



Growing Forward 2

Dehcho Region Report

2016

Canada/Northwest Territories



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Executive Summary

The Department of Industry, Tourism, and Investment – Dehcho Regional Office, under the Trade and Investment Division, administers and implements different components of the Growing Forward 2 Program. The following programs were delivered to the communities based on each community's needs and requirements:

- Small Scale Foods Program
- Traditional Harvest Program (Take A Kid Gardening and Community Harvests)
- Agriculture and Human Resource Development Program

These programs were also delivered hand-in-hand with the Northern Food Development Program specific to Agriculture Development Infrastructure.

The regional office hired an Agriculture Coordinator to work with each of the communities preceding the planting season until after the harvest. This individual works with the communities to assess their needs and wants based on each community's interests and commitments to their respective projects. Ongoing communication with the garden coordinators, band managers/SAOs, and community visits throughout the season help to shape how the individual projects and workshops are implemented, administered, and delivered.

As part of Agriculture Promotion and Awareness, the Regional Office delivered school-based workshops offered during the growing and non-growing season. The agriculture and food-growing successes and accomplishments of each community were recognized through newspaper articles, fall harvest fair, and community feasts. These events were very well attended by the public, recognizing the delivery of our programs while maintaining an excellent working relationship with the leaders and members of each community.

The goal of the Growing Forward 2– Small Scale Food Program partnered with the Northern Food Development Program is to assist the communities in developing and enhancing local food production by



Executive Summary

providing support – including materials and equipment – to create sustainable community gardens that can be utilized every year.

ITI Regional Office accomplished its objectives by delivering the following activities:

1. Four visits to each community including the Take a Kid Gardening workshops.
2. Organized garden workshops and advisory services to community members who maintained vegetable gardens in their yards.
3. Supported community garden coordinators as needed to answer questions and provide guidance.
4. Provided seeds and transplants for each community.
5. Provided and distributed of a variety of perennial berry bushes for each community.
6. Assisted in the maintenance and expansion of the community gardens.
7. Provided funding to purchase seeds, fertilizers, garden sheds, tools, and equipment.
8. Developed a library of gardening books at the ITI regional office.
9. Provided copies of garden books to schools and Band Offices in all the communities for their libraries. Community members can borrow books from their respective school/Band Office.
10. Established and maintained three demonstration garden plots at the ITI office.
11. Collaboration with clients in Checkpoint and Lindberg Landing, both actively involved in vegetable gardening.
12. Hosted agriculture fairs in Fort Simpson and Fort Liard for the purpose of providing condensed workshops for community members from an assortment of instructors.

Well-being is a benefit of gardening that is difficult to measure but is recognized by many. The ITI vegetable garden maintained by the staff is an example of our commitment to and awareness of the program that demonstrates what we are trying to convey to the public. Comments on beauty and enjoyment of the garden were numerous.



Agriculture Fairs

This year ITI hosted two agriculture fairs; one in Fort Simpson and one in Fort Liard. These events were held over two days in order to maximize the number of participants. Guest presenters included the Northern Farm Training Institute (NFTI), Ecology North, and Tamarah Pellissey. The topics were broad-ranging and included composting, wild plants and their uses, food preservation, creating a northern berry orchard, soils & seeds, and garden design. Art workshops were also held concurrently, creating a relaxing and casual atmosphere. Special guests at the Fort Simpson fair were chickens, a young goat, and a sheep which were all popular with the children who attended.





Agriculture Fairs





Fort Liard

Fort Liard has established a community garden by the airport road which currently has 10 raised beds surrounded by an orange snow fence which is in place to deter the local bison herd from accessing the garden. Due to a marked increase in interest in the community garden there are plans to expand the number of raised beds available for community members. An in-ground potato patch was added to the garden as well. Echo Dene School has three garden boxes which they are using under the Take a Kid Gardening program.

Seed Starting Workshop





Fort Liard

Planting Workshop





Fort Liard

Food Preservation Workshop





Fort Simpson

The Fort Simpson Community Garden Society was established in the summer of 2011 with the assistance of the ITI Regional Office. There are currently two community garden sites in Fort Simpson after the discontinuation of the Wild Rose garden:

Four Miles – maintained by the homesteaders in the same area.

Main Site – maintains 51 garden boxes, communal planting areas, a school planting area, and 34 active members

The main garden is currently in its second year at a new location by the Seven Spruce Golf Course after moving from the Papal site in the Fall of 2014. This transition continues to be ongoing as the Fort Simpson Community Garden Society enhances its infrastructure in respects to storage and fencing.

Two businesses located in Checkpoint and Lindberg Landing are actively maintaining agricultural plots. In addition, there are now two agriculture businesses within the village of Fort Simpson. Forest Gate Greenhouse Gardens opened to the public in the spring of 2016 and provides vegetables, herbs, flowers, wild-crafted teas, and hemp soaps. Dehcho Gardens is in its second year of operation and grows root vegetables such as potatoes, carrots, beets, and turnips for sale.





Fort Simpson

Food Preservation Workshop





Fort Simpson

Bompas Elementary School Take A Kid Gardening

All classes at Bompas Elementary School participated in the in-class seed starting program in the spring which saw students planting a variety of seeds which they then tended and watched grow. The lessons learned in the classroom were then transferred to an outdoor setting during the annual spring culture camp where students planted potatoes, onion sets, cabbage transplants, and several types of root vegetable seeds.





Jean Marie River

The community of Jean Marie River used to have a community garden close to the band office until housing sites were installed on the site. In 2013, the community members had identified a new location close to the river where water can be easily accessed. The community garden is approximately 2,000 sq. ft. and is protected by a sturdy wooden fence. An elevated platform for the water tank helps provide pressure for the water hose. The garden uses a combination of both raised beds and in-ground planting.

Seed Starting Workshop





Jean Marie River

Planting Workshop



Food Preservation Workshop





Nahanni Butte

In the summer of 2015 the community garden was reestablished at its original site prior to the flood of 2012, after being temporarily moved to a space near the arbor. A chain-link fence was installed around the 50'x50' perimeter to discourage the local herd of bison from trampling the garden. With the assistance of ITI, a small greenhouse was purchased in order to extend the growing season. A platform is being constructed for the water tank in order to increase pressure for the hose.

Seed Starting Workshop





Nahanni Butte

Planting Workshop





Nahanni Butte

Garden Maintenance Workshop



Food Preservation Workshop





Sambaa K'e

The community of Sambaa K'e has maintained their community garden for almost 20 years now. In those years the community garden was abundant in their produce, specifically on cabbage. According to the locals, they would trade their vegetables for wild meat harvested from other communities. Today Sambaa K'e has two locations for community gardens: the first (original) located near the old airport runway and the second, smaller one is located right in the community. The community members are very active gardeners and they continue to expand their gardening efforts. Construction has been completed on a 32' greenhouse which is located at the original garden site. This will be used to grow warm-weather crops as well as to extend the growing season.

Seed Starting Workshop





Sambaa K'e

Planting Workshop



Garden Maintenance Workshop





Sambaa K'e

Food Preservation Workshop





Wrigley

The community garden in Wrigley is predominantly an in-ground garden with a few smaller garden boxes. The soil of this garden is beautiful, black, and rich which makes it ideal for growing vegetables. In order to keep the local dogs and other wildlife out of the garden there is a snow fence around the perimeter. Unfortunately a sudden and unexpected frost in July killed most of the vegetables that were planted this year. Some short-season plants were re-seeded after this with some success. A small garden has been established at the youth centre which was planted and is being cared for by students. The location of this planting site is favorable as it is easily accessible and convenient for the youth to maintain. Brave Adventures, one of ITI's proponents under the Agriculture Development Infrastructure, continues to maintain poultry in the community, though it is operating at a smaller scale than in previous years. A fresh batch of egg-layers is being raised to augment the current flock size which has been dwindling due to occasional predator interference. A greenhouse was also established on the property of Brave Adventures to extend the growing season in order to provide fresh vegetables for their bed and breakfast business.





Wrigley

Seed Starting Workshop



Planting Workshop





Wrigley

Garden Maintenance Workshop



Food Preservation Workshop

