



Harvest Share

*A food recovery program for the
distribution of fruit tree and
garden surplus*

The harvest is abundant, yet so is the need.



**Creston Valley
Food Action Coalition**

Creston Valley Food Action Coalition

HARVEST SHARE PROGRAM *for distribution of fruit tree and garden surplus* **2008**

HARVEST SHARE PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

Background:

The Creston Valley in the southern interior of British Columbia enjoys a rich agricultural heritage as its geographic location, climate, topography, and access to fresh water allow for the production of a bounty of fresh fruits and vegetables, grains, dairy and livestock. The first apple orchards were planted in the valley in 1901. By the early 1920s the neighbouring community of Wynndel had earned the title of “Strawberry Capital of the World”. In 1935, in anticipation of a 165,000 bushel wheat crop, Creston's first grain elevator was built¹. Throughout the following decades commercial enterprises have come and gone but agriculture has remained the valley's primary industry.

Today, the Creston area, including the communities of Erickson, Lister, Canyon, and Wynndel, with a combined population of over 14,000, is home to more than 100 commercial producers of tree fruits such as apples, cherries, peaches, nectarines, pears, plums; berries such as strawberries, Saskatoon berries, and blueberries; vegetables such as asparagus, tomatoes, and potatoes; feed grains; and livestock². The agricultural tradition is not limited to business operations alone, as backyard gardens, mini-orchards and greenhouses are popular sights. Many residents choose to live in this valley because of the climate and food production opportunities.

Program Rationale:

Decades ago, when the Creston community was significantly smaller and more reliant on local produce as a primary food source, people would rally around the farmers to harvest and distribute food. Historical information at the Creston and District Museum and Archives notes, “Occasionally, the harvest was so good that the entire town was closed to help bring in the apple crop, and the Fall Fair was cancelled so that the Recreation Centre could be used to store [the apples].”¹

¹Creston and District Museum

²Statistics Canada 2006 census data

Over the years, the industrialization of farming and commodification of foodstuffs changed the landscape. Today, the sheer number and size of commercial operations demand less reliance on the community and greater dependence on migrant workers to get produce to market. Additionally, the growth in local population not directly or actively involved in agriculture, and the ever-increasing reliance on food importation and the consequent separation from our food system, have all contributed to a disconnect between resident farmers and non-farmers. As a result, Creston is a community where there is such bounty that tonnes of fresh produce falls to the ground unharvested. Yet within this conspicuous abundance some people do not have enough to eat.

Although agriculture remains a major valley industry, and most area residents are fortunate enough to benefit from the abundance, not all community members have access to the fresh, healthy food produced here. The Creston Valley Gleaners Food Bank, an organization that was itself founded to collect food from local farmers and share it with families in need, currently distributes nearly 3000 food packages annually to people who do not have enough to eat³. The Creston Valley Ministerial Association, representing Creston area churches, assists others, the United Church offers free luncheons to the needy, and other community service organizations play an additional role in ensuring our citizens have enough to eat. As a community that is home to many elderly people (approximately 25% of the population is 65 years of age and over), limited mobility may also reduce local food access for some. As well, single parent families account for 13% of the local citizenry, another segment of the population to face food security issues.² Finally, the Creston Valley Food Action Coalition, initiator of this *Harvest Share* program, was originally formed out of a desire to feed hungry children as identified by a local school principal. The current economic downturn, unemployment, underemployment, and physical and mental challenges are aggravating factors.

The harvest is abundant, yet so is the need. And in this land of plenty there is no reason for anyone to go hungry.

Program Goals:

The program aims to achieve a variety of socio-economic and environmental goals:

- To reduce waste
- To support families and individuals in need

³Creston Valley Gleaners Society

- To reduce wildlife attractants
- To reduce our carbon footprint related to food consumption

Program Overview:

Harvest Share is a food recovery system designed to capture and redirect fresh fruits, vegetables and nuts that may otherwise go to waste and get these foods into the hands of people who need it. The program involves identifying produce to be rescued, recruiting volunteers to assist with picking and transportation, and distribution of this produce to various social service agencies, and ultimately, the end users. The project will also encompass small-scale processing of produce, extending the availability of these healthy foods.

This report will serve as a detailed manual for implementing the *Harvest Share* process in three phases:

- Phase One: Donation Encouragement
- Phase Two: Gleaning and Distribution of Fruit Tree & Garden Surplus
- Phase Three: Small-Scale Processing

Partners:

The *Harvest Share* program, although spearheaded by the Food Action Coalition, will develop to become a collaborative effort between many area community service providers, such as the Kootenai Community Centre Society, the Creston Ministerial Association, Community Resources Centre, and the Gleaners Food Bank. Additionally, other community organizations able to identify excess produce and people in need, such as the Creston Agricultural Society, Service BC, Interior Health, Ktunaxa First Nation, Community Action Program for Children, College of the Rockies Community Greenhouse, Creston Community Gardens, Kootenay Employment Services, and area schools will be involved in the various implementation phases.

To meet conservation and wildlife conflict reduction goals the Food Action Coalition has also partnered with the Bear Aware and BC Conservation Foundation to identify high risk areas that will benefit from fruit, vegetable and nut gleaning.

Resources:

The Creston Valley Food Action Coalition thanks the Town of Creston (Union of British Columbia Municipalities) and Columbia Basin Trust for providing funds to develop this program.

The CVFAC thanks the BC Conservation Foundation Bear Aware program for providing funds for picking equipment and support for identifying high risk bear/human conflict areas.

The Creston Valley Food Action Coalition acknowledges the following organizations for their invaluable assistance in developing the *Harvest Share* program:

- The Nelson Food Cupboard
- Lush Valley Food Action Society
- Kamloops Food Policy Council
- BC Food Systems Network

HARVEST SHARE PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Phase One: Donation Encouragement

A fruit tree/garden food recovery system requires the cooperation of a number of individuals and organizations: picking volunteers, transportation volunteers, receiving agencies and the coordinating agency. It may take a number of months to fully develop a program and ensure all the elements are in place. However, orchard and garden produce does not wait. If a full program cannot be implemented before the critical harvest period, it is recommended that a 'donation encouragement' phase be applied.

To implement the Donation Encouragement phase:

1. Identify and communicate with community agencies that may be interested in receiving perishable food donations, such as food banks, shelters, church groups, outreach organizations, early childhood education agencies, etc.
2. Design an advertising appeal campaign to reach individuals that expect surplus produce. Investigate newspapers, radio and television stations for public service announcements, write an article for the local newspaper, make presentations at church groups, community groups, and schools, post notices on community web sites, develop a web forum, compile a list of email contacts, make and distribute posters. Educate people as to the need to capture and redistribute surplus produce. Ensure potential donors are aware of the British Columbia *Food Donor Encouragement Act (Bill 10-1997)* protecting those who donate from liability. (Appendix A)

3. Create means of thanking food donors such as a mailed card, a social event, or newspaper notice, etc.

These three steps are all that will be required to implement the *Donation Encouragement* phase, however, additional steps may be desirable in areas where commercial food production exists:

4. Identify community agencies that would be willing to accept larger volume donations (eg., from a commercial orchard), should they become available. This step may be implemented easily if a receiving agency possessed telephone and/or email contact information for needy individuals capable of using volume produce quickly or preserving (canning, dehydrating, freezing) for later use.
5. Communicate with farmers and orchard owners the ability of receiving agencies to accept volume surplus and provide contact information.

Phase Two: Gleaning and Distribution of Fruit Tree & Garden Surplus

Phase Two of the *Harvest Share* program may be implemented as an expansion of Phase One, but might also be applied without first having gone through Phase One. Phase Two requires considerably more coordination, resources and community involvement than Phase One. Phase Two will involve:

- Recruiting picking volunteers
- Identifying surplus
- Harvest/collection
- Transportation
- Distribution

It is recommended that at one person be hired to coordinate the *Harvest Share* efforts for the harvest season (June through October), to recruit picking volunteers and produce donors, line up receiving agencies, transportation, etc. Two sample coordinator job descriptions are attached for information (Appendix B-1 and B-2).

The overall premise of *Harvest Share* is that volunteers will be recruited to pick surplus produce; that produce being shared equally between the donor, the pickers and a social service agency such as a food bank. It is possible that donors have taken all the produce they need and in these cases, produce will be

shared equally with the pickers and agencies.

This phase of *Harvest Share* must also take into consideration two different types of donors – backyard garden/fruit tree donations, and commercial orchard donations. The *Harvest Share* program must ensure that it does not interfere or seem to interfere with the business of commercial operations. The concern of area farmers is that people may begin to assume that if they wait long enough, produce will be available for free. This would have a detrimental effect on the income of commercial farms and would send a negative message about what a *Harvest Share* program intends to accomplish. Already, farmers and packing houses have no shortage of people asking for end-of-season or cull donations. For this reason, any surplus coming from a commercial operation should be donated strictly to an agency or agencies, and not be shared with pickers unless first approved by the orchard owner.

Recruiting Picking Volunteers

The success of the *Harvest Share* will depend on the volunteers recruited to harvest surplus produce. Educate people as to the need to capture and redistribute surplus produce, and that by helping others they may also help themselves. To recruit harvesting volunteers:

- Speak with farmers to provide a clear understanding of what the goals of the *Harvest Share* program are and how they may participate without harming revenues.
- Design an advertising appeal campaign to reach individuals interested in picking for a share in the harvest.
- Investigate newspapers, radio and television stations for public service announcement opportunities.
- Write an article for the local newspaper.
- Make presentations at church groups, community groups, and schools.
- Post notices on community web sites, develop a web forum, compile a list of email contacts.
- Make and distribute posters.
- Rent a table at the farmer's market and applicable public events such as trade fairs and seasonal show such as a Home and Garden Show.
- Include receiving agencies in recruiting efforts. Food bank clients and those visiting other agencies should also be aware of the opportunity to pick surplus produce. Consult with agencies to determine how *Harvest Share* may be used to encourage increased self-reliance.
- Ensure all messaging clearly states the difference between backyard surplus sharing and

commercial orchard/farm donation.

- Create clear contact information to make it easy for people to volunteer. Have sign-up sheets at each event, a dedicated phone number and an email address. Create a database of potential pickers.
- Ensure pickers that adequate training will be provided and that the signing of a indemnity waiver is mandatory.

Challenges

In the Creston valley there is no shortage of surplus, and based on initial research, identifying those willing to donate should not be difficult. The challenge will be to recruit enough picking volunteers to handle the potential. Building a database of potential pickers well in advance of harvest season will provide an understanding of how many donors may be accommodated. As with any volunteer operation it is possible that even after indicating interest and commitment, volunteers may not actually be available on the picking date. Recruit enough harvesters to ensure there are 6-8 people confirmed for each fruit tree pick.

Identifying Surplus

The idea for the *Harvest Share* program came forward because of the knowledge that the Creston community creates immense seasonal abundance and surplus. Identifying food donors should not be problematic. Attract donor volunteers as part of the same recruiting techniques used for identifying volunteers as listed above.

- Have a checklist or information gathering sheet prepared that collects data such as name, address, type of surplus available, anticipated date for picking, pest management, if any. A sample Fruit Tree Owner Registration form is attached (Appendix C).
- Ensure those that have trees to be picked provide adequate notice of picking date as picking volunteers will have to be notified and assembled in advance.
- Create a database of potential donors.

Regarding pest management, other centres implementing this type of produce rescue program have learned through experience to accept only disease-free and insect-free produce. Organic fruits and vegetables are welcome, but they must have been managed to ensure there are no pests or disease

present. Additionally, commercial orchard culls may be come available. Culls are acceptable for donation as long as they are insect and disease free. All people deserve to eat top quality produce.

Challenges

- It is imperative that potential donors understand the difference between the harvest and distribution system for backyard surplus versus commercial farm/orchard surplus. The potential exists for misunderstanding and consequent alienation of farmers. All promotional information (presentations, posters, articles, advertisements, public service announcements, etc.) must be clear to differentiate between harvest *share* (backyard) and harvest *donation* (farm).
- The intention of this program is to provide those in need with fresh, quality produce. There may be a potential for some to view this program as a means of disposing of overripe, diseased or insect-infested produce. Organizers must be clear and consistent with their message that only top quality produce will be accepted.

Harvest/Collection

Prior to any harvest taking place the *Harvest* Share coordinating agency must:

- have suitable liability insurance in place,
- provide adequate training for volunteers and donors alike to ensure everyone's needs are met,
- have picking equipment on hand in the event the donor does not have the required equipment. This will include picking ladders, picking poles, totes or lugs, and a means of transporting this equipment to the picking site,
- host an orientation session for pickers. This session should cover basics, such as how communication will be received about a picking site, on-site conduct, picking techniques, what to bring to transport produce, transportation, etc. A sample orientation form is attached for information (Appendix D),
- have each volunteer picker sign an indemnity waiver. A sample waiver form is attached for information (Appendix E).

Before each picking appointment the coordinator must:

- visit the picking site to assess quality of produce, ensure conditions of safety, determine what picking equipment may be necessary, and how many volunteers will be required, and what clean-up procedures (composting, etc.) are in place.

- contact volunteer pickers and provide detailed information as to where, when, what to bring, etc. Volunteers should be asked to make contact if they are unable to keep the picking appointment, but it is important to realize that although pickers may indicate a commitment, some may not actually show up for the picking appointment. Be sure to recruit enough pickers that if a few don't show up the job can still be done safely in a reasonable amount of time. Encourage car-pooling arrangements between picking volunteers.
- contact receiving agencies and inform them of quantity expected and arrange an appropriate delivery time.

On the day of the picking appointment, the coordinator must:

- arrive at the picking site early with adequate time to assemble equipment and ensure quality of produce,
- be vigilant in overseeing the picking operations; the safety of all volunteers being paramount,
- ensure picking site is left clean, equipment is stored, and that donor is happy with result,
- transport or arrange for transport of produce to receiving agencies or central depot,
- create a report of each pick to be included in end-of-season report.

Challenges

- Funds will be required to purchase liability insurance, picking equipment, orientation and training resources, transportation costs, and communication (cell phone). And as gasoline prices continue to increase, fuel costs due to transportation may also become an issue.
- It is possible that in an area of abundant agricultural production – both hobby and commercial – there may be more donors than can be easily managed. For the program to be sustainable it is essential for the project coordinator to fairly judge what the volunteers are capable of handling and commit to no more. Any produce that is rescued is produce that is not being wasted. When setting priorities, the coordinator may want to first consider the needs of the Bear Aware program which aims to reduce human/bear conflict. Gleaning fruits from trees in high risk areas should take precedence.
- In the case of large donations, storage may become an issue. The coordinator must ensure that if produce is accepted it can be easily managed with existing facilities. If it becomes evident that additional infrastructure is required, the project may always be expanded in future years.
- A storage area for picking equipment such as ladders need also be considered.

Phase Three: Small-Scale Processing

When awareness of the *Harvest Share* program grows, it may be possible to rescue enough produce to start a small-scale processing facility to extend the availability of local foods. It is recommended that a processing facility take the form of a community kitchen for a variety of reasons:

- Food Action Coalition philosophy and mandate
- Current health regulations
- Availability of produce
- Existing facilities

A community kitchen is a resource for helping people feed themselves better in an economical manner. In a community kitchen, a number of people get together and cook (or preserve), learning kitchen skills that enable them to provide for themselves while saving money. Participants in a community kitchen develop the spirit of teamwork and build relationships. Because the foods that each community kitchen makes are divided among its members at the end of each kitchen session everyone goes home with the feeling of a job well done, and with well-made food.

Mandate. The philosophy of the *Harvest Share* program is to get healthy food into the hands of those that need it, and to increase self-reliance and local food security. The Food Action Coalition's motto, "Let's grow, let's eat, let's share", aligns it with others in the community service/social activism genre. Serving community needs, providing service, encouraging self-reliance, educating and skill building are CVFAC objectives shared with a number of other agencies in the valley. A community kitchen provides the opportunity to exercise a number of these shared objectives. A community kitchen, where all participants are given an opportunity to increase their food security, is in keeping with the CVFAC mandate.

Health regulations. Current British Columbia food health and safety regulations stipulate that any food prepared for domestic consumption by 'unknown others' must adhere to small-scale food processing standards, such as would be found in any small commercial food manufacturing facility, including licensing, laboratory testing, product labeling, etc. These standards assure the food safety of processed products. Any product not meeting these standards would not be usable for donation. In other words, fruits and/or vegetables processed in any facility not approved and licensed by a provincial health

authority could not be donated to a food bank or other social service agency for redistribution. The Food Donation Encouragement Act, mentioned above, is not intended to include the donation of canned or otherwise 'home-processed' products.

A community kitchen, on the other hand, provides an opportunity for people to congregate and cook for themselves, sharing what they cook, with very few special requirements. If the community kitchen enterprise operates in an existing commercial kitchen, the community kitchen must adhere to the regulations governing that commercial kitchen, which include the presence of a person holding a Food Safe Certificate, and conducting all kitchen use according to Food Safe guidelines. But, aside from liability insurance, on-site safety instruction, and the signing of waivers, a community kitchen would require no licenses or commercial food processing permits. It is important to identify the produce used as 'excess' rather than 'donation', however, so that health regulations do not apply. A community kitchen not only provides opportunities for cooking, but also for sharing knowledge such as delivering workshops on food preparation skills to increase knowledge of health and economy.

Availability of produce. A community kitchen is also ideal as the availability of produce for processing will be inconsistent. Large donations of top quality produce will happen periodically but not, at least initially, on a reliable schedule. Community kitchen participants could be contacted for short notice projects when fruits or vegetables become available.

Existing facilities. Currently in Creston there are a number of commercial kitchens that operate according to Interior Health regulations. It may be possible to rent these kitchens for the purpose of assisting people to cook and preserve for themselves. Additionally, some community residents have offered the use of their home for small group preserving and workshops. Making use of existing facilities rather than building or equipping a new facility is more financially prudent and sensible, and provides better avenues for partnering with other organizations and individuals to promote community food security.

Additional research needs to be conducted for operating a community kitchen and several good resources exist, such as those available through Kamloops Food Policy Council, but initial research shows that in terms of small-scale food processing, a community kitchen appears to be the recommended option. Further research should be conducted on a number of points, including: existing facility rental, insurance, provision of materials and supplies, participant criteria, food safety training,

fundraising, and communication.

CONCLUSION

A number of factors will contribute to the success of the Creston Valley Food Action Coalition *Harvest Share* program: the abundance of surplus fruits and vegetables; volunteers already having come forward expressing interest in both donating and picking; social service agencies indicating an interest in participating; the BC Conservation Foundation Bear Aware program donating initial picking equipment; successful models are in place in other communities; and commercial kitchen facilities are in already existence in Creston. For the first two phases of program implementation, challenges are few and should be easily overcome with proper planning and organization of the program. Phase three will require additional research and partnership building but there are positive indications that it will be possible to implement this phase as well. *Harvest Share*, under the direction of Food Action Coalition staff or board, with careful preparation and management, should enjoy many years of successful food recovery and community capacity building.

Completed by

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Appendix A

Food Donor Encouragement Act [SBC 1997] CHAPTER 8

Assented to May 26, 1997

Contents

Section

- 1 Liability of donor
- 2 Liability of director, agent, etc.
- 3 Application of Act

HER MAJESTY, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of British Columbia, enacts as follows:

Liability of donor

1 A person who donates food, or who distributes donated food, to another person is not liable for damages resulting from injuries or death caused by the consumption of the food unless

- (a) the food was adulterated, rotten or otherwise unfit for human consumption, and
- (b) in donating or distributing the food, the person intended to injure or to cause the death of any person who consumed the food or acted in reckless disregard for the safety of others.

Liability of director, agent, etc.

2 A director, agent or employee of a corporation, or a volunteer who provides services or assistance to a corporation, that donates food or that distributes donated food is not liable for damages resulting from injuries or death caused by the consumption of the food unless

- (a) the food was adulterated, rotten or otherwise unfit for human consumption, and
- (b) in donating or distributing the food, the director, agent, employee or volunteer intended to injure or to cause the death of any person who consumed the food or acted with reckless disregard for the safety of others.

Application of Act

3 This Act does not apply to a person who distributes donated food for profit.

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Appendix B-1

Gleaning Project Coordinator Job Description

SAMPLE

Calling anyone who loves rolling up their sleeves to pick, dig or pluck fresh produce, and enjoys working in a dynamic environment that supports people living on low-income.....let us hear from you!

This part-time, seasonal position is for 24 hours per week at @ \$14.00 per hour from the agreed start-date in July through to the end of October. Some flexibility in hours is mandatory as gleans need to be scheduled according to accessibility and convenience of farmer/yard owners and volunteer availability.

Required Duties of Gleaning Coordinator:

- Recruit, build and maintain relationships with existing and new farmers/donors and volunteers; maintain database with updated contact information
- Schedule gleaning times with farmers, homeowners and volunteers to harvest excess produce
- Be present at and participate in all gleans
- Contact local organizations (community, not-for-profit, businesses, faith-based) to recruit gleaning sites and volunteers
- Public presentations and attend community events to increase awareness of the gleaning project
- Connect with local organizations and people in the community concerned about food security issues to reduce food waste and contribute to the community
- Pre-arrange transportation and storage of produce with the Warehouse Manager
- Network with Volunteer Coordinator for all volunteer requirements
- Provide recipes or preparation idea handouts for “uncommon” fruits and vegetables (rutabagas, kale etc.) for distribution
- Record all produce gleaned
- Maintain communication (phone, email, fax) and thank you letters to those involved with gleaning
- Compile a final report at the end of gleaning season
- Additional job duties as assigned

Appendix B-2

Project Manager Job Description

SAMPLE

Responsible to:

- Coordinator as supervisor; and,
- Social service agencies, and volunteers, donors, and funders through service provision.

Working Environment:

Decision-making is carried out in a collaborative and consultative manner with the Coordinator. All activities will be carried out in a barrier free environment that promotes equality, respect, inclusion and individual empowerment. Coordinator is expected to be familiar with the local anti-poverty and food security movement and to maintain open communication and collaboration in the promotion of food security.

Priority Tasks and Responsibilities:

Program Refreshment:

- Update gleaning guidelines.
- Update website.
- Update publicity materials & disseminate them locally.
- Publicize program in local media.
- Contact social service agencies to assess their fresh produce needs & capacity.

Gleaning Coordination:

- Contact area farmers to tell them about opportunities.
- Respond to donor calls.
- Coordinate volunteer gleaning days & work-trade days on farms
- Inventory & assign cash values to all donations.
- Coordinate produce sharing amongst Nelson's social service agencies.

Donor Management:

- Contact past years' donors.
- Maintain a donor database.

Volunteer Management:

- Ensure an ongoing volunteer resource base through recruitment, training, scheduling, appreciation initiatives and volunteer support.
- Maintain a volunteer database to track hours volunteered.
- Encourage food bank customers to volunteer.

General Administration:

- Maintain all records necessary for reporting to funder and the Coordinator.
- General reception duties, photocopying, office supply errands; maintain computer functioning.

Communications:

- Maintain co-operative, open and respectful relationships with donors, community partners, volunteers, and the general public.
- Submit a short monthly report to the Coordinator for inclusion in the monthly newsletters.
- Maintain ongoing awareness of the program in the local media.
- Prepare & host informative presentations on the program to local groups & school classes.

Customer Involvement:

- Organize farm tours for customers to visit the 2 farms with which we have CSA shares.
- Coordinate food preservation workshops when produce is abundant:
- Publicize workshops.

Funder Requirements:

- Take high resolution digital photographs to highlight the program's activities.
- Write a newspaper articles upon completion of the program.
- Acknowledge funding in all print media work.

Project Evaluation:

- Compile final program report, including produce, donor & volunteer statistics, publicity log & lessons learned.

As time allows:

- With guidance and support from the Coordinator, research funding opportunities for next year.
- Assist private businesses fund raising on the program's behalf.

Appendix C

FRUIT TREE PROJECT
FRUIT TREE OWNER REGISTRATION

SAMPLE

DATE:

CONTACT INFO:

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Street Address:

Type of tree and variety (if known):

Approximate date fruit will be ripe:

How many pickers would you estimate are required?

How tall is the tree?

Do you have a ladder we can use?

Has the tree been sprayed?

When would be the most convenient time for pickers to come? Would you like to be there?

Is there a place to leave windfall fruit/compost on site?

Is there anything we should know regarding access? Powerlines, dogs, off limits areas?

Do you want pickers to leave you a third of the fruit?

Comments:

Appendix D

FRUIT TREE PROJECT Picker Orientation Information

SAMPLE

Welcome to the Fruit Tree Project! Thanks so much for being a volunteer.

HOW THE PROJECT WORKS: People who aren't going to pick their own fruit trees call us. We call our volunteers and the fruit gets picked and divided three ways (roughly) between the landowner, the picker and the drop-spot.

COMMUNICATION: This is key. If you have time to do a job, pick all the fruit that's there and make sure it gets to the drop-spot. **IF YOU DON'T HAVE TIME, JUST TELL US.** We won't be mad; we have lots of other pickers who can do it. Calling only takes a second. Getting back to us to let us know when a job is done and how it went is really important too. If any part of the process is not working for you then tell us how things could run more smoothly for you. We'll let you know if the landowner whose tree you're picking wants to hear from you before you show up to pick.

THE RISKS: So far, no one has been hurt. Still, it's important for you to know that there are risks involved when you pick fruit. Please read and sign the attached **waiver**. Turn it in as soon as you can. Please remember that your safety comes first. If a situation doesn't feel safe to you, you don't need to continue a job. Just let us know so that we can keep track.

LOGISTICS: EQUIPMENT AND TRANSPORTATION: You do not need to have a car to be a volunteer but it helps to coordinate with a driver in some way, ie. you pick it and someone else transports it at a later time. We can send you out in teams if you like. Before you go, grab some plastic bags or some cardboard boxes in which to carry the fruit.

PICKING TECHNIQUE AND JUDGING RIPENESS: All fruit with stems is picked with a "twist and lift" method. Grab the fruit, encompass it in your hand, give it a turn and lift it up in the opposite direction or towards the base of the branch. In terms of ripeness, the deepness of colour, firmness and taste will all tell you whether the fruit is ready. Even if fruit isn't all perfectly ripe it's wise to just get it all at once because you likely won't want to keep going back. Many types of fruit ripen off the tree.

SOME MORE NOTES ON HARVESTING:

One of the objectives of the Fruit Tree Project is to reduce the number of human-bear confrontations. Fruit is one of the major attractants of bears to our city, therefore we must do everything possible to ensure that fruit is not left out to attract bears. It is for this reason that we have instituted a policy of picking all fruit from the trees we harvest (unless it poses a risk to personal safety) and all windfall from the ground. Windfall and scarred or bruised fruit will be kept separate from good quality fruit, and will be used by local farmers for animal feed and/or compost.

Although it may be tempting to shake the tree in order to remove excess fruit, this is not to be done! Shaking the tree can cause serious damage to a tree's branches and root system. Tree-shaking also casts a very unprofessional light on the project, and may cause landowners to back out of the project.

It is important to us that your picking experience be a pleasant one, and we would like to point out once again that you are in no way expected to pick any site that you deem to be unsafe for any reason. We also expect landowners to treat pickers with respect while picking (and vice versa) for the valuable service you are providing. Should you come across any situation that you find unsafe or uncomfortable, please notify the project coordinators immediately!

- Please see the attached information on "**How to Pick Fruit**" by Abram Davis. It covers safety considerations, tree care and fruit quality, food safety and picking fruit for extended storage.

HAPPY HARVESTING!

Appendix E

**FRUIT TREE PROJECT
WAIVER**

INDEMNITY AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY

SAMPLE

I RECOGNIZE AND ACKNOWLEDGE that there are inherent risks and hazards involved in harvesting fruit. I agree to assume all such risks and hazards and bear all costs of medical attention. The following is a NON-EXCLUSIVE list of possible risks that could occur while volunteer fruit picking:

- falling from a tree
- falling off a ladder
- allergic reaction to an insect bite
- eye injuries related to being poked by a branch
- being struck by falling fruit or branches
- damage to another persons property

I HEREBY REMISE, RELEASE AND FOREVER DISCHARGE The Project, its employees, and all other participants from all manner of actions, causes of actions, claims and demands of whatsoever nature which I may have in respect to any injury, loss or expense I may sustain arising out of or in any way connected with my participation as a volunteer with this Project.

I HAVE READ THIS INDEMNITY AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY AND ACCEPT ITS TERMS

Name of Volunteer

Date

Signature of Volunteer