



North Cariboo Agricultural Marketing Association Farming Agriculture Rural Marketing Eco-Diversification



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February 7, 2023

Submitted to the Cariboo Regional District Northern Caucus
Director Mary Sjostrom, Area A
Director Barbara Bachmeier, Area B
Director John Massier, Area C
Director Jim Glassford, Area I

Presentation to the Northern Caucus - February 14, 2023

The North Cariboo Agricultural Marketing Association dba FARMED is pleased to be able to attend the February 14, 2023 Northern Caucus Meeting to provide an update to the project titled ***“Opportunities 2022 & Beyond”***.

This update is a follow up to the motion below that was made and carried at the May 17, 2022 Northern Caucus meeting following the FARMED delegation at the March 8, 2022 Northern Caucus meeting:

Further that the FARMED project be supported with \$3,000 in funding to be allocated from the North Cariboo Economic Development Service in 2022, with a possible extension into 2023 following a review of the first year of the project.

The financial support offered in 2022 is greatly appreciated and valued by FARMED and the Opportunities 2022 & Beyond committee. As a volunteer group, we have made good progress with the project; the benefits of which will be realised across the North Cariboo and beyond. As FARMED moves forwards with fully implementing all of the project components summarised in our delegation in March, 2022 we are pleased to be here to provide an update.

Our hope is that the Northern Caucus Directors continue to support the “Opportunities 2022 Project & Beyond” by becoming a “Sustaining Partner” through a contribution of \$5000.00 / year for a minimum of the next 2 years. Continuous funds provide some stability to the project as it gains momentum in addition to FARMED being able to leverage additional funds with this contribution.

Thank you

Lynda Atkinson, FARMED Chair
Heloise Dixon-Warren, FARMED Vice Chair
Lori Fogarty, FARMED Secretary / Treasurer
Joleen Morrison FARMED Director
Wilma Watkin, FARMED Director

Traditional Acknowledgement

We are grateful to live, work, play and grow, collect, and process our food on the traditional territories of the Dakelh, Secwepemc and Tsilhqot'in peoples who have lived in the North Cariboo since time immemorial.



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Opportunities 2022 & Beyond
Project Report
February 14, 2023

Project Overview

The Opportunities 2022 & Beyond project focuses on Connecting Producers to Consumers and Increasing Food Security across the North Cariboo. This project has multiple components that will have positive economic benefits, create more resilient sustainable communities, and increase food security. The project is focused on the following results:

Production of the North Cariboo Farm Products Guide & Map (Version 4)

- An Inventory of regionally based businesses (farms / ranches / community food gardens) involved with agriculture / local food production complete with a listing of the products grown by whom and when and where they are available.

Development of an Interactive Mapping Web-based Tool

- The development of a Web-based Interactive website that will connect producers to consumers & address Food Security concerns. This site will include search options for local agriculture products and services and how to access them and where, e.g., farm stands, retail outlets supporting local products, farmers market, etc. This site will be interactive, informative and educational. The site will enable stories to be created through combining text, interactive maps, and other multi-media content such as videography. The stories will focus on the North Cariboo and may include the following and more:
 - History of Agriculture in the North Cariboo;
 - Fire Smarting on your Farm
 - Edible Indigenous Plants of the North Cariboo
 - Invasive Plants to look for on your Farm
 - A particular farm or ranch, a product,
 - A market or farm stand tour
- A listing of regionally based non-profit organisations involved with agriculture / local food production / food security to promote what their mandates are and how residents can get involved with them.
- A listing of culturally significant foods that grow wild and are important to the Indigenous peoples that make the North Cariboo their home. This listing will be developed in

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partnership with the North Cariboo First Nations knowledge keepers and elders. It will focus on Indigenous, common and Latin names, how to identify, uses, harvesting tips, ecology, and perhaps some recipes.

Round Table

An event that brings together agencies, organisations, and individuals from across North Central BC to discuss local and regional food security initiatives with the aim to become more connected so we can support rather than duplicate the efforts of one another.

Celebratory Launch

An on-farm celebratory event to launch the project including ribbon cutting, demonstrations, farmers market, local food, or a historical presentation, as examples.

Project Update

In mid-September, Jillian Merrick was hired for as the project coordinator. Jillian proceeded to create a database of many of the farms in the north Cariboo region. Contact was made with 109 farms and the registration information of those agriculture businesses being listed in the NC Farm Guide was collected. In addition, a database of the status of many of the farms on the list was collected and recorded. Jillian also streamlined the registration and payment process on the FARMED website, which made the process much easier. In addition, a monthly FARMED newsletter format has been developed, so project updates can be shared with the community at large.

Unfortunately, in January, Jillian informed the FARMED directors and Opportunities 2022 committee members she would be resigning the position as coordinator, as her purchase of the Wells Hotel in December was keeping her too busy to fulfill the contract.

In January, another potential candidate for the coordinator position was contacted and hired to continue work on the project. Unfortunately, the project is behind the original time schedule, and the committee is requesting an extension to the completion date of the project.

North Cariboo Farm Products Guide

Committee members worked with the graphic designer from South Hill Graphics and Big Country Printers to complete the design and printing of 2500 copies of the North Cariboo Farm Products Guide on schedule and under budget. The committee will be contacting various retailers

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and agencies to identify locations for the distribution of the guide and plans are being made to participate in several events to distribute the guide to the public.

Interactive Mapping Web-based Tool

Committee members are working with the new coordinator, Nicole Johnston, to orient her to the components of the next phase of the project. In the meantime, committee members have connected with various agencies and contractors to share the goals of the project and identify the supports and timeline for each component.

Examples of the connections developing to move the project forward include:

- Interactive website development: ABC Weblink
- Sponsorship packages for Interactive website: Community Futures
- Videography programming: Shaw Cable
- Grant writing and website analysis: CRD
- History of Agriculture – story telling: Quesnel & District Museum
- Regional networking for the round table and food security: Canadian Mental Health Association Food Coordinator, Williams Lake Food Hub, Prince George Everyone at the Table (EAT), Farm to School BC-Northern region, Quesnel Library, Seedy Saturday
- Regional expansion of program: Integris Credit Union, Cariboo Regional District, Agricultural Development Advisory Committee
- Indigenous culturally significant foods: Longname Society - Kitchen Coordinator; Chad Stump, Quesnel Tillicum Society; Tony Goulet, Lhtako Dene Nation, Nazko First Nation, ?Esdilagh First Nation

It should be noted some of the components will not be able to be completed by certain contractors until June.

Summary

The Opportunities 2022 & Beyond committee members appreciate and value the support provided by the North Cariboo Rural Caucus for the 2022 budget year. Although there have been some challenges in timelines in moving the project forward, the committee is confident that the project will be something of incredible value and is much needed in this post-pandemic world of high food costs, extreme weather events, and the interest in creating connected and healthy communities through the production of local food and supporting a local food economy. The committee members are hopeful the North Cariboo Rural Caucus will continue to recognize the importance of the project and work being done by continuing to be a financial partner.

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