



Resilient Local Food Systems

West Kootenay, B.C.

An in-depth look into the evolution of one local food system enhancing its resilience

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www.deconstructingdinner.ca

Summary of Presentation

With its distance from major food distribution centres being greater than most Canadian communities, the West Kootenay region of British Columbia has become an inspiring example of how people, organizations and businesses are fostering a more resilient food secure community. Examples of Canada's largest independent member-owned cooperative grocery store, Canada's first community supported agriculture project for grain, and many more stories of innovative and passionate farmers who are enhancing the local economy, increasing food security, strengthening community well-being, and providing residents with a strong sense of place.

Examples

Kootenay Country Store Co-operative – www.kootenay.coop

- Founded in 1975, the KCSC is Canada's largest* member-owned independent co-operative grocery store. Located in a town with only 10,000 people, the KCSC maintains over 9,000 members and annual revenues of over \$9million.
- Local producers are given priority shelf space and whenever possible organic products are sold.
- In early 2012, the Co-op purchased a new building and land on which it plans to relocate or redevelop to expand its operations.

Kootenay Grain CSA / RSA (Community/Retail Supported Agriculture) www.cjly.net/deconstructingdinner/thelocalgrainrevolution.htm

- Community Supported Agriculture is an innovative model whereby farmers are paid at the beginning of the season and guaranteed a market for their product. The eaters are too provided with a level of security in knowing they will receive a share in the harvest and satisfaction knowing that they are ensuring financial health for local farmers.
- There are only a handful of CSAs in North America providing grain and the Kootenay Grain CSA is Canada's first.
- In its second year, the CSA tripled in size, serving 450 families and a dozen businesses with local grains/legumes.
- In its third year, the CSA evolved into three independent grain CSAs.
- Sailboats have been used to transport some of the grains along Kootenay Lake (56-hour journey) between the Creston Valley and Nelson in an effort to explore fossil-fuel-free methods of transporting food in the region.

Jon Steinman



Jon grew up in Southern Ontario and arrived in B.C. in 2004. Before his western migration, Jon studied food systems at the *University of Guelph*, leading him to work within restaurants that were fostering more personal relationships with their suppliers (farmers)! These experiences played an important role in Jon's eventual interest to 'deconstruct' where our food comes from and advocate for more resilient regional food systems.

Upon arriving in the city of Nelson, *Kootenay Co-op Radio (CJLY)* was a young but established member-owned community station who welcomed Jon as part of their award-winning morning news programme, *Nelson Before Nine*. Having been no stranger at the time to sharing his views through his weekly food & beverage columns in *PULSE Niagara* and *Off-Centre Magazine*, Jon became inspired by the potential of radio as a medium to communicate information about our food that the mainstream media was not. The groundwork was laid for what would become the weekly one hour radio show *Deconstructing Dinner*, airing on radio stations across North America between

Kootenay Local Agricultural Society – www.klasociety.org

- KLAS is a new organization dedicated to the production and promotion of local agriculture and products.
- KLAS has launched the local label “Kootenay Mountain Grown”, which signals to consumers that the product was grown locally and adheres to standards set by KLAS. The standards are similar to organic, however, because of the changing face of organic, KLAS members have chosen to move *beyond organic*. KLAS standards provide more flexibility to the economic challenges specific to the region’s farmers.
- The society maintains a tool-lending library to help reduce the expenses incurred by farmers and maintains a growing seed/gene bank to help preserve local varieties of plants and breeds of animals.

Other examples shared... Kootenay Alpine Cheese, Community Food Matters (Networking Organization), Nelson Urban Acres (Urban Food Production), Proposed West Kootenay Regional Food System Alliance, Underground Food System, School programs.

2006-2011 and was distributed weekly as a podcast.

Jon has been involved in and coordinated many food initiatives including *G.E. Free Kootenays*, *Community Food Matters*, and the *Kootenay Grain CSA*. He's a Board Director of the *Kootenay Country Store Co-operative* - Canada's largest independent consumer food co-op. Jon recently coordinated a short-term project which intends to stimulate the process of building capacity in the West Kootenay region of B.C. to develop a regional food council. The outcome of the project is a report available on-line – *Towards a Regional Food System Alliance Development Strategy for the West Kootenay*.

Jon is an established writer, having been published in *Orion Magazine*, *Briarpatch Magazine*, *Small Farm Canada*, and *Synergy Magazine* among others. He's also in increasing demand as a public speaker and he speaks at many food security and agricultural conferences and events.

Contact Information

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