

## **President's Report 2016**

As always in the world of the Revelstoke Local Food Initiative, 2016 has been a busy year. It is with great pride that I write this report as it gives me the opportunity to reflect on all that we have achieved. When you are stuck in the nitty gritty of the work, it is easy to get overwhelmed and to forget to see the big picture – like when you cannot see the proverbial forest for the trees. When you take a step back to write a year-end report, you get to appreciate the successes as well as the failures, but most importantly, you just get wowed with the truly important work that we do and the impact that this work has on our community. So please take a moment to let me take you on a tour of all the amazing trees that make up the LFI forest:

### **Coordinator:**

#### **Jenna Fraser**

This has been Jenna's first year with the LFI. She got thrown right into her work in May 2016 with all our summer contracts starting up. She is our forester and makes sure that the old trees don't shade out the new trees to give them room to grow and expand. She feeds the forest with all the grant money that she has secured and makes sure the LFI forest keeps its integrity and is neat and tidy.

### **Board:**

#### **Sara Sansom (Secretary)**

Sara has been involved with the LFI since she first moved to town and has been a great visionary and advocate for all things local food. She is the LFI's Inspiration Woods. She dedicates her personal and work lives to being sustainable and earth- friendly.

#### **Nicole Cherlet (Memberships)**

Nicole has been with us for a long time and keeps track of our membership and manages our systems. She makes sure that the forest is diversified and that it expands over time and that we know what kind of trees grow in our beautiful forest.

#### **Cynthia Galant (Treasurer)**

Cynthia had the hard task of being the bookkeeper, thus keeping the free-spirited trees that like to grow however they want straight and in line.

Unfortunately she had to leave us for personal reasons at the beginning of 2017.

**Kristina Geidt** (Director at Large)

Kristina joined forces with the LFI last year and has brought a wealth of research background to the board. She introduced chickens and with it chicken bingo into our forest. Lately, she has had to take a step back to take care of her growing family.

**Toni Johnston** (Director at Large)

We are very lucky to have scored this gem of a tree for our forest. Toni is in charge of the mature stand of trees, to make sure their voices get heard and that there is cooperation, knowledge-sharing and most of all mentoring happening between the old growth forest and the spindly new trees.

**Stu Smith** (Director at Large)

Stu was brave enough to join the board in 2016 as the first male on our board! He is in charge of bringing in different perspectives and works with trees in real life! He is an avid gardener and a wealth of information of all things garden related. If he had it his way, our forest would consist of garlic and pepper trees, with a few tomatoes and herb plants sprinkled in for good measure (to be able to make a mean salsa).

**Sarah Harper** (Director at Large)

Sarah joined the LFI board in 2016 and always asks the right questions, which help her form a solid opinion and help guide the decision-making process. She is one of the true tree huggers on the board and cares deeply about food, the environment and how we interact as human beings. She is an amazing gardener and lover of bees and chickens. In our forest, she is responsible for art and beauty and making sure that others are able to see it too.

**Nadja Luckau (chair):**

Me, I am the president of this forest, a forest that I am very proud of and I see as a healthy and shining entity. Sometimes we like to cram too many trees on too little space, so it is my job to make sure our existing trees get enough air and attention to grow to their fullest potential. The plan is to slowly expand our forest at a sustainable pace to add more and more

diversity to our stand. Every now and then we harvest some trees, because they are damaged or have fulfilled their purpose in order to make room for new trees. All in all, I think we are doing good!

### **Special Agents**

**Melissa Hemphill** (ex officio board member)

Mel has been involved with the LFI since the beginning and has been an ex officio board member for the past two years. She, as the Food Security Coordinator (with Community Connections Revelstoke), is in charge of the ecosystem “food security.” She works to connect the LFI forest with others around us by building corridors and strengthening communication. She is also a forester of her own and many other forests, and we are thankful that she has watched over us and guided us.

**Hailey Ross** (ex officio board member)

Hailey is part of our old growth forest, as she has been around since the beginning. She has taken a step back in the past couple of years to care for her family. She is our firefighter: whenever I have to tackle a subject that I am unsure about, Hailey is usually the first person I ask for advice and her response time equals that of a firefighter on call. It is good to have resources like her on hand.

### **Contractors (our wood fairies)**

**Sarah Darval**

Sarah took on the Little Sprouts and Garden Guru programs. She did a great job at taking the Little Sprouts program to the next level and engaging more pre-schoolers than ever in first gardening activities. Sarah organized a great Garden Guru series.

Together with Jodi Kay, she took on the Gleaning Project.

**Jodi Kay**

Jodie and Sarah Darval did a great job at organizing the gleaning sessions and making sure that the fruit was distributed to the food bank and volunteers of the program.

**Agathe Bernard**

Agathe organized a successful Garden & Art Tour, which once again

showcased the beautiful backyard gardens and talented artists Revelstoke has to offer.

### **Jesse Johnston-Hill**

For the past three years, Jesse is doing a tremendous job with the farm to table program. Last year she created the Garden Partnership program (Growing Friends), where school kids grow food at the Mt. Cartier Care facility in partnership with the senior residents of the facility, providing an opportunity for intergenerational learning.

### **Keri Knapp**

Keri took on the Visual Art Centre garden, where she did a great job. Her ability to engage people and her artistic talent ensured that the RVAC garden ran smoothly and grew abundantly. She managed to engage volunteers that were not part of the garden, which is a great feat.

### **Kristina Geidt**

Kristina coordinated a garden school in the Downtown Community Garden. This was a trial year to offer a learning opportunity to those interested in picking up basic gardening skills. Kristina did all the work from creating the curriculum to delivering the classes as well as maintaining the garden and coordinating the harvests.

### **2016 Programs**

Farm to Table

Garden Partnership (Growing Friends)

Garden Guru

Little Sprouts

Downtown Community Garden – Garden School

Revelstoke Visual Arts Centre Garden

Incredible Edible Film Fest

Garden and Art Tour

Equipment Loans

Seed Swap

### **2016 Sponsors**

A big thank you goes out to our sponsors both for monetary support as well as in kind donations. In no particular order:

CBT  
Revelstoke Credit Union  
TD Friends of the Environment  
CSRD  
City of Revelstoke  
Big Mountain Kitchen  
Community Connections Revelstoke  
Track Street Growers  
Mountain Goodness  
Terra Firma  
Wildflight Farms

### **Friends & Volunteers**

We could not have done it without all of these fine folks. Their dedication and energy are the engine that lets our organization run smoothly: Bob Gardelli, Ken Talbot, Mike Champagne, Jen Avery, Amy Clarke, Bekah McCloud, Jody Lownds, Jodi Kay, Sarah Newton, Leah Switzer, Conner Platinum, Ellie, Steph Calvert, Janet Lemieux, Bear Aware and many more.

Concluding, I would like to thank all the people that have been involved with the work of the LFI over the years. It is always hard to estimate the volunteer hours that get put into an organization, but my conservative guess sits at around 1,200 hours in the past year.

The board just finished its strategic planning session last month, and things are looking good for 2017. We will be running all our programs as well as adding Revelstoke Bee See (an observation bee hive) to the mix. We are ahead with the funding for 2017 and will hire our garden coordinators by the end of March to get a head start this year. 2017 also looks like the return of the Midsummer Night's Green fundraiser, so stay tuned for more details on that.

So, as in any other healthy forest, spring is always a super exciting time: it is time to shake off the snow and watch new sprouts pushing their way towards the light and take root. I am excited for the growing season ahead and, as always, super curious to see what will happen next.

Yours truly,

Nadja Luckau

Keeper of the LFI Forest and wood fairy in disguise