

Report from the directors of Skookum Food Provisioners' Cooperative, as presented at the 2011 Annual General Meeting

Wednesday June 22, 2011

The first full year of Skookum's operations has been a very busy and productive one. The board of seven directors has worked hard throughout the year to accomplish many of the goals identified at last year's AGM:

Governance, management & documentation: To formalize the structure of the Association and provide documentation so that members, directors, and officers know how things work.

Projects: To provide our members with activities that help them produce, process, and preserve more food for themselves and others.

Publicity & outreach: To let people know who we are and what we are doing.

Fundraising: To find appropriate sources of funding to support our activities, particularly in our startup phase.

Membership: To recruit new members and respond to the needs and interests of our members.

At the special board meeting in October 2010, the board began to refine our vision of how we can devise and manage Skookum's projects so that they benefit members – which is the main purpose of any cooperative – as well as providing tangible value to a project's coordinator(s), to the cooperative, and to the community.

The board tentatively agreed that every project must contribute at least 5% of the project's total value to Skookum and 5% to the community. The share of value which goes to the coordinator was less well-defined, and this is something that the board will continue to refine and monitor as our members develop more projects.

A major area of work for the incoming board will be to continue encouraging members to support our principles of individual self-empowerment & community self-reliance by working together to accomplish collectively what is difficult to do individually. This means reducing (as much as possible) the barriers that prevent members from managing projects which involve other people, financial transactions, reporting, and so on. The board is primarily responsible for crafting, testing, and modifying all of these policies and procedures.

Meanwhile, we need all our members to be creative and come up with clever ideas for projects which they are willing to manage... with support from the board and from their fellow members, of course!

Accomplishments since June 2010

Governance, management, & documentation

- Fourteen board meetings (now on regular monthly schedule);
- Special board meeting in October 2010 to begin crafting policies for projects and to refine mission, values, and principles;
- We are conforming to requirements of BC Cooperative Association Act with respect to making documents publicly available;
- We have continued posting documents and minutes to website;
- We have completed a Secretary's Manual and posted it to website;
- We wrote a policy permitting the board to bring resolutions forward and pass them by email;
- We created mission statement: "Working together to build and maintain a healthy regional food system".

Report card: Good progress towards fundamental operating principles and procedures, especially with respect to transparency and accountability to membership.

Goals for upcoming year: Ongoing work needed to refine policies and procedures for projects, particularly how finances will work. Board manual to be completed and published, detailing how the board functions.

Projects

- We created and published project proposal form;
- We managed Skookum Gleaners (former Fruit Tree Project);
- We developed policies and procedures for rental of cider press and rented it out three times;
- We made a group order of 1036 reuseable BPA-free canning lids;
- We ran a tomato-canning bash on September 14, 2010;
- We had an Apple Press-Off at Community Resource Centre on October 16, 2010;
- We ran two mushroom log workshops in April 2011;
- We found a coordinator and began planning for bulk-buying project.

Report card: Impressive amount of work accomplished here! These pilot projects created real benefits for members and for the community.

Goals for upcoming year: Main goal now is to empower members to take on creation and management of projects with the support of the board, since all projects so far have been instigated and largely managed by the board. We must work towards a regular year-round roster of projects designed to increase members' household food security and to strengthen the regional food economy.

Publicity & outreach

- Short article in Home Grown magazine in July 2010;
- 78 people attended our very successful public meeting with Carol Murray on February 9, 2011, and six one-on-one groups met with Carol during the day;
- We sponsored haiku contest during the 50-Mile Eat-Local Challenge;
- We attended various public events (e.g., Seedy Saturday, Chamber of Commoners) to spread the word and recruit members;
- We held a public meeting on April 13, 2011.

Report card: Three very successful awareness-raising events (Harry Burton's visit, Apple Press-Off, & Carol Murray's visit) and several smaller ones. We seem to be generating good word-of-mouth publicity.

Goals for upcoming year: We need to keep our name out there attached to projects which benefit members and the community. We need members who can help with publicity, postering, writing, etc.

Fundraising

- Very successful fundraiser with Harry Burton in July 2010 (raised \$764.53 towards cider press);
- Submitted application for \$3000 to City of Powell River's Grants-in-Aid program in August 2010 to support Skookum Gleaners;
- Received contributions from Career Link, First Credit Union, Transition Town Powell River, Powell River Food Security Project, and anonymous donors.

Report card: Almost \$2000 raised, which is a very good showing for the first year. More is needed until such time as ongoing projects begin to bring in regular revenue.

Goals for upcoming year: Prepare a budget so we know how to focus our fundraising efforts. Enlist members to help with planning fundraisers.

Membership

- Accepted 33 applications for membership, of which 12 are joint, giving us 65 memberships and 84 members;
- Board created a policy of inviting members to attend board meetings.

Report card: Almost exactly doubled membership from the 2010 AGM, which is pretty good considering that we did not have a focused membership drive.

Goals for upcoming year: Continue to define the benefits of membership, mainly by creating and managing projects whose benefits are evident.

Our Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Association is to

- 1) help its members acquire and share the knowledge, skills, and resources they need in order to
 - a) grow, gather, raise, and catch healthful food as locally as possible;
 - b) preserve, store, prepare, and share the bounty;
- 2) build a strong community and a diverse local food economy based on mutual support, fair prices, living wages, and respect for the natural systems which sustain life.

Our values

Self-help

Self-responsibility

Democracy

Equality

Equity

Solidarity

Honesty

Openness

Social responsibility

Caring for others

Our Principles

Voluntary and Open Membership

Democratic Member Control

Member Economic Participation

Autonomy and Independence

Education, Training and Information

Cooperation among Cooperatives

Concern for Community and Environment

Individual Self-empowerment

Community Self-reliance

Fairness and Transparency