Nourishing Smart Growth with Sustainable Food System Networks

New Partners for Smart Growth Conference
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Lauren Gwin, OSU Center for Small Farms & Community Food Systems
Greg Holmes, 1000 Friends of Oregon
Sarah Sullivan, Gorge Grown Food Network
Katrina Van Dis, Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council
CENTER for SMALL FARMS & COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS

What we do:
- Extension—programs for small farmers
- Research—farming and food systems
- Teach—college courses
- Collaborate—with food and farm organizations
- Change—the world

Centerforsmallfarms.oregonstate.edu
Smallfarms.oregonstate.edu
What’s a community food system?

A collaborative network that integrates sustainable food production, processing, distribution, consumption and waste management to enhance the environmental, economic & social health of a particular place.

• Small-scale, sustainable farms;
• Closer ties between farmers and consumers;
• Equitable access to an affordable, nutritious diet;
• Food & ag businesses that create jobs & recirculate capital;
• Improved conditions for farm & food system labor;
• Food and ag policy that supports all the above.
Oregon CFS Network

**Vision:** All Oregonians have meaningful access to healthful Oregon-grown foods through a sustainable statewide system of local farms, food processors and distributors.

**Mission:** To achieve greater impact for statewide food system work by enhancing the ability of participating organizations to achieve this vision.
Oregon CFS Network

- 1000 Friends of Oregon
- ACCESS
- Adelante Mujeres
- Cascade Pacific RC&D
- Central OR Intergov’tal Council
- Curry Watersheds Partnership
- Ecotrust
- Food Roots
- Friends of Family Farmers
- Friends of Zenger Farm
- Gorge Grown Food Network
- High Desert Food & Farm Alliance
- Huerto de la Familia
- NEDCO
- Nehalem Valley Farm Trust
- NeighborWorks Umpqua
- North Coast Food Web

- NE Oregon Econ. Devel. District
- Nourish Yamhill Valley
- Oregon Farmers' Market Ass’n
- Oregon Food Bank
- Oregon Rural Action
- OSU Small Farms/CFS Center
- PCUN
- Rogue Farm Corps
- Rogue Valley Farm to School
- Rural Development Initiatives
- School Garden Project
- South Coast Development Council
- Ten Rivers Food Web
- THRIVE
- Upstream Public Health
- Village Gardens/Janus Youth Prog.
- Willamette Farm & Food Coalition
Key Facts:

- Fact 1: National Scenic Area = protection
- Fact 2: Ecologically diverse: 5 ecosystems
- Fact 3: Economy rooted in agriculture

Gorge Grown Food Network
What makes Gorge Grown Food Network unique?

• Citizen-driven programs
• Solutions-based, grassroots, holistic approach to a systemic problem
• Incredibly diverse food shed with a vibrant agricultural heritage, passion for place & pioneer spirit
• Access to water, I-5 corridor, Columbia river, trains, nearby food-centric city

Gorge Grown Food Network
Connecting farmers & consumers since 2006

WHAT WE DO:

• Address Food Insecurity – Mobile markets, Veggie Prescription Program, Food Stamp Matching funds, Nutrition education
• Link local buyers and sellers – Farmers’ markets, Who’s Your Farmer directory
• Educate & Train – Community Food Leaders, Farmers Market Network, School Gardens
• Food Business Support & Promotion – Food Business Incubator

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

• Buy local food first – Support regional farmers and our economy
• Volunteer with Gorge Grown, your local food bank or community garden
• Donate to Gorge Grown today – Every $100 will support a Veggie Prescription for 5 families
Our Mission

To build a resilient and inclusive regional food system that improves the health and well-being of our community.
Farmers’ Markets
2015 By The Numbers

$358,411 Contributed to our local economy
1,324 Pounds of fresh food donated
92 Farmers’ markets hosted

78 Family farms and local businesses supported

LOCAL FOOD FIRST
www.gorgegrown.org

$4,494 Spent on produce through the Veggie Rx, POP Club, and SNAP match programs

26,468 Customer visits at Gorge Grown farmers’ markets
The Food of Life
Blue Bus Cultured Foods brings the fermented food trend to the Gorge

Krauts, with a new twist on an old, but a home-grown food, is a hybrid of the spier lactic krauth and the more common sauerkraut.

In the cozy, adjoined kitchen in their new location, Kraut "Krauts," owners and Kraut enthusiasts can fill the containers with chopped cabbage, ginger, chile, carrots, onions, garlic, beets and other vegetables.

They also serve kimchis, a popular fermented sauce originating in China, native to the owner.

Using a digital pH meter, Kraut tests the mixture of the various vegetables in each container, ensuring a slow, even growth. The pH scale of 3.5, which, Kraut says, isn’t enough acidity. "We sample the mixture constantly," he said. It needs more time to develop flavor and allows the good bacteria to grow.

Kraut tells me, magically transforms the raw vegetables into a fermented food. In about three weeks, the natural bacteria breaks down the enzymes in the vegetables into a more palatable product, one that is easier to digest and more nutritious than the raw vegetables themselves.
Exclusive Farm Use Land Protection
Innovative “Light Industrial” Use
Building a network: What is working?

- Collaboration i.e. Coordinated care
- Cooperative branding i.e. Cider Society
- Leveraging federal support i.e. USDA grants

The Columbia River Gorge Cider Society is a group of participating local cidermakers, orchardists, and retailers focused on promoting and supporting the region’s cider industry through collective marketing, networking, and collaboration.
Challenges to building a network

- Cultural, political, geographical barriers
- Lack of distribution, aggregation, storage
- Competition between organizations
- Wild West/Rural Individualism
- Straddling two states
- Seasonal population
Our Vision

We envision a healthy, self-sufficient Columbia River Gorge where our food is produced with integrity and is valued, abundant, and accessible to all.
Thank you!

Sarah Sullivan

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High Desert Food & Farm Alliance

Key Facts:
- Fact 1: Diversity: specialty crops, meat, dairy
- Fact 2: High desert, rainshadow, isolated
- Fact 3: Strong community, ties to the land
Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council

*local government*

*Community & Economic Development department*

Goals within Food System sector:

- Improve the local food system economy
- Improve community resiliency
- Preserve the region’s quality of life as a desirable place to live and work
Central Oregon Food System

History

- 2008: SNAP machines in farmers markets
- 2010: Central Oregon Food Needs Assessment
- 2011: Food Summit
- 2012: Formation of non-profit
- 2013: Food Hub Study
- 2014: Value-chain study, wholesale support
- 2015: Risk management technical support
High Desert Food & Farm Alliance

Support a community based food system in Central Oregon to:

- Increase access to fresh healthy food
- Support sustainable land-use
- Foster relationships among farmers and consumers
Research & Development

Production Planning
Connecting farmers and buyers, developing a platform

Research & Development

Facility
Development of aggregation, storage, processing, manufacturing, and distribution

Food Safety

Production

Community Engagement
Education (policy makers), job creation, workshops and events

Consumer Demand
Institutional buying, farm events

Food Hub

Farm to School

Economic Impact Study

COIC
HDFFA

Food & Farm Directory

Cooking Matters

Seed to Supper

Production Planning
Connecting farmers and buyers to develop crop plans, spring menu development with chefs

Consumer Demand
Farm events, restaurant series, food & farm directory, farmers chef mixers

Community Engagement
Hands on education, restaurant series, farmers profiles and local food challenge

Food Safety

Facility

Research & Development
Partners

- OSU Extension
- Or. Dept. of Ag.
- School Districts
- Community Gardens
- Regional Food Bank
- Social Services
- Non-profits
- Farmers/Ranchers
- Citizens
Building Regional Network: Challenges

**Lack of Infrastructure**
- No: processing, one-stop shop, distribution

**Funding**
- Limited pots of money for funding

**Cultural and Geographical Boundaries**
- 3 counties, different crops and desires
Building Regional Network: Benefits

Collaboration
- Food Recovery Program
  - HDFFA, Food Bank, St. Vincent, Farmers Market

Grants
- USDA Farm to School
  - COIC, School Districts, OSU Ext. Cascade Culinary

Not the only one
- Food Summit
  - Non-profits, schools, farmers, citizens, policy makers
Rogue Valley Food System Network

Key Facts:

- Remote but connected
- Good Food HQ: Harry & David, Amy’s Kitchen
- Organic Mecca
Working with Oregonians to enhance our quality of life by building livable urban and rural communities, protecting family farms and forests, and conserving natural areas.
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Food System Assessments
A Vision for Our Food System

Leadership & Collaboration

Local Food

Environmental Sustainability

Economic Vitality

Social Equity

Healthy Eating
The Rogue Valley Food System Network establishes a collaborative community of leadership to develop and advocate for a healthy and sustainable food system in Josephine and Jackson Counties.
Food System Network Partners

- 1000 Friends of Oregon
- Access: Helping People Help Themselves
- Rogue Valley Farm to School
- Thrive
- Rogue Farm Corps
- Ashland Food Co-op
- Southern Oregon University
- Jackson County Health & Human Services
- Oregon State University Extension Service
- Medford First Christian Church
- The Lunch Show
- Pholia Farm
- Grants Pass YMCA
- Organic Produce Warehouse
Local Market Development
Economic Assessment
Regional Branding
Healthy Corner Store Initiative
Challenges

• Funding a “non-organization”
Challenges

• Funding a “non-organization”
• Keeping Everyone at the Table
Challenges

- Funding a “non-organization”
- Keeping Everyone at the Table
- Expectation Management
What is Working

• Amazing new partnerships
What is Working

• Amazing new partnerships
• Leveraging outcomes
What is Working

- Amazing new partnerships
- Leveraging outcomes
- Attracting new attention for traditional work
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