Bryson@telus.net Bob Maxwell, fieldstonegarlic@shaw.ca
2.	Island Farm Alliance	Craig Evans jenandbearit@gmail.com
3.	Ministry of Agriculture:Strengthening Farming Program Regional Agrologist	Jim LeMaistre Jim.Lemaistre@gov.bc.ca Rob Kline Rob.Kline@gov.bc.ca
4.	Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable, CRFAIR	Linda Geggie lgeggie@telus.net Christina Peacock christina@communitycouncil.ca
5.	BC Food Systems Network	Jen Cody jenandbearit@gmail.com
6.	LifeCycles	Linda Geggie lgeggie@telus.net
7.	Smart Growth BC	Deb Curran dcurran@dcurranandco.ca Ione ione@smartgrowth.bc.ca
8.	The Land Conservancy (TLC)-Agriculture Partners Program	Paula Hesje phesje@conservancy.bc.ca Ramona Scott ramona@conservancy.bc.ca
9.	Farm Folk City Folk	Jason Found jason@ffcf.bc.ca , Heather Pritchard sustain@ffcf.bc.ca
10.	Western Communities community organizations, Go Local initiative and Capital Families	David Stott davidcstott@gmail.com
11.	Environmental Law Centre, UVic	Deb Curran dcurran@dcurranandco.ca
12.	Blenkinsopp Valley Community Association, Madrona Farm	Natalie Chambers madrona@telus.net
13.	Agrologist	Kevin Brown KevinRBrown@shaw.ca
14.	Central Saanich Council	Alastair Bryson Alastair_Bryson@telus.net Bob Thompson rlthompson@shaw.ca
15.	Our EcoVillage	Brandy Gallager ourbrandy@shaw.ca
16.	Canadian Organic Growers, Vancouver Island, SOIL Program, ALM Farm	Mary Alice Johnson alm@islandnet.com

17.	Saanich Organics	Robin Tunnicliffe robintunnicliffe@hotmail.com
18.	Food Issues Writer	Karen Platt kdplatt@shaw.ca
19.	Saanich Council Candidate, Barking Dog Vinyard and Farm	Lana Popham barkingdog@shaw.ca
20.	Sea to Sea Greenbelt	Ray Zimmerman zimray@gmail.com
21.	Masselink Environmental Design	Derek Masselink derek@masselinkdesign.com

Strategies Employed on Farmland Accessibility Issues in the CRD		Who does work on this?
Policy and Planning	Development of Agriculture Advisories and Agriculture Area Plans	MAL Strengthening Farmers Program, supports North Saanich Proposed for Central Saanich Peninsula Agricultural Commission - District of Saanich - District of Central Saanich - District of North Saanich - Town of Sidney Derek Masselink derek@masselinkdesign.com
	Development of Food Policy Council for the Region	Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable (CRFAIR) working with the Food and Agriculture Subcommittee of the CRD Roundtable on the Environment www.communitycouncil.ca http://www.crd.bc.ca/rte/index.htm
	Policy and Bi-law revisions in Official Community Plans (OCP's) Criteria for edge planning,	Salt Spring Island, Central Saanich, Langford Strengthening Farmers Program SmartGrowth BC and Uvic Environmental Law Centre
	Participate in Farm Tax Assessment Review	MAL, individuals, LC, CRFAIR, IFA,
	Took kits for Municipalities	TLC, Strengthening Farmers Program, SmartGrowth, Uvic Environmental Law Centre
	Sit on Council, on committees and Advisories	Environment, Economic Development, Agriculture
	Create designated Zoning-"community farm zoning"	Saanich
Education	Regional Agrologist Resources share available data	Rob Kline
	Strategy for Municipal Elections and Presentations to Councils and Advisories	Many groups and Derek Masselink derek@masselinkdesign.com
	Raise idea of Preserving Foodlands as we do watersheds and parks Use of maps and public events	Sea To Sea Greenbelt Society
	Creation of Farmland Trust	SaltSpring Island Groups
	Value and highlight the ecological and social value that farmers contribute	BCFSN, CRFAIR, LifeCycles, TLC, OurEcovillage, Island Farm Alliance, FarmFolk CityFolk, Island Chefs Collaborative,

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	ALR-Protection and Enhancement Committee ALR Watch Program	Provincial Coalition of groups SmartGrowth and FarmFolk CityFolk
	Experiential programs for kids and adults Agriculture Holidays	LifeCycles, TLC, OurEcovillage, FarmFolk CityFolk, Direct Farm Marketers, Island Organic Producers Association, Canadian Organic Growers, Vancouver Island
	Media stories (rising Cost of food, connection between food and farming and culture and agriculture, maps and ALR exclusions, value of small plot agriculture)	Many Groups
	Public Forums, Events and workshops	CRFAIR, Common Energy, LifeCycles, FarmFolk City Folk, TLC, Sea to Sea Greenbelt, Islands Chef Collaborative
Land Trusts, Tenure or Leasing Strategies	Community Farms Program	TLC, FarmFolk City Folk
	Linking Land owners and Borrowers for leasing	Linking Land and Future Farmers, LifeCycles, Farm Folk City Folk and TLC Community Farms Program
	Farmland Trust or "Friends of Farm" strategies	TLC, Madrona Farm
	Land ownership and governance models	Our Ecovillage, TLC, Uvic Environmental Law Centre, Deborah Curran, Salt Spring Island groups
	Affirmative Agriculture Covenants	TLC
Supportive Programs	Strengthening Farmers Program Ministry of Agriculture	http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/index.htm
	Community Farms Program	TLC and FarmFolk CityFolk
	Leasing Linking Land and Future Farmers	LifeCycles, LLAFF, TLC, FFCF
Identified Needs	Develop land capacity surveys to determine populations needs for foods in conjunction with amount of land needed	

Available Tools and Resources

Where?

Draft Agricultural Land Use Inventory-District of Saanich

Capital Region Agriculture Backgrounder Agrologists Tour 2008

Capital Regional District Agriculture Overview

Draft Toolkit for Municipalities for Farmland planning
 Community Farms Program for BC: Putting Farmland into sustainable
 production

Regional Agrologist


Rob Kline

Rob.Kline@gov.bc.ca

Ramona Scott, TLC

Jason Found Heather Pritchard Farm Folk City Folk

ramona@conservancy.bc.ca

Join Smart Growth BC's ALR Watch Listserv (send email)	SmartGrowth BC www.smartgrowth.bc.ca
BC's Agricultural Land Reserve - A Legal Review of the Question of Community Need (2007)	
Citizens Guide to Protected Agricultural Land in BC (2005)	
  State of the ALR Report (2004)	
An Agriculture Strategy for the Saanich Peninsula (1997) <i>Funding provided by:</i>	Saanich Peninsula Agricultural Strategy Committee, Bob Maxwell fieldstonegarlic@shaw.ca
Farmland Forever: Reshaping the Agricultural Land Reserve for the 21 st Century www.davidsuzuki.org/files/SWAG/DSF-ALR_fma13.pdf	David Suzuki Foundation
Protecting the Working Landscape of Agriculture: A smart Growth Direction for Municipalities in British Columbia (2005) www.wcel.org/wcelpub/2005/14233.pdf	Deborah Curran West Coast Environmental Law www.wcel.org
Establishing Your Community Farm Trust : Legal Tools and Comparative Models www.elc.uvic.ca/documents/ELC-Community-Farm-Trust-Handbook.pdf	
Public Amenity Benefits and Ecological Services Provided to Local Communities in the Fraser Valley: The Case Study of Abbotsford, BC	
BC's Food Self Reliance: Can BC's Farmers Feed Our Growing Population www.smartgrowth.bc.ca/Portals/0/Downloads/selfreliance2006.pdf	
Planning for Farming www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/factsheets/factsheet5.pdf	MAL and Strengthening Farmers Program http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/index.htm
Agricultural Advisory Committees (AAC)	
Agricultural Area Plans	
Edge Planning	
GIS and Agricultural Land Use Inventories	
Support for Local Governments Planning for Agriculture	
Subdivision Approving Officers Toolkit	
Trails in Farm and Ranch Areas	
Publications related to Planning for Agriculture	
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Acts of Interest	
The Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) Act	
The Local Government Act	
The Farm Practices Protection Act (Right to Farm Act)	

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