



President's Report April 2021

In 2020 we had to adapt some of our programming to keep up with the times. We were able to adjust fairly quickly to the new circumstances and started the growing season with a virtual seed sale and virtual AGM and from there everything unfolded quite nicely. I think our biggest success last year was the online version of the Garden Guru Series: Jesse Johnston-Hill took over one of our oldest programs and posted tips and videos for new and seasoned gardeners online. I do believe that many Revelstoke gardening successes can be attributed to the timeliness and precision of her posts. Our market saw significant changes in 2020 - like a new location to allow for more space at the market. But most importantly, we were able to run it and offer a place to both purchase and sell local foods and crafts. Both community gardens ran and grew prolifically! Harvest Hootenanny was unfortunately not in the cards, but we were able to create and hold the Harvest @ Home event instead, which was a success in itself. Other new additions were the Food Commons committee, which worked hard on a vision to create an incubator farm in Revelstoke. This vision did not come to fruition in 2020, but we continue to work on it. Another committee that was started due to the events in 2020 is our Equity and Inclusion Committee. This committee has done great work and helped to educate the board on E&I issues and has started to work to include more equity into our programming (like a pay it forward option for event tickets).

The spring of 2020 started off somewhat frantically trying to figure out what to do and how to budget for the changes in programming and how to keep everybody safe. Despite all the challenges it was beautiful to see an increased interest in local food production and so many new gardens pop up in and around town. It was a good reminder for those of us who are involved with the LFI that the work that we have been doing for 11 years is in fact important.

Programs of 2020:

- Seed Sale/Seed Library
- LFI Market
- Community Gardens at the Revelstoke Visual Arts Centre and United Church
- Garden Guru
- Equipment Rentals

The 2021 Growing Season:

As we are navigating to see what is possible in 2021, we have secured funding to increase our community garden capacities and are hoping to expand into areas outside of downtown and Farwell. We are still patiently sitting on the fence and ready to LEAP at a Harvest Hootenanny event, should we be allowed to gather again in numbers that make such an event feasible (I already have an outfit laid out for a formal fundraising event!). Garden Guru will be a mix of online and in person events, the market will run very similar to how it ran in 2020. We are hoping that by the fall we can go back into the schools with our Farm to Table Program and we will take our Farm Tours virtual this year and the Seed Sale is happening at this very moment. 2021 looks to be another big year for local food in Revelstoke!

The LFI board:

Alexandra Sosnkowski vice president and interim treasurer extraordinaire. The policy work that Alex has done for us is outstanding to the point that I don't want to talk about it, as every board needs somebody like Alex and I don't want her to get snagged away from us.

Kristin Olsen Treasurer. Kristin did an amazing job starting the slow process of making our books more understandable to the board and creating new systems. She had to leave the board at the end of 2020, because important family matters had come up.

Melissa Hemphill Secretary and Institution. Mel's dedication to the local food movement is an inspiration. She is tireless in her work and has certainly picked up my spirits along the way a few times, when I lost my umph. And she usually has a bad joke to share if you really need picking up.

Jess Landing Director at Large and chair of the Equity and Inclusion Committee. Jess got the ball rolling to start the discussion of how the LFI can be more inclusive and has started to educate the board on E&I matters. Her sharp mind and thoughtful input is much appreciated at all meetings.

Rosie Denton Director of Marketing and Fundraising. Rosie has a knack for precision and has kept our marketing and fundraising efforts en pointe. She has been a driving force behind our annual fundraising events and helped make them a huge success.

Hannah Whitney Director at Large. At first Hannah seems like the quiet one on the board. But you know how they say that quiet waters run deep?! Hannah proves that point and contributes to our discussions and decisions in a very meaningful and thoughtful way.

Ron Glave Director at Large. Ron's big passion is bees! He has been offering invaluable education about honey bees to people of all ages and has taken over the chair of the bee committee.

Nadja Luckau President.

Current Executive Director and Contractors:

Kate Borucz Executive Director. Kate joined the LFI as ED in the summer of 2020. She took over from Jodi Kay in the middle of our adapted summer programming. Kate has done a fantastic job at securing funds for the LFI for 2021 and has started working on expanding our community gardens. I am looking forward to see where she takes us in 2021.

Kelsey Gasparini Community Garden Coordinator. Kelsey has been in charge of the community gardens since 2019 and she is a pleasure to work with! Her enthusiasm for people and gardening is infectious and makes gardening chores much easier.

Isabel Kessi LFI Market Manager. Isabel was hired for this position in February 2021 and we are all very excited to see how the market develops under her leadership.

As we are still in the middle of our hiring process there will be a few more faces joining the LFI for the 2021 growing season, so stay tuned.

Funders

As always the Columbia Basin Trust has been very generous with their support of our programming. In 2020 we also received funds from the Vancouver Foundation and the city of Revelstoke Grant in Aid. In 2021 the CBT continues to be a great supporter of our work and we have received a grant from BC Gaming for the first time ever! Some of our funds come from income generated through our programming as well as donations from our members. We thank all of our funders, big and small, who enable us to do the work that we do.

On a personal note

As I am preparing to leave the LFI board and am settling into my new life in Duncan (on Vancouver Island) I am thinking about all the ways the LFI has given back to me:

As much as the LFI is about food, it has also always been about its people. I have met some amazing friends along the way and these friendships will continue to last and will continue to have a lasting impact on who I am.

So, if you are participating in the AGM or just reading this report at a later time, I encourage you to join the LFI in whatever capacity you can: Volunteering is not just about giving back to your community and working on a cause you believe in, but about building lasting relationships. So I thank all of you who I have met along this journey for the interactions that we have had and for the opportunity to grow.

May you always find fresh local produce on your plates and friends and family to share this food with.

Nadja Luckau
President