

OSSPA MEETING, APRIL 15, 2015

Guest speaker John MacLeod from the Shuswap Food Action Co-op.

John was a member of the CSRD Agriculture Strategy. From their meetings, this group completed a set of recommendations in June 2014. This "Shuswap Agriculture Strategy" was handed out to members. Anyone who did not receive a copy should email Barb for a copy. Each recommendation is followed by Associated Actions, Partners and participants, Resources and Priority & Timing. The basic premise involves the ability of local "small farmers", rather than mega farms, being able to store, process and market local products. To this end the "Shuswap Food Hub" was formed, with monthly meetings and a membership fee of \$10.00. There are currently about 160 members. "The vision of the Shuswap Food Hub is to exist as a collaborative initiative that aims at creating a space in the community for the purpose of bringing people together with local food to improve health, education, access and advocacy efforts." (Quote from the Executive Summary "Reducing Barriers from Farm to Plate" which was passed around). Co-ops would be a good model to follow, but would need local people to invest. The Alberta government helps to fund Co-ops to get off the ground but BC does not. John suggests that a seat on the BC Ag Council would enable small farm local groups, as part of a larger entity, to have a voice in changing barriers currently in place due to industry regulations.

John also handed members "Discussion Paper 4: Agriculture, Infrastructure and Livelihoods" put out by Food Secure Canada, a national organization committed to fighting against hunger and building a healthy, fair and ecological food system.