



Sno-Valley Tilth Annual Report 2007

Our fifth year as a Tilth chapter continued to bring us growth and success. This year we focused on growing the Carnation Farmers Market and on involving a greater number of community members in our education and activities. We continue to mature as an organization and the hiring of an executive director has allowed us to expand our mission and range of influence.

Chapter Business

Executive Board Elected February 2007

President: Kate Halstead, Rocky Prairie Herb Gardens

Vice President: Amy Turner, Blue Dog Farm

Secretary: Laura Casey, Changing Seasons Farm

Treasurer: Andrew Stout, Full Circle Farm

Member at Large: Claire Foster, Stuart Landing

WA Tilth Rep

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Executive Director: Heidi Bohan

Carnation Farmers Market

This was our fourth market season and our first with Heidi Bohan as the market manager. Under her leadership, gross sales at the market were up 40% over 2006 and both vendor and customer counts were above 2006 levels. The market focused especially on marketing and new vendor recruitment and in addition to vendor space, the market provides a weekly space for local non-profits to educate the public regarding their efforts

Membership

We conducted monthly membership meetings from November through April, preceded by an informal potluck dinner to build community and give opportunity for non-members to meet our farmers. In addition to business meetings, our gatherings included educational programs on beekeeping, potato and tomato growing and breeding opportunities, supporting bat habitat, marketing for small farmers, the benefits of and how to create hedgerows, and a resource fair for small farmers (featuring new farmers market opportunities, USDA Rural Management Agency, Stewardship Partners, WSDA Small Farms Program, WSU Small Farms Program, King Conservation District, King County Ag./ Puget Sound Fresh, and WSU King County Extension). Over 50 people attended some meetings. SVT maintains an email listserv that promotes communication between members and between the membership and outside resources. 2007 registered membership was 45 individuals and organizations up 12% from the previous year.

Community Outreach

A strong focus of the Sno-Valley Tilth is community outreach. We achieve this goal both through active involvement in events and workshops and collaboration with supportive agencies to help educate and change policy in benefit of sustainable agriculture.

This year we participated in the Duvall Civic Club Plant Sale, spreading the word about our meetings and the market in addition to selling organic vegetable and ornamental plant starts. SVT also hosted educational seminars on espalier pruning and training techniques on grafting.

Submitted a letter of intent for the Carolyn Foundation's Puget Sound Food Project, proposing the development of a local USDA-inspected poultry slaughter facility, the development of a targeted marketing program to educate consumers as to the value of local, organic, and grass-fed poultry, and the development of an educational resource to help farmers with fertility management strategies to reduce outside fertilizer use while ensuring water quality.

Submitted a grant application in cooperation with the city of Carnation for funding to build commercial kitchen and permanent market shelter structures at the Carnation Farmers Market site. Committed to coordinating the use of the kitchen for a term of at least 10 years.

Participated in ongoing efforts to lobby the King County Council in favor of allowing new agriculture-related, flood-friendly infrastructure in the Snoqualmie Valley flood plain in order to support new farm creation. Additionally, we lobbied for the creation of an Ecological-Agricultural Preserve in the Snoqualmie Valley Agricultural Production District. Within that preserve would be a universal focus on encouraging, assisting, and expanding sustainable and organic food, forage, and fiber production to nurture the people of the Puget Sound region.