

## CHAPTER 7. REFERENCES, SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS, AND INTERVIEWS

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The chapter lists the documents and interview of individuals cited in Chapter 2 of the report and referenced in the preparation of the research. A summary of the interviews follows the reference list.

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## Interview Summaries

### 15<sup>th</sup> June 201: Meeting with Eric Adolfson, GIS coordinator at COMPASS

Eric has a comprehensive database of the information available locally for Ada and Canyon Counties.

There are problems with the data:

Some of the lots are counted twice both as commercial and agricultural land.

Land in use for agriculture is based on Tax Assessment Data. Owners claim tax exemption for land which produces a yield of \$1000 a year. Due to the recession in the building industry Land has been taken off the real estate market and returned to agriculture even though some of it is partly improved, This is confuses the figures since the amount of land on which agricultural tax exemption is claimed has risen year on year since 2008 due to the recession. Therefore the amount of agricultural land seems to have **increased** steadily since then. Often we found that this tax exempt land is zoned commercial or residential. There is no easy way of mapping this due to lack of information. The 2010 tax assessments are good for showing **the potential** agricultural land available. Long term we need to show that the trend is a steep decrease in agricultural land and explain why it doesn't look that way short term. I will research the tax exemption criteria.

Potential agricultural land depends on soil type. Most land has some potential use. Eric has a map (based on soil types) of all the prime agricultural land in Ada/Canyon Counties. He overlaid the land development since records began (1867) and it is obvious that 99% of development occurs on prime agricultural farmland. Eric has historic data which shows the locations of building permits and the year granted. He can run this as a "movie" each image being each consecutive year. This gives a clear indication of how Ada County is developing over time. It's all on prime agricultural land. Eric's analysis only covers Ada County.

Eric made the point that the one mile grid of roads in the valley was laid out to enable arable agriculture. So road infrastructure, electricity and services are adequate for this activity. Non-arable agriculture does not need as much infrastructure. He notes the conflict between agricultural use and residential/commercial development. Neighbors complain about the nuisance of intensive working hours, fumes and noise. Slow bulky vehicles are given short shrift on the roads. Prime arable land has been abandoned in and around local cities because of this. Is mitigation possible or appropriate through the planning process, changed agricultural practices and traffic management approaches? Should farming with large equipment happen in areas of city impact?

COMPASS has shape files which show potential infill sites in Ada County. Can see in COMPASS GIS model that some infilling of vacant land in the cities is happening. Is most obvious in Boise. Is it happening fast enough? This data is not available for Canyon County.

Can see that most development is moving from East to West over time along the I- 84 corridor. Prime Ag land is used for development because it is flat, has irrigation water and good road access.

Eric has a GIS layer of the Canal irrigation system in the valley Ada County which shows that land in the valley bottom of the Boise River is served by a comprehensive network of canals. Arable agriculture and most development are on this land. The most interesting image showed that land to the south and east in Ada County has soils which make it prime agricultural land but there is no canal system there so there is no farming. Also there has been no development.

Eric has no data on conditional use permit location and types. We need this to identify value added uses of agricultural property. However many local farmers avoid the need for conditional use permits on their land by selling via "brown box" so these records may not be very accurate. In fact the onerous nature of the red tape and conditions imposed by conditional use permitting is one of the reasons why local agriculture is not paying. (Evelyn Grimes has contacts in the valued added areas that could fill us in on this in more detail.)



### **20<sup>th</sup> June 2011: Meeting with RMA group.**

Rapid Market Assessments were prepared for farmers markets in Ada and Canyon Counties as part of the grant work. We talked about this being the best way of finding out about citizen interest in local food. Karen of the Capitol City Public Market pointed out that not all the markets to be surveyed sell local food exclusively. Most of the vendors are not farmers. She asked whether non local markets should be surveyed. Karen wants Certified Farmers Markets so that there are known parameters which all vendors adhere to. Idaho does not have this system. Most farmers/vendors are reluctant to talk to anyone about how much of the food they sell is local.

She suggested three questions that would be asked at every market. In addition each market would come up with another two. The idea is to replicate this survey every year or two so that progress can be monitored. See RMA Report

### **22<sup>nd</sup> June: Met Erinn Cruz, Intern at U of Idaho.**

U of I and the Treasure Valley Food Coalition are working out how much local food stays in the Valley. Presently Priscilla (U of I) wants to find this out as a proportion of the money spent on food in the valley. This is how the Agriculture Census evaluates production. Janie TVFC wants to know how much food **by weight** stays in the valley. Both are crucial to our ULI study.

- Need food weight to decide how much land should be preserved.
- Need food cost to figure out how to improve the value of local food so that farming locally becomes financially viable.

Janie sees local food sales information by weigh as crucial information for helping farmers. Janie is worried that amount in \$ will not help us figure out how to promote local agriculture and save enough land. Janie has spoken to Matt at the National Agricultural Statistical Service about the Agriculture Census which they do every 5 years. They are planning one for this year. He says many farmers do not participate. How do you get farmer confidence so they will give you accurate figures?

U of I may soon plan to do some work on a grant proposal to strengthen the regional food system. Their work could help formulate ideas for changing ordinances.

Janie sent me the following article: April 3, 2010, "METRICS Factory Food." New York Times. It states "Americans eat 31 percent more packaged food than fresh food, and they consume more packaged food per person than their counterparts in nearly all other countries.....T. Colin Campbell, a nutritionist at Cornell University, said that "there is a lot of money tied up in the industry because it is profitable for companies to make these foods." He added that "Processed foods contain large amounts of fat, salt and sugar ...but epidemiologic studies have shown that diets with higher levels of fat, salt and sugar lead to higher rates of heart disease, diabetes and obesity." \_Processed food is 50% of diet in USA. 0% in India.

### **27<sup>th</sup> June 2011: Meeting with Janie Burns, The Treasure Valley Food Coalition.**

She's a local farmer and activist. We discussed the food security issue and general agriculture set up locally and nationwide. We talked about the planning/zoning regulations and health regulations which can be challenging. TVFC will try to monitor change in the valley over time using this data and metrics which are set up. We talked about the need to take a holistic long term view of agricultural practice (Life cycle Assessment approach) not simply using profitability as the bottom line, as the deciding factor. About Food Security, economic sustainability, cultural issues.

The New York Times article and food chart showing consumption of food types in USA as compared to the rest of the world raises the issue of what should be grown on land. If our diet should change to make us healthier does that affect the amount and location of farmland. Do you need more land to grow a healthy diet? How much of a local healthy diet can be grown in the valley and how long is the season.

Janie's Driving issues for food security are having:

- local heirloom seed production,
- storage to ride out unpredictable events. How to evade a crisis and the potential anarchy by planning/storing.
- local food processing

Many of the issues surrounding local food production are outside of planning and zoning control. Maybe processing and storage should be easier to get permits for. Should be permitted uses for agriculture zoning category. Maybe put conditions on the uses if the site is adjacent to other uses to avoid nuisance.

Is a cultural need to be tidy. The small buildings needed for small scale energy efficient agriculture are not necessarily pretty. Nampa City does not understand agriculture. If you take animals off your land within the city limits you are no longer grandfathered in and you cannot put animals back on the land. Janie's farm is within Nampa city limits. Someone approached her and asked if she would like to graze her lambs on their land..... she needs this opportunity to survive.

Rich? Her friend, realized that zoning prevents him from buying food from elsewhere and selling it on his farm stand. Problem, he has to wait till enough of his vegetables are available before he opens, otherwise no one is tempted to stop. He can't sell the bits and pieces easily.

Pressure to use agricultural land needs to be reduced. Many smaller communities cannot afford to limit their growth because they built an expensive wastewater treatment plan. They need an increasing tax base to cover the bond payments to investors because they can't raise property taxes much. This creates a conflict between growth and maintenance of agricultural land. There are alternatives now like wetlands for wastewater treatment and the quality of the water can be monitored by companies who are accredited.

Energy efficiency and energy source are keys to the future of Agriculture. Big farmers are using 200,000 gallons of gas a year. It costs \$60,000 even when locked in at a good price. Volatility of oil is going to affect food prices and viability of current methods used by big Ag. Small Ag is less oil dependant but can it produce enough? Availability of grain for feed is managed on an international basis, Russia, USA, Australia. Grain it is not stored locally, but moved to where it is needed. This means there is only a 60 day supply of grain available at any time. The drought in Russia has made their crop late so there is a shortage currently.

Local growers don't know where their food goes ultimately. There is no "Chain of Custody." She's looking at historical records to see what was grown in the valley in the past. Too much emphasis on dairy and feed/ grain. Very little food produced in the valley is edible. We have figures for production of these crops but how relevant are these crops to a sustainable locally produced market. The balance of payments for agricultural products leaving as opposed to entering Idaho is hugely negative. (see Meter's report Local Farm & Food Economy, Crossroads Resource Center.)

To alter the crops available in the valley Janie would need to store crops which are grown. The idea is to store them for a year till the next crop is available. As a grower she is taking the biggest financial risk of anyone, so she would need someone else to invest in storage. Also she needs to know what price she could get for the crop before she grows it.

We've almost forgotten how to farm in harmony with nature. Requires more patience. She could make more money showing her farm and doing tours for kids than farming. People are very keen

to visit farms. Should tailor use of land to its climate. Prime agricultural land is useful for particular crops, but we should save other land for agriculture like grazing as well. How do you quantify that amount? How do you plan to maintain enough land in proper locations? Need to talk to farmers about their process.

Should maintain more food growth space than the valley needs so that fairly local areas where food growth is not possible can be supported. Likewise there will still be things we can't grow. Need Local Food Board to provide contracts and manage, provide storage/processing. Big Ag tends to look at profitable crops and focus on those. Worry is that the seed for less profitable crops will die out.

Culture: we have a society that equates success with profit. It's individualistic. Most of this community farming and local farming sounds good but we have forgotten how to work together with each other and the land. Have to discuss these issues from the perspective of our current culture. Finding ways to explain the benefits from that perspective in terms of "Natural Capitalism". Lovins.

### **29<sup>th</sup> June: Susan Carmichael, Collister Neighborhood Association**

She's organizing a door to door survey of how much local food is being grown in backyards. Idea is to start with Collister. Will it be significant enough to be counted as part of the local agriculture capacity? Will it reduce if we encourage infill and higher densities? Have calculated that if everyone used the back 100ft of their lot in Collister there would be 25 acres of crop land.

TVFC is helping Susan Carmichael look at how much local food is grown in yards and what type. Similar surveys for each neighborhood, could help answer the following questions ADA and Canyon countywide.

- How much local food is being grown on backyards? Will it be significant enough to be counted as part of the local agriculture capacity? Will it reduce if we encourage infill and higher densities?

Could there be local food cooperatives, like the ones in California for citrus trees, to pool.

### **6<sup>th</sup> July: Meeting, Amy Hutchinson, Scott Larson, Treasure Valley Food Coalition.**

Agri-tourism includes running bread-making workshops. This is their dream. But regulatory requirements are daunting and they don't fully understand them yet. Would a city mentor, or experienced community member to guide them through the process be useful?

Amy and Scott did a study last year on Hampshire food co-ops and local food in the home counties of England. Amy wondered whether planning should set aside land so that city dwellers who have no land to grow their own food on could rent it, as they do in Helsinki and England. Should there be better provisions for community gardens. City could buy land using parks and recreation money like they are doing with the foothills to preserve it.

Amy raised the question how do you deal with local agricultural operations that start on the edge of town and then get subsumed? Often the farmer does not own the land but puts a good deal of effort into improving the soil. This is an investment which only makes sense if use of the land can be secure and long-term. If the land is in the city it would be presumed available for development. Local Farmers who are currently using land inside the impact zone are finding continuity a problem. Rents go up with the likelihood that the land could be developed.

Local Agriculture is not viable without access to irrigation water. If development uses water for garden irrigation maybe there is an issue with not being enough water for agriculture in cities and

outside them as the amount of development increases. Should there be restrictions on use of water by new development associated with conditional use permits.

Could demand native and drought resistant planting but it would not necessarily mean that owner would use less water.

How will climate change affect the available land. Flooding patterns change. Gets too hot or cold to grow usual crops. Would we need more land to get same yield? Maybe land would no longer need irrigation? Could we use land further up the mountain if it gets warmer? Would more storms result in crop damage.

### **27<sup>th</sup> July: Meeting, Diane Norton, Department of Commerce.**

The idea that preservation of agricultural land may be a parks and recreation issue was raised by Diane N.

Of the 5 scenic byways in ADA and Canyon Counties the Snake River is the one with the food and agri-tourism on it at present. Diane Norton suggested that I look up Vancouver BC Department of Commerce. Have best program for promoting local food. Are running a Local Scene Contract for farmers so that the crops grown will have a guaranteed market, local storage and processing.

The two best known sources of local food are not cheap enough to be seen as everyday grocery markets for most people. The farmers market is a fun day out and the Coop is seen as a specialty store. How do you change that?

Diane N. is working on a “Harvest Idaho” culinary tourism packages with hotels so that visitors can experience the best of Idaho.

### **29<sup>th</sup> July: Idaho Rural Conference Janie Burns, Meadowlark Farms/ Treasure Valley Food Coalition, Backyard Innovations. Boise ID.**

#### **B: Idaho's local food systems: Yesterday and tomorrow**

Janie Burns led a session on Backyard Innovations. It puts together the research so far by University of Idaho and Treasure Valley Food Coalition on the amount of space needed to grow local food. Truth is that enough carrots for the Treasure Valley could be grown on 25 acres.

My impressions from the Idaho Rural Conference are that.

- Agriculture is not seen as a sector where economic development is possible.
- Agricultural business is not seen as entrepreneurial territory. You can't be an entrepreneur in Farming.
- Training seems to focus on those who come from agricultural families. Emphasis is on getting children of farmers re-interested in farming. Seems to ignore training of those who want to farm but are from non-traditional backgrounds.
- Are little or no training or mentoring opportunities for those who decide to farm later in life or along less conventional paths.
- There are conflicts between planning and agriculture which have resulted in animosity.
- The food distribution system does not encourage or enable tracking of local food from source to origin. In LEED speak there is no “chain of custody.” For food.
- Local food is still considered a fringe activity and no one in the main stream see it growing to a significant size.
- There are no processing or storage facilities in Idaho for most kinds of local food. So they get sent out of state only to return later ;labeled as out of state products.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> August: Brian Billingsley: City of Caldwell Planning and Zoning**

He's the Chair of the Snake River Scenic Byway Committee. The initiative for the by-way committee came from the Caldwell Chamber of Commerce. They have had an agricultural sub-committee for a number of years and the Caldwell Economic Development Commission.

The Commission is currently working on submittal of a \$50,000 Federal grant through ITD to develop way-finding along the by-way. This will include information kiosks at each city portal, signs identifying the crops grown along the highway and an information kiosk about the Snake River appellation and directions to each winery. Finding local matching money is a limiting factor and at a recent information meeting where 700 property owners along the by-way were invited, less than 20 showed up.

Brian mentioned that there are 95 edible agricultural products that are grown in Canyon County. He also gave me the name of George Crookham, who is the Chairman of the Coalition for Agricultural Futures <http://www.agriculturesfuture.org>. This is a group of large scale agricultural interests that came together after some land use decisions made by Canyon County impacted agricultural operations. They are behind the legislation that was adopted into the Land Use Planning Act last legislative session that requires the economic value of agriculture be addressed in Comprehensive Plans.

## **8<sup>th</sup> August: Meeting, Lacey Menasco and Leah Clark. Idaho Department of Agriculture**

They both work in the marketing side. Leah is focusing more time on local markets. Leah works with local producers to get their vegetables to market locally. Mostly schools and restaurants which use local food, a few downtown and a some in Nampa. She has their names. I raised the point that it is important to avoid potentially toxic chemicals being used close to homes. Maybe an organic approach is more appropriate there. Lacey made a very good point that a home owner could use some strong chemical which blows over into the organic farmer's land. How do you protect organic farming from this nuisance which ruins their livelihood?

There is little funding/will in the marketing department to actively encourage and organize local markets, scenic byways, artisan trails etc: They will support it if a local grass roots organization takes the lead.

No thought about how to encourage processing or crops which are not currently grown/processed here in Idaho. If it's not being grown already there is no state assistance to get over the chicken or the egg situation. Told a story about the Tomato canner who wanted to install a plant in Idaho. They did not encourage him even though Idaho grows enough tomatoes for this. Without processing we cannot feed ourselves for the winter months.

Idaho is very fertile in the summer and spring. We produce way more food than we need. They gave us a leaflet explaining this. Data is not available for what is produced in Ada and Canyon counties. Surely the quantity of food produced in Ada and Canyon is not enough for the populace so we are relying on the rest of Idaho like the rest of the world.

Diane K mentioned that there are extensive efforts to court trade outside of Idaho but little effort goes into local agriculture and food security as a generator for economic development in Idaho. Idaho produces a lot of seed for lettuce but no lettuce. In fact Idaho produces lots of seed. So much so that 80% of the world sweet corn was seed from Idaho. This is a food security issue so the amount grown here has been reduced.

Regarding training for non-traditional farmers, Peaceful Belly run mentoring for nontraditional farmers and you can work there voluntarily or take paid for classes. Not run by the State Agriculture Department. They provide no assistance. The University of Idaho runs a market gardening course and master gardening course through the extension.

Accurate Benchmarking is going to be a major problem. Don't have accurate costs or amounts produced by dollar or by weight. Land owners and growers have not yet been given a good enough reason to part with the information. Most food goes through 4 wholesalers in Idaho so could use their figures to get a fairly rounded picture but they don't separate out the local from other food. Are no really accurate figures but can use figures as a comparison from year to year. The statistical errors are too big to make the data reliable.

The Department of Agriculture want good metrics to get federal funding to help them continue the progress they have made. Farmers will not cooperate, they are worried about government control and competitors knowing their earnings. Agricultural Census is in accurate and only every 5 years.

Current system is not considered fundamentally broken by the Department of Agriculture. Is working OK for vested interests. Not enough forward thinking to see that it needs to change. Are working with local markets but not trying hard to expand outside the low hanging fruit. Are marketing the grain and seeds and powdered whey products produced in Idaho to the rest of the world. Have permanent trade offices in Taipei and Shanghai. This is their focus.

Doesn't seem to be any overall strategic thinking. There is no focus on what is happening at the Ada and Canyon County level. Idaho as a whole is performing well and producing lots of food. Local food is such a small part of what they do since Idaho as a whole produces so much. It doesn't make sense to focus on local food for them at State level. Need someone more local.

Since growing food for local markets is currently one of the few growth economies, it is clear that Ada/Canyon County should be planning to encourage it.

#### **9<sup>th</sup> August: Meeting of Agriculture Grant research collaborators**

Rapid Market Assessments results are available. Did some brainstorming with Carole Nemnich on questions for local farmer survey.

1. Problems with government which make it difficult to farm economically. This will include planning and zoning.
2. What would help farmers try new crops? How alleviate risks?

RMA data looks to Diane like there is a greater demand for local food than the markets are tapping. Janie thinks this would only be the case if the vendors at the market were sold out. They are not. Karen says they have survey results which prove local fruit and vegetables at markets are less expensive than non local at supermarkets. We've been brain washed into going to supermarkets.

Diane is concerned about who will take responsibility for marketing local food and encouraging economic development of food industries in the valley. She showed us all a "farm tour" which was put together by the Port of Skagit, a port authority. This role seems to be falling between stalls of State Agriculture Department and State Commerce Department.

I asked Pete Pearson if we could use the weight of food sold at Albertsons to figure out what people really eat in Ada and Canyon Counties. Says we can. This would be more accurate than national figures for calculating land needed for Ag. It may get us some more reliable benchmarks.

Policy question: should we be allowing enough land for feed lots or more ethical forms of Agriculture. Need more space. Labor source for farms. Why not high school kids instead of people based possibly illegal workers. Are high school kids too lazy now? Are there other ways of earning money.

Bob Taunton of ULI says a change is needed in government approach to water provision for developments. Public works use existing agricultural wells for new development. Want to maintain business as usual. Easy for water department to re-designate agricultural water well as drinking water. So agriculture infrastructure is subsidizing new housing development. Maybe we should stop taking the easy route and get developer to drill a well somewhere where there is no well. There is a well for every square mile of development. Why don't we use river water for drinking? Bob says that developers will work with the framework government and society gives them. So the only way to alter behavior is to regulate, alter policies and ordinances. Currently it is easy to change from Ag to development land. It is not much of a review process. Bob mentioned that we don't appreciate the enormous economic benefit of agriculture. The development industry practically disappeared in this recession but agriculture goes on. It is a powerhouse. We ignored it because we took it for granted before the recession. Now it is apparent that Agriculture is the healthy and reliable part of our economy.

Janie noted that large farmers often find the local food movement threatening. Are two different world views in Agriculture right now:

- Small local farmer.
- Large one who ignores local farming. Wants the system to stay the same.

New thinking is the area where entrepreneurship should be focused not Agriculture technology as is currently the case. Priscilla thinks while there is little new business help for any sector none of it is directed at agriculture.

### **9<sup>th</sup> August 2011**

Meeting with Evelyn Grimes. 9<sup>th</sup> August.

She is on the Snake River Byway Committee with Brian Billingsley. They have funding and want to find out if the Snake River Byway is generating income and how much. Big cross over with this Ag Grant.

### **10<sup>th</sup> August: Idaho Environmental Forum Conference/Teri Ottens**

It covered the EPA guidance note to the Clean Water Act. I met Terri Ottens. another member of the Snake River Scenic Byway Committee at the IEF conference. She used to be a planner and was working on Agricultural Preservation in Canyon County until recently. She is very keen to talk to us and was heavily involved with the Agricultural Easements. I think her experience could be invaluable in helping us come up with workable proposals for changes to policy.

Clean water is needed for agriculture, aquaculture and personal use. At the IEF Conference Mark Ryan of the EPA and Murray Feldman of Holland and Hart talked about the new Clean Water Act guidelines which are expected to come out in a couple of months. Irrigation water is covered by the Act. So is runoff from agricultural land. He mentioned that you'd be hard pressed to find a water-way in the western US which has not been manipulated by humans. Exceptions to the act will be expanded by the new guidelines. I'll look at the EPA website for information. There are significant economic implications for farmers with regard to water storage and spill prevention control which could affect economic viability and the ability to get insurance. The American Farm Bureau Assoc. and The Fertilizer Institute are worried about the implications of these guidelines. They are keen to establish clarity in the guidelines with regard to the scope of coverage and actions needed to meet the guidelines. No one thinks that leaving it to litigation to resolve these issues is a good idea, considering that it is a Supreme Court ruling which muddied the waters in the first place. They are also concerned that the guidelines will not be law and therefore not enforceable.

**16<sup>th</sup> August Idaho's Emerging Wine Industry Ron Bitner.**

There is a heavy reliance on immigrant workers to make the work profitable. Is growing tremendously in size and wines are becoming more sophisticated. Could be a big draw for tourism.

**23<sup>rd</sup> August: Terri Ottens, Snake River Byway Committee. Canyon County Agricultural Preservation expert.**

City planners and farmers and politicians alike became very concerned about the rapid loss of agricultural land in Canyon County during the boom years. They carried out studies to assess the cost of maintaining services and whether becoming a bedroom community for Boise gave them a viable tax base. They found that residential development alone gave a poor tax income and could not support the services it needs by itself. They surveyed locals to find out how much they valued farmland and whether they would contribute through taxes to preserve it. They got a positive response. They found that all the Tech companies in Canyon County left so Canyon is struggling to maintain a sensible employment base. Maybe it's not the best place for mass housing. Looked at TDR's and decided that they don't work in Canyon County. Not enough pressure for dense development. Is big opposition to more planning based restrictions .

**24<sup>th</sup> August: Barbara Perry Bauer, TAG Historical research and Consulting, Expert on History of the development of the Treasure Valley.**

Discussed dams and irrigation and how they continue to play a part in development today. Talked about the location of rail lines and the struggle to establish towns here.

**2<sup>nd</sup> September: Dave Krick, Bittercreek Alehouse and Red Feather Lounge Symposium on Food Security. Boise ID.**

Making a local food restaurant pay depends on rethinking the way you do things from the ground up. If you don't you can't make it pay. His biggest influences have been how to reduce energy use and wasted food etc. Local food is the buzz word with chefs right now. People want it and appreciate the taste. He's aiming for 75% local food by 2016. Very difficult target. If you keep it local the local economy benefits. One in three trucks on our roads is carrying food.

**21<sup>st</sup> September: John Tracy, Idaho Water Resources Research Institute.**

Agriculture and city life would not be viable here except for the federal government and private investment which went into the extensive network of canals dams and lakes.

The water table in the Treasure Valley is kept artificially high because of leakage from the canal system.

This is the best place to farm because don't need to use wells which drain the aquifer. The aquifer in this part of the Treasure Valley is easily recharged. However the aquifer in the Mountain Home and Gooding area (one of our most productive areas in the state is completely dependent on wells and the aquifer



cannot be recharged there so the water table is dropping dramatically. Agriculture in many areas southeast of the Treasure Valley is not viable. Development south of Boise is unlikely because although there is land it's too hard to excavate for construction and there is no water.

Water from irrigation canals is supposed to be for agriculture only. They made an exception for private lawns because they are grass and there are turf farms in the valley. So Domestic water has to come from the City Supply .Maybe we should close this loophole so that large lots would become too expensive to water with city water and demand would decrease. Demand for water from canals has remained steady even though the use of land has changed to residential from agricultural.

A recent study shows that there is enough water for 8 million people ( and no agriculture ) in the valley. This local economy is not driven by the need for water like California. In fact California may be demanding access to our water before long. He thinks we should establish an organization which helps to mediate water needs before we really need it and disputes arise over water needs.

Amount of Prime Ag land not the availability of water is the limiting factor so long as the climate remains the same and we can continue to collect enough annual snow melt.

#### **26<sup>th</sup> September: Cody Riddle Urban Agriculture Committee: Boise City Development Services.**

He considers Boise's zoning ordinance to be very dated and Euclidean in nature. It is inhibiting sensible progress City decided to revise the Urban Agriculture ordinance because it's outdated and many people have more chickens than three without it causing any nuisance. There is no reason to prevent sale or giving away of extra food from gardens and this is currently prohibited. There's how Planning and Zoning ordinances should change. As they pulled together the ordinance they realized there is no practical difference between back yard agriculture and urban agriculture on ½ an acre. It is not a nuisance should be encouraged. Large animals are still not permitted only chickens goats, rabbits and bees.

Still won't be allowing roosters. Someone commented that their neighbor's dog barking was more of a nuisance than a rooster would be. The ordinance will set reasonable parameters and protect rights of those farming and farmed next to.

Front yards should be available for cultivation. They don't need to stop being used in winter (some people grow winter vegetables) but they do need to be kept tidy.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> October: Chad Stevens, Chicken coop builder and chicken keeper. Tour de Coup, Boise**

Has his coup at the front of his house near the street. It's beautiful. There is no nuisance to neighbors. Very small only a few square feet. Keeping chickens is very compatible with urban living. His home is in an older neighborhood about 3 miles from downtown Boise. He has a fenced in yard which is normal for the neighborhood.

#### **6<sup>th</sup> October Maria Minnicucci and Cheyne Weston, Boise City Parks and Recreation.**

An HOA is running a Community Garden on their land at Borah Park. They leased the land to them and have helped them get it ready to farm but currently don't really have an official remit or resources to do more. Maria see's this activity is building community. She is supportive because she sees it as part of the

Parks and Recreation's mission to encourage outdoor interaction between members of the community in an equitable and healthy manner. She sees potential for more of these. Other forms of land use to do with urban agriculture could be accommodated on their land in places. They are currently leasing 260 acres to farmers but this more of a money management plan. If the market changes they may need to sell this land for building to keep Parks and Recreation afloat.

They would prefer that community gardens did not happen in parks because there are conflicts of purpose. The need to be tidy. The need to kill invasive species. Access is not easy sometimes with vehicles. Not all community gardens are chemicals free. Toxicity could be a problem. Parks have very careful regime to minimize chemical use. Irrigation is on a timer so gardeners have limited water use. Contrary to immediate thought there is not enough parkland to meet all the demands. Currently Sports are a priority. Slow moving organization. Things have to be put in the Capital improvement plan which is on a two year cycle. The Parks Comprehensive plan is revised every 6 years. Just starting a public consultation cycle now.

She raised the idea of using tax levy's to buy Ag land. She thinks it is appropriate.

**7<sup>th</sup> October: Peter Oliver and Al Marino Thornton Oliver Keller.**

This company specializes in commercial real estate and property management. They collect data on the local property market to analyze the current position and direct their clients and investments. They gave us information on the amount of vacant land and vacant properties in Ada and Canyon Counties. They track this data because it is not easily available in a non disclosure state and it gives them a commercial edge. Data excludes any building type that you can't rent out. Also excludes any land the owner has not decided to rent or sell. Is still a 3 month inventory of vacant homes They expect development for residential to be stalled for the next five years. Land south of Boise is volcanic rock and difficult to route services through.

**7<sup>th</sup> October: Tim Breuer: Land Trust of the Treasure Valley.**

There are only two agricultural easements in Canyon County and none in Ada County. The reasons are that owners don't want to tie up their land. They want their to be able to decide what to do with it after they are gone. The land appraisal value drops after an easement is signed. Get a tax benefit on the land after the easement is signed. Easements are administered by a trust that could be the Land Trust. Was talk of using easements to make land available for farming in cities. But then someone has to farm it every year or it becomes a weed patch. Culture of being rule-averse here. Therefore comprehensive plan includes language that talks about wanting to maintain agricultural land but there is no one who wants to put policies in place to achieve this. Thinks that zoning ordinances are the most effective tool for agricultural land preservation. He described the cascade effect of farmers selling their land located in the middle of nowhere but in the city's area of impact. The city is obliged to service that area but they can't afford it. The Land Trust has been educating local cities about this. If Ag Land cannot be easily rezoned for residential/commercial it will not be attractive to developers. Lots of farm land in city limits which was bought speculatively is in the ownership of banks and farmers have bought it back for 20c on the dollar. Maybe the market is self adjusting. The Land Trust doesn't spend much time on Ag land preservation. Their focus is on conservation.

**13<sup>th</sup> October: Mellissa Hamilton University of Idaho, Presented on Community Gardens at the APA Idaho conference in Moscow.**

Talked about the amount of social capital that community gardening generates.

**26<sup>th</sup> October: Andrew Townsend, Economist, Idaho Department of Labor.**

Their figures mostly reflect big agriculture because they can afford to employ people. Still most farmers do not have employees so they adjust the figures to account for workers who are seasonal or the children of farmers.

Distribution is mostly local wholesale so growth in this could indicate less dependence on trucks coming in from out of state.

Processing has decreased. He's going to check why this is with a colleague. Could be that volume of processing is not changing but technological advancement and employment efficiencies are getting better. Maybe shedding management positions.

Support jobs are people who support the needs of farmers. You may expect these jobs to change as more sustainable jobs come on line. We could do graph of these jobs to see how they change over time as a benchmark for growth of local agriculture.

Many Ag Companies are based in Boise so Ada employment figures could be inflated because ag companies may choose to report that all their employees are in Ada county when they are spread amongst more locations outside the county.

He has no data on the demand for local food. No Anecdotes Thinks we need a Focus group to get at the potential for growth in jobs in this area. Employees in CSA's are not included. Another area for Focus group.

Has no way evidence regarding a whether a training gap in the workforce is preventing growth in local food production.

Department of Labor has funds and would be willing to support programs like internships for farmers or training if a need is established.

**26<sup>th</sup> October: Sierra Club Panel. Ariel Agenbroad: University of Idaho Canyon County Extension. Casey O'Leary, Susan Medlin, TVFC.**

Ariel has links with the community gardening community in Canyon County.

Casey O'Leary is a young local farmer who talked about her problems making ends meets in an economic environment tilted towards the large scale farmer who contracts to national and global markets. She is having trouble leasing enough land. Owners don't want to commit it to her use for long enough for her to improve it. Lots of people believe they buy local food when they don't.. Farming is her

love, Landscaping is her income. Funny that people will pay her more to look after their lawn than grow their food. Subsidy regime has to change for local farming to take off.

Susan Medlin talked about the need for an organization which would pursue and maintain Agricultural Land Easements. The Land Trust is not prioritizing conservation easements and anyway these are for conserving land and habitats. Regular farming constantly disturbs habitats. How do we get financial enthusiasm for maintaining Ag land if not through a desire for local food. Politicians are not really aware of this issue yet . Talked about matchmaking land with gardeners through an online database.

**22 December 2011: Gary Christensen, Cheri, Claire, Stirling and Steve. LDS Cannery. Chris Florence, Sweet Valley Organics**

Local farmers and the Treasure Valley Food Coalition toured the cannery to better appreciate the facilities and land needed for processing on a local scale. The group concluded that they would need at least two plants of about this size or smaller. One would be for vegetables and fruit and the other for meat. That way the USDA and FSA standards would be easier to meet. The Food Safety concerns are very real and they appreciated the level of diligence required to achieve them. Nevertheless the regulations do add considerable cost to operations. There is a huge concern that even though there is a need for a facility like this, adequate funding is so far out of reach that local farmers whose incomes are small will not be able to achieve this. Chris Florence is keen to pursue this but see's the enormity of the task. Who will step up and fund this?