



NEWS RELEASE

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Island Chefs' Survival Challenge for Madrona Farm

VICTORIA, B.C. – Ten of Victoria's finest chefs will demonstrate exactly how far they are willing to go in the name of fresh, local ingredients in the Island Chefs' Survival Challenge on October 5, 2008.

Hosted by Madrona Farm, the Island Chefs' Survival Challenge will be a spectacle of culinary performance art. Chefs from several local restaurants will hunt for their favourite vegetables, picking them from the field while evading many strategically-placed obstacles. Then they'll row to Condiment Island – in the centre of the farm's biggest pond to get all the extras they'll need to complete their masterpieces.

Once they've got their ingredients, they'll get to work on their dishes, but not in any normal restaurant kitchen. This is survival cooking; they will only be equipped with a two-burner propane stove, their two favourite skillets, a couple of knives, tongs, and a cutting board.

Spectators will be able to view the cooking portion of the challenge up-close, and talk to the chefs while they cook. This is a fantastic opportunity to see Victoria's best chefs make culinary art out of the most basic ingredients.

Participating chefs believe this event will highlight their commitment to local agriculture. By sacrificing the luxuries of a restaurant kitchen, they hope to underscore the enormous importance of good ingredients to the creation of fabulous meals and raise awareness about the need to preserve our dwindling farmland for farming.

There will be a limited number of tickets offered for this event; they will be distributed through participating chefs, media outlets and other locations.

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Madrona Farm Fundraising Campaign

Madrona Farm is a 27-acre parcel of prime agricultural land on Blenkinsop Road. Agriculture, restoration and conservation have been integrated on this third-generation family farm to create a thriving example of successful, sustainable agriculture.

The newly formed Friends of Madrona Farm Society (FoMF) has entered into an agreement with The Land Conservancy of BC (TLC) to purchase Madrona Farm, located in Victoria, for placement in a land trust with TLC. The FoMF must raise \$2,500,000; of which a substantial portion will be donated by the landowner. TLC's mission is to ensure that the agricultural productivity and ecological values of Madrona Farm are protected forever. This fundraising campaign for the purchase of the farm by the community it serves, and the placement of the farm in the hands of a land trust, will be the first of its kind in B.C., and part of the solution for local food security.

Although Madrona Farm is zoned Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), this designation does not require the land to remain in food production. Without further protection, Madrona could be purchased for use as a "hobby farm" or "gentleman's estate," and never again be used to grow food for the community. Community purchase of this farm is a test of our collective desire to protect farmland for farming.

Once TLC holds title, the property will be inalienable and can never be sold. The farm, its uses for local, sustainable food production and conservation of biodiversity, will be protected by the Constitution of TLC. This will ensure the purposes of the FoMF are met in perpetuity.

Farming on Madrona is guided by a commitment to environmental, social and economic sustainability. "The farm operates as close as possible to a natural ecosystem," says Madrona farmer, Nathalie Chambers.

The Land Conservancy of BC

The Land Conservancy is a registered charity and land trust protecting wilderness areas, cultural landmarks, and agricultural lands in B.C. Since 1997, it has protected over 120,000 acres of sensitive and threatened lands around the province, involving more than 300 projects. It has grown to include over 8,000 members, and is now part of an international network of National Trusts with over 7.5 million members. Some of The Land Conservancy's earliest work centred on connecting with ranchers in B.C.'s interior to protect grasslands ecosystems, which are home to one-third of B.C.'s endangered species. In 2001, The Land Conservancy launched the Conservation Partners Program, through which it works to promote local farmers who are stewards of wildlife habitat on their land. www.conservancy.bc.ca