



EVERYONE AT THE TABLE

TERMS OF REFERENCE 2021



As settlers on this land, we wish to acknowledge the 9000+ years of the Lheidli T'enneh Nation's stewardship. Their ancestors have cared for this beautiful land that feeds us all and we wish to continue to welcome their teachings and ancestral knowledge as we work towards food security for all people.

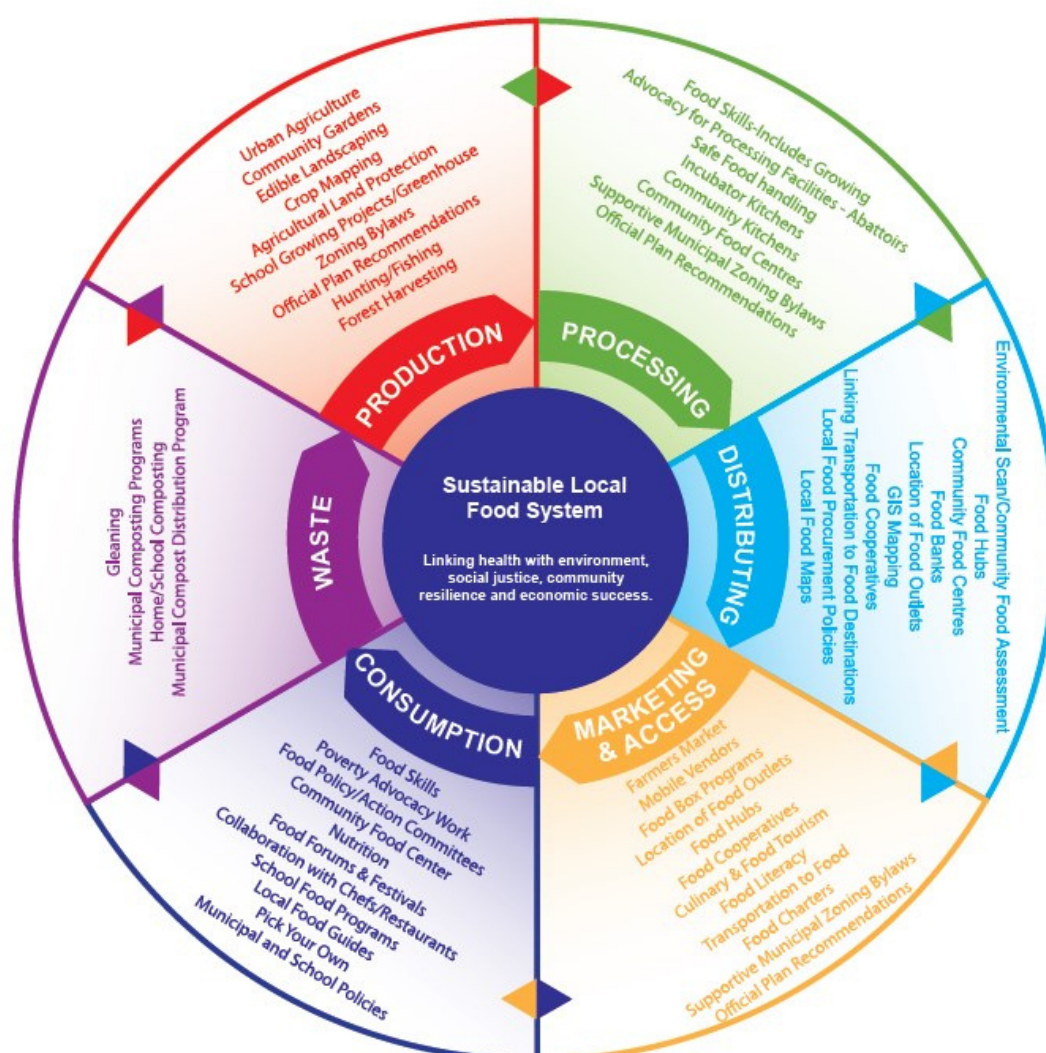
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VISION

“Growing the change we want to see in the world.”

MISSION

We are working collaboratively with all aspects of the regional food system to grow a regenerative food system for North Central BC by building community capacity around food through programs, policy, and partnerships.



Based on the Simcoe-Muskoka Health Unit wheel

GOALS

We aim to:

1. Improve regional food security and sovereignty through a just regional regenerative food system by:
 - a. Maintaining an inventory of regional initiatives that share our vision and mission to celebrate and publicize their accomplishments, supporting their strength
 - b. Cultivating meaningful partnerships/collaborations with individuals and groups pursuing new food initiatives to bridge the gaps by implementing community-based food programs
 - c. Drawing upon local knowledge and resources, and building capacity and channels of interconnectedness between government, community organizations and the public.
 - d. Providing a forum for networking
 - e. Actively supporting and contributing to Indigenous Food Sovereignty initiatives in the spirit of reparation and reconciliation.
2. Influence policy by:
 - a. Creating ways community voices can be heard in matters of local food policy and action.
 - b. Strategically contributing to plans and policies at all government levels.
 - c. Striving for excellence in internal governance.
3. Ensure our actions are well grounded in the voices of our communities by:
 - a. building on the best research and wisest practices available
 - b. supporting/collaborating with community-based research related to food systems

VALUES

We are united by core values that arise from a shared commitment to social justice, open and reflective self-awareness, and a willingness to learn and grow together.

All our actions are examined through the lens of reparation and reconciliation with Indigenous people. We acknowledge the 9000+ years of the Lheidli T'enneh Nation's stewardship. The Lheidli T'enneh' ancestors have cared for this beautiful land that feeds us all and we will continue to welcome their teachings and ancestral knowledge as we work towards food security for all people living on these lands/ in the region EAT aims to serve.

We are open to improving our awareness, knowledge and skills as a relationship-building resource for the wellbeing of the collective and the achievement of our goals.

We focus on action, fueled by a commitment to social and system change that improves inclusion and participation of those most vulnerable to food insecurity.

We believe those who grow our food should make a living wage.

We recognize and celebrate the heritage and achievements of the many who went before us in the search for a regenerative and just food system, and we build on their efforts, as we collect their stories and learn from their work.

Our modified version of the Simcoe Muskoka wheel frames our work and we use it to map our growth and stay focused.

We privilege experiential knowledge when we ask questions respectfully. We gather information by listening to the voices in the region and to the wisdom of local food producers. We learn from them where, what, and when to move on issues of importance.

HOW WE WORK

Memberships

“Together we are more than we can be alone.”

To date there are three levels of participation:

1. working table: members meet regularly and keep the work-flow happening to advance the goals of the collective. Currently self-appointed through their degree of interest and level of activity.
2. advisory members who are available for consultation and advice but who only attend meetings when they are needed.
3. Community members who have expressed an interest in working collaboratively with EAT

Anyone who becomes actively involved in a project becomes part of the working table for that project for the time of the project.

Advisory members and Community members bring the voices from the different areas of the wheel to the working table and can be part of the working table for short or long periods to advance a given project.

All members are independent and active proponents of the vision, mission and goals of Everyone At the Table, committed to a dynamic and progressive collective process that furthers the vision, mission and goals of the group. Together we are well connected to deep wells of experience, skills, and knowledge in our community.

Inclusivity and participation

Members are active food system advocates, experienced or willing to learn about, contribute to, and act on the Vision, Mission, and Goals. The members of the collective will strive to model inclusive and respectful participation across the diversity of the community, including levels of activity that enable individuals to participate in ways that meet the advancement of the vision, mission and goals. We accept members in good faith who will support and further the aims of the collective. We have zero tolerance for bullying, racism, and intolerance of others. We will acknowledge that life is a learning lab and we will make mistakes so, understanding we are all learning, we will support each other in addressing any issues that may arise.

To become an active member of the core working table, because the quality of working relationships is directly correlated with the joy experienced in our work, new working table members will be on a try-out for 3 months, a sort of mutual evaluation for fit.

A new working member could join the working table by bringing a project to it, or could ask to observe for a while. People interested in joining approach a current member to discuss their fit and the member brings them to a meeting to observe. When ready, they can express how or where they see themselves fit, what they bring, and can contribute. If current members are comfortable with the fit, they welcome the new working member. Send interested potential members our TOR and the wheel.

Working group members have unlimited access to the EAT shared drive and email.

Advisory and community members are given access to specific files as needed.

Members of the collective understand that the EAT email, website, and social media accounts belong to the collective.

Process

As a collective, we are an action group that:

- are committed to a participatory democracy process that will enable us to support each other, encourage sharing of resources, build learning and development of knowledge and complementary skills sets, and commit to honest and straightforward relations and communications.

We use a consensus model, depending on respect and reciprocity to understand consensus is not always 100% agreement but it is 100% agreement on a way to move forward. Ask the question: “can you live with this?” By checking with each other, we will continue to learn which decisions need consensus, and which not. We are an action group, not a society, so we do not expect our membership to grow to such numbers that consensus would be impossible to reach. All members are at least part of the time at the core working table, as core workers or as advisors. Suggestion: Should we feel like we are stuck, 75% of the members can agree to call for a vote.

Our framework

Nurturing common ground

We are modelling our work on the garden, that everyday there is work to be done as we work together. This work is in the weeds, so they do not strangle creativity and productivity, some are like medicine; some are companion plants; some are simply beautiful: *“As we grow and move forward we will recognize what is working and what is not working in the ways that we communicate and make decisions. We will make adaptations that attract and sustain the commitment of members. This process of finding common ground will nurture our growth in the gardens, within meetings, with all relationships we will encounter.”*

This includes being honest about capacity and speaking up when we need help.

Meeting frequency

We currently meet once a week for 1.5 hrs, but hope to gain a staff and eventually only meet once a month for one hour (max 1.5 hours), with a set agenda to work on emerging issues.

Currently some of us work as volunteers many hours every day for EAT, but we hope that with a staff we could trim this down to two hours per week.

During the labour intensive food production seasons (seeding, hunting/fishing, gathering) meetings will be less frequent.

Meetings are followed by minutes collectively written on our shared google drive for those that could not participate.

Sub-working groups working on specific and time urgent issues will set their own meeting frequency and update the monthly meeting.

Minutes should record only actions and decisions. Zoom recordings are the more detailed record to be consulted if needed.

We use an ongoing agenda on our shared google drive as a planning tool, and our shared calendar and tasks as a safety net to ensure issues do not fall off our table.

Because we recognize that food advocates already have busy schedules, we commit to not unnecessarily increase their work burden so we will:

- Use asynchronous tools to accommodate contributions (i.e. the meeting is not the only place to talk to each other)
- Commit to keeping up and staying connected if we miss meetings by talking to buddies in the collective, reviewing minutes, documents, and other communication tools, and trusting peers to get the work done when we cannot participate.
- Follow through on work commitments we make to the collective and let the group know if/when we need help.

Scope of our work

We use our wheel to ensure we are holistic and inclusive

We are humble learners, always ready to deepen our understanding of the local food scape and what is needed to help it grow.

We work on building relationships and trust within the collective and with external allies and potential influencers

Our principles

We represent only ourselves; we work on our internal relationships, and support the strength and capacity we bring.

We walk lightly in the world of food and if we cause harm we own it and work to repair any damage.

We support and encourage creativity and new approaches.

We set manageable priorities and are strategic and thoughtful on what is most relevant and doable.

This is a living document. We expect that it will evolve over time with changing contexts and changing membership. We plan to review it every two years, more often if circumstances dictate.