

TFSC / Thurston Food System Council	
July 10, 2013	3:00pm – 5:00pm at TRPC
Monthly Meeting	Monthly Meeting Minutes
Facilitator	TJ Johnson, Chair
Notes	Diane Grace gracedd@earthlink.net

AGENDA:

- I. INTRODUCTION (10 min.)
- II. MEETING MINUTES - JUNE 5 (5 min.)
- III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS (10 min.)
- IV. EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATION (20 min.)
- V. WORKING ISSUE TEAM (WIT) REPORTS (30 min.)
 - A. MEMBERSHIP (10 min.)
 - B. COMMUNICATIONS (10 min.)
- VI. LEGISLATIVE UPDATES (10 min.)
- VII. NEW PROPOSALS (10 min.)
- VIII. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS (5 min.)
- IX. EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS (15 min.)

NEXT MEETINGS: Wednesday, August 7 & September 11, 2013 at TRPC, 3:00pm.

I. Attendance and Introductions:

TJ Johnson, Sustainable South Sound; TFSC Chair
 Karen Parkhurst, Thurston Regional Planning Council
 Peter Witt, Friends of the Farmers Market and Kiwanis Garden Projects
 Loretta Seppanen, Slow Food Greater Olympia, SSCFT Membership
 Erik Hagan, WSU Extension/Small Farms, for Mason and Thurston Counties; Mason Conservation District and Co-Founder of West Olympia Farmers Market
 Sarah Rocker, Staff Advisor for TESC's Flaming Eggplant Café
 Lesley Wigen, Thurston County Public Health, TFSC Communications/Website
 Katie Rains, GRuB Executive Director
 Sash Sunday, OlyKraut, TFSC Co-Chair
 Diane Grace, Food Sovereignty Nutritionist, TFSC Secretary
 Aslan Meade, West Olympia Farmer's Market Board
ABSENT: Lucas Patzek, Lisa Smith, Zachary Fleig
VISITORS:
 Martha Rosemeier, Instructor, The Evergreen State College
 Sabine Meuse, Washington State Public Health Nutrition Coordinator, and Washington State Food System Round Table
 Heather Sundean, Thurston County Food Bank Produce Manager and Satellite Liaison with Hunger Relief Organizations
 Treacy Kreger, South of the Sound Farmland Trust, South Sound Fresh, Friends of FM.

II. APPROVAL of MONTHLY MINUTES: June 5, 2013 (- Diane Grace)

Kim Gridley provided these clarifications for her presentation summary [*edits included in online Minutes.*]

- Kim has worked with the Nisqually **Watershed** for 10 years. She does not eat salmon **often**.
- Nisqually Tribe shellfish beds at Woodard Bay are managed by their **She Nah Num Seafood Company**.
- Distribution occurs at **two gas stations, one in Lakewood, the other in the Nisqually valley (I-5, exit 114) selling local frozen and smoked salmon.**
- Now there are a few Chinook and **Coho salmon. Chinook Salmon and Steelhead Trout are both listed on the Endangered Species List throughout Puget Sound and in the Nisqually River.**
- On the Braggett Farm, **tide gates and agricultural dikes** were removed to increase breeding area.
- **The farm is not currently a financial enterprise for the Tribe;** it is a teaching and cultural resource.
- The Solstice 2013 celebration will **focus on engaging the tribal members only, and in future years hopes to reach out to the broader community.**

Clarification from **Elise Krohn's** presentation:

- From 2004-2011, Elise apprenticed with Bruce Miller (“Oscoba”) **a revered Skokomish elder and cultural bearer who inspired the Northwest Indian College Traditional Plants and Foods program.**

E.J. Zita of Armstrong-Zita Ranch is on the **Thurston County Agricultural Advisory Committee.**

The Statewide 1-522 GMO Labeling Campaign speaker will **not** present August 7th.

The Monthly Meeting Minutes for June 5, 2013 were moved, forwarded, seconded and passed for Approval to post on website, with the above mentioned amendments. [*August 7: Sash will fill in as Secretary, as Diane will be out of town.*]

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

Treacy Kreger reviewed upcoming food events [*Please see listings under IX. Events & Announcements; in TFSC April Minutes, and on the TFSC Website Calendar.*]

Sabine Meuse, Washington State Public Health Nutrition Coordinator with the Washington State Food System Round Table is working on the “**Healthy Eating, Active Living**” program. Also, a **Conference Call, every other month** is being developed, linking area Food Councils, best practices, lessons learned and more. TJ Johnson volunteered to be TFSC’s designated Liaison for the call.

Heather Sundean, Thurston County Food Bank Produce Manager and Satellite Liaison for Hunger Relief Organizations, wishes to attend TFSC Meetings regularly. Membership team will follow up with her.

**IV. EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATION:
“Local Farms, Local Markets” – Sarah Rocker**

Sarah Rocker received a 2013 grant for her Graduate student’s research project, to study **“What are the barriers and opportunities regarding locally produced food?”**

The project team included **Lucas Patzek** and **Erik Hagan** (WSU Extension Small Farms), **Lisa Smith** (Enterprise for Equity), **Peter Witt** and **Treacy Kreger**, to start an **“Assessment of Fruit and Vegetable Producers and Consumers”**. Topics studied in their survey included Procurement, Wholesale, Retail, Institutional production and consumption patterns. In addition to farm surveys and interviews, the assessment also considers restaurants, cafés, correctional facilities, hospitals, colleges and universities. The three county “South Sound” assessment included **Thurston, Mason** and **Lewis** counties. **Who are the local buyers? What is the missing infrastructure? Is a Food Hub needed?** The following **attributes** were examined:

- What is the producer’s **proximity to Urban centers, Transportation, Access?** High diversity among small to medium farms was found. This area has a history of successful farmer’s cooperatives (started by Stephen Buxbaum in the 1980’s).
- **Phase I:** Fruit and Vegetable Producers surveyed (results presented today).
- **Phase II:** Conduct surveys of Buyers: chefs, cafés, food service and so on, to include surveys, interviews and focus groups.
- **Phase III:** Engage the community and population; share the data with them.
- **October 14th Networking Event** to connect Buyers and Producers. A Public presentation will come later. “Research and engage”.

The current survey sample was distributed to 87 farms, with 74 of the responding farms currently operational. 39 surveys were eligible (51% were running Fruit and/or Vegetable operations). 13 “on-farm” interviews have been conducted by Sarah and Lucas thus far.

- Average Farmer Age: 49.6 years
- Average years farming: 25.9
- Average farm acreage: 104 acres (1 = 3,000 acres. **30% under 5 acres.**)
- Gender of farmers: 58.3% male + 41.7% female
- Location of acreage: Thurston 66% - Lewis 18% - Mason 16%
- ~20% are 3rd Generation farmers; 1st Generation farmers are increasing.
- Significant reduction during last two years of “Farmers going off-line”.

How do you define “local”?	95% want to sell locally! (2 of 30 not interested.)
100% USA	57% within 60 miles
95% Pacific NW	42% within South Sound
70% within 100 miles	24% within their county

Total Revenue: 30% sold under \$5,000 annually.

The “U” curve of the annual revenue graph ranged from \$5K to \$500K. Most sold to:

1. **Farmers Markets** and direct sales to Restaurants, Processors and Wholesalers.
2. Retail; Co-ops
3. Farm stands
4. CSA, followed by U-pick.

“CHANGES to MARKET: What is your intended plan for the future?” Using the Lichert Scale, farmers rated intention to **Expand** (there is a lot of upward motion); a few are **Reducing**; no one plans to **Eliminate** a market choice. **Start-up** Markets included direct sales with co-ops, restaurants and processors, farm stands and CSAs.

Events planned in **2013** include:

- July 15:** Farmers Breakfast Meet-up
- August 12:** Buyers Focus Group
- October 14:** Farmers & Buyers Networking Event
- November 15:** (to be advised)
- December 2013:** Final Report
- January / February 2014:** **“Community-Stakeholder Report” and Follow-up:**
[Thurston Food System Council wishes to host this!]

“Do you have unmet Infrastructure needs?” 50% said yes. In order of priority:

1. **Cold Storage**
2. **Dry Storage**
3. Deliver
4. Washing
5. Packing
6. Processing

Many are selling a lot of “Raw product”; not to distributors or processors.

Would you consider using “Aggregate (joint) marketing” to expand your markets?
1/3 said **no** - Less than 1/3 said **yes** - 1/3 said they **don’t know**.

Would you “Share Infrastructure”?

Surveys showed a strong **no** on sharing **Cold / Dry Storage** as well as **Washing equipment**.

However **1st Generation, Thurston County, female farmers, of all income levels, averaging 18 years of experience** (3 to 50 years experience) were **very interested** in sharing **Cold / Dry Storage** (17%), **Machinery** (45%) and **Food Safety** (20%) resources.

ASSUMPTIONS TO TEST:

1. Is there a lack of **Scale-appropriate infrastructure? How do needs differ** between those stating “yes / no” or those needing “more / less”?
2. **What collaboration would be most effective, for diverse interests?**
3. There is initial interest in **Local**. There are **mixed needs, highly diverse**, with or without relations with Buyers or with Agritourism.
4. **Buyers:** What **efforts** do you have to go through, what are the **challenges?** What **Top Products** do you want?
5. **The Port** wrote a Letter of Support for this assessment regarding **Cold Storage**.

DISCUSSION:

- It was reported that the Elected officials like the “joint marketing” idea of a **brand logo, “Made in Thurston County”**.
- There is so much information to gather and share by interviewing farmers – Go where they are!
- There is a Farm Incubator for “start-ups” and “growth”. There are nationwide studies to support this, Farm-to-School programs and distribution.

- **What and “How much” does it take for a Food Hub to be viable** for farmers and local food? Peter has provided 20 different Food Assessment reports.
- Sabine Meuse reports that the Northwest’s Ag business culture says “**Yes to Partnerships**”.
- At the Pierce County EDC (Economic Development Council) & American Farmland Trust Conference, attending by Sarah Rucker and TJ Johnson, it was announced that Thurston County is eager for partnerships.
- **Consumers?** Farmers make the most money (price/pound is established) at **Farmers Markets**. **Consumer affordability** has to be “a part of the puzzle”.
- “**Consumers and the Food Action Plan?**” TJ stated that we are awaiting Sustainable Thurston’s Action Plan, which Karen mentions “is in the Draft Plan”.
- A future **WIT is to be established** for meaningful merging of the “bigger” **January/February 2014 “Community Report back” event**.
- **Sustainable Thurston’s “Food 101” on December 6, 2013** could be associated with this.

Sarah Rucker encourages anyone to contact her with any questions or comments about the assessment and its ongoing process. < rockers@evergreen.edu >

V. WORKING ISSUE TEAM (WIT) REPORTS:
A. MEMBERSHIP (- Loretta, Aslan, Katie, Erik)

An updated **Membership “Consider Applying” Form** was distributed for all current and potential members to fill out, to aide in fulfilling sector voices and liaison communication.

Loretta and **Elise Krohn** have remained in contact, to identify and encourage potential members who could provide a **Tribal Voice** to join TFSC. Just as France, Germany and Italy each have differing values, the local **Nisqually, Squaxin Island and Chehalis Tribes each value and represent unique interests**. There is **not “one inter-tribal voice”**, not even SPIPA (South Puget Intertribal Planning Agency). **Charlene Krise** of the Nisqually Tribe will be offered a formal invitation to come and present to the Food Council. Perhaps each Tribe could be invited to present at sometime?

DISCUSSION:

- “**Tribal Members look at Agriculture in a different way.**” “It’s easy to put a foot in one’s mouth” without awareness of differing values. “**WATER QUALITY is very important**, rather than “Saving Farmland” or “Economic Development”.
- “**Do not make assumptions**”. We can’t ask any 1 person to represent the group. Perhaps we can find representatives who represent more than one sector: “**Tribe + Salmon**”.

Grocers – Fish & Shellfish – Full Time Farmers are other voices being sought. People and Members will change over time (for a constant flow of new information, efforts and energy.)

- The idea of a Quarterly Newsletter was suggested, for Sector Liaison’s to submit reports and updates.

V. B. COMMUNICATIONS (- Lesley Wigen, Peter Witt, Karen Parkhurst)

Strategy has been completed.

COMMENT: Shall TFSC create a **Newsletter?** Could it be an Intern position? To communicate Liaison reports?

Laurel Smith, CCBLA, suggested that a paragraph for a “learning opportunity” be written up and posted on Evergreen College’s “Community Opportunities Data Base”, viewed by 100’s of people.

The **Press Release** for the finished NDFR Template is written and being edited. It will be forwarded to Jeff Kleingartner, Timberland Library, for distribution soon. Karen suggested that distribution include TRPC’s mailing list.

VI. LEGISLATIVE UPDATES (- Karen Parkhurst)

Karen Parkhurst read, tracked and summarized a list of **53 Food and Agricultural legislations** considered for the State General Fund Budget within the Legislative system, as of July 10, 2013. “It’s all over the map.” She will forward a summary of Bills that passed, or not, to Lesley. <http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billtracking/bills.aspx>? Or <http://www.leg.wa.gov>

Examples: Following the Bill Flag (“SHB 1200”) and Bill Title (“Seafood Labeling”) **Status “C 290 L 13”** signifies “passed” legislation. **Status “H Rules 3C”** denotes “where the bill did not pass”. **“Date”** represents the last action, date signed into law or enacted. The Original Sponsor and Committee Sponsor are listed. **“f”** implies that a Fiscal Note is required. SHB is a Substitute House Bill. If the same bill is listed in both House and Senate, one of them might move forward.

Although EHB 1276 “Dropout prevention/farming” (**GRuB Replicator**) and SSB 5123 “Farm internship program” did not pass the Senate, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) passed a budget proviso with a “chunk of money” for “40+ students”.

Legislation that did not pass:

SB 5327 “Small Farm/property tax” (f) (reducing the Farm House tax to the Ag rate). “Chris Reykdahl is a Hero”.

SHB 1188 “Underproducing ag land”, H Rules C did not pass; Western Washington needs to pay attention to a difference of opinions of farmers East and West of the Cascades.

HB 1407 Genetically modified orgs (“No tax”)

SHB 1558 Honey beekeepers/taxation (Recognizes the problem and scientific work!)

HB 1827 Wholesale food distributors (DOH and licenses)

ESSB 5035 Capital budget 2013-2015 (History: “Farm tours”)

SB 5276 Designated agricultural land (Growth management, no protection)

SSB 5766 Ag producers and regulators (working together with land preservation)

SB 5862 (f) Mint growers and processors (B & O tax exempt vs. distill into other products).

SB 5866 (f) Hog fuel sales & use tax exempt (“Biofuel”)

Legislation that passed:

HB 1149 (f) “Craft distillery customers”, C 98 L13 passed as one of 10 **Agritourism** bills.

ESHB 1403 Economic development (f) C 111 L 13.

ESB 5616 Farm vehicles on highways C 299 L 13

SSB 5774 Alcohol tasting (age 18) C 59 L 13 (“Education”)

E2SSB 5802 (fe) Greenhouse gas emissions C 6 L 13 (Agricultural; study committee)

Loretta mentioned that \$250K funding for Farm-to-School passed, for 2 staff members.

Is there interest in following the “Hemp/Marijuana” issue? Some thought we should continue to follow the “agricultural, land and economic” side.

“There is \$1 Million in the Legislative Budget for the Thurston County Food Bank”.

Karen wants to form a **Legislative WIT** for next session, to follow, report and link Farm and State councils, with Sabine Meuse. Karen was asked to **submit a WIT Application** followed by a vote to approve.

Karen distributed hand-outs for workshops:

“Biomethane Workshop – Cash Cow: The Future of RNG as a Transportation Fuel in Washington” on July 16, 2013, 8:30am-4:00pm at Pierce County Environmental Services, sponsored by Washington State Clean Cities. (RNG=Renewable Natural Gas)

Upcoming Healthy Food Access Portal **Webinars**:

< <https://cc.readytalk.com/cc/s/registrations/...>>

July 11: “New Markets Tax Credits – An important Financing Tool for Healthy Food Retail” (11:00am-12:00pm) <...registrations/new?cid=16j0t36jxas9 >

July 18: “Healthy Food Retail in Rural Communities” (11:00am-12:30pm) <...registrations/new?cid=yxasje932efb >

VII. NEW PROPOSALS:

Nothing was mentioned at this time.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS:

Nothing was mentioned at this time.

IX. EVENTS and ANNOUNCEMENTS:

August 3, 2013 “TABLE for OLYMPIA” City-wide street potluck on **5th Avenue between Darby’s and the Capitol Theater, 4:00- 8:00pm**, presented by the Thurston Food System Council.

- Many sponsors and volunteers have signed-up and are needed, especially on event day, for table set-up, compost, clean-up and so on. Meeting soon.

- **MIXX 96** printed 300 posters for free (distributed today), designed by **Laurel Smith**, CCBLA. The PDF files are available in several formats for posting and email – Pass the word!
- Sponsors can arrive at 4:00pm to “claim their table”, and there are more tables than sponsors. Table seating for 300 people is available, plus 2nd seating turn around, making space for 600 eaters.
- Farmer Brandon Best recently delivered “TFSC sponsorship” money to Sarah; after sponsor names were added to the poster. TJ will follow-up with Brandon.

July 12, 8:30am Sustainable Thurston “Food 101: Robert Coit presents Food & Waste” at TRPC. What is next? Please give suggestions to Karen Parkhurst. Webinars?

Diane Grace summarized her brief presentation at the **June 24th DAC (Disaster Assistance Council)** Monthly Meeting, invited by Vivian Eason to introduce the “Neighborhood Disaster Food Resiliency” project (NDFRx). Attending agencies included Red Cross, Salvation Army, Area Agency on Aging, Thurston County Emergency Management and Food Banks. Diane mentioned there was a “6-week delay in the authorization of FEMA food aide to Hurricane Sandy residents”.

- Robert Coit clarified “a matter of scale”, that Thurston County Food Banks would redirect staff and close temporarily only during “the Big One” of FEMA emergencies. This distinction could be captured in the Press Release.
- The **new Thurston County Food Bank STORAGE and DISTRIBUTION Center** at **2260 Mottman Road**, across from **SPSCC**, was toured. It is located “out of the flood plane” with easy access to Olympia Airport (where FEMA food drop would occur). Administrative offices will be moved here, with expanded client services remaining downtown.
- The **NDFRx Template’s link on the City of Olympia website** was mentioned.

Sarah Rocker has been accepted to Penn State to pursue her Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, with USDA grant funding to enhance food sovereignty for the low-income in the Northeast, where she grew up. She turned in her notice at TESC’s Flaming Eggplant for late October; and Food Council in early December, 2013. She will be back here in January/February 2013 for the Assessment Survey Reporting!

Erik Hagan: Savor South Sound - Ag Days, August 1-2-3, 2013 at the Thurston County Fairgrounds from 9:00am-2:00pm daily, with table top displays and booths. Each day will focus on a topic: Appreciation of Vegetables; Grain Economy; Fruit; Shellfish; Fermentation & Preservation (featuring Sash Sunday, OlyKraut, on Thursday). Wednesday through Saturday evenings will feature ciders, beer and wine tasting. A Shellfish Feed “might” happen on Sunday.

Autumn: “**Cultivating Success: Whole Farm Planning**” course will include Sustainable Ecosystems, Grazing, Soil Management and Business Plans. They will walk farmers through the process, and collaborate with Enterprise for Equity’s Agripreneur training. Applications will be accepted starting in mid-September.

July 11-14: The Bread Peddler is serving a special menu of **100% known-source meals**, including **Pacific Northwest charcuterie**.

Farmers Market 2013 Dinner Series:

- **July 27th** (“Temptations Spice”)
- **September 14th** (“Indian Summer Harvest”) < www.farmers-market.org >
- **August 20th** – **The 14th Annual Taste of the Market** with Treacy Kreger as M.C. **2nd Annual Slow Food Farm-to-Table Dinner at the Colvin Ranch August 24th.**

[Detailed listings can be found in the April 3, 2013 TFSC Minutes; and on TFSC Website Events Calendar.]

Loretta Seppanen: Thursday, “October 24th National FOOD Day”- Volunteers are encouraged to post and host a potluck dinner, noted on the FOOD Day website, focusing on “Sustainable Fish Eating” (keeping in mind Kim Gridley’s presentation last month). “What fish can you provide, and from which Fisherman? How does one prepare it?” TJ Johnson noted that sufficient lead time is needed for the County Commissioners to “proclaim” it, as they did in 2012.

Laurel Smith, CCBLA: September 27, 2013 is the United Way “**Day of Caring: Community to Community Day**” where Companies are paired with Organizations to volunteer 4~8 hours of service work, including many professions. “After-party” follows.

Katie Rains: Thursday, July 11 – “Small Farm-to-Table Dinner” at GRuB celebrating the first pilot group of student graduates.

July 14 – TC Pronet Picnic at GRuB.

Thursday, August 29: “CARNIVAL – 20 years of KGP!” Produce Food Swap, Outdoor Movie (Real Dirt on Farmer John and Locavore were suggested).

Sunday, October 13: Soiree at Alderbrook Resort with full Farm-to-Table Dinner and 3:30pm Sunday Auction. 50% hotel discount offered for Columbus Day weekend.

Sash Sunday will be speaking **Sunday, July 14** on “**Rooted In**” small loans to local farms ranging from \$2,500 to \$5,000, with \$50,000 total from lots of investors. 3 farms have applied for these individually arranged loans with a promissory note; 3% interest with flexible terms, and some risk. They are creating a compendium list. FFM (Friends of the Farmers Market) gave Sash/OlyKraut a grant.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, August 7, 2013 at TRPC, 3:00pm:

Diane Gasaway, Director of the **Northwest Cooperative Center** will present.
Sash Sunday of OlyKraut presents “**Rooted In**”, offering small loans to farms.

September 11: Presentation on the **Statewide I-522 GMO Labeling Campaign.**