

Clearwater Community Impacts

By Joanna Hurst

The Yellowhead Community Services Food Security Program is deeply grateful for the support we have received from the Tamarack Institute and Canadian Red Cross for several projects that benefited our communities. Through this funding we were able to spread out the projects with five other community partners for maximum impact.



Two new community bio-char kilns are now available for residents throughout the North Thompson Valley. The Clearwater kiln was fully booked this spring right up until the summer fire ban. The District of Barriere has happily offered to be the steward of one of the

kilns so that we are able to serve the lower portion of the valley as well. The kickoff event at Seedy Saturday was instrumental in creating public awareness and providing community education about the benefits of bio-char and forest ecology. Brian and Grace from Transition Salt Spring did an amazing job with their demos and presentations, and really helped to create a buzz – most notably with our local community forest (Wells Gray Community Forest). The board and manager are now exploring how bio-char kilns can be upscaled and used within their tenure and brought attention to the initiative at the BC Timber Sales Value Added Tour that was hosted here in the North Thompson this last spring. They even planted an experimental plot of trees with bio-char amendments as part of a high school student project!

Seedy Saturday is first and foremost an event that promotes seed saving and local food sustainability. This year, we were able to offer seed saving manuals at the event and also some open-pollinated BC- grown heritage seed through our seed swap table. Gardeners are encouraged to take some seed, grow it, harvest the seed and donate some back to the seed library so that the cycle continues and Clearwater becomes more resilient.

Our Community Garden will benefit from six new fruit trees, rain barrels and soil amendments. The rain barrels were installed at an opportune time to capture the high rainfall we had in June and store it for use during the heat wave of July, thus lessening the

demand on our municipal water systems, especially as our volunteer fire department battles a wildfire nearby. The fruit trees will be planted in the fall as we break ground on our massive garden renovation.

Our Community Kitchen is looking forward to making use of the freeze dryer to help preserve the fruit we collect and distribute through our gleaning program. Some minor electrical upgrades need to take place before we can use the unit, which will happen in August.

We were also able to connect with the Blackpool Fire Department and provide them with a Purple Air Quality Monitor, which is now installed and providing local data in real time.

As you can see, the ripple effects of these projects will be impactful and long-lasting.

Thank you again for this opportunity!