

Coastal Agriculture Roundtable aka “the Harvest Table”

April 3rd 2024, Tofino



1. Attendees

Louise Rogers - Long Beach Farms
Erika Goldt– Eat West Coast, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust
Katie Miles – Coordinator, Tofino Community Food Initiative
Amy Needham– ACRD Sustainability Planner
Niamh O'Reilly - Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ Traditional Foods Coordinator
Bobby Lax – Tofino Ucluelet Culinary Guild
Kaley Ruel – Regional Island Health Dietitian
Heather Shobe – Contractor in Agriculture with ACRD
Bruce Grieg – District of Ucluelet
Hilary O'Reilly – District of Tofino

Regrets

Laurie Gehrkie – Ucluelet Co-op
Paulo Eichelberger - ACRD
Nitanis Desjarlais – Ahousaht Foods Coordinator
Rachel Dickens – NTC Dietitian

2. Background of the Coastal Agriculture Roundtable

Heather Shobe was an Agricultural Support worker with the ACRD who was key in securing Vancouver Foundation Systems Change funding that supported the Coastal Agriculture Roundtable to date. She is continuing on contract with ACRD on agriculture related projects. Heather gave a brief history of the Roundtable. Any questions can be directed to acrdagriculture@gmail.com or more info can be found in the [Coastal Addendum](#) adopted in December 2018.

Amy Needham described the current status of the Roundtable as a Select Committee. The current funds for the committee from the Systems Change fund will expire in June 2024. Amy proposed a transition from committee to working group, allowing more flexibility in the terms of reference and membership, and allowing official recommendations and actions related to ACRD to be actioned through formal channels via the Agricultural Development Committee. Note that Erika sits on this Committee as a west coast rep and is able to assist in bringing things forward. Questions on the model, please contact aneedham@acrd.bc.ca

3. Terms of Reference and Committee Model

The current Terms of Reference was written in 2019. With changes in ACRD support as noted above, and changes to committee requirements of process in ACRD, it was time to review and update the current Coastal Agriculture Roundtable Terms of Reference. The review resulted in the following consensus decisions:

- Change the name of the 'Coastal Agriculture Roundtable' to the 'Coastal Foods Roundtable'
- Transition from 'Select Committee' to 'Working Group' of the ACRD
- Approve ACRD-led RFP process to identify co-host west coast-based facilitator once Systems Change is complete (June 2024)
- With transition to Working Group, membership will be organization, government, or community based therefore allowing rotating individual representatives
- Roundtable will continue to meet at minimum two times per year
- Decisions within the Roundtable will be made first most by consensus and attendees present will represent the quorum

- Decisions without initial consensus can be moved forward in absence of opposition
- Recommendations will, in good faith and with appropriate timelines, be presented to and adopted by the Agricultural Development Committee prior to ACRD Board presentation, but recognizing there may be situations where the Roundtable decides to directly submit to the Board.
- Any organization or government that may wish to be co-host of the Roundtable in collaboration with the ACRD is welcome to contact the current Clayoquot Biosphere Trust co-host for more information at erika@clayoquotbiosphere.org

4. Updates from ACRD

- Education and training in ACRD
 - Successful Meat Processing Education with Dock + and meat distribution through Alberni Food Society
 - Seafood Processing with North Island College, low uptake, ideas for west coast involvement
 - Greenhouse Training in exploration with Shelter Farm – looking at options for length and timing of program, subsidies, etc to assist with access
- Major priority areas and projects
 - Agricultural Water Infrastructure Grant
 - Grant received for long term agricultural water infrastructure upgrades in the Alberni Valley – the Council for Agricultural Water Supply meets twice per year and would welcome some West Coast representatives. Let Amy N know if interested in joining.
 - Other considerations include the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship's strategies for Watershed Security and Flood Strategy as well as the ACRD's Coastal Marine Strategy
 - Community Climate Action Plan
 - Hope to have collaboration across ACRD, with a major first step in tracking emissions
 - Planned to kick off in 2025
 - Emergency Food Security Planning grant received with City of Alberni collaboration resolution
 - Support for collaboration is on the agendas for upcoming community government council meetings to sign on to the project
 - Priority emergency areas identified as: supply chain interruption, drought, flood, and wildfire
 - Contractor will be hired on deliverables this spring
 - Phase 1 – major focus on livestock emergency response planning in the Alberni Valley, as well as gathering info on food security indicators
 - Phase 2 – west coast only (incl. Bamfield area) and including 'non-traditional agriculture' food sources
 - Opportunity for the Coastal Agricultural Roundtable to play an important role in bringing food system players (not just governments) together on Phase 2
 - System Change project (ending June 2024)
 - Some wins include increased capacity and creation of staff positions supporting agriculture and food security at the ACRD and in other local organizations, and broadening of language from 'agriculture' to include marine foods, Indigenous food sovereignty, and non-conventional agriculture. Report and resource document pending

5. Updates and Key Areas of Discussion

- Interest among DoT and DoU planners in pursuing a regional land use strategy, as with transportation, and to include food land use
- DoT has a new water infrastructure strategy and new communications around water use expected by summer 2025
- District of Ucluelet emergency planning – a major step has been the sale of District land for \$1 so the food bank can relocate to tsunami safe area

- West coast emergency food has specific challenges for ACRD, including lack of data on actual amount of food currently transported into the region; the seasonal fluctuation, lack of storage (incl. cold) for transportation among communities, need for increase preservation education and facilities, power outage issues
- There's a desire for more skills training opportunities for youth, high school students, and those who are only able to attend part time
- Clayoquot Biosphere Centre – in capital campaign, major component is the community kitchen, stay tuned for online session open for learning more and providing input to the designs and functions, NIC is a major partner
- Tofino Community Food Initiative has delivered region-wide education and networking opportunities for community and school gardens and local growers, but does not currently have funding to continue this, but looking for opportunities for funds or to support ACRD training to come to the coast
- Tofino Ucluelet Culinary Guild noted priorities affecting food on increase costs of labour, transportation, and general inflation. Also looking for increasing school food support, ways to expand local food box program, and participating in emergency planning
- Farmers Market Coupons continuing in Port Alberni, could a small group gather to find a way to expand to the coast in a creative way given that there are no farmer's markets but there are farm-direct opportunities. Ideas could be TUCG is a farmer's market, or health and social workers that already have been distributing food could use the coupons
- Long Beach Farms noted the unique west coast climate opportunity for more winter and seasonal gardening and filling those gaps not able to be filled by Island-wide sources
- Neptune Ice in Tofino is looking to create an on-dock seafood direct store, working with District of Ucluelet and Island Health on addressing regulations
- Housing continues to a major issue across the region, affecting labour, consistency of human resources, and costs
- Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ Government supports the community food fisheries and has also widened to potentially include more food sources as well, however the land title for Wya garden area transferred to Econ. Dev so the future is unknown. YG has committed land in Hitacu toward a new garden, but starting from scratch and lack of funds or human resources
- Clayoquot Biosphere Trust's Vital Signs is always looking for ways to support community data around indicators of food security. The Vital Signs program will now be running year-round, so ideas can be brought to Erika at any time.

6. Priority Actions

- Amy to bring updated Terms of Reference to Agricultural Development Committee for endorsement
- Erika to look at a small followup meeting on Farmers Market Coupon Program
- Erika to invite those interested to the Biosphere Centre Community Kitchen online session
- Updates on the launch of Food Security Emergency Planning work to be shared with group via email when available
- Outreach to is welcome in support of the Wya garden or it's transition plan to hitacu for summer 2024 – Erika will connect key members via email to connect