



BUILDING UPON OUR AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE

Region-Wide Initiatives

These initiatives are proposed to reconnect city residents to their surrounding productive landscapes and advance local food systems and policies that allow for healthy coexistence.

Initiative RR.1 – A Local Foods System to Meet Regional Demand

Proposed Lead(s) High Country RC&D

Project Source Appendix E.1

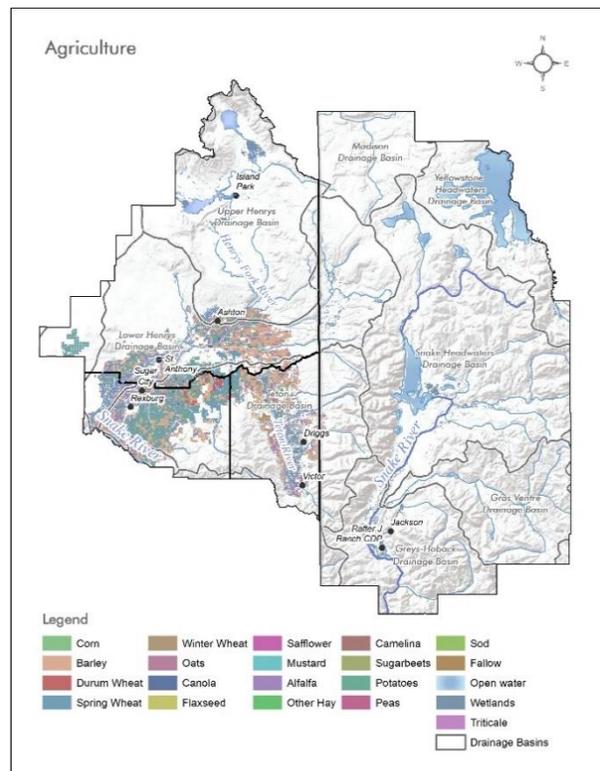
The Regional Plan’s market assessment for locally-grown foods shows that demand is growing within a 100-mile radius of the Teton View Region. The study revealed that new opportunities do exist, especially for the growing number of small producers in Idaho’s Teton and Fremont counties. While most producers are already participating in the local supply chains, it is difficult for individuals to fully explore the market potential of existing products on their own or determine how to align their production with the needs of buyers and consumers. This initiative would seek to more precisely quantify regional supply and demand as a first step towards designing a local foods system for the Teton View region.



Initiative RR.2 – Infrastructure for Local Foods Processing

Proposed Lead(s) High Country RC&D

Project Source Appendix E.1



This multi-year initiative would examine what already exists locally in terms of USDA-inspected meat processing and commercial kitchens, and consider expanding this infrastructure where feasible to better meet the needs of local producers. Because existing produce supply chains process that large infrastructure projects are needed in this region. Given existing volumes, having one commercial kitchen in the area would likely meet producer and value-added needs.

ROOTS & RESILIENCE (continued)



Initiative RR.3 – Cooperative Marketing and Distribution of Local Foods

Proposed Lead(s) New Ag Cooperative

Project Source Appendix E.1

The USDA Agricultural Census data underreport the number of producers raising certain varieties of products, and even many in the business are unaware of the diversity of products grown in the region. A need exists for increasing consumers' and other stakeholders' awareness of available local products to help build demand for a greater amount and diversity of locally grown products. Under this initiative, a traditional producer's cooperative would be organized to perform this marketing function on behalf of its members, with management, sales and distribution services gradually made available as part of the co-op's mission.

Initiative RR.4 – Codes and Incentives to Protect Agricultural Uses/Lands

Proposed Lead(s) County governments

Project Source Appendices A.1, B

Adoption of the proposed Model Development Code would put into effect agricultural land use provisions found under the Open Uses category (10.7.1).

Agriculture is generally described as production of crops, livestock or poultry and includes agricultural auction and processing, community garden, nursery, urban farm and winery. In addition, the category of Accessory Uses addresses Livestock Keeping (10.8.9.) that provides detailed use standards and prohibitions against dogs, cats or other domestic animals that conflict with raising of livestock. Other relevant Accessory Uses covered are gardens and greenhouses for personal or group use. Those local governments that also volunteer to certify under the *Greater Yellowstone Framework for Sustainable Development* would commit to protecting existing agricultural land uses if they fulfill the necessary credits (see Plan).

Initiative RR.5 – New Avenues for Value-Added Agriculture

Proposed Lead(s) Teton & Fremont, ID

Project Source Appendices E.2 & E.3

This initiative encourages more cooperation with university extension services in each state and other ag-oriented groups in pursuing economic development strategies that work for both the farmers and their respective communities. While many farmers and ranchers in this region may viewed as diversified land managers operating profit centers around commodity crops and livestock, others have been willing to experiment with organic production, renewable energy generation, or direct sales to local consumers. To be most effective under this initiative, community leaders would commit to on-going dialogue with local producers about the types of enterprises that may fit their situations and then stay alert for new joint opportunities. Paying attention to new value-added possibilities is important not only to benefit the local economy, but to preserve the rural lifestyle that residents value so highly.

ROOTS & RESILIENCE (continued)

Agricultural Programs

The agricultural industry has traditionally been well-supported by federal, state and local programs that now face funding challenges. These programs would benefit by broader support of municipalities.

Project RR.6 – Maximizing Irrigation Water Supply: Policies and Practices

Proposed Lead(s) Irrigation Entities; High Country RC&D

Project Sources USBR HF Basin Study; Guide to Hydrology and Water Management - HFF

Because groundwater and surface water systems are so interconnected in the Henry's Fork Watershed (most of Fremont, Madison and Teton counties, Idaho), any changes to water use and management patterns in the region will affect other uses, including natural resource needs, irrigation supply, and/or municipal water supplies. It is in the interest of cities and counties to become fully engaged in current discussions on irrigation water management and future storage projects to ensure that decisions are made only after considering the impacts to other water uses, including their own jurisdictions. By becoming involved in water supply discussions, city officials would better understand water rights appropriation in Idaho and how conjunctive management of surface and ground water sources downstream could affect municipal water rights in dry years. Each locality would employ practices and enact policies related to the following programs:

- *Aquifer Recharge*
- *Off-stream Storage*
- *Water Conservation*
- *Cloud Seeding*

Project RR.7 – Collaborative Decision Making in Watershed Management

Proposed Lead(s) Henry's Fork Watershed Council: HFF & FMID

Project Sources HFWC website; Drought Management Plan

Regular participation in the Henry's Fork Watershed Council is recommended for all local officials within Fremont, Madison and Teton counties. This watershed collaborative tackles complex watershed issues while improving relations among angling, administrative and agricultural constituencies. Since 1993 the basin's recreational fishing and irrigation interests have worked together to find water management solutions through use of scientific data and trust-building dialogue. The Council operates under a legislative charter in force since 1994 that also designates the Council as the advisory body for state water quality protection. In 2003 Congress directed the Council leaders to annually engage in drought management planning to maintain or enhance watershed health even in years of below-average precipitation. The mission of this water management plan is to balance the health of the basin's famous fisheries with agricultural needs through flexible and adaptive water management within the context of Idaho water law.



ROOTS & RESILIENCE (continued)

RR.8 – Soil Health Initiative

This initiative affirms the importance of healthy soils for food security and essential ecosystem functions, and it raises awareness of 2015 as the International Year of Soils. In aligning with voluntary statewide initiatives in Idaho and Wyoming, localities would collaborate with local farmers, area conservation districts and the National Resource Conservation Service in encouraging soil conservation practices across the region.

Project RR.9 – New Crop Assessments

The Aberdeen Research and Extension Center in Southeast Idaho conducts research into many of Idaho's most important crops, including potatoes, wheat and barley. Operated by the University of Idaho College of Agricultural and Life Sciences through the Idaho Agricultural Experiment Station, the center conducts research into plant breeding and crop production. Field testing of new potato and grain varieties and other crops such as quinoa would be encouraged of those Teton View farmers wanting to bring new foods to the commodities market or the consumer.

Project RR.10 – Cooperative Weed Management

A recommitment to region-wide weed management programs is envisioned under this Plan with Teton View counties supporting efforts of the Teton Conservation District in Wyoming and the Henry's Fork Cooperative Weed Management Area in Idaho. Efforts to manage, contain, reduce and eradicate noxious weeds occur through public education and direct control measures such as spraying weeds, biological weed control using insects, and other measures such as grazing by goats. Cost-share programs with private landowners would be promoted by municipalities in Partnership with the conservation districts.

Community-Scale Projects

These are opportunities for farmers and ranchers to engage with their local communities in direct marketing of their products and in the growing tourism sector.

Project RR.11 – Agricultural Tourism Opportunities

One promising strategy for promoting local agriculture and food systems is to benefit from the tourism base that already exists in the region. This project would begin by assessing traveler interest in a variety of "agri-tourism" enterprises such as fee hunting, horseback riding, farm/spud cellar tours, barn dances, and U-pick produce. An analysis would also be conducted on what types of on-farm accommodations might be financed and built on the least productive parcels along our scenic byways and recreational trails. A network of simple campsites, huts, cabins and lodges could be operated by a private concern or co-op so landowners could benefit from the capital improvement on their properties without having to operate a lodging enterprise.

Project RR.12 – Farmers' Market Coordination

Under this project each county would form an individual steering committee to strengthen the farmers' markets in their jurisdictions and to share the planning and coordination roles. While working to find the right time and setting for shoppers, the steering committees also should consider the needs and preferences of local producers so more of them can participate. Rather than requiring each producer to pay for and attend their own stand, multiple producers could benefit from a collaborative effort that advertises their products without them having to be present.