



The  
New  
Ruralism  
Initiative



American Planning Association  
Northern New England Chapter



# New Ruralism: Making it on Main Street

Radically Rural [Remote] Summit  
September, 24, 2020

Jo Anne Carr & Jenny Whittaker





# Agenda

- Introduction
- New Ruralism
- Virtual Tour of Case Studies
  - Maine Grains
  - The Relief Zone Community Youth Center
  - Island Employee Cooperative
  - Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center
  - Quimper Village
  - Kodiak Harvest Food Co-op
- Discussion with Q & A
- Reflection on Lessons Learned
- Conclusion

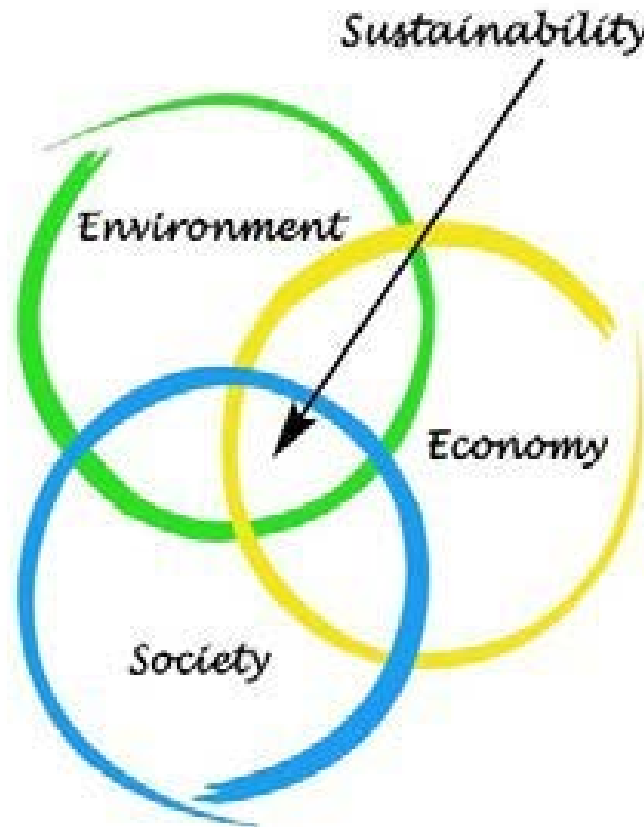


# The New Ruralism Team

- Tara Bamford, Community Planning Consultant
- Jo Anne Carr, Town of Jaffrey NH & Fitchburg State University
- Peg Elmer Hough, Community Resilience Organization
- Mark Lapping, University of Southern Maine
- Chad Nabity, Regional Planning Director, Grand Island, NE
- Lynne Seeley, Community Planning Consultant
- Jennifer Whittaker, University of Pennsylvania



# What is New Ruralism?



New Ruralism articulates that rural communities, to prosper, need a synchronized sustainability focus in three areas: economic, environmental, and social.





# What is New Ruralism?



# Introductions

- Jo Anne Carr, Director of Planning and Economic Development, Town of Jaffrey, NH, member of New Ruralism Initiative
- Amber Lambkey, Maine Grains, Skowhegan, ME.
- Lisa Lyon, The Relief Zone Community Youth Center, Frewsburg, NY.
- Les Weed, CEO, Island Employee Cooperative, Stonington, ME.
- SuLynn Creswell & Kristin Law, Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center, Camden, AL.
- Jack & Carolyn Salmon, Quimper Village, Port Townsend, WA
- Emily Iacobucci, Kodiak Harvest Food Co-op, Kodiak, AK
- Jenny Whittaker, New Ruralism Case Study Coordinator



# Virtual Tour of Communities



**MAINE  
GRAINS.**























Opinion

# That Flour You Bought Could Be the Future of the U.S. Economy

Keep baking bread. Small grain companies may suggest a better path for American business.





# MAINE GRAINS.

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ORDER ONLINE AT [WWW.MAINEGRAINS.COM](http://WWW.MAINEGRAINS.COM) OR EMAIL US AT [ORDERS@MAINEGRAINS.COM](mailto:ORDERS@MAINEGRAINS.COM)  
DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT GREATER NEW ENGLAND



# The Relief Zone Community Youth Center 2000-2020





## The Relief Zone

Location: Frewsburg New York

Geography: Agricultural Community

Community Background: Multiple small businesses

- Churches

- Frewsburg Central School System

- Police Department

- Volunteer Fire Department

Demographics: 1,471 households, average income of \$43,899

- 300 households have children

- 9% living at or below the poverty line

- 791 students enrolled in the Frewsburg Central School District

  - 28% receiving free or reduced breakfast and/or lunch



Project Goal: To equip, unify and serve the school, church, and family.

### Project Description:

Saturday Teen Outreach Program (STOP) 2000

Young Minds Tutoring Program 2003

Incorporation 2006

Children's Programming 2006

New York State School Age Child Care License (SACC) 2015







## Connection To Main Street

- Located in the center of town TRZ is easily accessible to children, teens, & parents.
- Collaboration with Frewsburg Central School District
- Board of Directors Members



-Local Businesses

-TRZ Staff

-Community

Frewsburg Fire Dept.



Frewsburger Pizza Shop





## Lessons To Share

1. Collaborate
  - Share your vision & passion
  - Strength in numbers
  - Work with those around you
2. Listen
  - Hear what people are saying
3. Learn
  - From your mistakes
  - From others





# New Normal

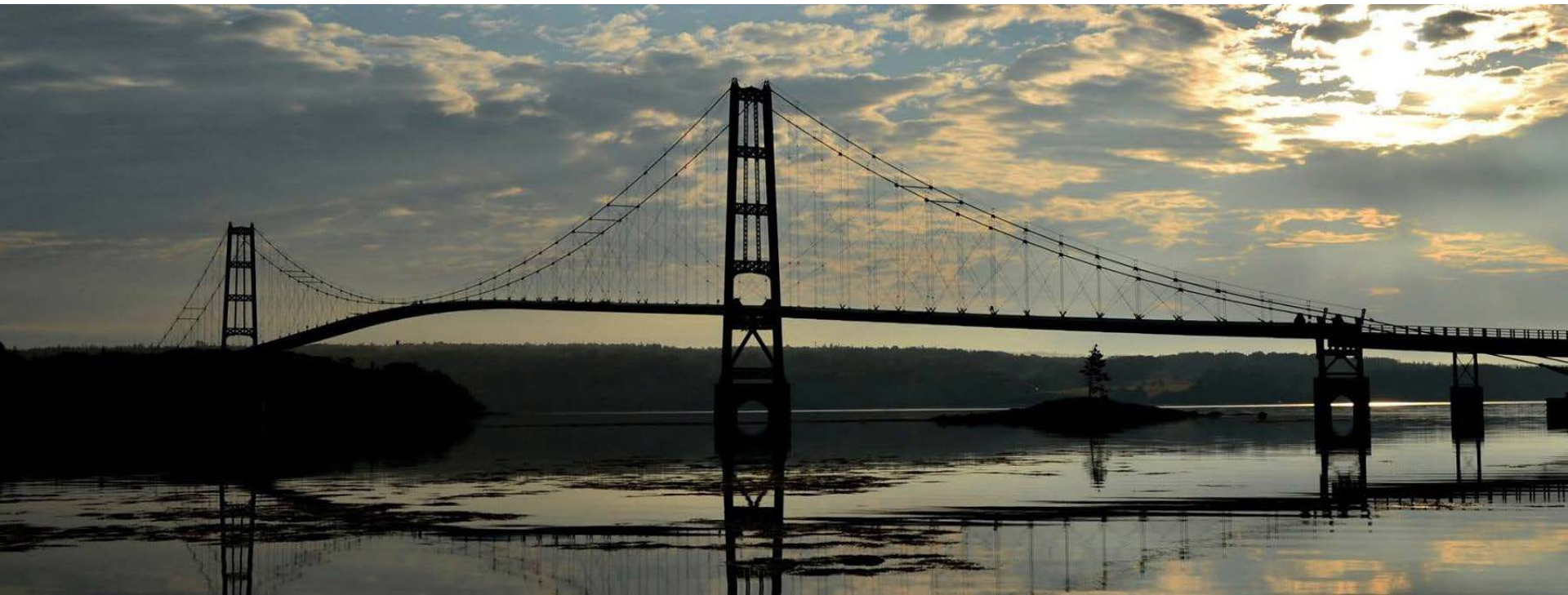
Flexibility

Resiliency





# Island Employee Cooperative Deer Isle/Stonington, Maine



It is the mission of the IEC to create good jobs for island residents, to provide the highest quality service for our customers, and to support our island community.



[HOME](#) [ABOUT IEC](#) [IEC BUSINESSES](#) [COMMUNITY](#) [EMPLOYMENT](#) [CONTACT US](#)

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The background of the page is a wide-angle aerial photograph of a coastal area. In the foreground, a large, elongated island covered in dense green forest sits in the middle of a calm, blue body of water. Several smaller, similarly forested islands are scattered in the background, creating a sense of depth. The sky is a pale, clear blue, suggesting a bright, sunny day. The overall mood is serene and natural.

**Employee Owned**  
**Operated with Pride**

# Island Employee Cooperative Deer Isle/Stonington, Maine





# Island Employee Cooperative Deer Isle/Stonington, Maine





INVESTING IN THE *Arts*

FOR

Economic Development



Black Belt Treasures  
Cultural Arts Center



# WHO AND WHERE ARE WE?



Black Belt Treasures was established in 2005 as a 501(c)3 non-profit with the mission to “foster, develop, and promote economic development initiatives aimed at creating jobs and increasing the income of local residents through the marketing of arts, crafts, literature, food products, and other items unique to Alabama’s Black Belt and to cultivate and provide arts education in the region”.



## SERVICE AREA

- ◆ 19 County Region – 95% Rural with population of 525,608
- ◆ Primary Economic Sources: Farm, Timber, Outdoor Tourism
- ◆ Unemployment 13.67%, Poverty 26.87% with average household income \$35,721

## BBTCAC

- ◆ Opened in 2005 with 75 Juried Artists – Currently 360
- ◆ To date \$1,696,147 in Sales - \$1,187,303 Returned to Artists (70% of all profit returned to artists)
- ◆ Website – Over \$45,000
- ◆ Visitors from all 50 states and 32 other countries, approximately 12-14,000 annually

# THE WHAT AND WHY...

Black Belt Treasures opened in 2005 as a result of the Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission's assessment of tourism possibilities in the region. Although ATRC was originally looking to identify historic sites to draw tourists, the assessment recognized a wealth of local craftsman and artists with few opportunities to show or market their arts and crafts. ATRC shifted focus to a gallery space that would draw visitors off the interstate to experience the culture of the region. They identified and renovated a vacant auto dealership that now functions as the BBTCAC Gallery. Today, BBTCAC and ATRC remain close partners.

In a region plagued by negative press, BBTCAC has strived to recreate the public's negative perceptions through the rich arts and culture of the region. The campus includes the gallery, a multi-use education center (Black Belt ART House), and artist studio...with future plans for additional maker spaces, changing gallery, and community meeting/event space.



## CURRENT ENRICHMENT & EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Visitors and Tours to Gallery

Artists served through Gallery & Website

Artists – professional development

Teaching Artists Program

In-school and virtual arts enrichment

After School/Summer Art Programs – in-person and virtual

Workshops for education partners

Adult Art Education Classes both in-person and virtual

Participants in lectures, exhibits, hands-on activities & demonstrations

Artist Demonstrations at regional events and programs

Arts Cultivate – creative entrepreneurial classes and 1:1 counseling



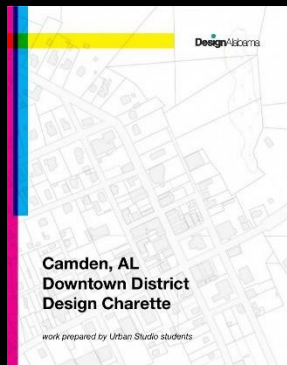
# Why We Do What We Do...Artists





# THE MAIN STREET CONNECTION...

- ❖ Located in a renovated former car dealership in historic downtown Camden...
- ❖ BBTCAC continues to invest and participate directly in revitalization, tourism, and creative placemaking.
- ❖ Downtown Revitalization Team
- ❖ Creative Placemaking Projects: Murals, Mosaic Benches, Quilt Trail
- ❖ Black Belt ART House & Artist Residency
- ❖ Artist Demonstrations & Events
- ❖ Public Art partnerships
- ❖ Tourism Initiatives – partnering with downtown businesses, museums, and nonprofits for Events, Civil Rights & Cultural Tours, Weekend & Day Trips, Programs, and more...



# SHARING OUR STORY...



## WE MUST LOOK WITHIN TO DEVELOP A MOVEMENT

Outside investment isn't going to radically transform the Alabama Black Belt; change must come *from within*.

No matter how small, or how rural, or how low-resource, communities wanting to improve must look within to identify what makes their place unique and special and *cultivate* that.

Communities should identify what resources of value they possess and link it with what others in the community need.

By developing a web of assets, the overall community becomes more self-reliant and resilient.



## FOCUS ON COLLABORATION – NOT COMPETITION

Small rural communities succeed when they *collaborate* rather than *compete*.

The arts become a more powerful tool for development when many artists and arts/community/cultural based organizations blossom. We should not compete with other places, but rather lift the entire region by partnering with organizations, individuals, local governments, businesses, educational institutions, and artists toward the common goal of improved economic outcomes and preserved and celebrated culture and arts.





# SHARING OUR STORY...

## INVEST IN LEARNING

Engaging in arts-based work in rural areas can sometimes feel isolating, lonely, and hard. Learning about what is happening outside of your community is motivating, inspiring, and necessary even when travel budgets are tight. We have found that attending outside conferences and state and national events are great opportunities to make connections with other professionals in similar fields, learn about what other places are doing, and share our own experiences.

Through attending events like Creative Placemaking Summit, we have gathered ideas and resources on everything from budgeting to outfitting arts education classrooms to training educators. Exposure to new cultures, groups, and ideas keeps work fresh.

And, signing up to be a presenter or panelist can sometimes help offset costs of attendance.

## INVEST IN TEACHING

Arts-based community economic development rests just as much on education as it does on economic growth. Education of the community about the benefits of an arts-based approach and arts education to ensure arts and craft-based heritage is never ending.

We continuously engage local residents, the business community, community nonprofits, local government officials, and educators on the importance of the arts for the region, emphasizing the ways that the arts can contribute to many positive outcomes across the region.

We invest heavily in arts-based education in part to ensure that the handicraft traditions of the area are passed down to the next generation. Treasuring and fostering the customs of residents and providing space and materials for inter-generational skills transfer ensures the region continues to prosper from the arts.



Figure 4. Arts education in schools is a key part of BBTCAC's efforts in the region.





The Impact that Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center has had on numerous aspects of the community, from job creation, tourism growth, arts education opportunities, to creating an arts community has grown each year since 2005.

For a town with a population of around 2,000, its significant that Camden and Wilcox County attract people from all around the world - around 14,000 visitors a year, from all fifty states and thirty-two countries so far.

Cultural and Experiential Tourism have become a major part of the Black Belt Region's growth.

BBTCAC is no longer the only previously vacant building now contributing to renewal in the area. Several restaurants, bed and breakfasts, and businesses have opened to serve tourists and the community alike.

Staff and artists involved with BBTCAC are also active in the greater revitalization efforts of the region, sitting on comprehensive planning boards, quality of life meetings, health and wellness panels and beautification committees. BBTCAC's deep investment in the arts also ensures that many folk-art traditions remain in the regional community and are passed down to the next generation.

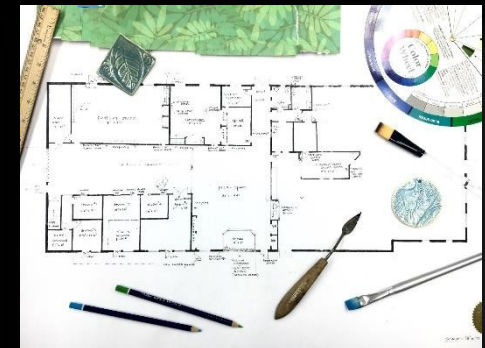
We credit the immense talent, skill, and generosity of the region for building a space where culture, heritage, and art is preserved not just in galleries and museums but in the heart and soul of their community.



During 2019-20, BBTCAC had to cut its Arts Education programs short, cancel all late winter, spring, and summer events, lectures, tours, trainings, and demonstrations, and close the Gallery temporarily, due to COVID-19.

In spite of this set-back, BBTCAC was still able to provide arts enrichment programs in schools in Dallas and Wilcox counties, involving 16 teachers and 1,228 K4-12 students.

Digital Resources were purchased through a grant to provide Virtual Classroom opportunities for Art Classes for students of all ages. These resources are housed in the 2000 square foot arts education center called the Black Belt Art House, constructed in 2019. This space includes an artist studio space, a mixed media classroom, and a pottery studio and classroom – and will increase the educational offerings to area communities and schools once classes are fully able to resume.



# Contact us...

◆ Sulynn Creswell  
Executive Director  
[sulynn@blackbelttreasures.com](mailto:sulynn@blackbelttreasures.com)

◆ Kristin Law  
Art Programs & Marketing Director  
[kristine@blackbelttreasures.com](mailto:kristine@blackbelttreasures.com)

(334) 682-9878

And find us on





# Black Belt Treasures

CULTURAL ARTS CENTER

209 Claiborne Street

Camden, Alabama 36726

334.682.9878

[www.blackbelttreasures.com](http://www.blackbelttreasures.com)



# PORT TOWNSEND, WASHINGTON

## A VICTORIAN TOWN ON THE OLYMPIC PENINSULA

- Population of the city: 9,946,
- Population of the county: 32,965
- Median age: 55.9
- Median income: \$52,000
- Education-BS or higher: 42%
- Housing- County: 18,965 units Port Townsend: 5,261 units
- Median value of owner-occupied housing units: \$311,100



# Quimper Village

Senior Cohousing in Port Townsend, WA



# ONE OF FOUR PODS

## SEVEN HOMES



## Landscaping



## Workshop





# The Conversation Circle

## Masked for the virus



Common House Dinner for 28



Holiday Gift Exchange



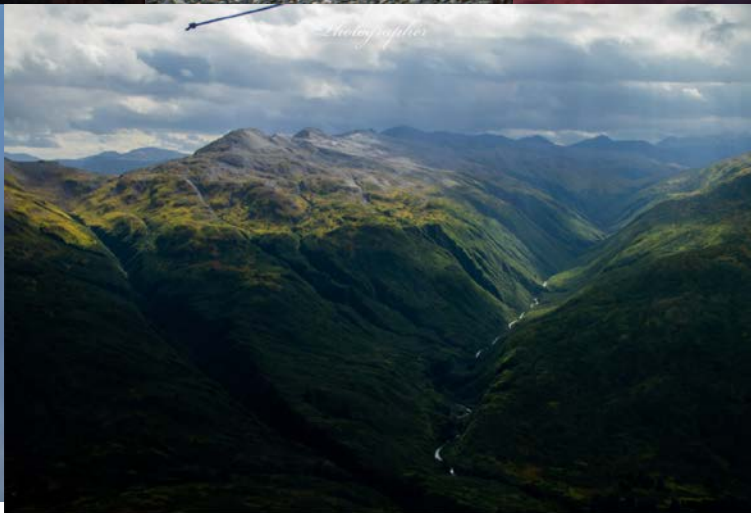
# Impact of QV on Port Townsend

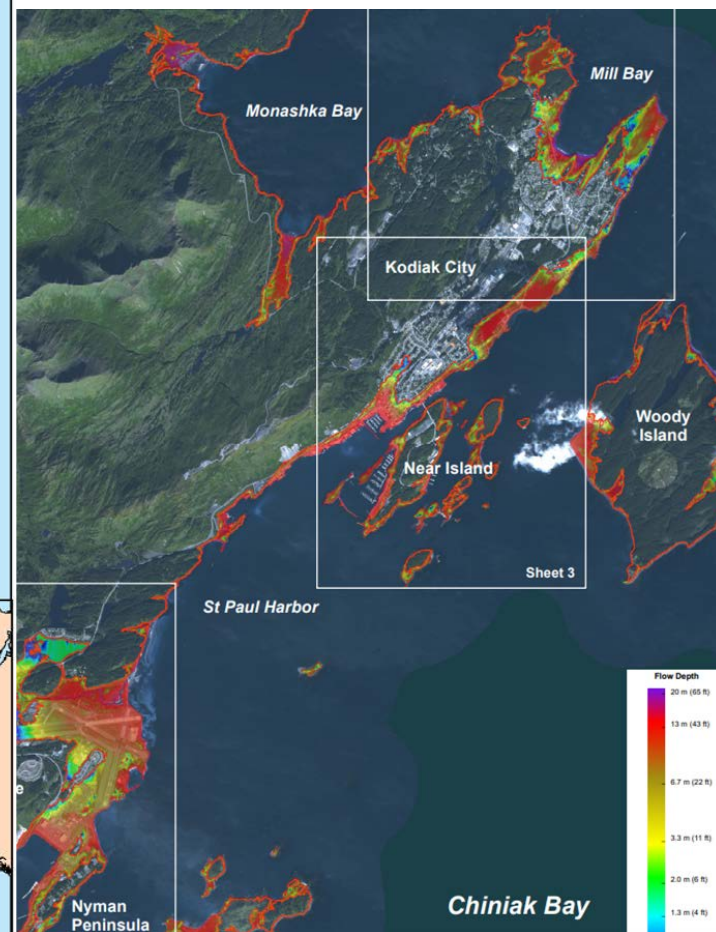
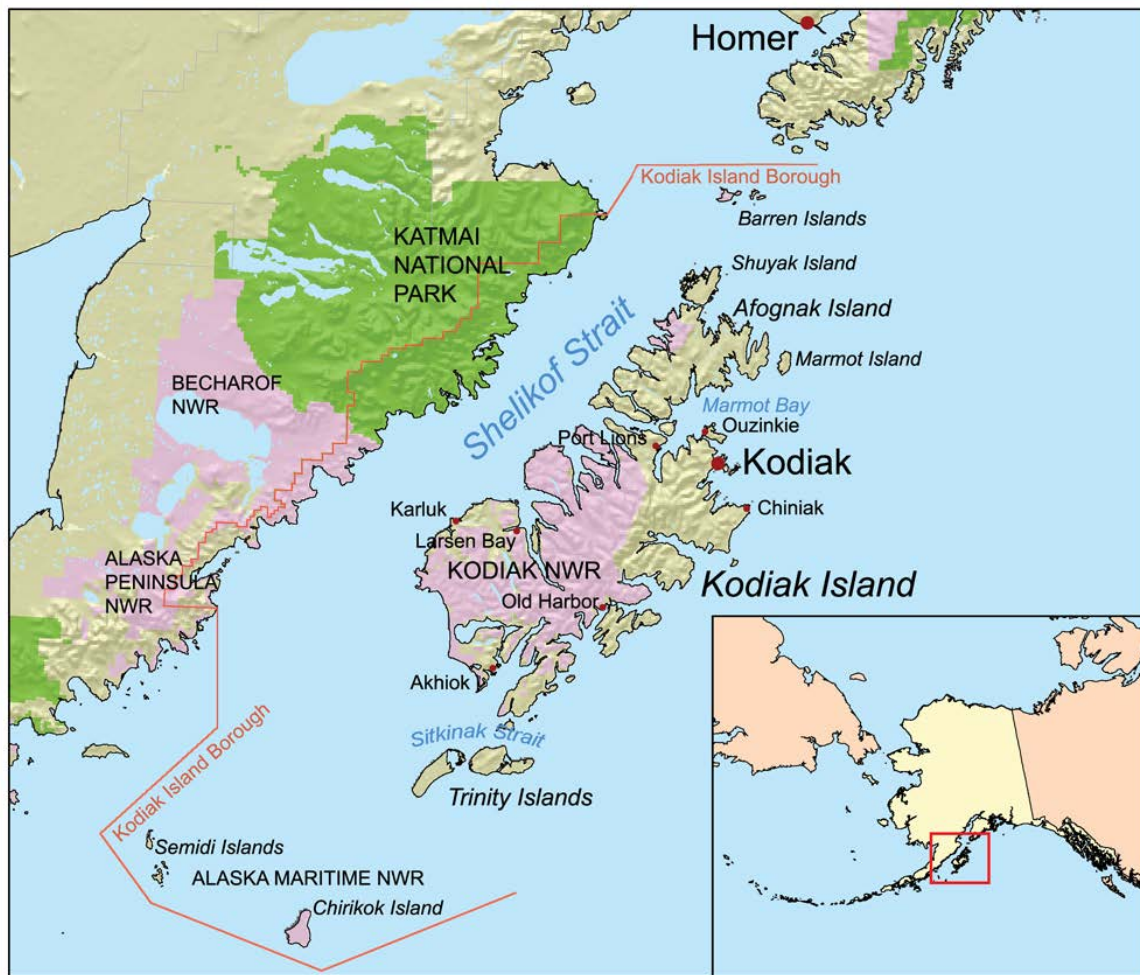
- 28 new housing units
- 20 existing housing units available on the local market
- 9 new households to the Greater community
- almost \$10,000,000 spent in the regional economy for development
- increased City tax base by \$11,000,000















## OUR MISSION

Provide Kodiak communities with quality food choices that are locally sourced, economically sustainable, and environmentally responsible while promoting education and engagement.

## OUR VISION

Build a community owned full service grocery store emphasizing locally harvested seafood and produce, supplemented with regionally sourced goods.

## OUR VALUES

We honor the cooperative values of equality, equity, mutual self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, and solidarity and honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others.



# Connection to Main Street - Markets

- Twice weekly markets throughout the summer at a constant location
- 7000+ lbs of Alaska produce sold this season



# Connection to Main Street - Neighbors

-People love meeting their food producers!





# Connection to Main Street - Collaboration

-Kodiak Baptist Mission, Bounty Farm, Kodiak Island Brewery, Kodiak 4-H, Kodiak History Museum, Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation District, Homer Food Hub, Arctic Harvest, BrightBox, Kodiak Area Native Association, Old Harbor Alliance, Kodiak Archipelago Leadership Institute....  
The list is long!!

-“ChuckaslugChallenge”







# Challenges/Lessons

- Adapt based on what is attainable- FOOD HUB
- Just try it out! - sink or swim (products, collaborations, grants, campaigns etc).
- Dedicate someone to social media



## Photo Post Details

on 09/03/2020 9:07 AM

kodiakharvest  
Kodiak, Alaska



We are loving this post by @emma\_party08

as, "If you want to know what a real worker looks like, these are your  
Those boys work harder than a lot of adults."

harvestfoodcoop #kodiakharvestcoop #supportlocal #knowyourfood  
yourlocalharvesters #eathealthy #alaskagrown #sustainableliving  
#kodiakcommunity #kodiakstrong

Image not available

### Post Performance

53 0 0

### Interactions

2

Actions taken from this post

Profile Visits

2

### Discovery

373

Accounts reached

6% weren't following you

Follows

0

Reach

373

Impressions

424

From Home

387

From Profile

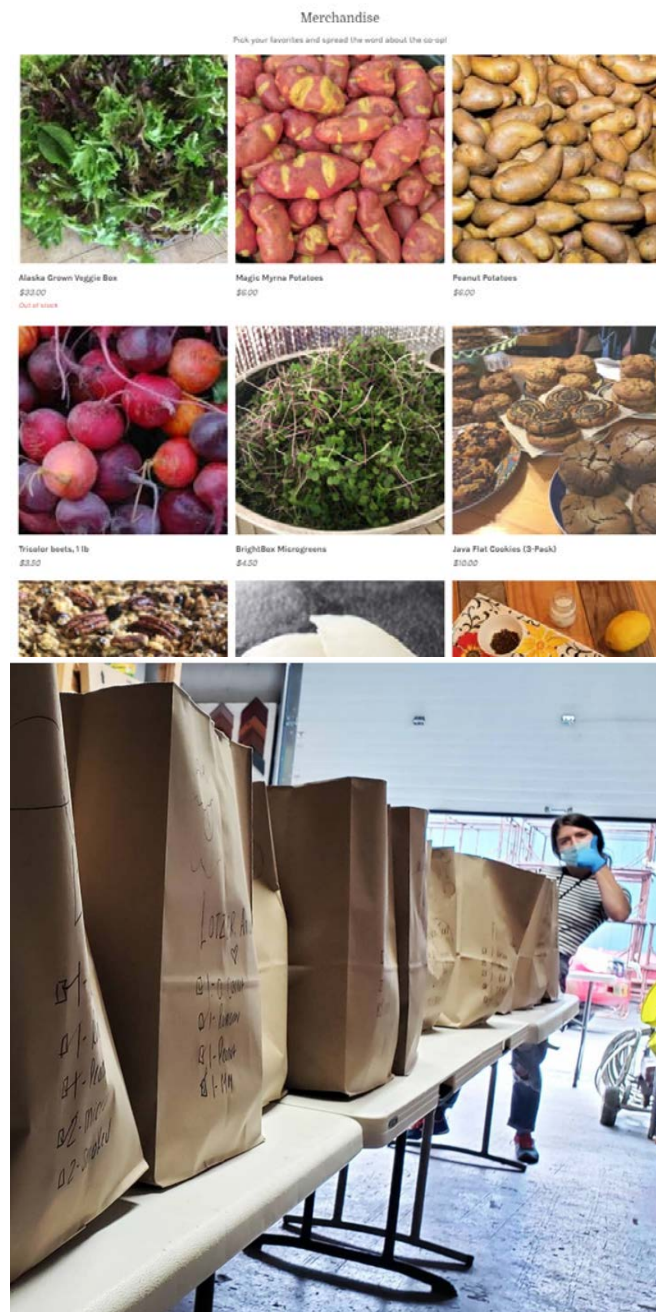
14

From Location

13

# Adaptation to COVID-19

- Increased our Food Insecurity
- Started offering weekly veggie boxes with add-ons
- Obvious increase in public value of locally produced food
- Applying to lots of grants!
- Hope to qualify for SNAP and WIC by next season



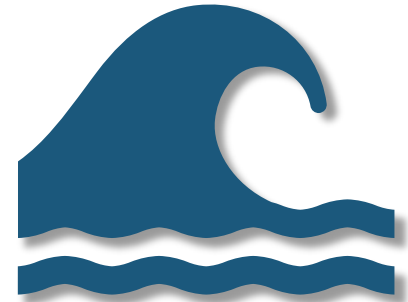
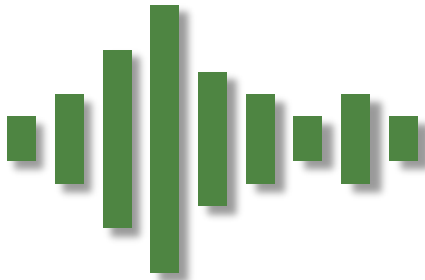
Thanks for your time! Questions?







# Lessons & Reflections





Build strong  
relationships





Celebrate  
incremental  
wins







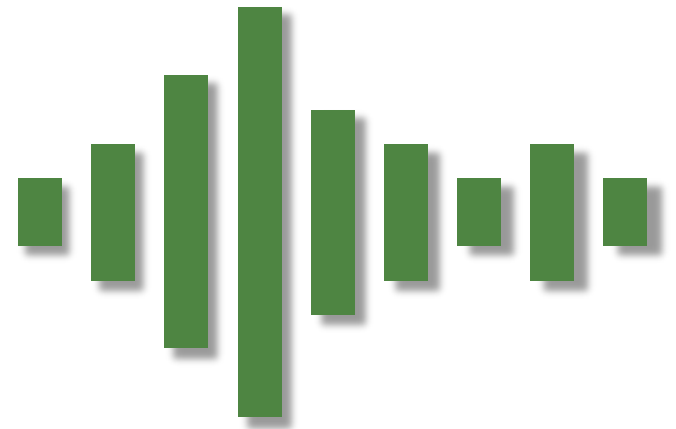
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Communicate  
and share out  
often





Be adaptable  
and listen





# 5

Learn from other  
communities

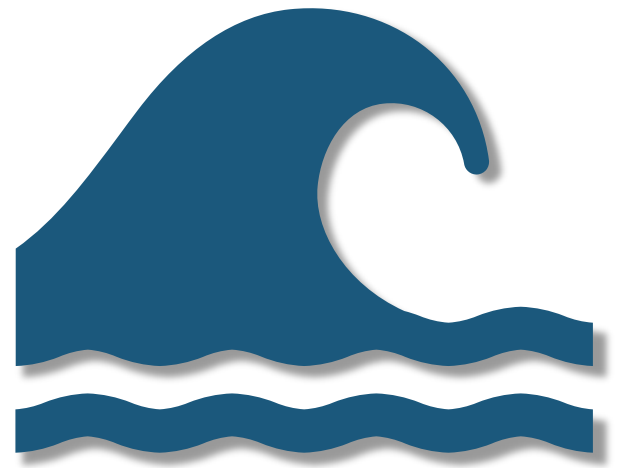






6

Look for the long  
term ripple  
effects





# What's next for the New Ruralism Initiative?

- Nominate your community
- Spread the word
- Help Us Continue to Expand Our On-line Library



# Staying Connected

<https://nne.planning.org/knowledge/new-ruralism/>

Tara Bamford

[tebamford@gmail.com](mailto:tebamford@gmail.com)





# Facilitated Q&A

Post your questions in the Chat Box and Emily will key you up.

