

# Farm to School Outreach Committee

## - Minutes -

3:00 – 4:30 p.m., 20 October 2006, Miller Hall 260, Fort Lewis College

*In attendance:* Mari Rice, Jim Dyer, Beth LaShell, Katie Pepinsky, Tina Evans, Marcus Renner, Zach Opatken

### **1. Check in from Food Assessment Brainstorm Meeting**

Marcus summarized the minutes from the last meeting. Katie and Jim then summarized a discussion that had taken place the day before about potential community food security projects that could be undertaken by Growing Partners if they receive an additional USDA Grant. Much of that discussion revolved around community gardens.

### **2. Discuss outcomes for the local food conference**

The group then discussed big picture outcomes for a local foods conference. These included:

- Creating greater understanding of and support for the idea of “community food security”
- Inspiring members of key audiences to assist with specific aspects creating community food security in La Plata County.
- Creating more awareness of the Community Food Assessment
- Creating more awareness of what is already happening locally to increase community food security and the organizations and resources currently available
- To highlight the role Fort Lewis College can play in supporting the push for community food security.

(Note: I would like to state one other goal that we discussed: Raising awareness of the problem of access to food for low-income residents of La Plata County and potential strategies to address this problem).

The group discussed more specific strategies for creating community food security and how the conference could support them. Five strategies were discussed.

**Land Preservation and Access** – After the community garden discussion of the previous day, the group decided that a group of motivated citizens could emerge from the conference ready to work on identifying and preserving prime farmland and community garden spaces in the city and county. Katie summarized the need as: identifying available land for new farmers, preserving existing farmland, and identifying potential garden spaces. This work has been brought up in the context of the two local land trusts working together, but not much has happened on this front. The group was not sure how much “easements” should be a part of this discussion since it creates a knee-jerk reaction

in some agricultural landowners. The group agreed that having Kathy Roser give a presentation on easements could be helpful. A group of residents could also identify city and county policies and possible funding strategies to preserve and increase access farming and gardening parcels.

**Farm to School Action Teams** – The group continued to support the idea of creating farm-to-school action teams coming out of the conference that could work on the implementation of the wellness policies at their school

**Higher Education and Food Security** – The group discussed focusing the “research and education” track discussed at the last meeting on the role that Fort Lewis can play to support community food security through gardens, farm-to-college links, classes, internships, community-based learning opportunities, the use of the Old Fort property, continuing education, and extension classes. The group suggested that a Community Food Security Task Force could be created after the conference to take a comprehensive look at these opportunities and make recommendations to everyone in the college.

Jim said that these “tracks” didn’t necessarily have to be “breakout” sessions since he would want to be involved in all three.

The group also talked about the importance of building relationships between the **producers and the food purchasers**. At the last meeting, the vision was for a group that would meet on a semi-regular basis to keep in touch on what’s available, when it’s available, take farm tours, and slowly build trust and communication. We felt having opportunities to directly interact with buyers might be one of the few ways to get growers to the conference.

The thinking at this meeting, however, was it would be hard to hold such a group together without a tangible goal. Katie suggested that some preliminary coordination could be done by one or two people to match producers and buyers and that connections might grow naturally if we can just get them in the same room. The group decided that this had definite value but that we shouldn’t try to organize a group to work coming out of the conference.

The group also talked about the importance of addressing the **marketing and distribution** issues, but also felt that we shouldn’t expect to have a group of people coming out of the conference ready to work on setting up a multi-farm CSAs, work-site CSAs, a central distribution site, a community kitchen or additional farmer’s markets. Again, we thought that people who want to work on these things might find each other at the conference and all these options should be discussed, but that the multiplicity of ways to address this issue and the variety of interests might make it difficult to form and maintain a coherent working group.

### **3. Discuss the structure of the conference and role of an outside speaker**

The group felt the two primary criteria for thinking about an outside speaker should be:

- The ability to get people in the door
- The ability to offer insight on the problem of community food security

Mari said that she would call and find out some of the California people on the list including Katy Mamen, from Occidental Arts and Ecology Center.

Marcus would investigate bringing Anna Lappe'. Marcus said that challenge is that the EC likely doesn't have enough money to bring in a big name person. He said that creative advertising would be key.

#### **4. Date and Next Steps**

Marcus said that everyone should bring their best ideas for things to have as part of the conference to the next meeting that we would build the structure.

The preliminary thought was to have it in late February and have a Friday evening and all-day Saturday event.

We scheduled the next meeting for Wednesday afternoon, November 8<sup>th</sup> from 3:00 to 4:30. Marcus will schedule a room.



### **Katy Mamen**

Katy Mamen, a Fellow at the Oakland Institute, is a consultant, writer and educator focused on food and agriculture, corporate globalization and economic localization. Based at the Occidental Arts and Ecology Center in Northern California, Katy is currently working with the Oakland Institute on a research project entitled “Facing Goliath: Reversing the Impact of Supermarkets on our Local Economies, Communities and Food Security.”

Katy works with organizations to forward systems approaches to sustainability and recently worked with the Vivid Picture Project to generate a blueprint and change agenda for a sustainable food system for California. Previously, she coordinated the Local Food Program at the International Society for Ecology and Culture (ISEC), an education-for-action program advocating the many benefits of shorter links between producers and consumers, and studied the impacts of transnational mining companies on indigenous peoples with the North-South Institute’s program on Governance, Civil Society and Conflict.

Katy is co-author of *Ripe for Change: Rethinking California’s Food Economy*, an in-depth examination of the effects of corporate globalization on California’s food and agriculture sector, making the case for a shift toward local food economies. She coordinated the production of ISEC’s Local Food Toolkit, authored numerous articles on corporations and social justice and has lectured and led workshops at many universities, conferences and gatherings. A Canadian national, Katy holds a BS (Hons) in Physical Geography from McGill University in Montreal and an MS (Distinction) in Holistic Science from Schumacher College in the UK, a groundbreaking program that focuses on understanding and working with complex systems. Katy has worked in England, Panama, Peru and India as a researcher and activist supporting local and traditional agricultural systems.

### Other Potential Speakers

#### Local Food and Agriculture –

Alice Waters

Judy Wicks

Brian Halwell – Worldwatch Institute

Patricia Allen – UC Santa Cruz

Anthony Flaccavento – Appalachian Sustainable Development

Gary Paul Nabhan

Wes Jackson

Wendell Berry

Janet Brown – Center for EcoLiteracy

Eric Schlosser