# Whatcom Food Network Planning Committee Meeting

*Planning Committee purpose/function:* Working to build common understanding and facilitate collaborative efforts toward an equitable, sustainable and healthy food system for all.

**Agenda**

Date: 1-17-2018

Time: 1-3pm

Location: Sustainable Connections

## Present

Facilitator: Various   
Note taker: Diana Meeks

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| ~~Adrienne Renz~~  Cheryl Thornton  Chris Elder  Holly O’Neill  ~~Lisa Sohni~~  Karlee Deatherage  Diana Meeks | Kent Kok  Mardi Solomon  ~~Rosalinda Guillen~~  Sara Southerland  Pete Granger  Kelly Molaski, WCHD  Jen Hey, WSU |

Red = DECISIONS

Yellow = ACTION ITEMS

Blue = Opportunities for Collaboration

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| --- | --- |
| **MEETING SUMMARY:** | |
| **Item** | **Summary** |
| 1) Agenda Review | Agreed upon |
| 2) Go Round |  |
| 3) WFN Roles, Recruitment, and Coordinating Team Confirmation |  |
| 4) WFN Work in 2018 |  |
| 5) Forum Planning |  |

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| **FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:** | | |
| **By when** | **Action Item** | **Person(s) responsible:** |
| 3/21 | Sara will share focus group report with the group. | Sara |
| 2/21 | The WFN should host a collaborative calendar, so we can check to see what events are on what dates to help with planning! | Diana |
|  | Get Jen all WFN SC info! | Diana |
| 2/21 | Look into University of Colorado, Center on Network Science PARTNER tool | Diana & Mardi |
| 3/21 | Share info on WSU, Stevens County dot mapping info | Jen |
| 2/21 | Coordinating Team will review 2018 workplan idead/ action groups/subcommittess and solidify at the next meeting | CT Team |
| ASAP | Recommendations for Holly on speakers for water quality and quantity ed. | Steering Committee |
| Done | Add Karlee to CT emails. | Diana |

## PROPOSED NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING:

## March 21, 2018

Location:

## NOTES

1. **Agree on agenda for meeting**
   1. **Agreed.**
   2. Welcome newcomers – Jen from WSU and Kelly from the WCHD.
2. **Go Round: *What are your orgs. plans for 2018? Where do you need support in your work and where do you see opportunities for collaboration?***
   1. **Holly O’Neil:** The Whatcom Anti-Hunger Coalition annual meeting is happening on Thursday, February 1st, from 2:00-4:00 pm at the Pioneer Park Pavilion (2007 Cherry St) in Ferndale. Mark Peterson from the Sustainable Connections’ will be sharing about a multi-year grant to help our community redistribute food waste from restaurants and food producers into community meal programs. Please attend! We want the Coalition to become one of the workgroups of the WFN. Anti-Hunger Group leadership is supportive of this, and hopefully we can talk about this later at the meeting.
   2. **Lisa Sohni** (via Holly): Please come to the Data Walk, on Feb 2nd, presenting data on poverty at St. Joes that the Whatcom Asset Coalition is putting on. It is invitation only though so please don’t share invite.
   3. **Chris Elder:** We are updating Ag. Strategic Plan this year, though we are still early on. There is interest from farming community to address farmworker housing/clarify housing code. The other big direction the update is going is to consider the economic benefits of protecting farmland, what are economic challenges to building infrastructure, etc. We could be looking at quantifying those things through land use tax benefits, or a Farmland community benefit study, among others. The PDR Program is working on updating program guides and broadening of scope of our work – from farmland to protect working forestlands, and other types of land. There will be opportunities in fall with the ag strategic plan to engage, the help I need is to engage non-farmers as the public doesn’t understand how/when/why of farming.
   4. **Jen Hey:** A little bit about what I do, I work in SNAP Ed doing outreach to under resourced communities, working on food access, and my focus is farm to community. Now working farther north, trying to find more ways to get locally produced food into the hands of low income people. My work is very systems oriented to help make this happen, and always have an eye on low-income piece.
   5. **Karlee Deatherage:** At RE Sources I work in clean water program, mainly on policy. We are looking to engage more around Lake Whatcom and our drinking water, and other water quality issues like plastics pollution (Styrofoam and straws, partnering with Surf Rider Foundation possibly doing their [Ocean Friendly Restaurants](https://www.surfrider.org/programs/ocean-friendly-restaurants) program). Very interested in building relationships with smaller farmers this year and we want to take more of a collaborative approach. We are also working on water quantity issues, including the Hirst decision halting permitting/growth in rural areas, engaging on finding solutions that work for all and that ensure we have enough water in streams for healthy harvestable salmon populations. I am serving on the PDROC with Planning Dept. and we are working on recommendation for County Council for transfer of development rights to encourage development in urban areas, possibly looking at a density of development rights system.
   6. **Sara Southerland:** Lots happening this year for the Food & Farming Program here at Sustainable Connections. We are working hard to get people signed up for the [Farm to Table Trade Meeting](https://sustainableconnections.org/events/farm-to-table-trade-meeting-2018/). This year we will be hearing from Patsy Martin, Port of Skagit County and Mauri Ingram, Whatcom Community Foundation about growing local agriculture and food industries with innovative value-added food cluster developments and a focus on emerging supply chain infrastructure, the development of a local food campus concept in the new Bellingham waterfront. The Food Atlas is still in development, an online tool for consumers and also a resources for wholesale buyers, and a resource for food & farm businesses (to find commercial kitchens, capital, etc). Work has slowed on this project as state wide partners have also gotten funding to do a similar project, and we are exploring that collaboration but still hope to have something launched this year. We would love to have support later, helping to let others know about it and providing feedback on ideas. We are rebranding our Eat Local First Campaign, now 7 years old, refreshing the look, making it more modern. Sara will share focus group report with the group. We would love help sharing the ELF Campaign once refreshed, sign up for a monthly toolkit to share, etc. We are trying to intentionally expand ELF into Skagit so if you have contacts you would like to share please let us know. We are doing a strategic alliance exploration with Cloud Mountain Farm Center, and we are also open to feedback if the community has any.
   7. **Pete Granger:** Every year Fisherman’s News puts on the [Wild Seafood Exchange](http://wildseafoodexchange.com/), a one-day event that helps fisherman/seafood businesses connect with buyers. That will be March 1st out at the airport. Am also involved with the Whatcom Working Waterfront Coalition, and might become the president this year – keeping our waterfront going, with our goal of no net job loss in maritime industry sector. We’ll be involved in the waterfront redevelopment, including trying to get fisherman to have a dedicated dock to sell direct off their boats. Seafeast will be happening again this September 21&22, and we will be offering booth space for educational organizations, Sue Blake will be coordinating. We will emphasize the eating of more seafood at this event, featuring a sit down seafood fest, also featuring fresh produce from the county and increase relationships with local vendors.
   8. **Cheryl Thornton:** This year we will be starting our new intern program, 7 FT interns this year and two graduate interns joining from last year. New education coordinator as well and we are revamping curriculum, working with other farmer education program (including Food to Bank On) and collaborating with other programs across country. Our incubator program has aslo changed to be a 5 year program. We are focusing more on our community education programs related to agriculture and farming, help them understand how farms work and have upped our number of workshops to 45. Have three with the Whatcom County Library to reach those that can’t travel very far or wouldn’t be able to pay (how to start a garden and grow food focused). Will be starting a number of market farmer field lots – in field education for farmers, and will continue crop trials. Expanding farmer roundtable series to bump up our farmer-to-farmer education, networking, peer relationship building opportunities. There is opportunity to have WFN cross sector info at these roundtables. Doing more with reaching out to institutions, like BTC, and to have more cross pollination between food buyers and food producers. We are working at Western, doing education with Aramark and the Real Food Challenge – the goal is really better education about systems agriculture and food systems. Want to expand our volunteer program, and make it more of an educational program as well.
   9. **Kelly Mulowski:** The Health Dept. will not be providing WIC services after Sept 30th. We are moving towards providing foundational public health services, which we are required to provide. Dept. of Health will be leading a community meeting on the 23rd of January at the Civic Center to find a community partner that would be willing to take on the case load. As far as the open positions we’ve had, it has been a challenging to fill these positions. There are still looking to fill the two spots, one position in Foothills and one in another part of the county yet to be decided. We have also started a new round in regards to the Community Health Assessment and have forwarded the CFA to County Staff.
   10. **Mardi Soloman:** Whatcom Farm to School is involved in three different levels of collaboration and after being immered in this work, I want to note that collaboration is hard work! Its takes one person who has a set intention to work on holding things together. For Farm to School we have regional collaboration for our schools, then we have WFN to see how food system issues fit together, and we are involved in the State Farm to School collaboration. The main challenge for all is getting sustainable funding so that things can keep moving. Our focus this year will be that funding piece; there will also be some opportunities for advocacy work this year. Also, we produced a second edition of our [NW Regional Farm to School Guide, please take a look!](http://www.whatcomfarmtoschool.org/resources/nw-regional-farm-to-school-directory/)
   11. **Kent Kok**: Thursday January 25th we have an event we are co-sponsoring: [Sustainable Farming and Food Systems: A Community Forum](http://calendar.bellinghamherald.com/eventx--86041_2475348--St.-Lukes-Community-Health-Education-Center-Interaction-Panel-Discussion-on-Sustainable-Farming-and-Food-Systems.aspx) at 6pm. St Luke’s Community Health Education Center 3333 Squalicum Pkwy, Bellingham, WA 98225. C2C is co-sponsoring this forum along with Jobs with Justice, the NW WA Central Labor Council, SEIU Local 1199NW, UFCW Local 21, and Skagit Labor Dems Workgroup. Our concern for and support for local farming is what triggered our idea to organize this forum – the issues: the death of a farm worker at Sarbanand Farms, the ongoing conflict over water and the growing trend of out of state corporations purchasing good ag land in Whatcom County – like Sarbanand Farms. All are invited!

Cheryl: The WFN should host a collaborative calendar, so we can check to see what events are on what dates to help with planning!

1. **WFN Roles, Recruitment, and Coordinating Team Confirmation** 
   1. Adrienne has officially stepped down as Chair of the WFN and off of the Coordinating Team and will be sitting on the Steering Committee from here one out.
   2. Chris and Sara have volunteered to step up into Chair and Vice-Chair positions respectively.
   3. Karlee has also volunteered to step up into the Coordinating Team
   4. All other Steering Committee members have elected to stay on the Committee for 2018, except Astrid. The Coordinating Team be in touch with Astrid to figure out the best fit for a WCHD representative.
   5. Jen Hay, SNAP Ed. from WSU has volunteered to join the Steering Committee. Diana will follow up with her to get her onboarded!
   6. The Steering Committee unanimously approves all above changes.
2. **WFN Work in 2018**
   1. Steering Committee reviewed the Whatcom Food Network Food System Goals
   2. Open table discussion on what WFN’s 2018 work should include:
      1. *Focus on Advancing Collaboration*
         1. Collaboration and participation: Is there a systematic way to allow collaboration in a more natural and consistent way. Our quarterly meetings are valuable, inspiring and if we could find ways to leverage what we do and where we are at to take collaboration to next level.
         2. Look at the Forums and look at top goals (structure piece, social justice, etc) are there other strong themes we could focus on at Forums). Creating a mechanism, beyond forum, how can individuals and orgs facilitate coming together more.
         3. At Forum we always hear, more time for networking.
         4. Diane Smith, Center of Network Science, shared the PARTNER tool. An option to connect data using social network analysis. Diana and Mardi will be looking into more.
         5. WSU, Stevens County, a woman works with groups to do a dot mapping. Jen will share info.
      2. *Funding*
         1. Funding for each of our groups. Sustainable funding for food system work and the organizations that rely on it.
      3. *Food Systems Planning Effort*
         1. Look at launching again this year, it would help to look at regional food infrastructure, evaluate what we do and don’t have. We are shifting away from a proposal with the Whatcom Community Foundation and are now looking at possibly having County Council staff a Food Policy Council. Right now is a good time to engage County Council before budgets get formalized. Start this conversation before summer, draft ordinance or language and then talk with County Council members. This comes back to how we can engage and collaborate more, leverage the relationships we have within the WFN to make outreach and engagement with Council more effective.
      4. *Solidify working groups and subcommittee* 
         1. Farm to School Collaborative action group
         2. Anti-hunger coalition action group
         3. Food system planning action group: Karlee, Chris, Holly, Hank
         4. Communications/Outreach Subcommittee CFA outreach: Jen, Diana, Adrienne, and Mardi
         5. Strategic Collaboration subcommittee
         6. WFN membership, strategic collaboration
            1. Invites to forums, and follow up
            2. Recruitment for steering committee and our
         7. Maybe for #4-6 look at what we want to achieve and then create these action groups or subcommittees. Coordinating Team will review this and solidify at the next CT meeting.
            1. Communications/Outreach Subcomittee
            2. CFA outreach
            3. WFN membership, strategic collaboration
            4. Invites to forums, and follow up
            5. Recruitment for steering committee and our
      5. *Diversity and inclusion*
         1. Intentionally build increasing diversity and inclusion into communications, outreach and recruitment
3. **Forum Planning**
   1. Dates: May 3rd, **10th,** 31st
   2. New forum ideas: Use CFA wheel to do one major topic and one subtopic. We could use CFA to pick a major topic and then go across the wheel/around wheel to pick subtopic to connect sectors/topics. Instead of going half and half topics, what if we dive deep into one topic and then at the end there is a short teaser into whats next.
   3. Maritime/fishing as possible next topic, consumption at opposite end (food security). Pete would like to focus as a commodity and a food item, consumption seems like a natural lead in. Mention land and water, but it won’t be main topic.
   4. Instead of going across we could go around, or we don’t need to go perfectly around. And as we look at say fishing we ask, how does this affect each sector.
   5. Fishing labor was a big hole in the CFA, we could only find Farm labor, and the labor in retail sectors.
   6. For next forum focusing on field work makes the most sense but to have other retail workers there would help moderate that conversation.
   7. Fishing will be the next main topic and labor will be the ending topic.
4. **Wrap Up**
   1. Closing comments anything that came up today
      1. Holly: Organizing East County event to see what we’re doing in the foothills, need recommendations for speakers on water quality and quantity.
      2. Sara: Will start putting things on the WFN Listserv more regularly and hope to see you all at the Trade Meeting
      3. Pete: Will look at last Forum agenda and structure and come up with some ideas
      4. Cheryl: Recommitted to active engagement in this group
      5. Astrid/Kelly: We will figure out how to best staff the WCHD representative on the WFN
      6. Diana add Karlee to CT emails.