

Salt Spring Island Farmland Trust Society

Impact Report- a deep look into 2024

Vision

Our vision is to support and inspire a vibrant, thriving, and prosperous agricultural community on Salt Spring and as part of the Southern Gulf Islands, increasing the percentage of local food that is grown, purchased, and consumed for a more sustainable, equitable, food-secure future.

Mission

The Farmland Trust will preserve, promote, and revitalise local agriculture by:

- acquiring, restoring, and maintaining farmland for lease,
- maintaining community gardens and a commercial-level food hub, and
- offering food and farming educational programs to create a more sustainable, knowledgeable, and food-secure community.

Farmland Acquisition, Activation and Management

Burgoyne Valley Farm and Community Gardens

- To date we have leased land to a total of 15 farmers and 400 gardeners.
- A survey sent to our current 90 community gardeners received a 20% response rate which revealed some interesting statistics:
 - 5- 10 lbs of produce is harvested from June- September per plot
 - 47% of produce is preserved for consumption during the year
 - 60% of respondents grow enough to share with family and friends
 - 63% of respondents grow food solely at the Community Gardens
 - 100% of respondents do not live near the Community Gardens

We asked gardeners what they loved most about the Burgoyne Valley Community Farm. Here are some of the comments we heard back:

“It's less isolating to be in a garden with others, which I love... I think the community aspect really helps because you can observe what other people are doing and learn from it... by being a community we can build resources together”

“The location is peaceful, welcoming, spacious, lots of flowers, real sense of reverence for the land and collaborative work like busy bees.”

“[The] Garden is not tied to my housing situation (housing insecure means I move a lot and would lose my garden every time if it was at home)”

Garden Plot and Farm Rental Agreements encourage Best Management Practices through:

- Water conservation measures
- Restrictions on use of herbicides and pesticides
- Energy conservation through solar net metering- so far all electricity is covered

Partnerships that support access to local food production

Abattoir Society

We partnered with the Abattoir Society to establish a community compost at the Burgoyne Valley Community Farm. When this project is realised, it will contribute to environmentally responsible local waste management, and the compost produced will be available to amend the soil at the Burgoyne Community Farms and Gardens.

Young Agrarians

We have partnered with Young Agrarians to advertise available farmland at the Burgoyne Valley Community Farm. Through this partnership there is a streamlined process for giving farmers access to land through robust contracts between farmers and the Farmland Trust.

SSI Emergency Services

The Farmland Trust is supporting an emergency preparedness initiative called “Neighbours Feeding Neighbors” designed to build capacity at the farm and household level, to support families through a long term period of isolation, whether from extreme weather, earthquake, supply chain disruptions and or other factors.

Royal Roads university

The Farmland Trust entered into a partnership with Royal Road University to bring their shared values, expertise and commitments to sustainability to the stewardship and educational programming for a celebrated heritage orchard and horticultural site on Salt Spring Island. Both organisations bring skills and acumen that will be enhanced and enriched through a partnership and by working together.

The Root Food Hub

The Root is the Islands only food hub and officially opened its doors in Spring 2023. This 3000 sq ft sustainable hub offers a local wholesale, processing, and distribution option for on-island farmers, producers and food buyers. The Root Food Hub provides Salt Spring Island’s community with:

- An accessible commercial kitchen facility
- Indoor temperature- controlled storage
- Walk in fridge units with shelves
- A seed bank in partnership with Salt Spring Seed Sanctuary
- A barn for hosting workshops, events, and more
- A permaculture demonstration restoration garden
- Equipment rentals
- A residential rental suite, currently occupied by the Salt Jar Refillery
- Farming and food- related education
- Self standing storage container

Restoration Permaculture Gardens

A dedicated group of gardeners have successfully restored and rehabilitated industrial land to create permaculture gardens planted with fruit bearing trees, shrubs, medicinal plants, and vegetables. Our permaculture gardens will support permaculture gardening education programs.

Core Anchor Tenants

We are supporting our mission to support a vibrant agricultural community by successfully attracting several anchor tenants: including Local Salt- a local food distribution, Salt Jar Refillery- a zero waste emporium, Free Rangers- an organic food distribution, Ox Eats Grass- a vegan food vendor, as well as commercial kitchen tenants: Sweetgrass Food Co- a catering company and dinner pick up service, Nance Bakes- a farmers market pastry chef and bread maker, Salt Spring Flour- a local grain milling company, Salty Burger- a gluten free and vegan burger alternative, Hidden Realm Hot Sauce- a farmers market hot sauce vendor, and Creative Earth Co- a locally produced chi- masala.

Since officially opening in Spring 2023, approximately 17 new jobs have been created through the various enterprises that use The Root

Over 35 Local Farmers, Makers, and Bakers Aggregate Products at the Root

75- 200 Customers are Served Weekly

Seed Sanctuary Society

In addition to the creation of the Seed Sanctuary located at The Root, which houses a variety of vegetable, flower, and herb seeds grown on Salt Spring Island, the Seed Sanctuary Society also helps to build capacity and supports resilience of local food production by offering seed cleaning services to farmers and gardeners every fall.

Salt Spring Food Share

The Salt Spring Food Share is helping to build a culture of food sharing, contribute to food security and reduce food waste on the island. The program hosts weekly food exchanges where islanders are invited to share homegrown and homemade foods. The program also conducts community fruit harvests with volunteers harvesting from over-abundant fruit and nut trees on the island. Harvests get shared between the volunteers, land holders and community partners including the Food Bank.

Since its launch in July of this year there have been

- 6,706 lbs of produce collected
- 1163 lbs of produce donated to the Food Bank
- 47 land owners engaged in the project
- 35 volunteers engaged in harvesting

Learning Series- Growing Our Future Together

This year the Farmland Trust officially launched our Learning Series which engaged community members, agriculture experts, and many more. Workshops included:

- Biochar Burn and Stone Soup- Brian Smallshaw
- Seed Starting- Ben Corno and Kaliegh Burton
- Green House Growing- Eland Bronstien
- Easy Gardening- Kerrie O'Donnel
- Advanced Composting- Kayla Stratford
- Kitchen Knowledge- Cheyenne Sawshook

Upcoming Workshops include:

- Growing Food in a Changing Climate- Linda Gilkson

- Creating Soil with Worms- Nick Jones
- Irrigation and Rainwater- Harry Burrton
- Fruit Tree Pruning- Harry Burton
- Soil Science for Farmers- Jane Squire

In total 90 participants engaged in this year's programming and \$1,500 raised, all of which have gone into supporting the administrative efforts of the program.

Thank you to our funders & supporters



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