

GOOD FOOD NETWORK

Progress Report

2022/2023



crfair





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Honoring the *People & Land*

In stewarding healthy and sustainable food systems, we walk in the footsteps of the Indigenous peoples on whose lands we are located. CRFAIR and the Good Food Network reside on unceded Coast Salish Territories*, specifically of the Lək̓ʷəŋən peoples, also known as the Songhees and Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) First Nations, the W̱SÁNEĆ Nations, also known as the W̱JOL̓EŁP (Tsartlip), BÓKÉĆEN (Pauquachin), STÁUTW̱ (Tsawout) W̱SIKEM (Tseycum), MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat)}, Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay) First Nations, as well as the T'Sou-ke, Pacheedaht, and Pune'laxutth' (Penelekut) Nations. We endeavor to honour the land, the peoples and the treaties by strengthening our relationship, knowledge and responsibilities to one another.

The presence of settlers (non-Indigenous peoples who live on these lands) is not neutral; it has had and continues to have devastating impacts on many aspects of life for Indigenous peoples. Many of the common farming and distribution practices, including the seeds we plant, the ways we educate, and our methods of growing food came to these lands through the ongoing process of colonialism. These means of production have, in many ways, led to the dispossession and disconnection of all people from the abundance that nature has to offer while disproportionately impacting Indigenous peoples.

Thanks to the resiliency and leadership of Indigenous people and their allies, traditional ways of caring for the land and one another have not been erased. We believe that this ongoing history of colonial violence can and must change if we are to reach our goals of local, sustainable, and equitable foods for all. Acknowledging this shared history, continuing to learn how it has shaped our ways of being in relation to one another, and taking actions to support the leadership of Indigenous peoples to revive traditional ways of being, are commitments embedded within the work of the Good Food Network.

In hopes to amplify and celebrate the work being done by the many Nations and their allies to ensure the continued thriving of traditional food systems, this report highlights some of the work being done locally. We humbly encourage feedback and dialogue on how to be in better relation with one another and the land.

* The term Coast Salish is used to encompass a number of Indigenous peoples, including Esquimalt, Hul'qumi'num, Klahoose, Lekwungen, MALAXEŁ, Musqueam, OStlq'emeylem, Pentlatch, Scia'new (Beecher Bay), Sliammon, Shishalh, Skxwú7mesh-ulh Úxwumixw, Stó:lo, Straits, Tseil-Waututh, T'Sou-ke, W̱SÁNEĆ, and Xwemalkwu.

For a *local, sustainable* and *healthy* food system...

Every year, committed actors from different sectors in the Capital Regional District work collectively around a complex social problem; how to create a more equitable, healthy and sustainable local food system. This report aims to share some of the many actions being taken to achieve this goal. While this is a non-exhaustive report of the incredible initiatives taking place throughout the region, it provides a snapshot of the inspiring leadership of local communities and a map to guide forward movement.

Who is the Good Food Network



The Good Food Network is a group of diverse people, organizations, institutions, decision makers, advocates, educators, health professionals, activists, farmers, makers and distributors that share the common goal of increasing local, healthy, equitable and sustainable foods. The Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable (CRFAIR) is the organizing back-bone of this network, acting as one point of connection. CRFAIR provides administrative, legal and financial support, as well as host events, gathering spaces, educational opportunities and communication services to drive collective action towards our shared food system goals.

Impact Areas

Local Food Economy

Outcome: A strong regional community and commercial food economy supporting sustainable land and water ecosystems.

Target: Local food production for the Capital Region increases from less than 10% of total food consumption in 2011 to 25% by 2025

Food Literacy

Outcome: Increase food literacy to improve health and sustainability in the CRD

Target: The number of households in the CRD who report growing or accessing healthy, local and traditional food steadily increases from 23% in 2014 to 46% by 2025. To do this, we will double food literacy efforts.

Food Access & Equity

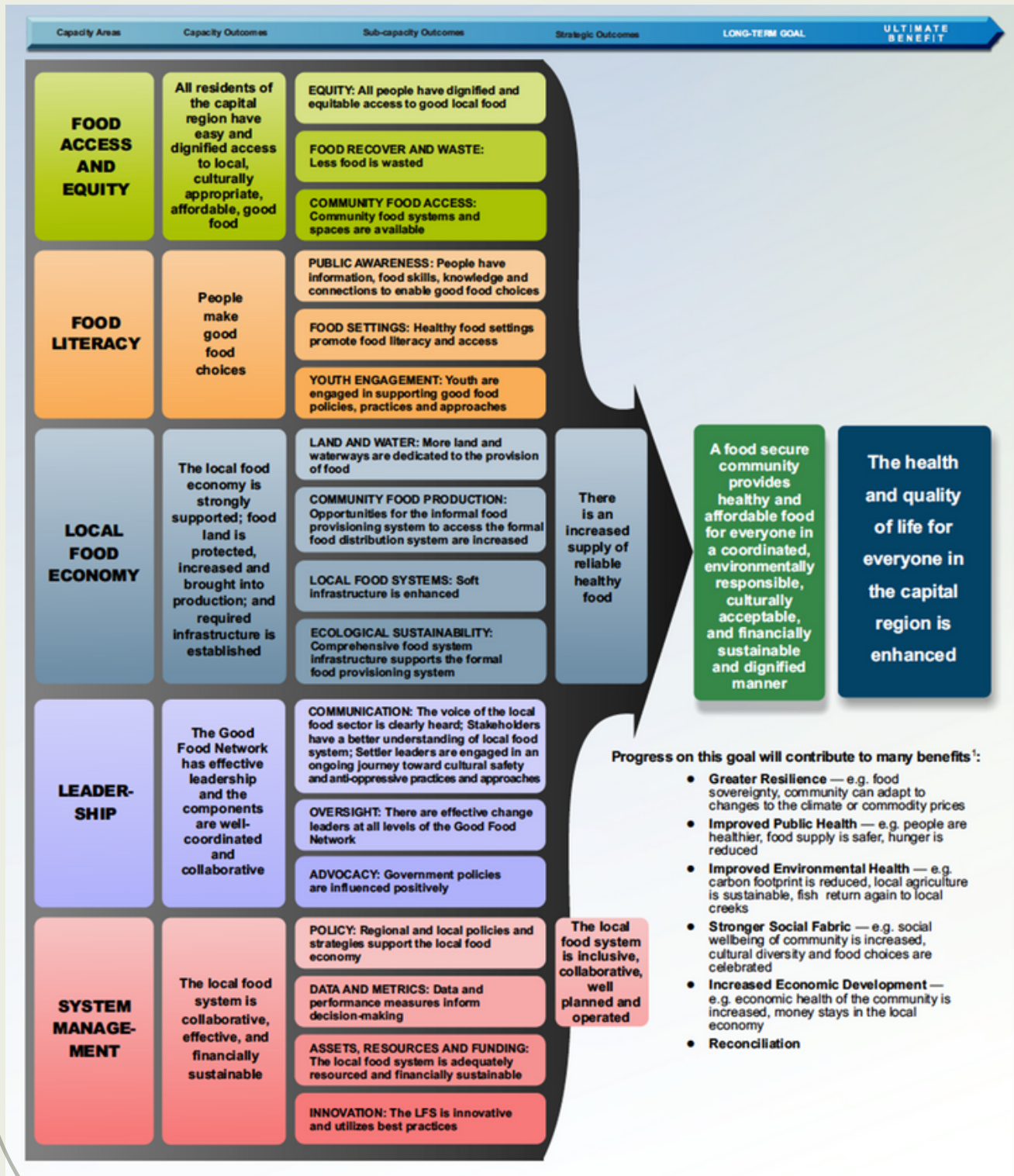
Outcome: All residents in the CRD have access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food.

Target: The number of households who report that they are food insecure drops by 25% from 14% of households in 2021 to 10% by 2025 decreasing food insecurity.

To learn more about indicators on the health of the regions Local Food Economy, Food Literacy, and Food Access & Equity, visit the [2020 Regional Food System Indicator Framework](#) by the Community & Social Planning Council.

Capital Region Food System Outcomes Map

The Collaborative Outcomes Map was created in 2018 as a tool to understand the Capital Regional District's complex food system web. The Map breaks down larger impact areas into smaller sub-areas with the aim of creating continuity and linkages between goals and long term benefits to the local food system.



Key Food Systems Issues

Food Insecurity

High cost of housing and rising food prices are exacerbating food security in our region.

Did you know?

The number of Canadians using food banks across the country reached record highs this year, with nearly 1.5 million visits in March, up 15% over the same time last year.

Source

Food Sovereignty

Many people are not able to access land or resources to practice their traditional foods and medicines.

Challenges to Local Food Production

Heavy pressure on land has driven up the price of rural and agricultural land making land access the greatest barrier to new farmers. Most farmers still struggle economically.

Did you know?

The average salary of a farmer in BC is \$36,563 source and a farm worker in is \$29,640.

Source

Local Businesses Struggling

Local food and beverage operators are still recovering from the cumulative impacts of the pandemic, while labour shortages are also adding to the economic insecurity of many operators and the cost of inflation and climate change are hitting businesses hard.

Did you know?

75% of grocers that responded to a local survey said they have more demand than they can supply and demand for local foods is increasing. (Closing the Supply Gap, 2022)

Health

Increase in number of food related health issues.

Did you know?

More than 30 % of Canadians said they were eating less healthy food due to rising costs, while almost 20 % said they skipped meals to save money.

Source

Climate Change

Long global supply chains and food production methods are energy intensive and contribute to climate change and dwindled self-reliance. Climate change will impact our ability to grow food on the island.

Did you know?

A study from the University of Victoria shows that atmospheric rivers such as that that occurred in 2021 that led to floods and landslides that killed five people and cut off all road and rail routes between Metro Vancouver and the rest of Canada are now at least 60% more likely to occur. Source

Local *Response* Highlights

Tackling Food Insecurity

Food Rescue Program

The Food Rescue Program, run in partnership by the Capital Region Food Share Network and the Mustard Seed, works with over 75 member organizations, who in turn serve more than 10% of the population of the CRD each month.

[Learn more](#)

South Island Farmhub

The South Island Farm Hub Farmbucks Program has purchased over \$110,000 of fresh, high nutrient-dense foods from local farmers and producers to supply seven local charities.

[Learn more](#)

Red Cedar Cafe

Red Cedar Café continues to distribute between 1000 – 1300 frozen meals per week.

[Learn more](#)



Food Sovereignty

PEPÁKEN HÁUTW Program

The PEPÁKEN HÁUTW Native Plants & Garden Program offers weekly workshops for the 350 students of the WSÁNEĆ School Board that educate students in growing, planting, and harvesting native plants like JSÁY (douglas fir), KŁO,EL (camas) and DEKENİŁĆ (thimbleberry); as well as growing fruits and vegetables. In addition, PEPÁKEN HÁUTW offers hands-on Learning on the Land Programs to more than 200 people annually to help restore native ecosystems at four sites within WSÁNEĆ territory.

[Learn more](#)

WSÁNEĆ Leaders & Parks Canada

WSÁNEĆ Leaders and Parks Canada are working together on three projects which enhance local fishing, hunting, and foraging opportunities in traditional territories. Growing Together, Fur to Forest and Clam Gardens are projects tackling issues that threaten food sovereignty by restoring native ecosystems, mentoring youth, managing wildlife populations and tending to food ecosystems.

[Learn more](#)

Salish Sea Garden Project

The Salish Sea Garden Project, initially called the Clam Garden Initiative, began as a pilot project from 2014-2019 to experimentally restore two clam gardens by managing them as WSÁNEĆ people have for thousands of years. Characterized by a rock wall at the low tide line that traps sediment and expands the habitat in which clams flourish, the wall acts as a reef-like habitat, creating homes for kelps, fish, and other important foods that would otherwise not appear in these areas. Once established, clam gardens support up to two times more clams than unmodified beaches. Now in it's second phase, Parks Canada staff and the WSÁNEĆ Traditional Knowledge Working Group have revived the project after a period of dormancy during the pandemic to build on lessons learned from the first phase of the Clam Garden Restoration Project and expand the scope to create healthy, sustainable ecosystems.

[Learn more](#)

Food Production & Land Access

Salt Spring Island Farm Trust

Salt Spring Island Farm Trust, in collaboration with farmers, families and other organizations, utilizes the 60-acre Burgoyne Valley Community Farm to house four farm businesses, Salt Spring Island Community Services' Harvest Farm Program, and provide land to 90 families who tend to 1000 sq. ft. community garden plots. It is also the future site of the Community Composter.

[Learn more](#)

Young Agrarians

Young Agrarians supported 347 new farmers and land owners on Vancouver Island this year to increase the accessibility of land and upscale agricultural productions through their B.C. Land Access Program, which provides farmer mentorship, business advise and legal support. Since the program's inception, they've helped 1,700 people in total. Are you looking for somewhere to grow? Big or small, you can also find or post available backyard gardening space through the Young Agrarians publicly sourced [U-Map](#)

[Learn more](#)

CRD Foodlands Access Program

Thanks to the overwhelming support from local advocates, The CRD Foodlands Access Program is one tool designed to help reach the strategic goal of increasing land for food production by 5,000 hectares by 2038. In February, the CRD published Kwantlen Polytechnic University's (KPU) Institute for Sustainable Food Systems' [Foodlands Trust Business Case](#). The business case provides information about agricultural land use and identifies initial capital and operating costs to advance a foodlands access incubator program for new farmers on three parcels of land within the CRD. With strong support, this project has moved into its next stage to identify detailed operational requirements, determine a funding strategy and confirm land use and local government participants for establishing this new initiative.

[Learn more](#)

Strengthening Local Businesses

The Local Food Box

"The Local Food Box is a marketing partnership between eight farms in Metchosis to promote and assemble farm fresh goods to supply a well-balanced weekly CSA box to local people. This important work keeps small farmers focused on the specialty foods their customers love, while also allowing them to access a bigger market by bundling their goods with other farmers.

[Learn more](#)

Kitchen Connect & The Root

2022 saw boots on the ground for construction of Kitchen Connect in Victoria and The Root on Salt Spring Island. Scheduled to open their doors in 2023, these new regional Food Hubs are designed to provide production facilities available to local food maker/producer businesses to grow their processing capacity from incubation to scale up. Equipment and affordability are key in facilitating these small businesses to make larger batches with increased efficiency, meet health and safety standards to access retail and institutional markets, and provide training and support programs!

Scale Collaborative

Scale Collaborative works at the intersection of culture, capacity and capital to strengthen organizations and increase impact in community. In 2022, Scale's Thriving Non-Profits Program helped 49 organizations build financial resiliency, while the Thrive Impact Fund invested \$1.4M into impact organizations.

[Learn more](#)

Health

My FED Farm

Now in its third year, my FED Farm was designed to increase food security for vulnerable individuals who face barriers to accessing fresh, healthy, and affordable food. Each recipient receives a free edible garden kit, including grow bags, seedlings, seeds, and educational resources. In 2022 my FED Farm provided 236 Garden Kits, delivered 708 planters, directly helped 585 people, cultivated 14,000 seeds and plant starts, and increased the food growing capacity by 5,568 Lbs. FED is a project of the Synergy Foundation. [Learn More.](#)

[Learn more](#)

School Food Shift

Members of the School Food Shift Collaborative have successfully laid the groundwork for the pilot initiative, *Setting the Table*, which will support the aggregation, processing and distribution of food to schools in School District 62. Starting in 2023, the program will provide at least five schools with a daily offering of either breakfast or lunch to feed 200+ students per day. In addition to providing prepared meals, the pilot will connect schools to community agencies to access free food and bolster existing school-based food programs.

Living Edge

Seven communities in the CRD are being supplied with rescued and fresh foods in a no-questions-asked free market offered by the Living Edge. In collaboration with Food Share Network, Mustard Seed Food Bank and the Salvation Army, Living Edge works to secure food from grocery stores and other food providers to increase access to healthy foods.

[Learn more](#)

Climate Change

1000 Rain Gardens Project

The Friends of Bowker Creek Society and Peninsula Streams Society have teamed up for the **1000 Rain Gardens Project** to help reduce storm water entering the creek and improve salmon habitat for the return of adult Chum salmon in 3-4 years. Slowing down rainwater and allowing it to enter the soil in rain gardens where plants and microbes can help to break down pollutants will help improve water quality and balance winter flood and summer drought water levels. The **1000 Rain Gardens Project** aims to educate and inspire the creation of 1000 rain gardens throughout the watershed, build community connections, educate residents and businesses in the watershed to better manage rainwater and maintain a healthy urban watershed.

[Learn more](#)

Sandown Centre for Regenerative Agriculture

Sandown Centre for Regenerative Agriculture is working to restore the water quality of WSE, IKEM creek and soil biodiversity of the 83 acres of farmland, wetland and forest which lies on WSÁNEĆ territory. The creek, which flows within a 947-acre watershed in North Saanich and runs into Patricia Bay, is an important contributor to a healthy ecosystem. By contributing to drought and flood control, filtering contaminants, and providing habitat for fish, wildlife and pollinator crops, and sequestering carbon from the atmosphere, the creek and soil that runs through the site are essential contributors to climate health. Currently, the team at Sandown Centre for Regenerative Agriculture is monitoring and testing the site to create baselines for their restoration work which will undoubtedly contribute greatly to the academic and environmental restoration communities.

[Learn more](#)

FarmFolk CityFolk

Climate change is a key area of work for FarmFolk CityFolk who are active in the CRD. The organization brings a local lens to the work through advancing policy by participating in a coalition called Farmers For Climate Solutions, as well as, hosting hands-on climate action events through farmer field days. In addition, FarmFolk CityFolk focuses on biodiversity and soil health by organizing seed saving initiatives.

An example of this was the hosting of a documentary screening of Dr. Vandana Shiva's new film and cleaning over 100 lbs. of seed with the Mobile Seed Cleaning Trailer with farmers in Metchosin, Saanichton, and North and Central Saanich.

[Learn more](#)

VIGBC

In 2022, the Vancouver Island Green Business Collective (VIGBC) launched a certification program for green grocers. This certification measures and credits local grocers that are reducing their sources of waste and emissions such as food waste, refrigeration, lighting, single-use plastics and offering more local products.

[Learn more](#)

Building Leadership

The Good Food Leadership Roundtable guides the work and priorities of the Good Food Network, Bringing together those who are committed to stewarding the network goals forward and holding accountability. Leaders come from across sectors, municipalities, organizations, health authorities, funders and communities and meet monthly to discuss emerging topics, share information on impact initiatives and engage in dialogue focused towards enhancing food system goals.



School Food Shift Collaborative

School Food Shift collaborators are working to promote healthy food environments in schools including through incorporating healthy sustainable food into schools through policies, programs and capacity building environments.

Update: Members of the School Food Shift Round Table are launching the *Setting the Table Pilot Meal Program* in School district 62. This program has secured funding and is set to begin operationalizing systems in January 2023 with the goal of providing at least five schools with a daily offering of either breakfast or lunch and continuing to provide free food to bolster existing school based food programs. In addition, School Food Shift has secured resources to develop a volunteer management portal to train, track, and mobilize a base of highly skilled food systems volunteers to support schools with their food initiatives.

Food Literacy

The Food Literacy Working Group supports networking opportunities for sharing promising practices and research to align food literacy efforts more strategically.

Update: In June, the steering committee held it's annual food literacy gathering including in-person and online participation. The theme this year was on sharing stories of impact, how do we do that in our work more effectively and provided opportunity for networking, sharing food together, and hearing from incredible speakers working on enhancing food literacy in the region.

Food Policy Taskforce (FPTF)

The goal of the Food Policy Taskforce (FPTF) is to design a governance model for a regional food policy council which is representative of all food-related interests in the region, including Indigenous food systems, healthy food access, food literacy and education, and a thriving local food economy. The Council is complementary to existing groups doing similar work in the region and serves as a unified voice for the local food system with regards to external relations with other regional food policy councils, senior levels of government, and investors.

Update: For the last two years, the FPTF has been conducting background research, meeting with and learning from the experience of similar groups in other regions, developing a concept paper, and beginning to identify the top priorities and potential composition of the seats on the Council. A research paper describing the current state of food policies and actions across local and First Nations' governments in the region has now been developed and is in its final drafting stages.

What you can do (CTA): To review the FPTF research paper, get involved with municipal engagement efforts, or join the Food Policy Taskforce, please email Ben at bclark@delphi.ca

Local Food Economy & Closing the Supply Gap (CSG)

CSG is an initiative that builds collaborative leadership amongst food businesses across the region to establish and strengthen a short local food supply chain. This supply chain represents a strong, sustainable local food system that is a values-based system for producing, organizing, distributing, and financing local food, include fish and seafood, for local use.

Update: In August, CSG released *Building a Sustainable Local Food Supply Chain in the Capital Region: A Capacity Assessment*.

This research represented the voices of more than 100 food businesses, fishers to processors, farmers, restaurants, distributors, and retailers who were surveyed and/or interviewed on supporting/collaborating on building a local food supply system. Read the findings of the report [here](#).

Stakeholder outreach continued in November where CSG hosted a local food system symposium, where food sector businesses were joined by investors and policy makers to build on the above research findings and collectively identify priority actions and a leadership framework that will contain the future of a local food supply chain.

Youth Food Network

This group of youth connect within Ləkʷəŋən territory to forward their learning on food justice within a local context. The goal of this group was not to create action, but to work, learn, and reflect.

Update: Youth Climate Justice Group created a structured series of conversations and field trips that took place 1 to 2 times per week from early June to late August 2022 giving youth a chance to engage with the community and learn more about initiatives related to climate action and climate justice. Integrating the knowledge, feelings, and experiences of these youth culminated in the creative project "Talking to Trees", a zine which created a place for youth to express complex emotions surrounding climate change. Read the report on the YCJG outcomes and learning [here](#). In integrating lessons learned from a summer of learning, The Youth Food Network came together in partnership with the Compost Education Centre with shared goals in reaching and supporting youth. Thus the Youth Climate Stewardship Collective (YCSC) was formed in October 2022. This collective meets twice per month to provide free workshops to youth ages 14-20 centered around climate justice and ecological stewardship. Since its inception the group has seen steady enrolment of 10-15 youth per session. Read more on the [YCSC here](#).

What you can do: Make space for youth to provide creative outlets to combat the burnout from climate change and other stresses on youth and create deliverables from your programming that measure if youth developed skills to navigate climate grief and anxieties. Have knowledge on local food systems and want to lead a hands-on project such as mycology/mycoremediation, policy development, or gardening in the city? Email alistair@crfair.ca now to collaborate on a workshop.

Good Food Gathering

The Good Food Gathering is an annual event for those working to enhance the local food system. The "gathering" emphasizes opportunities for cross-sector collaboration, networking, skill building, and highlights the Good Food work happening in the Capital Region. The 2022 Good Food Gathering included a calendar of events to highlight and amplify the work of the network throughout the month of October, a workshop that provided connection, tools and support to members struggling with lack of adequate resources, a tour led by Explore Songhees of vital historical sites and a network dinner with awards and updates from the Good Food Leaders.

[Read the Good Food Gathering Report](#)

Story of Impact

Garret and Ben, farmers and founders of Farm or Die were inspired to take action after attending the 2018 Good Food Summit. Seaside Magazine reports, Garrett and Ben attended a local forum focusing on a healthy and sustainable food system around the Capital Regional District. "In 2018, we went to the Good Food Summit at UVic," says Garrett. "It was all about the economic and academic side of farming. Food security is a big issue on the Island." Principles of sustainability inform their approach, including crop rotation, maximizing biodiversity, composting routines, and low impact techniques.



Flavour Trails

CRFAIR, in partnership with the District of North Saanich and Destination Greater Victoria hosted the 16th annual North Saanich Flavour Trails Festival this year! Flavour Trails events promote and organize community celebrations that provide opportunities to experience the quality and creativity of the regions' farmers, fishers, harvesters, food producers, chefs, vintners, cider makers, brewers and distillers. In addition to a season-long promotion of North Saanich's food and agricultural businesses in the region, a weekend celebration was hosted at Sandown Centre for Regenerative Agriculture in addition to other local businesses. More than 500 residents, visitors, and anyone looking to expand their knowledge and taste for local food and beverages got out to taste and explore the abundance of North Saanich!

[Learn more](#)



Shared Bounty Network Growth

Engagement

- +2000 members on the newsletter with 50% highly engaged folks who open and click emails frequently.
- 12 monthly "around the network newsletters – featuring jobs, events, and calls to action from community members. Send your requests to be featured to engagement@crfair.ca
- 23 events and 1000+ attendees
- 35 work experience jobs filled by youth and equity deserving groups
- 12 monthly "Around the Network" newsletter editions

Resource Sharing

- \$560,000 to network members
- \$1M to food system infrastructure
- 5 working groups and roundtables

Collective Impact

- 968 products listed for sale on the FarmHub market
 - 61 farmers & makers selling through South Island FarmHub
 - Over \$300,000 income for farmers and makers through the South Island FarmHub sales this year
 - 100,000 seedlings and 300 cubic yards of garden materials distributed to communities by the award winning City of Victoria's Get Growing, Victoria Program!
- 

Get Involved

This report is brought to you by the Good Food Network, coordinating body; CRFAIR with guidance from the good Food Network leadership, Roundtable.

Stay informed by signing up to receive our monthly newsletter, find out about local events, volunteer opportunities and more at www.crfair.ca.

Join a roundtable and work with other advocates who share your passion!
Email info@crfair.ca with the name of the roundtable you'd like to join.

If you/your group is working to shift systems in a collective approach and would like to be featured in next year's report please contact info@crfair.ca

Thank you to our sponsors!

