**Openspace Workshop Notes**

**March 8, 2014**

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| Session Title | Permaculture |
| Convener | Gord |
| Participants | Jes, Jenny, Gordon, Molly, Jed, Angeline, Ari, Brante, Joel, Stephen, Jennie |
| Summary of Discussion | Diversity - never leave bare soil, cover crop cocktail  Food Forestry – (see Richard Walker)   * Replace ornamental with useful * Plant support plants * Nitrogen, biomass, pest control, dynamic accumulator * Spilanthes * Plant annuals   Holistic Management – supply your needs  Cell Grazing – moving animals often  (animals fertilize and move on to optimize ecological growth cycle of grasses, and quality of feed to animals)  Swale – water catchment collection system on moderate slope (1%+) capture and store moisture, water  Strip Forestry (alley cropping) hay fields/pasture etc.  Prune roots  Drip irrigation (gravity) 18’’ drop  STUN – sheer total utter neglect  Silvopasture   * Trees 50% coverage * Underplant * Nuts, fruit, persimmon, plums (drought resistant) mulberries * Diversity of grasses |
| What’s Next? Links, etc. | [www.holisticmanagementinternational.com](http://www.holisticmanagementinternational.com)  [www.sari.com](http://www.sari.com) (Sustainable Agiculture)  Check out: Quivira Coalition  Check out: Book – Restoration Agriculture |

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| Session Title | Permaculture (another page of notes) |
| Convener | Gord |
| Participants | (same as above) |
| Summary of Discussion | **Pattern Recognition** – landscape  Function of Diversity – multiple ecosystems. Agro-Forestry, applied mycology, cross-cropping and cover gardening, water harvesting, holistic management.  **Permaculture** is a tool kit. Skills in use. Skills – methods – techniques  Swale – mound that collects water. Slows water down on landscape, moderate slope, rock mulch melt down.  Key to success: Water System  **Agro-Forestry Methods:** **1. Strip Forestry** – ally cropping (follow contour of land) Key point – Abundance of Diversity  **Contour Line -**point of level on the landscape. Close together (steeper) further apart (key point) Key line compacts lines in swales, water from valley – ridges, transport.  **2. SilvoPasture** perennial pasture. 50% ground coverage. Good plants: mulberries, nut trees, persimmons (high leaf protein content, regenerative, good pig feeding height).  Increase water production and grass production.  Cell Grazing – putting cattle on landscape to regenerate, encourage to eat vigorously. Helps to irrigate and fertilize. Amount of land determines amount. **A decision-making system**.  **3. Forest Farming** currently established ecosystem, possibly thin out canopy, reduces evaporation.  **Identify goals – what will your land allow you to do?**  **4. Food Forestry** edible landscapes, tree products, herbs, replace ornamentals with food producing plants. Supports 1. Nitrogen fixers (base) 2. Dynamic Accumulator (pollintator, insect attractors, biomass, mulch, pest detractor, ‘comfrey’ mineral pullers. |
| What’s Next? | [www.soilhealthlibrary.org](http://www.soilhealthlibrary.org)  “Tree crops of a permanent agriculture”  J. Russel Smith  “STUNN – sheer total utter neglect” Mark Shepard (breeding site specific plants, creating seeds, 3 years)  Cover Crop Chart (‘informed decision’ soil armour)  A Resilient Farm and Homestead  Restoration Agriculture  SARE website – free downloads: <http://www.sare.org/> |

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| Session Title | Organic Certification |
| Convener | Jordan |
| Participants | Ann, Steve, Aaron, Gabe, Jenica |
| Summary of Discussion | Accreditation Body (COABC)  Certifying Body (non-profit organization, member farms)  Canadian Organic Regime (Nation Program)  General principles and management document, permitted substances list  BC – how are you selling? Regionally (cheaper option if only selling in BC) Internationally (Procert US or other international standards)  Not based on Land Size but on income  Certification is for Production Methods / not for the end product.  NOTE: Jordan provided a handout to the group on how to certify so the notes here are not detailed. |
| What’s Next? |  |

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| Session Title | Land Access |
| Convener | Sara Dent |
| Participants | Caleb, Kale, Amy, Courtney, Ashton, Kirstin |
| Summary of Discussion | Refer to Young Agrarians Land Access guide for detailed examples of agreement / checklists / questions: <http://youngagrarians.org/tools/land/>  Group 2-10 for purchase  O.U.R. Eco-Village is working on developing a co-mortgage structure for multiple owners  The Gathering Place on Cortes Island has a shared ownership structure, Sara to find out more  Entrance/Exit Agreements important  Lease vs. License, difference detailed in Land Access Guide  If lease is on portion of parcel and registered with title of land, then subdivision rules will apply, meaning that a lease can not extend beyond a 3-year term or land is considered sub-divided and owner must either sub-divide or discontinue lease  First Nations Land as potential land that can be accessed for farming through relationships, and lease/license agreements  CrownLand – Grazing Permit / Ranching Permits, contact local regional district to find out whether there are available government owned parcels for lease/license |
| What’s Next? |  |

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| Session Title | Leveraging Your Experiences: Record Keeping |
| Convener | Scott Bell |
| Participants |  |
| Summary of Discussion | Why keep records? Because it helps us be efficient, organized, accurate. It helps other people know our system. Make your data work for you. Put in the time at the beginning and save time later.  Consistency wins, every time!  Ex. Have same ID number for crops and consistent labeling.  You can keep records for all crops, or just the ones you are wondering about, and you can do the counts/tallies of time just once or twice a year. So you have something to work from. At the very least you should know what you harvest and what you sell. Use alcohol based pens on plastic covers. |
| What’s Next? Check out/ links, etc. | Asana (a to-do list App).  See Scott’s hand-outs |

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| Session Title | Animal Farming |
| Convener |  |
| Participants |  |
| Summary of Discussion | Feed – Rogers 5 cents a kilo.  **Chickens** – people want organic or pasture raised over conventional. Splitting chickens half organic, half conventional. Trio starting point – 2 females, 1 male  Feed barley with protein to egg layers, half the cost.  Broilers – slaughter date – then chicks. Peggy Thompson (June Springs)  Breeds of Broilers – halfway in Armstrong – 10 weeks instead of 8, less problems. Heritage Bird – Ashton Oasis Farm lots of animals, cheap chicks in spring. Animal Welfare – no hybrid birds. People want Happy Meat.  **Goats –**when reject young, give babies to other goats. Breed so you can finish in time for Easter. Auction.  **Eat Wild** – ethically produced meat.  **Rabbits** – cheaper than chickens, grow quick.  **Ducks** – black soldier fly – eats maggots and food scraps and chicken feed  Encana – Suzuki |
| What’s Next? |  |

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| Session Title | Soils |
| Convener | Molly |
| Participants |  |
| Summary of Discussion | Problems/Questions: How to make better - Rocky Soil, Clay Soil, Sandy Soil?  Composting on an Industrial Scale.  Ground Cover / giving nutrients to soil. What does the geology under my soil mean to my soil? Soil testing- is it worth it? Mineral/nutrient amendments ph/calcium?  **Kelowna Geology**: glacial lake originally. Higher acid high soils / ponderosa pines. Lower soils 7-8ph settled better. Mobility of nutrients changes drastically with ph. Do you have low ph? Add lime! Base soil? Add sulpher!  **Soil Testing**: cautious of where you test because highly irrigated areas can be different. Take small samples from various areas. 6-12’’ deep with samples using stainless steel tools and bucket. Mix to send in sample or section off different areas of your farm if you think that they may have different soil profiles. Send in multiple soil tests to lab (more expensive). Sample taken in the fall give you time to remediate for the next season. Spring tests mean the soil is more biologically active (when soil temperature has risen to 10 degrees) and ideally not as water saturated. Sample every 3 years to allow for change.  A+L Lab / Pacific Soil Lab for tests. Ask for a complete test, includes micronutrients.  **How to Correct Soil: *Acidic*** – lime – interferes with nitrogen. Apply in the fall, will have time to break down and absorb. Don’t mix with fertilizer (granular soil) cause it counteracts. You can add it together with compost in the fall. ***Kinds of Lime:*** Where soil test comes in handy. Caution; breakdown of calcium and magnesium need to be balanced.  80% Ca+  15-18% Mg+  4-5% K+  (this balance is perfection)  ***Idea:*** Dig a soil pit 1 meter deep – see the layers of your soil and what you can do about it.  ***A+L Labs*** have booklet online that can show you have to read your own soil tests. ***Boron*** macronutrient – often needs to be fixed with in the soil 0 be cautious of pockets, use spray – liquid but be careful can create soil deficiencies.  Beets and spinach can be an indicator of boron deficiency if you have trouble growing. When doing leaf analysis be cautious of when/stage of leaf’s life.  **Cover Crops:** clover can be used for intercropping and end of season. Red clover works really well.  Vetch, field peas, rye – one year, fall rye going into a winter season. Caution, can bounce back easily, need to leave a decent gap between turning over and planting. Oats can also be a decent cover. Move cover 1st down then turn over. Buckwheat – used to smother other plants, especially grass.  **Idea for Small Plots** use cardboard / sheet mulching – cover with 18’’ of solid organic matter on top – need at least 18’’ to break down the cardboard, as well you can plant squash in the compost. Leaves create a great compost. It takes time, the best time to do this is July when the grass is tall and the roots are weak. Move grass down and throw down cardboard, and organic material. |
| What’s Next? | Check out Dr. Ingham’s work on soil food web for more information on how to maximize the ecological immune system of your soil and keep the soil nutrient battery re-charged☺ |

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| Session Title | Local Processing and Gleaning |
| Convener | Brante Farrell |
| Participants | Brante, Courtney, Taryn |
| Summary of Discussion | **Processing – *what****:* what is accessible and practical for you? ***Where***: where is close, affordable and fits what you need? ***How?*** What equipment and packaging do you need? Be simple and source as closely as possible.  **Gleaning *– what****;* What is available in your community or region? What is being wasted? ***When***: This is critical! You need to labour at exactly harvest time! ***How;*** Collecting the produce must be done carefully and cleanly then either frozen, dried or processed in short-order to maintain the taste and colour. |
| What’s Next? | Don’t worry about doing very small scale processing, test the ‘market’ waters, find out the feedback before you launch heavily into any product. |

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| Session Title | Biodynamics |
| Convener | Gabe Cipes |
| Participants | Gabe, Ari, Scott, Jessica, Peter and Jed |
| Summary of Discussion | **Principles of Biodynamics:** human being stands at centre, they are the creator. Manuring means to ‘enliven’ soil, soil is alive. The plant connects the earth with the soil. The animal is the soul of biodynamic agriculture. Societal dimension: honesty, integrity, empathy, intuition. Application of biodynamic preparations – biodiversity (very important) quality of products.  **Biodynamics** has been intuitive for many years of human history. Rudolph Steiner documented these intuitions and turned them into a spiritual science. The rise of industrial ag. inspired the biodynamic movement, to create a body of work to counter the destructive techniques of the green revolution. Demeter standards require 10% of your land to be wild (uncultivated)! Horsetail ten spray for mildew suppression, learn the language of your land. |
| What’s Next? Links / resources | “Agriculture Course” by Rudolph Steiner  Educate People about Demeter Standards (standards that govern and monitor biodynamics. Take biodynamic info and further it today, we have more understanding and comprehension. Listen to your land, watch the moon, watch how the natural systems exist and grow and co-exist, apply and learn.  Thanks Gabe. |

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| Session Title | Seeds : Growing and Saving |
| Convener | Heather |
| Participants | Sarah, Ian, Mike, Jennay, Peter, Serena, Gabe, Jodi |
| Summary of Discussion | **Interests:** growing seed stock for specific climates (Armstrong, Shuswap, etc.) saving money, cultivating specific varieties. Self-reliance.  **General:** In every region of BC there are local seed group, reach out to those groups. Challenging and intimidating to grow seed. Local seed resources – Sunshine Farm Seeds, Stellar Seeds.  [BAUTA INITIATIVE](http://www.seedsecurity.ca/en/) – supporting local seed groups, developing seed banks, libraries to save seed from extinction. Looking for people to grow out varieties of seed and provide relevant information about the seed/crop. Has seed facilitation fund to offer grants for farms to develop infrastructure for seed production. Developing BC Seed Co-op to bulk up available seed quantities with a focus on what is scarce locally (e.g. carrot seeds) and provide food locally produced by farmers. |
| What’s Next? | Develop stronger seed cooperatives so that farmers can focus on one/two seed varieties, then swap and trade, or sell bulk seed to each other without having to deal with the challenge of growing and saving ALL your own seed.  Create job divisions on farm so that one person is growing seed, the other is growing yearly crops to sell.  Support Seedy Saturdays  Talk and make connections to find out who is growing seed in your area. Good place to start with seed saving: grow what you love! Start with 2-3 things the first year or two. |
| Resources / links, etc. | BC Seeds Website (books, webinars, stellar seeds manual,)  Carol Depe Oregon.  BC Seed Gathering, November 2014 – workshops, networking, open space organized by [FarmFolk CityFolk](http://www.farmfolkcityfolk.ca/). |