

GULF ISLANDS Co-op Proposal

for Food Producers and
Island Sustainability

An invitation...

to Pender, Galiano, Mayne and Saturna

for interested farmers, potentially other producers (e.g. arts), and supporters...

to collaboratively plan the best potential GULF ISLANDS CO-OP for us!

A brief presentation:

1. How we got to this interesting point
2. How the funding we have can help us
3. How a Co-op could follow through on the SGI Food & Agriculture Strategy goals
4. How a Co-op could also support some parts of the SGI 2020 Strategic Plan

We begin...

by honouring and inviting the participation of the Coast Salish Indigenous peoples,

whose traditional territories are the Southern Gulf Islands of Saturna, Pender, Mayne and Galiano

(including the Tsawout, Tseycum, Tsartlip, Penelakut, Lyackson, Pauquachin and more)

1. How we got to this point:

- non-profit Heartwood Folk School of Pender has offered classes since 2010
- focus: food growing, sustainable energy, traditional skills/arts, capacity building
- April, 2017: Vancity grant to initiate a Gulf Islands Calendar and informal co-op of education and event providers

1. How we got to this point (cont)

- Southern Gulf Islands (SGI) Food & Agriculture Strategy completed in 2017
- SGI 2020 Strategic Plan discussion paper also completed in 2017 (Listening Tour)
- SGI Director David Howe supported a Community Works Grant to Heartwood, to help our islands plan a co-op to follow up

2. How the funding we have can help

- current funding is for SGI Electoral Area (Galiano, Mayne, Pender, Saturna), for 15 hrs/wk of coordination + meeting expenses
- primary goal/opportunity is collaborative community planning of a potential co-op to support SGI Farmers and Food Producers
- secondary goal can be broader support for other producers, general island sustainability

3. How a Co-op could support SGI Ag Strategy

- first recommendation of SGI Food & Agriculture Strategy is to create an inter-island organization
- this organization is for greater collaboration and communication, plus advocacy, education, and practical support for SGI food and agriculture
- a Gulf Islands Co-op focusing on SGI food producers could serve all of the above functions, including helping SGI farmers to build capacity and to more beneficially sell what we grow

How other Food Co-ops assist members:

- through co-operation and advocacy, helping increase access to agricultural land, equipment, storage (e.g. Quebec co-ops)
- also joint marketing and online multi-vendor sales (e.g. Cowichan “Cow-op”, Ottawa Valley Food Co-op, Oklahoma Food Co-op)
- last 2 Co-ops include other producers (art, craft, health products), for greater mutual benefit

4. How a Co-op could support SGI 2020 Plan

- developed through our SGI Community Economic Sustainability Commission (e.g. Listening Tours)

- SGI 2020 also recommended an inter-island entity, for more connection and collaboration, and to host a go-to SGI website (joint marketing)

- Co-op Proposal funding already supporting the above, with Gulf Islands Calendar, plus Gulf Islands Registry of Food, Arts, Education & More; a Gulf Islands Co-op could continue this support

Conclusion? Instead just a beginning...

- a Co-op seems like the most supported candidate so far, to help with key identified needs of SGI food producers, and potentially some others
- a Co-op is a democracy of its members, so the most interested islanders will collaboratively plan what next, and we encourage you to join them!
- Zorah Staar and Colleen Doty can support you for next 8 months, with 2 more meetings per island, plus Vancity could fund a Co-op incorporation!

What we invite you to do...

- google “Gulf Islands co-op” for more info
- register online to hear more, give feedback
- then you’ll be in the Gulf Islands Registry, so we can keep getting to know each other
- see or post in the Gulf Islands Calendar (you can just google it), for joint promotion of our amazing Southern Gulf Islands!