

I. COVER PAGE

A. Report Date: July 25, 2012

B. Title of Project: Plumas County Food Policy Council

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E. Location of Project: Plumas and Sierra Counties

F. Commodity(ies) Addressed: N/A

G. Funding: \$9,968.08

Objectives

The primary goal for this project was to ensure that food security concerns are addressed in a formal environment, such that: 1) county-wide food security measures are considered throughout all levels of public policy, planning, and collaborative, community-based efforts; and 2) the agricultural sector of the local economy is protected, encouraged, and given a voice to ensure that it is provided with public policy that encourages growth of local farmers and local food.

The main objective related to this was the creation of the Plumas County Food Policy Council (PCFPC) with members representing County Planning, Public Health, Social Services, UC Cooperative Extension, emergency food distributors, nonprofits, and agricultural producers.

II. Summary

Project staff researched Food Policy Council models in regions with characteristics similar to Plumas County and coordinated with those Council Coordinators via phone meetings and social networking sites, making connections for the Plumas County Food Policy Council's (PCFPC) future. Best practices for Plumas County were summarized. Project staff also identified the rules and regulations that exist for the formation of a Plumas County Advisory Committee.

Potential PCFPC members were identified, and meetings were arranged with those persons/agencies/organizations to familiarize them with Food Policy Council models and gather input. After compiling this input, a meeting was hosted to present a summary of findings from all stakeholders and to gather further input on the creation of the PCFPC mission, vision and objectives.

A final report was created to summarize the planning process and detail the following: PCFPC structure; draft mission, vision and objectives; funding needs and potential sources; and next steps for the PCFPC.

Key items decided during the planning process include:

- Decision-making Process: Loose consensus
- County Recognition: Not a formal advisory board to the Board of Supervisors, but a council to be recognized as a resource for grappling with food issues, should the Board of Supervisors choose to refer to them, and a council that may well bring policy suggestions to the Board of Supervisors for consideration.
- Structure: As a result of the planning activities, interviews and surveys, the proposed PCFPC will not be a stand-alone council; rather, it is now a working group of the Plumas-Sierra Community Food Council (CFC). There are four working groups of the CFC with two assigned leaders each to schedule meetings, create agendas, keep minutes, and report back to the larger council. The CFC will continue to meet monthly, with a break during the prime growing season. Working groups may meet more frequently. The remaining three working groups are K-12 Education, Farmer Education and Economic Development, and Team Zero/Backyard Production. The CFC anticipates revisiting the

issue of structure as it recruits new members in the Fall. The revised structure will include the potential implementation of a governance or executive committee for the entire CFC that will work to coordinate the working groups and the overall mission and vision of the CFC.

- **Policy Focus:** The CFC wishes to primarily focus on policy when policy represents a barrier or an opportunity to the projects with which the CFC is engaged; otherwise, the CFC aims to keep active projects as their main focus. The CFC will maintain membership in the California Food Policy Council.
- **Communication:** The CFC has implemented a WikiSpaces sharing site. The CFC is committed to increasing its public communication with a website and with meeting notices published in local newspapers.
- **Strategic Plan:** The CFC intends to complete a strategic plan (already outlined) when it begins meeting again in the Fall to sustain its focus, guide decisions, provide structure, etc. Once created, the CFC may seek approval via a Memorandum of Agreement among key stakeholders that outlines each stakeholder's role in relation to the CFC.

IV. Specific Results

Researching FPC models – The team conducted research about the structure, operations, activities and focus areas of various existing food policy councils by:

- Attending the Community Food Security Food Policy Conference and meeting with California Food Policy Conference attendees during a break-out session, May 2011;
- Reviewing “Food Policy Councils: Lessons Learned” document;
- Telephone interviews with rural California FPCs (Del Norte, Humboldt);
- Participation with other California FPCs in listening session held by the California Secretaries of Food & Agriculture and Health & Human Services, June 2011;
- Telephone conversation with Mark Winn, Community Food Security Coalition; and
- Participation in information gathering, priority setting and first meeting of the California Food Policy Council at the San Francisco City Hall, May 2012.

Recruiting members – The PRS team conducted interviews as a means to recruit members, using the following steps:

- Developed a list of stakeholders in the county to interview with an eye toward all five geographic regions, different elements of the food system, county government representation and socioeconomic status;
- Developed a survey that would 1) inform the interviewees about food policy councils, 2) inspire them, 3) gather information on the issues and opportunities they saw in the local food system and with regard to access to healthy food, and 4) gauge interest in participating in a food policy council;
- Conducted 20 stakeholder interviews;

- Summarized and presented results to the Plumas-Sierra Community Food Council¹ with interviewed stakeholders invited;

Drafting mission/vision/by-laws – The team worked in a subcommittee with other Plumas-Sierra Community Food Council members to develop a mission statement, vision and objectives (no by-laws, as it was decided not to form a separate council). The methodology was to review those of other food policy councils, adopting what resonated with our group and then adding and adjusting, as needed. In the visioning work, the team and CFC members had identified key focus areas which were subsequently represented in the statements. The team collected feedback, adjusted and then approved the statements at subsequent Community Food Council meetings.

Identifying and pursuing funding – The team developed a list of potential funding sources, but was not able to pursue additional funding by the end of the grant period. The Plumas-Sierra Community Food Council does not meet in summer months, due to the large number of producers on the council. The CFC intends to pursue additional funding in the fall.

Written report for creation of FPC – See attached report written by Kristi Jamason.

V. Potential Benefits/Impacts on Agriculture and/or Food Systems

This project resulted in the development of a path for the Community Food Council to move forward in the Fall of 2012, including a defined structure, membership and scope of work. Community Food Council participation and advisors have been broadened to include a greater diversity of key stakeholders (see attached final report to the Community Food Council). Multiple working groups have allowed Community Food Council members to focus on their specific area of interest, while at the same time allowing the group as a whole to quadruple the breadth of its impact, from addressing one topic per year to working on four per year.

VI. Dissemination of Findings

The May Community Food Council meeting included invitations to key project partners (project interviewees), as well as current Community Food Council members. Kristi Jamason and Tom Neill shared findings from their interviews and research conducted as a part of this project. A final report of the project was also posted to PRS' website under the Community Food Network service page. A copy of the final report from Kristi Jamason is attached to this report.

¹ Due to the shared agricultural areas (Sierra Valley) and small size (population) of the two counties, the Plumas Community Food Council decided to join forces with Sierra County. This came about as a result of providing input to the CDFA's state working groups through the Sierra County Environmental Health Director around scale-appropriate regulations and other barriers to local food production.