



## APPALACHIAN FOODSHED PROJECT

*Enhancing Food Security by Cultivating Resilient Food Systems and Communities*

# North Carolina Regional Meeting, December 5, 2011, Asheville, NC

### Goals of the Meeting:

- (Re-) Introduce the Appalachian Foodshed Project and review the outcomes from the initial AFP Capacity Building Forum, held on Oct. 28-29 in Blacksburg, VA.
- Collectively discuss the dynamics and challenges of the food system in western North Carolina.
- Identify five crucial target areas for addressing food security in Appalachian North Carolina.
- Begin the formation of a NC Foodshed working groups, through identifying areas of focus and developing team goals.

### Meeting brings together stakeholders, community practitioners, extension agents, and academics to engage in dialogue on food security in Western North Carolina.

The NC regional coordinators of the multi-state Appalachian Foodshed Project (AFP) held a kickoff meeting on December 5th, 2011 at UNC-Asheville. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the Appalachian Foodshed Project to stakeholders in Western North Carolina, collectively discuss the dynamics and challenges of the food system, and begin to identify five crucial target areas for addressing food security in the region.

This full-day session was professionally facilitated and included the opportunity for participants to interact in open conversation, to share and build on ideas, and to consider together what the NC Foodshed Project can accomplish in western North Carolina.

Working in small groups, participants collectively discussed the dynamics of the food system in Western North Carolina, focusing on the region's assets. Each group then created a visual representation of the food system as they understood it. These visuals were then presented and explained to the full group to build a shared understanding between meeting participants of the overall food system in Western Carolina.

Michelle Schroeder-Moreno and the facilitator (Logan Couce of Fountainworks) then introduced a NC-specific game plan that gave an overview of resources available, the project's goal and objectives, and some potential next steps to take on the path towards those goals and objectives. As the AFP is intended to be participatory in



Participants worked in small groups and drew visual representations of the food system in Western North Carolina.

nature, the organizers sought to avoid planning all of the work out in isolation, but rather sought to collaboratively develop it with the participants.

Based on the discussion of goals and objectives, participants then worked in small groups to generate ideas that could affect



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204 Wallace Annex  
Blacksburg, VA 24061

Nikki D'Adamo-Damery, Project Coordinator  
Phone: 540-231-2264  
E-mail: [nikkid11@vt.edu](mailto:nikkid11@vt.edu)

### Project Planning Team:

Susan Clark, *Project Director, Virginia Tech*  
Kim Niewolny, *Co-PD, Virginia Tech*  
Steve Hodges, *Co-PD, Virginia Tech*  
Michelle Schroeder-Moreno, *Co-PD, NC State*  
Cheryl Brown, *Co-PD, WV University*  
John Beck, *GRA, NC State*  
Angel Cruz, *GRA, NC State*  
Phil D'Adamo-Damery, *GRA, Virginia Tech*  
Mary Oldham, *GRA, WV University*  
Sarah Misyak, *GRA, Virginia Tech*

*A collaborative effort of North Carolina State University, Virginia Tech, West Virginia University, and community stakeholders*

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- ◆ The Appalachian Foodshed Project is using a **foodshed concept to address issues of food security in West Virginia and the Appalachian regions of North Carolina and Virginia**. Similar to the concept of a watershed, a foodshed takes into account everything between where food is produced and where it is consumed. This includes the farms and gardens used to raise food, travel routes used to transport products, processing facilities, distribution (farmers markets, brokers, retailers), and the restaurants, institutions, and homes where we all eat.
- ◆ The Appalachian Foodshed Project is designed to build on the work that is already happening in Appalachia, facilitating and enhancing formal and informal work by creating **a network of organizations and individuals** who are engaging similar issues related to community development, economic viability, health and nutrition, food access, social justice, and agriculture.
- ◆ By working collaboratively, the Foodshed Project hopes **to build on the human and natural resources in the region** to improve access, expand food security, and enhance food economies, especially in communities that have been underserved and are economically vulnerable.
- ◆ The Foodshed Project will work to **cultivate resilient food systems within the region**. This means creatively working with communities, farmers, policymakers, non-profits, and institutions to better understand the food system and implement changes that have long term benefits for all people in the region.

## North Carolina Regional Meeting (continued)

change in Western North Carolina over the next 1-2 years. As a large group, participants used the ideas to create consensus around the following four focus areas:

1. Food access
  - Concurrent harvesting, community gardens
  - Harnessing food waste...
  - Improving food access to hungry people
2. Creating collaboration between food system services
3. Increasing local food production, processing and distribution
  - Through focusing on strategies to improve growing, distribution, and processing
  - Raise local food production
  - Infrastructure (facility, value added)
  - Integrate local food in larger distribution channels
  - Promotion of youth farming

4. Intergenerational education and engagement
  - Consumer education for cooking fresh food
  - Education to raise consumer demand for local food
  - Consumer education (*10% Campaign*)
  - Youth (education, nutrition)

Participants then broke out into small groups around each focus area to discuss who should be involved in the work, potential goals for each working group, and “next steps.”

Eventually, the focus areas will formalize into working groups, as the project moves forward to implement community food security assessments and community enhancement grants.

*For more information, or a complete report from the NC Regional meeting, please contact Michelle Schroeder-Moreno, North Carolina Co-Project Director: [michelle\\_schroeder@ncsu.edu](mailto:michelle_schroeder@ncsu.edu).*