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SQUAMISH VALLEY AGRICULTURAL PLAN PROCESS MOVES AHEAD WITH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

First Community Event planned for Sunday, March 10

Squamish, BC – The development of an agricultural plan for the Squamish Valley is closer to becoming a reality, with a consultant hired and the first round of community engagement about to take place.

The Squamish Valley Agricultural Plan is a joint project of the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) and the District of Squamish, with support from the Squamish Food Policy Council and funding, in part, from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Government of British Columbia through programs delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C. The project was announced in October, 2018.

Since that time, a team of consultants, led by Upland Agricultural Consulting and the Whistler Centre for Sustainability, has been retained to assist in drafting the plan. Over the course of the year, there will be extensive consultation with the community and stakeholders. The first community event will take place on Sunday, March 10 from 5-7:30 p.m. at the Brackendale Art Gallery and will include a presentation from the consultants, followed by an opportunity for audience members to ask questions and share suggestions.

The Plan will encompass the SLRD Area D and District of Squamish (Squamish Valley) area, situated within the unceded traditional territory of the Skwxwú7mesh Uxwumixw (Squamish Nation). The Plan will build on the recent Agricultural Land Use Inventory project for the Squamish Valley that was conducted by the BC Ministry of Agriculture.

“So much great work has been done to date by local organizations and communities to explore opportunities for increasing the strength and viability of the food system. The Squamish Valley Agricultural Plan will build on this strong base to achieve the goals of encouraging, protecting, and celebrating farming and food security in the region. Establishing key priority areas and recommended action will be an important outcome of this process and we are excited to be working with Upland Agricultural Consulting and the Whistler Centre for Sustainability on this important project” says SLRD Board Chair and Area D Director, Tony Rainbow.

“We are encouraged to see the process moving forward and this initial community kickoff event is an important first step in getting input from area residents,” he added.

The Plan will engage community members, organizations and businesses from across the Squamish Valley to determine the direction for moving forward for a sustainable agriculture and food system. The Plan will be developed with input from farmers, ranchers, food security advocates, health professionals, and consumers. It will provide a valuable opportunity for Squamish Valley residents to have input into the future of agriculture and food in their community.

“Our goal is to develop a strong and vibrant food system in this part of the region that will reflect the vision and aspirations of our residents,” says District of Squamish Mayor Karen Elliott. “The Squamish Valley Agriculture Plan will help to identify where we need to effect policy changes and how we can support agricultural uses throughout the valley that bring economic opportunity and social benefit for all of our farmers and residents.”

Recommendations from the Plan will be translated into implementable actions along with a defined funding strategy to ensure they are achieved.

The project webpage is: www.slrd.bc.ca/SquamishValleyAgPlan

The project committee wishes to acknowledge the financial assistance of the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC for making this plan possible.

Residents with questions can contact:

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