

Food Security Coalition quarterly meeting summary

January 23rd,
MCMC Medical Office Building
The Dalles, Oregon

Present:

- Barb Ayers, Hood River County
Emergency Management
- Bridget Hinton, OSU Extension Service
- Bruce Bolmey, Washington Gorge Action
Programs (WGAP), CEKC
- Buck Jones, Columbia River Inter-Tribal
Fish Commission
- Caitlin Seyfried, Columbia Gorge Food
Bank
- Darla Johnston, CEKC Board, Underwood
Community Council
- Hannah Ladwig, Gorge Grown Food
Network
- Janeal Boren, WGAP
- Jenny Twohig, edible and medicinal
landscaper, emerging farmer
- Kate Karlson, Gorge Grown Food Network
- Lauren Kraemer, OSU Extension Service
- Marianne Durkan, FISH Food Bank
- Marquita Veloz, Windy River Gleaners
- Michelle Sager, Oregon State University
Extension Service
- Neil Friedrich, Department of Human
Services Self-Sufficiency Office
- Rachel Suits, Oregon State University
Extension Service
- Sarah Kersten, Oregon State University
Extension Service
- Sarah Sullivan, Gorge Grown Food
Network
- Sidney Axtell, FISH Food Bank & Spirit of
Grace Church Garden
- Victor Veloz, Windy River Gleaners,
Mephibosheth
- *Liz Oberhausen, Gorge Grown Food
Network (facilitator)*
- *Kiara Kashuba, Gorge Grown Food
Network (note-taker)*

Action items:

- If you have thoughts or **feedback on the Master Gardener program** or have comments on how Master Gardeners have served you, please pass along to Michelle Sager (Michelle.Sager@oregonstate.edu) so she can bring it up in the program's state-wide, deep-dive evaluative conversation happening in May.
- Steering, Infrastructure, Direct Service & Engagement, and DEI workgroups open to new committee members! **Contact Liz if you'd like to join a workgroup.**
- Sarah Kersten with OSU Extension will be doing a Food Access Campaign for the Food Security Coalition. If you have any relevant material to post or ideas of what she should post about, please let her know (RAREAmeriCorps@oregonstate.edu) Also, **please share our Food Access Campaign social media posts**, coming soon!
- If you **know any partner organizations that could use blankets**, the Columbia Gorge Food Bank has a lot to give out. Contact Caitlin Seyfried (CSeyfried@oregonfoodbank.org)

Meeting Objectives

- Advance Coalition projects, including
 - the new Gorge Food Resource Guide,
 - Coalition Mission and Vision statement
 - Emergency preparedness projects and goals
- Share information about the Coalition and member organizations' work and upcoming events
- Provide opportunities for networking and learning

Introductions, Updates and Upcoming events:

- Oregon State University Extension Service's Master Gardener program in Hood River county will be open to the public for **6 winter gardening classes on Wednesdays in February and March**. \$10/class or \$50 for whole series. Contact Rachel Suits for more information (Rachel.suits@oregonstate.edu)
- Small Farms: Washington State University Extension & Oregon State University Extension are **offering a hybrid class series called Growing Farms**. Classes are online with three in-person meetings in March/April, and a field trip day. Geared towards creating business plans and new farmers (0-5 years farming experience). Contact Rachel Suits (Rachel.suits@oregonstate.edu) or Hannah Brause (hannah.brause@wsu.edu) for more information.
- Oregon State University Extension Service is offering a **Master Food Preservers certification class** in late spring. Contact Lauren Kraemer for more info (lauren.kraemer@oregonstate.edu)
- FISH Food Bank **celebrates 50 years of service in Hood River county on April 25th**. Contact Marianne Durkan (mariannedurkan@gmail.com) FISH is also doing outreach and extending services to furloughed federal government workers.
- Barb Ayers (Barbara.Ayers@co.hood-river.or.us) with the **Hood River County Emergency Management is holding three day-long classes**: Mobilizing Faith-Based Community Organizations in Preparing for Disaster on **March 11th**; Access and Functional Needs Preparedness Planning for Rural Communities on **April 30th**; and Emergency Operations Plans for Rural Jurisdictions, **April 22nd**
- Victor and Marquita Veloz are forming **new nonprofit, called Mephibosheth**, is being created to address issues those experiencing homelessness face.
- **Community Connect event coming up on January 30th**, 9-4 at the Mid-Columbia Senior Center. This is a one-stop-shop for services regarding folks experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness. Contact Caitlin Seyfried for info, (CSeyfried@oregonfoodbank.org)
- Oregon State University Extension is holding another **Food Hero Volunteer Training Program** on **February 27th**, 9am-2pm, at FISH Food Bank in Hood River. Contact Sarah Kersten (RAREAmeriCorps@oregonstate.edu)
- Map of My Kingdom: One woman play about the emotions at play in **farm land succession planning**, with panel on Farm Succession to follow. Sunday, February 17th, 6pm at Wy'East Middle School. Contact Sarah Sullivan (Sullivan@gorgegrown.com)
- **Buyer-Seller Matchmaker event** to connect producers with chefs, schools, hospitals, and other folks looking to buy local food: February 21st, 10am-12pm at Skyline Hospital. Hosted by OSU

Extension, WSU Extension, and Gorge Grown Food Network. Contact Rachel Suits (Rachel.suits@oregonstate.edu), or Hannah Brause (hannah.brause@wsu.edu)

- **Indoor Hood River Farmers Market** happening now until May on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month at the Ruins (formerly Spring House Cellars, 13 Railroad Street). Contact Hannah Ladwig (Hannah@gorgegrown.com)
- **SNAP recipients received February benefits early** due to the government shut down. They will not be receiving more benefits in February, so outreach is needed so that clients can budget accordingly. **Department of Human Services is still open** and processing new applicants and recertification for SNAP benefits. Contact Neil Friedrich, Neil.FRIEDRICH@dhs.oha.state.or.us
- **Oregon State University's Master Gardener program** is having a deep dive evaluation conversation at the state-wide level in May, asking questions such as, are we serving communities the best way we can? What is the purpose of the program? If you have thoughts or feedback on the program or have comments on how Master Gardeners have served you, please pass along to Michelle (michelle.sager@oregonstate.edu) so she can bring it up in the program's conversation.
- Buck Jones (buck@critfc.org) informed us that a few years ago he received a Food Safety Modernization Grant and another larger USDA grant that was used to create recommendations for fisheries codes. **CRITFC's recommendations are now being used in the University of Arkansas's Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative's Model Food and Agriculture Code!** He is also working with the Northwest Area Indian Health Board to **advocate for the creation of a food sovereignty committee within the Affiliated Tribes** Resolution of Northwest Indians, a lobby and policy group.
- **Farm to School Gorge Regional Gathering**, Thursday, January 31st 4-6pm at the Mosier Community School. Contact Kiara Kashuba, Kiara@gorgegrown.com
- The Food Security Coalition is holding a **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Training on Friday, February 8th, 9am-12pm** at the FISH Food Bank in Hood River. Contact Liz for more information or to RSVP.
- The next **Direct Service and Engagement Workgroup meeting is Wednesday, February 20th**, 10-11:30am at the Hood River Library. Contact Liz to join this group or for more information.
- **What We Eat Matters**: Utilizing the power of nutrition and food policies for intergenerational health is a conference happening at the Dalles Armory on **Wednesday, March 6th**, 9:30am-3:30pm. For more information or to register, contact MooreInstitute@ohsu.edu

Food Security Coalition orientation powerpoint

After introductions and updates, Liz provided a brief orientation to introduce new members to the Food Security Coalition, and build returning members' familiarity to articulate the Coalition's work. The slides she used are available on the Coalition's website, gorgegrown.com/foodsecurity, if you'd like to use them as an aid to present the Coalition's structure, purpose, and accomplishments to other groups.

Coalition demographic information and membership:

Liz also shared some demographics from last year: In 2018, **75 people** attended Quarterly Coalition meetings, representing **43 organizations** and agencies. **39 people** attended a Quarterly meeting for the

first time. Approximately **33% of new participants** were Latina/o/x, tribal members and/or descendants, and/or seniors.

The group also looked at:

- A document showing organizations involved broken up by sector
 - *Feedback from group: could we include a contact person or general directory of Coalition members*
- A document showing organizations involved broken up by county
 - *Feedback from group: should we separate east and west Klickitat county? They are very different populations.*

2019 demographic data collection:

We see in local data, surveys and research that some populations experience food insecurity at a much higher rate than others. It is a core value of the Coalition that people from the communities most impacted by food insecurity have a central voice in our movement and decision-making. This year we will collect voluntary and anonymous demographic information, to ensure that we are living this value. If you have comments/feedback on this survey or process, please let Liz know.

Work Group updates:

Steering Committee: we hold monthly meetings that serve to shape the direction of the Coalition. We update each other on our work, shape and debrief Quarterly Meetings, coordinate funding efforts, and make sure the Coalition is staying true to its values. Most recently, we've been working on our Mission, Vision, and Equity statements, gathering information for the Food Resource Guide, and helping to plan the Epigenetics & Food Policy Summit happening in March. We are currently open to new members, and the group will be formalized in the next year or so—let Liz know if you'd like to join the Steering Committee.

Direct Service & Engagement Workgroup: Recently in our meetings (that happen quarterly), our conversations have centered around communication: successes and challenges of communicating internally within our own organizations, with our bosses, coworkers, and volunteers; how to communicate the Food Security Coalition to others and share our work elsewhere; how to communicate back to the Coalition about the work other groups are doing. We've also been reviewing some food insecurity screening questions, and working on creating a Gorge Food Resource Guide.

Infrastructure Workgroup: we've spent time honing in on the structure of our workgroup, and how to work most efficiently. We meet quarterly, and decided that we will focus on one priority area or project per meeting and invite additional stakeholders to each as is fit. Each priority area/project has lead person, and then Liz does the outreach to outside stakeholders. Our projects are to 1) support land development and access for producers and gatherers (lead: Sarah Sullivan); 2) convene and support local meat producers (Lead: Hannah Brause and Michael Kelly) 3) Farmer support and education (leads: Rachel Suits and Hannah Brause); 4) continuing to explore a local aggregation, distribution,

and processing center (lead: Kathy Ursprung); and 5) conducting a regional food bank stakeholder survey (leads: Sharon Thornberry, Atilla Boros, Liz Oberhausen)

Mission and Vision Statements: Review, discussion and approval

Mission statement:

“We cultivate partnerships, build understanding and take action to create an equitable local food system in which all people have access to nutritious and culturally appropriate food.”

Notes: We may need to add a half sentence or word on the infrastructure side of our work. (APPROVED by the group with support for that edit)

Vision statement:

“We envision a thriving community, where all people are nourished by a just and abundant ~~regional~~ local food system.”

Notes: use “local” rather than regional, as it matches the Mission Statement. (APPROVED by the group with that edit)

Equity Statement

Sarah Sullivan shared the revised, working-draft equity statement. She shared some useful context on what such a statement is and our process to create and edit one: an Equity Statement goes beyond a nondiscriminatory statement to show an organization’s commitment to equity, and acknowledges systemic oppression. It is a tool to deepen our conversations, a lens through which to filter our priorities and programs, and holds us accountable to each other and our funders. It serves as a reminder of who we are centering in our decision making and conversations, and who we may be excluding.

We fully recognize that our work to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion will be on-going, and that we are beginning a journey towards food justice and solidarity, together. This is a working, living statement that we can revisit and amend over time. It will also be accompanied by a “Gorge Food System History Project” that Kiara is researching (contact Kiara@gorgegrown.com to get involved). This statement has undergone many cycles of feedback and editing, from the entire Coalition, the Steering Committee, the Gorge Grown Board, and the newly forming equity group at The Next Door. We’ve heard conflicting opinions of how gritty or friendly the statement should be, but what we heard over and over from those from populations that have experiences trauma and oppression specific to food systems in the Gorge is that it is absolutely imperative that we call out this oppression, that we say it happened and is happening, and that we not shy away from that to make this equity statement easier to take in, that we cannot water down the language we use. We also received feedback that naming specific historically excluded groups inevitably excludes some unnamed groups. We have distilled dozens of comments from many stakeholders and Coalition members.

Equity statement semi-final draft:

“We commit to creating a just, equitable ~~regional~~ local food system based on solidarity and dignity. We acknowledge that the current food system is built and dependent upon the oppression of historically excluded communities. We will confront the systemic injustices that create and perpetuate poverty and hunger.”

Notes: Change “regional” to “local” to match Mission and Vision statements; would it help to be more specific about the Gorge?; are we, as a group, confronting this? What are we doing? If we can’t list concrete steps, maybe it’s best to be honest about that in the statement.

To join in on our Equity Statement conversation, contact Sarah Sullivan (Sullivan@gorgegrown.com) to join the DEI committee. Our next step is to create an Equity Lens for the Coalition, and write our 2019/2020 work plan.

Gorge Food Resource Guide

Kiara Kashuba presented the new Gorge Food Resource Guide, and we spent some time reading and updating the Guide as a group. We plan to update the Guide together every Quarterly Meeting. The Guide will be available on our website, gorgegrown.com/foodresources, in PDF form for download and printing. If you think of more updates, or have information to update that can’t wait until the next Quarterly meeting, let Kiara know (Kiara@gorgegrown.com)

Emergency/ Disaster Preparedness

The last hour of our meeting focused on Emergency/Disaster Preparedness. First, we heard about upcoming events and grant opportunities from Barb Ayers, Hood River County Emergency Manager.

Upcoming events:

1. Mobilizing Faith-Based Community Organizations in Preparing for Disaster, March 11th
2. Access and Functional Needs Preparedness Planning for Rural Communities, April 30th
3. Emergency Operations Plans for Rural Jurisdictions, April 22nd

Grants:

1. Homeland Security Grant to perform a communications study
2. SPIRE (State Preparedness Incident Response Equipment), an Oregon-based grant for equipment to build resilience to catastrophic disasters. This one pertains to the Coalition the most, for example Barb is helping Hood River County’s Meals on Wheels apply for this grant to fund a generator so they can operate during emergencies.
3. Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD) is offering grants for resilient energy infrastructure to use in disasters (battery back-ups, solar, etc.)
4. Applied to the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for shelter and evacuation planning (currently looking for an AmeriCorps member or consultant to write the plan) and to install an emergency alert system.

Contact Barbara.Ayers@co.hood-river.or.us to register for any of the events or to get more information.

Lauren Kraemer presented on the importance of our personal preparedness in disasters, since we can't help clients if we don't have our own plans in place. She also discussed how disasters disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, such as the elderly, disabled, children, those who have a first language other than English, prisoners, pregnant women, those with health issues, homeless folks, and people on a limited income. Lauren offered to give a more in-depth presentation on emergency preparedness to those interested.

Lastly, Caitlin Seyfried updated us on how the Oregon Food Bank is updating their state-wide strategic plan that has a large focus on emergency preparedness. The Columbia Gorge Food Bank is preparing their own disaster plan, and Caitlin can share this once it's done later in the year. The Food Bank is also planning to do some disaster preparedness outreach and education at food pantries, and is currently looking for partners to help with this. They also have a surplus of emergency blankets they can distribute, so if you know of community partners who need blankets, please get in touch.