

Addendum to the Traditional Foods and Indigenous Recipes in B.C.'s Public Institutions Report

This document contains additional information from the Traditional Foods and Indigenous Recipes study by Queenswood Consulting that was not included in the report. This information has been shared for readers interested in learning more details and study context.

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1: Benefits of increasing traditional foods

The benefits discussed below are based both on discussions with participants in this study and a high-level review of the growing body of literature about this topic. The sections that follow summarize both high-level findings from the literature as well as feedback from interviews with participants, who provided a multiplicity of specific benefits related to seven thematic groups: cultural connection; nutritional value; mental health benefits, environmental/natural benefits, potential costs benefits, support for reconciliation, Indigenization and inter-cultural understanding; and support for B.C.'s efforts to encourage local food production and utilization.

Cultural connection

Increased access to traditional foods offers not only an opportunity to expose patients and students overall to a wider variety of proteins and other traditional foods, but also helps bring integration of the Indigenous world, worldview and existence. As one participant summarized, traditional foods are the glue that connects the community, and the sharing of such foods provides a fundamental way to help people seamlessly connect to their community's traditions.

While the nutritional value of traditional foods is important, many participants identified the inherent links between food and culture, teachings, stories, language, and family relationships as having equal if not greater value. They noted how taking away these links has, in the past, contributed to whole communities and cultures falling apart. The linkage with language was notably cited, with participants noting the important role these things play in Indigenous peoples' fundamental understanding of who they are and their place in the world.

The central role of food in connecting Indigenous peoples and communities is a cultural reality that goes back to time immemorial. The role of governments in disrupting these connections, through measures such as the banning of Potlaches, is a well-documented fact. Many participants expressed optimism that government is now playing a role in correcting these mistakes and using policy to reverse past wrongs. The opportunity to "get back something that was taken away," as one participant put it, can be a strong support to overall efforts at reconciliation.

Many participants noted that the road ahead will be challenging, because much Traditional Knowledge has been interrupted by years of forced separation from traditional approaches. Many noted a general lack of traditional foods being harvested, produced, prepared and served, not only in public institutions but across society generally. Food, along with language, are two areas where bringing back traditional ways offers a chance to relearn and reconnect to fundamental Indigenous values and connections to the wider community.

The importance of food in health-care institutions was often noted as being particularly important. This is a time when loved ones are ill and going to the hospital is rarely a joyful occasion. When this

is combined with unfamiliar food, families worry that their loved ones are not being well cared for, and there is a sense that patients would recover more quickly if they felt more of a connection to their traditional foods.

Traditional ways of preparing and serving food also offer an opportunity for cultural connection. One participant described how, when traditional foods are served in their community, a specific song goes along with the food. This happens in local schools when traditional foods are served, but when non-traditional foods are on the menu there is no singing and a palpable lack of community feeling. As they said, “colonized foods have no relationship to culture, but there is a deep cultural connection with traditional foods. They speak to your DNA memories.”

Fostering these connections is seen as particularly important for children and youth, and increasing access to traditional foods and recipes is seen as a key way to integrate Indigenous culture and food histories into education programs. This is especially so where children come from homes that are not engaged in traditional foods, which is a common result of generations of policy that sought to remove and disconnect Indigenous people from their cultures.

In summary, many participants talked about feeling and wanting to fulfil a cultural responsibility to use increased access to food and recipes to pass on food traditions. This was often cited as a way to retain, re-discover and make cultural values relevant for Indigenous peoples in the province, especially younger generations who may not have grown up with traditional ways. Overall, participants put a high value on the role that food can play in helping people connect to their traditions, cultures, and wider Indigenous world view.

Nutritional value

The nutritional value of providing greater access to traditional foods was also commonly identified by participants as a strong benefit of this approach. Although there is great variety in what constitutes traditional foods across the province, as noted elsewhere in this report, all traditional foods share fundamental qualities: they are non-processed, whole foods, and when it comes to wild meat and seafood, can be higher in protein and healthy fats than non-traditional foods.

Particularly when combined with traditional ways of hunting, growing and gathering, eating traditional foods such as fresh fruits, vegetables, fish and meats is widely seen by participants as not only having obvious health value, but having a more intangible value of connecting peoples' food to the lands they come from.

Many participants also described anecdotal evidence of patients making quicker recoveries and experiencing overall improved health when provided access to traditional foods. This is especially so for Elders, who tend to respond well when provided with food they grew up with, including foods like berries and herbs that have medicinal as well as nutritional value. One Elder shared their story

about spending a lot of time in hospital recovering from cancer treatment. There she craved moose broth, but was limited to hospital food. Once she returned home, she was able to have moose broth and other traditional foods, and she was convinced this was a significant factor in bringing her back to health.

Mental health benefits

Along with improvements to physical health, increased access to traditional foods offers patients, students, inmates and other consumers of food in public institutions mental health benefits. Providing food that is familiar is important for everyone but can be particularly beneficial for Indigenous people to feel welcome and an integral part of the environment. This is especially so in situations where food choices are prescribed, like hospitals or correctional facilities.

The availability of traditional food was widely described as spirit-lifting, especially for Elders who have long and strong memories of including these foods in their diets. Where people *want* to eat the food provided, they are more likely to have healthier appetites; this is seen as a key contributor to recovery from injury and illness, and a key factor in overall health.

A number of participants noted that people who have the option to eat traditional foods show improved moods and general mental health, as they have a sense of familiarity, belonging, and acceptance. Some institutions in Interior Health recognize this by allowing patients of Indigenous heritage to request from daily menu foods that are traditional to their area. They support the conclusion that patients who eat familiar and healthy meals exhibit stronger overall mental health, which in turn leads to improved physical health outcomes.

Connection to the land

Along with the personal benefits noted above, participants also noted that increasing access to traditional foods offers potential benefits in terms of environmental stewardship, healthy harvesting, and integrated connection to the land and sea that is the source of foods.

Particularly where traditional food is obtained from Indigenous sources, protecting stock is a fundamental part of the supply equation. Watershed and all resource management is an integrated part of the Indigenous approach to food supply. One example is the Cowichan Tribes, which invested \$1.1 million in 2019 to improve the river on its territory, a river that has traditionally been at the center of food production for the Quw'utsun (Cowichan) people.

Other benefits are available where food is obtained through traditional means – for example, communities can easily identify where the food has come from, how it's been treated, and where there are potential concerns related to health and safety. This better allows for integration into traditional production cycles and stronger overall stewardship of natural resources.

Use of traditional foods can also support sovereignty and self-determination. Increasing access to traditional foods requires increasing access to land and sources of traditional food, and a focus on food provides a good linkage to other components of culture that are harder to integrate.

Finally, the very acts of hunting and gathering foods by traditional means can provide health and wellness benefits, providing a visceral reminder of peoples' links to their lands and waters.

Impact on costs

One of the major barriers that participants said impeded their use of traditional foods is the cost. Currently, even where it is possible to source traditional foods for purchase, they are considered "specialty" items and priced accordingly. Many items are prohibitively expensive, making their integration into public institutions' menu challenging if not impossible.

Many participants felt that increased access for Indigenous harvesters to traditional foods could have the effect of increasing availability and lowering costs. This could result both from greater production, and a wider integration of such foods into food production processes.

Increased access would also potentially open markets for people looking for traditional foods – the more traditional foods are available within the food system and that people can use without concern, the easier they will be to incorporate. This could also result in the opening of more food service businesses that offer traditional foods. However, any expansion of serving traditional foods must have the risk of overharvesting already taxed or recovering stocks as a primary concern.

Some participants suggested that traditional sourcing approaches offer potential cost advantages. In some institutions, where traditional foods are obtained outside of regular budgeting and procurement processes, food is provided on a barter basis, or at extremely reduced rates. Although this is not an option that is widely available at most institutions, it can make an important difference. One participant cited the example of a child care facility that paid for a fishing boat's fuel, and in return received a portion of its haul that amounted to six weeks worth of fish. This was only possible through the Nation's fisheries department, illustrating the importance of community support in accessing traditional foods.

Supporting Reconciliation

Reconciliation with Indigenous people is a priority for the government of B.C. Acknowledging and supporting the provision of traditional foods in B.C.'s health, education and other public institutions offers a strong and very practical way of demonstrating a commitment to the principles and goals of reconciliation and inter-cultural understanding. Recognizing Indigenous people in their communities and feeding them what they want to eat sends a strong message that they are heard, valued, and determinative of their own diets and health.

It is well recognized that the sharing of food is a powerful connector and including traditional foods and Indigenous recipes can play a key role in breaking down racism-based care and colonial histories. Where Indigenous people are able to share their food history with others, this builds community and personal connections, helping with overall efforts at truth and reconciliation, assuming the information is received respectfully by non-Indigenous people.

The educational opportunities offered by increased access to traditional foods can be significant, providing a major contribution to formal and informal learning about Indigenous cultures. There is a high and growing level of interest in learning about local Indigenous food histories, from formal settings such as UBC, to restaurants where traditional foods are being ever more integrated into Pacific Northwest cuisine. Participants who work in public and educational institutions, as well as those with a history in the food service industry, consistently reported a high level of enthusiasm among staff, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to learn about and incorporate traditional foods in the food they offer.

Many participants felt that the benefits of cultural and educational exposure for the general public overall could be a significant contributor to embedding Indigenous approaches in the wider B.C. culture, bringing traditional ways and stories into the public consciousness. Overall, this was seen as an important way to support the goals and objectives of reconciliation, and to foster better understanding about Indigenous cultures more generally.

Indigenizing institutions

The provision of traditional foods at public institutions – particularly educational institutions – can contribute to formal and informal efforts at Indigenization. Some institutions like the College of New Caledonia in Prince George have made Indigenization a purposeful priority, while others have a more general approach to incorporating Indigenous approaches, principles, and traditions. Providing greater access to traditional foods can benefit both approaches.

The availability of traditional foods can provide both health and cultural benefits to students. It can facilitate the celebration and incorporation of Indigenous culture into educational and other institutions, providing opportunities to adapt practices and to use more traditional ways and approaches. This can also provide an opportunity for alignment with other Indigenization initiatives within educational and other institutions in B.C.

Supporting local foods

Finally, increased access to and use of traditional foods and Indigenous foods aligns with the government of B.C.'s interest in encouraging the production and consumption of locally-grown foods. This includes the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries' Buy BC program, which helps to promote B.C. food and beverages to ensure consumers can easily identify and enjoy local food

products, while supporting farmers and businesses throughout B.C., and Feed BC, which seeks to increase B.C.-grown and B.C.-processed foods in hospitals and health-care facilities, post-secondary institutions, and other government-supported facilities.

Buy BC is a provincewide marketing program supported by several components, including Buy BC logo licensing, a cost-shared funding program for industry-led Buy BC marketing activities, retail partnerships, promotional activities and events, and a comprehensive marketing campaign that drives consumers to look for the Buy BC logo on products in grocery stores throughout the province.

An increase in traditional foods in public institutions can be a key component in government initiatives such as those noted above. For example, it could support Feed BC's goal to increase the use of food products produced or processed within B.C., as support for traditional foods means, by its nature, support for local food production and connection to local food supplies.

2: Detailed descriptions of current initiatives

Post-Secondary Institutions

University of Northern British Columbia Food services (UNBC)

UNBC included Indigenous Priorities as one of five pillars guiding their food provision in their recent vendor selection.

In recognition that the needs of Indigenous students include specific and respectful food options and associated cultural components, in their recent food service provider vendor selection, UNBC noted that the food service provider will be expected to actively consider Indigenous needs, consistently provide food options that align with these needs and hold high levels of cultural competency, as it relates to Indigenous and other cultural service practices.¹ This is a new requirement for UNBC's food service provider, but they have experience providing Indigenous food for special events.

For these events, they have received guidance from the First Nations Studies department in setting recipes and understanding how to use traditional food products properly. Their chef and kitchen team members like to forage and fish, so they feel confident about food safety concerns when using local and wild foods. Chartwells also has an Indigenous chef at the corporate level who can consult and train staff. Still, there is not enough volume from local harvesters or producers so traditional foods are offered primarily for Indigenous events, which have served spruce tips, birch and house smoked fish, for example. They are reliant on specialty distributors, and it can be difficult to count on the more distant small distributors. On one occasion, game meat didn't show up for a special function so they had to make do with what they could find, and they house smoked some ducks and fish instead. The policies to approve a new distributor can be onerous, so it can be challenging to get specialty items on occasion rather than through the regular supply. Finally, preparing traditional foods is more labour-intensive, which increases the cost above the food products themselves.

What would help in the future:

- Greater organization within the network of small harvesters and producers, such as a central grading, washing and processing facility, might result in a more consistent schedule.
- Targets for a percentage of traditional foods in contracts, such as those linked to Feed BC.
- It will make it easier for everyone to increase the service of traditional foods as more product enters the approved system.

University of British Columbia (UBC) Food services

¹ <https://www.unbc.ca/food-services/five-pillars>

Increasing the service of traditional foods and Indigenous recipes supports both reconciliation and Indigenization.

UBC food services is guided by food vision and values, and these are currently being revised, including Indigenous foods and food systems as a priority item. Traditional foods and Indigenous recipes are not yet incorporated into core food service but have been provided for special events on occasion. These special events have primarily offered Indigenous recipes, such as a salmon barbecue for 4,000 people. An increase in traditional foods and Indigenous recipes being served on campus provides an opportunity for students to learn about Indigenous food history while at UBC. UBC's first priority is to offer traditional foods and Indigenous recipes within the residents' dining, as these students have fixed menus. They will also work towards incorporating these foods into other market-driven food services.

Post-secondary institutions are not able to use donated food within their food supply, so must work within approved sources of market foods. The Indigenous garden at the UBC farm is not currently supplying the core food services, but there is potential that it can in the future.

Food service staff need training to prepare and handle traditional foods and Indigenous recipes. UBC has a strong and growing relationship with the Musqueam Nation, on whose territory their campus is situated, and hopes to work with them to connect to people in community to share knowledge about traditional foods with the food services team. UBC also began offering apprenticeships to Professional Cooks program two years ago and hopes to create opportunities for Indigenous youth in this program.

What would help in the future:

- Targets set for traditional foods like those for local food would have impact on the main distributors.
- Food service providers need greater connections to potential distributors of traditional foods.
- Food safety inspectors need to learn more about the experiences of people serving traditional foods without safety incidents, which will help build respect for the traditional food supply chain.
- Emphasize the alignment of Truth and Reconciliation calls to post-secondary institutions with an expansion of traditional foods and Indigenous recipes in food services.

A partnership made it possible to create an Indigenous Professional Cook Program, infused with 30% Indigenous knowledge, and learning to prepare Indigenous recipes.

A partnership between the Industry Training Authority, Okanagan College, and the Okanagan Training and Development Council resulted in a pilot Professional Cook Level 1 program, which infuses Indigenous culinary techniques and ingredients into the standard curriculum of Okanagan College's Culinary Arts Certificate program. Thirty percent of the knowledge in the program is Indigenous knowledge. Chef Andrew George, at the time an Industry Training Authority apprenticeship advisor, helped integrate Indigenous information and recipes into the Professional Cook Level 1 program outline. The program has been able to use traditional foods for demonstrations in the pilot, but not offer the foods for public consumption. The Indigenous Professional Cook Program Level 1 is now being offered in the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology. The pilot has been able to source a range of Indigenous recipes but continues to look for more. Okanagan College has connections with Indigenous foods restaurants such as the Red Fox Club, Kekuli Café and Spirit Ridge Lake Resort.

Challenges have included the availability and price of game meat and other wild ingredients, within a fixed program budget. The lack of network to find specialty distributors, as well as the speciality distributors challenges in providing a steady supply chain. Regulatory barriers prevent use of uninspected meat, including donated meat. Program staff also note that the variation of traditional foods between nations means that local food traditions may not resonate with Indigenous students from outside the region, though some principles are consistent (such as stewardship and connection to the land).

What would help in the future

- An online database of regional specialty distributors and Indigenous recipes.
- Training videos for traditional cooking methods.
- Some mechanism to address sustainability and consistency in supply chain.
- Program funding recognition that there are additional food costs to an Indigenous Culinary Program.
- Better connections to and promotion of Indigenous food service operations.
- Stronger connections with local Indigenous communities and First Nations in the area.
- A symposium of food service providers interested in increasing service of traditional foods and Indigenous recipes.

University of the Fraser Valley – Sto:lo Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Culinary Arts program

Integrating Indigenous culture and food histories into culinary programs is a way to help get back some of what has been lost.

Through a partnership between the Sto:lo Nation, University of Fraser Valley (UFV) and Vancouver Community College (VCC), a 12-week, pre-trades training program at UFV and VCC provides pre-apprenticeship culinary training and related workplace certificates. The program sources traditional foods for functions and other specialty programming in partnership with Stó:lō nation. They have also developed partnerships with Indigenous food service businesses, such as Stó:lō Bannock.

The greatest challenge the program faces is the almost non-existent supply chain for traditional foods. Food Premise Regulation requires that food come from approved sources, so they are unable to incorporate donated, foraged or harvested foods into food service or the curriculum. Most specialty products such as game and wild mushrooms come at a premium cost. The program staff are also working to incorporate both broader pan-Canadian Indigenous food history as well as regional traditional foods and note that it is hard to capture both well.

What would help in the future

- A processing facility that can handle and supply traditional foods.
- A specialised distributor of traditional foods.
- Regulatory change to permit wild harvest to enter approved food supply chain, given proper documentation, storage and transport.
- Approach K-12 is taking is great – everyone is learning about Indigenous histories. Post-Sec Culinary needs to take same approach.
- Similar to the K-12 approach where Indigenous worldviews are incorporated into all lessons, Indigenous culinary curriculum should be offered to all students, giving everyone an opportunity to learn about traditional foods and Indigenous recipes.

Coast Mountain College sees that it has a role to play in helping communities to maintain traditions and pass knowledge on to the next generation.

Coast Mountain College has a new diploma program in development which will focus on Indigenous foods and customs. The new program incorporates safe transport and storage of wild harvested foods. This program builds on their experience in delivering a culinary program in several Indigenous communities (e.g. Masset, Moricetown, New Aiyansh, Hazelton, Kitkatla, among others) and which incorporated some Indigenous foods. The culinary programs have been able to use donated traditional foods for special events, such as eulachons, sea lion, and soapberries, but typically is reliant on market ingredients. When delivering the program on reserve, they have been able to source and use more traditional foods product.

Through relationships with Indigenous communities, Coast Mountain College has many contacts with harvesters, but regulatory barriers prevent them from using much of the wild sourced food. People are hesitant to share their best sources of places to gather, hunt or fish outside of their own family or community. There is potential for overharvesting if traditional foods become more popular and have market value.

What would help in the future

- First Nations shared processing facilities to make handling and storage safer.
- Education about proper food handling could lead to more opportunities to provide harvested foods to the public.
- Regulatory changes to allow butcher shops to process game for service to the public.
- Options to integrate culled deer or other surplus food into supply chain.
- Support for networks of people active in hunting and foraging and Elders to make it easier to source product. Bring these people into institutions to share knowledge with food service staff and students.
- Bring awareness of local and traditional foods to a wider audience.

Health Facilities

Island Health: North Island Hospitals Indigenous Recipes

North Island Hospitals offer traditional foods as a recognition of their patients, the food that they desire, and what makes them comfortable.

The North Island Hospitals have been working on incorporating Indigenous recipes into their in-patient food service. They have done so using food from the main distributor for Island Health in their region; it is not possible to use donated food or specialty distributors. Patients select food from a menu of choices, and conversations are ongoing about how to ensure Indigenous patients are aware that Indigenous recipes are available.

It is in the mandate for the North Island Hospitals to serve traditional foods. As they tested recipes such as clam fritters, fish soup, salmon patties, appleberry crumble, and bannock, they found that some (such as the clam fritters) are too labour intensive to make from scratch on-site, but would happily purchase them if they were made commercially and frozen. Patients frequently request traditional foods which are not market available, such as seasonal foraged items like salal berries, salmon berries, and huckleberries. There are also requests for wild salmon rather than farmed. They have been working with an Environmental Health Officer to explore the possibility of having donated food cooked outside of the food services by an activities staff person and served with family sign off.

What would help in the future:

- Indigenous recipes which can be made with market-available foods translated into different quantities e.g. a soup recipe with details for 10, 50, 100 servings, including vegetable recipes.
- Suggestions of market available vegetables that are appropriate as Indigenous foods.
- Trial testing of recipes in long-term care.

Northern Haida Gwaii Hospital has been able to increase serving Indigenous foods by asking, learning and following Indigenous protocol regarding traditional foods and recipes.

Following substantial conversation with the community about how to serve Indigenous foods, the hospital in Masset began to cook food in their kitchens for in-patient meals. Many of the meals include salmon and halibut, donated to the hospital and processed through a Canadian Food Inspection Agency approved facility. Northern Health has created a policy to allow donated fish, which has made this possible.

However, these changes rely on the generosity of the community, but it has been frustrating not to be able to compensate the fishers, and that the fishers must be required to bring the food to a facility to be processed. Indigenous recipes are sacred and often protected knowledge, and the process of standardizing these recipes for use in the hospital system without appropriating and disrespecting them has been difficult. There needs to be flexibility within the food procurement system to allow for local food from the community; provincially sourced food is not local enough. Further expansion of programs like this need to take time to be led by community, as each community has different priorities, food systems, and relationships. New programs need to engage with Knowledge Keepers and traditional harvesters to better understand how these processes meet food safety requirements.

What would help in the future:

- Take time in developing similar programs or related policies. Every community is different, every food system is different, and every community has different priorities, and people are at different levels of relationships. This cannot be rushed.
- Teach why it is important to incorporate traditional foods.
- Engage with harvesters to understand their processes and how these are followed to ensure food safety.
- Expand flexibility clauses in exclusivity distributor service contracts beyond 5%.

Interior Health: Deni House Forest to Fork Program

Deni House, a long-term care facility serves a traditional foods-inspired meal once a week.

Interior Health was hearing from community members in hospitals and care homes that the inability to access traditional foods was impacting their health recovery. In Williams Lake, where many of the requests originated, the local dietitian began to work with the community to develop a solution.

The intent for the program initially was to serve traditional foods, harvested locally with the support of Knowledge Keepers. The Food Premises Regulation required foods to be from approved sources, which are both expensive and typically not local traditionally harvested foods. The community has shifted to a menu of foods in consultation with Elders and Knowledge Keepers from all three local Nations. This includes blueberry soup, elk stew, salmon, deer meat and Saskatoon berries to name but a few as well as some common comfort foods from First Nations communities like bannock, yeast bread and cabbage pudding. Lillooet and Ashcroft are beginning their own processes towards sourcing traditional foods and recipes.

What would help in the future:

- Granting health authorities more power to approve food sources locally, allowing more traditional foods into the food supply chain.
- Institutions communicating with First Nations that there is a demand for producing traditional foods.

Stó:lō Elders Lodge

Long-term care facility incorporates traditional food preparation into activities.

The Stó:lō Elders Lodge is a Fraser Health funded assisted living facility, designed for Stó:lō and other Indigenous Elders. Meals must be from approved sources, though the kitchen team continues to look for ways to incorporate more traditional foods and Indigenous recipes, including using produce from their garden.

The facility is held to a strict budget for food and is allocated \$7/day per person for food costs which must provide lunch and dinner. This budget limits the ability to purchase what commercial sources of traditional foods might be available. The community wants to share food with lodge, but the Food Premises Regulation prevents the lodge from serving it. Family members can bring prepared food items in for residents, and this is how traditional foods are often provided.

Elders living in the lodge share traditional recipes and knowledge with the facility regularly, and activities include traditional fish preservation several times a year, with Elders working with the food service team.

What would help:

- Education on cultivating traditional foods within facility gardens.
- Training for food service staff about preparing traditional foods and Indigenous recipes.
- Education for dietitians and Environmental Health Officers about traditional foods.
- A food traceability process linking harvesting to inspected processing facilities.

PHSA Forensic Psychiatric Hospital

Forensic Psychiatric Hospital begins sourcing local, traditional foods.

The Provincial Health Services Authority Forensic Psychiatric Hospital is a secure facility in Coquitlam. The facility includes a full service kitchen, which receives menu advice from a patient advocacy group. Food services staff have been actively looking for ways to incorporate Indigenous recipes into the meals offered, understanding that many of their residents are Indigenous and wishing to provide food which is familiar and nutritious.

The facility has begun by arranging to purchase salmon from the Syilx / Okanagan Nation, and continues to seek Indigenous recipes and traditional food sources. The facility also has a garden and would be interested in guidance on what they could plant for use in Indigenous recipes. Indigenous residents in the facility are from many different nations, and while they are interested in profiling Coast Salish foods (the facility is on Kwikwetlem territory) they recognize Indigenous residents may be looking for a variety of traditional foods.

It took the Food and Nutrition Services Manager a long time to find a vendor from whom he could purchase wild salmon, despite many connections throughout food services. The kitchen staff are eager to learn and try new recipes, what they need most are connections to those who would teach them.

What would help:

- A network of traditional foods distributors.
- Indigenous recipes and training to properly prepare them.
- Education on traditional foods for First Nations within B.C.

Early Childhood Education

Nutsumaat Lelum Child Day Care

The on-reserve Day Care provides children the opportunity to develop a taste for traditional foods and deepen their cultural connection.

The Nutsumaat Lelum Child Day Care is located on the Stz'uminus First Nation reserve and is supported in part through the First Nations Health Authority Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve program. The program regularly serves traditional foods. The fisheries department will fish for the child care centre and provides cold storage, community hunters donate elk (which they have ground by a butcher with some added pork fat), or the centre picks and processes local berries and other

plants. They have also been able to access local clams, dried and smoked fish. Many of the children don't eat traditional foods at home, and some staff do not either, but the centre provides an encouraging space to try them.

The cost of traditional foods is high. The centre is often dependent on community members' ability to donate food they have harvested, which is increasingly limited as wild stocks shrink. Child Care Licensing Officers have also expressed concern about the serving of traditional foods, even when this is outside their jurisdiction, and the foods have been approved by Environmental Health Officers.

What would help in the future:

- Cultural competency training (including traditional foods) for Child Care Licensing and Environmental Health Officers.
- Alignment of regulations around food service with the Indigenous Foods Guide.
- Mechanism to integrate deer culls into donated wild game meat.
- Provincewide working group of individuals with an interest in providing safe, non-market, traditional foods.
- First Nations developed food safety training specific to working with non-market high-protein and other traditional foods from field/ocean to table.

K-12 Education

Haida Gwaii: Local Food to School Program

The Local Food to School Program in Haida Gwaii is working towards reconnecting youth in schools to traditional food knowledge and local grown and harvested foods.

The Local Food to School Program grew out of a Farm to School Initiative which was more focused on facilitating connections between local farmers and schools. The Local Food to School Program works to increase access to traditional foods access for schools, as well as other organizations on-island that offer meals and food services. Haida people have historically grown a lot of food in gardens, and so much of the traditional foods include local food produced agriculturally, such as the Haida potato.

The program has worked to find ways to process seafood and local venison, following both cultural protocol and demonstrating how it meets food safety standards. It is important to the program that the food is authentic, so the people serving and creating the traditional foods needs are rooted in Haida culture or have a very strong understanding of it guided by community Knowledge Keepers. Food safety regulations have required donated seafood and meat to be processed in a facility, though the Department of Fisheries and Oceans has been willing to be more flexible if an educational workshop model was being used. The community has knowledgeable hunters, fishers and food processors and many have been willing to help. For example, Baru Farm (a provincially certified meat facility) helped develop a food safety plan for hunted deer, which was eventually approved by the Environmental Health Officer. Shelly Crack, a community dietitian helped to line up the Western food safety plan with the Haida food safety plans for smoking fish. These parallel food systems were used alongside an Elder teaching a fish smoking workshop.

Though Knowledge Keepers have come into the school to teach about traditional foods, entering school institutions can be difficult for many, and it would be easier if more of this education could be done on the land and in community. Without enough Haida people involved in the program, there is a higher chance that the program will make cultural errors, and this is an ongoing concern.

What would help in the future:

- Alignment of food safety rules with Traditional Knowledge in other First Nations.
- Reduction in administration required to take children onto land.
- Create positions within school districts who can focus on relationship building and connection with Indigenous communities.

Haahuupayak Elementary, Port Alberni

Traditional foods incorporated into a healthy school's program.

Funded in part by a Healthy Schools B.C. First Nations School initiative, Haahuupayak Elementary has been bringing traditional foods into the school. Working with another First Nations school, they put together a health and wellness curriculum including traditional foods and culture.

The program has primarily used donated foods. For example, a seal was brought into the classroom and students learned about hunting techniques, traditional processing, and food preparation. The program also hosted a buffet with kids eating traditional foods with Elders and talking about them, building connections together, and to their culture.

One of the Indigenous leaders helping to facilitate the program homemade some traditional foods toys to contribute to the language nest program. These normalize traditional foods as part of play, and include eulachons, salmon and a toy smokehouse. Her focus is on introducing youth to traditional foods, so they can get a taste for them, and then will continue to eat them as adults.

What would help in the future:

- Access to wild places for harvesters.
- Value placed on traditional foods so they will be protected.
- Finding ways to grow and produce traditional foods locally and stop going into the bush to get them.

3: Examples of shared stewardship initiatives

This appendix summarises three initiatives which present different approaches to implementing Indigenous peoples' harvesting rights as part of shared stewardship initiatives: the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve Clam Gardens, the Kluane National Park Reserve in the Yukon, and the Dasiqox Tribal Park. B.C.'s *Together for Wildlife* draft strategy outlines the government's intention to create new opportunities to work collaboratively with Indigenous governments to effectively and efficiently deliver wildlife stewardship, which is in line with further initiatives like these.

Gulf Island National Park Reserve: Clam Gardens

Prior to being removed from large parts of their lands, many coastal First Nations managed clam gardens as one of many sources of traditional foods. Within the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve are clam gardens which Hul'q'umi'num and WSÁNEĆ Nations would have managed within their territories, though since 2003 the gardens have been part of a national park. In 2014, the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve, in partnership with Hul'q'umi'num and WSÁNEĆ Nations, began restoring two clam gardens. The work of monitoring and restoring the gardens has been guided by Coast Salish knowledge holders and complemented by modern scientific methods. Coastal First Nations knowledge holders have shared that the act of harvesting clams keeps clam beaches productive, creating healthy bivalve habitat by turning over the beach sands and exposing these sediments to oxygen. If a beach is not worked, seaweed and dead clams accumulate on the surface and suffocate live clams.

The five year project was designed to help determine whether clam gardens can be used as an effective resource management tool within the park, and to enable Coast Salish peoples to engage with their ancestral territories and practice their traditional harvesting rights.² As this project closes, based on its success, there is an opportunity to continue Hul'q'umi'num and WSÁNEĆ Nations' access to the clam gardens, providing a regular source of traditional foods.

Kluane National Park Reserve: A expanded model of harvesting rights

The Kluane National Park and Reserve in the Yukon is managed cooperatively with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN) and Kluane First Nation (KFN). In 1943, the Canadian government designated this area as a game sanctuary to protect local wildlife, also banning First Nations from hunting and trapping as they had for thousands of years in the area. Decades later, the Canadian government recognized formally that Champagne and Aishihik First Nations citizens (1993) and Kluane First Nation citizens (2003) have subsistence harvesting rights on their traditional lands in the park. These comprehensive agreements permit harvesting for all fish, wildlife and plants for all

² Parks Canada: Gulf Islands National Park Reserve – Clam garden restoration <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/B.C./gulf/nature/restoration-restoration/parcs-a-myes-clam-gardens>

CAFN and KFN citizens, their families, and for ceremonial purposes. Further, these citizens have the right to share, trade, barter, or sell any edible fish, wildlife and plant products with each other and other Yukon First Nations for domestic purposes.³

Dasiqox Tribal Park

In 2017, the Dasiqox Tribal Park Initiative was created, led by a steering committee made up of Xení Gwet'in and Yunesit'in leadership. The park is located in traditional T̓silhqot'in territory, about 125 km southwest of Williams Lake, B.C..⁴ Tribal parks may have varying structures, but the vision for this park is an area that allows the T̓silhqot'in to “protect the land and revitalize Indigenous culture, while also creating opportunities for sustainable economic development for their members and the broader community.”⁵ The 2018 *Community Vision and Managing Goals* Hunting, Fishing, Harvesting Plants and Animals within the Dasiqox Tribal Park states the following: ⁶

- Harvesting plants and animals in DTP follows culturally appropriate methods including following T̓silhqot'in laws.
- Hunting pressure is reduced to restore sustainable local populations of preferred wild food animals, moose in particular, in preferred harvesting areas.
- T̓silhqot'in traditional laws are implemented and communicated to land users.
- Important seasonal habitats and preferred harvesting areas for sensitive species like moose (wintering areas) are protected with restricted access.
- Recreational areas are clearly marked, and hunters or recreationists use designated areas only.

Chief Roger William of the Xení Gwet'in described the difference between a provincial or national park and a tribal park as: “the purpose of a regular federal or provincial park is preservation, protection, conservation — which are admirable, laudable objectives that are a little bit 19th century. The purpose of a tribal park, by contrast, is sustainability of the ecosystems necessary to support the aboriginal or treaty rights.”⁷

³ Parks Canada. Kluane National Park and Reserve: Harvesting - First Nations Rights and Responsibilities. Retrieved March 12, 2020, from <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/yt/kluane/activ/tradition/ii>

⁴ <https://dasiqox.org/>

⁵ <https://dasiqox.org/about-us/our-story/>

⁶ 2018 *Community Vision and Managing Goals* Hunting, Fishing, Harvesting Plants and Animals

⁷ <https://www.nationalobserver.com/2016/03/31/news/how-B.C.%E2%80%99s-first-nations-are-taking-charge-tribal-parks>

4: Project Ideas for Shorter and Longer Term Actions

The project ideas summarized below could be considered and undertaken in a short timeframe, require a smaller investment, and/or could be eligible for funding within an existing grant area. These options were developed by the project team based on priorities identified by participants in the study, as well as consideration of how other programs in B.C. and Canada have approached effort to increasing the use of traditional foods and Indigenous recipes.

Considerations: Shorter Term Actions

Develop and enable alternate food safety approval

Current food safety requirements do not allow for the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge into government food safety processes. As noted above, section 11 of the Food Premises Regulation, requires food premises to ensure that all food on the premises is from an approved source: either another approved food premise, a licensed slaughter establishment under the Meat Inspection Regulations, or “a source that is approved by the government of Canada, the Provincial government, the government of another province or territory, or an official or agency of any of those governments under whose authority food safety standards are established and enforced.”

Exploring how traditional ways could be incorporated need not necessarily require changes to regulation, particularly with respect to short-term options. For example, the Food Premises Regulation could remain as it is, if Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) could be authorized to approve sources of food, based on a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HAACP) based plan. HACCP is a systematic approach to the identification, evaluation, and control of food safety hazards, and a HACCP based plan describes the steps required to harvest and process a food safely.

This change would likely require EHOs to receive additional training on those food safety standards introduced by the Province. First the Province has to establish relationships with Indigenous Knowledge Keepers to gain their insights into how traditional foods are harvested and processed, so food safety standards and appropriate guidance can be developed for EHOs. Currently, BCIT is the only B.C. post-secondary institution which offers a program eligible for certification as Public Health Inspector / Environmental Health Officer. This program is currently two years long, though it is under review.

Prior to making either larger change (authorizing EHOs to approve sources or working with B.C.IT to develop additional training for EHOs), it would be helpful to have worked with a small group of EHOs to collectively learn about and recommend approval for sources of traditional foods. It would likely require additional oversight for the group of EHOs, and perhaps could require consumers of the food

to provide written acknowledgment that they understand the food they are eating has been approved through an alternate approach.

Assuming a successful pilot, it may still be best for a staged expansion of EHOs approving traditional food sources, initially focusing on a small number within each health authority who have received additional training and developed trusting relationships with Indigenous Knowledge Keepers.

Develop Indigenous food processing facilities

A central barrier to serving traditional foods or Indigenous recipes within B.C. public institutions is the lack of approved food products, particularly for processed food which meets the specialized product requirements for health care food service. A similar lack of food processing capacity in B.C. and need for product packaging designed to meet the unique requirements of health care food service has been identified as a barrier to increasing local food procurement within health care.⁸

There is a demand for commercial food products which are portion sized and prepared as a re-thermable product, or partially prepared and easy to be cooked within an institution with limited kitchen staff and equipment. There is also demand for texture-modified foods such as purees or soups. For example, Island Health's food services in the North Island have been working on Indigenous recipes using market available foods. During their testing, they found that clam fritters were very well received, but that preparing them within the institutions was too labour intensive. If a processing facility could make and freeze clam fritters, these could be easily prepared and served within B.C. institutions with minimal kitchen space. Such facilities could go farther and prepare re-thermable meals.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries has been working to encourage the consumption of B.C. products and support resiliency within the agriculture sector, including building capacity along the value chain. Funding is currently available to support the development of agriculture and agri-food opportunities, including targeted funding for Indigenous communities and organizations. The B.C. Indigenous Agriculture Development Program also has incorporated support to help communities apply, which addresses an important barrier to accessing funding for many Indigenous communities.

Some health authorities are more reliant on re-thermable meals than others. It would be helpful for health authorities and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries to work together with First Nations within each health authority to provide guidance as to what their packaging requirements are, and to develop partnerships so once processing facilities exist that they can work together to identify and test traditional foods or Indigenous recipes for delivery through the health care system.

⁸ McBride, Michele and Forster-Coull, Lisa. 2018. Local Food Procurement in B.C. Healthcare: Review of Food Procurement Processes in B.C. Healthcare Facilities and Opportunities for Increasing Local Food Buys.

Where local distributors cannot meet the purchasing needs of an institution (in terms of the quantity of product that is available) the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries may be able to assist by helping supplies through aggregation initiatives which are being used to increase the supply of local food.

Keep listening and engaging

It is understood that this study is likely to form the first phase of a longer-term engagement aimed at identifying priorities and opportunities to increase the availability and use of traditional foods and Indigenous recipes in B.C.'s public institutions. The first phase of this project has had a short timeline, which limited the numbers of people who could be engaged in conversation, even though the size of the team and pre-existing connections across B.C. made it possible to connect with a larger and more regionally diverse group of people. These conversations were also one-time connections, where in order to begin to plan more substantive change, relationships are needed.

Despite these limitations, participants were almost universally enthusiastic about the project and its intent and welcomed subsequent conversations in the next phase. We were also commonly referred to other people and organizations who would want or need to be part of further conversations.

Work with dietitians on Indigenous recipes for health-care facilities

The menu plans for in-patient food service in health care are reviewed by dietitians who ensure alignment with nutrition requirements. Where food is prepared on-site, simply sharing dietitian approved meal plans may increase the abilities of food services to integrate Indigenous recipes. This approach may be most successful in health-care facilities where patients select meals from a menu of choices.

In-patient meals are also subject to strict budget guidelines. While there continue to be barriers to serving traditional foods in public institutions, integrating Indigenous recipes is much more possible. While it may not be possible to source wild game for these recipes without additional policy and regulation changes being made, recipes can still highlight common Indigenous food ingredients and reflect sustainable food choices. For example, some hospitals offer salmon menu choices, but budget constraints have resulted in serving open net farmed salmon, a farming technique opposed by many First Nations in B.C. due to the negative impact on wild salmon stocks through the spread of parasitic sea lice⁹.

For many Indigenous people, especially those living in coastal areas, the potential for risk and harm from open-net salmon farming to produce the meal negates the comfort they might feel from eating

⁹ FNLC Calls for End to Open-net Pen Salmon Farming in British Columbia. <https://www.bcafn.ca/news/fnlc-calls-end-open-net-pen-salmon-farming-british-columbia>

familiar foods. While choosing a more sustainably harvested salmon (wild or closed containment) may raise the cost beyond the allowed budget, there are likely other Indigenous recipes where the cost variance is not as significant. Salmon may be a default Indigenous recipe for non-Indigenous people, along with foods such as bannock, given the generalized lack of understanding of the diversity of traditional foods and Indigenous recipes. There may also be an option to serve salmon prepared in a different way which is less costly such as salmon head soup.

Identify and map B.C.'s traditional food regions

A central barrier to increasing the service of traditional foods in B.C. public institutions is a lack of understanding of what traditional foods are and how they differ from Indigenous recipes seen through a pan-Indigenous lens, which might include foods such as bannock and “Indian tacos”. A better understanding of different foods in each region would help contribute to an understanding of differences between Indigenous cultures, challenging pan-Indigenous assumptions widely held by non-Indigenous people.

It was also the strong advice from other areas of Canada that have moved forward in this area that taking time to understand differences in traditional food production and use between regions is a fundamental step towards creating initiatives that will be supported by Indigenous people.

Work is underway in some organizations that could be leveraged to gain momentum on this work. For example, the FNHA has produced traditional food factsheets that include some preliminary reference to the region(s) where that food is commonly used.¹⁰ The number of traditional food regions is a question for First Nations and other Indigenous communities within B.C. to decide. There would certainly be more than the five health regions or eight economic development regions and would be more likely to reflect the 24 tribal council areas, or 34 distinct languages, or 60 Indigenous language dialects within the province.

Develop a repository of Indigenous recipes

Public institution food service providers commonly suggested the sharing of recipes and training to prepare traditional foods and Indigenous recipes. Indigenous people consulted as part of the project, as well as members of the project team, noted that many Elders and Knowledge Keepers may be reluctant to share traditional food sources, but would be more open to sharing Indigenous recipes.

While an increase in service of Indigenous recipes would be an improvement on the current situation in most public institutions in B.C., this is not a substitute for serving traditional foods rooted in culture and language. Increasing the use of Indigenous recipes would help to grow awareness of and appreciation for Indigenous cuisine. Indigenous recipes are often easier to make with approved

¹⁰ FNHA. Traditional Foods Fact Sheets. https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/Traditional_Food_Fact_Sheets.pdf

sources, yet still highlight local food ingredients. The cooking techniques for some Indigenous recipes are likely new to non-Indigenous chefs, who would benefit from training in how to safely pit cook fish, for example. However, it is important to keep in mind the negative experiences Indigenous communities have had when sharing Traditional Knowledge, and the understandable reluctance many may have of sharing related information.

Use toys to increase children's familiarity with traditional foods

Indigenous people who spoke with the project during this phase commonly talked of the importance of introducing children to traditional foods. Increasing the ability for traditional foods to be served in early childhood education is the best way to do this, but there are other ways to support normalizing traditional foods.

Making and gifting these toys throughout child care centres in B.C. would support the introduction of traditional food ideas, even before the barriers to serving these foods are addressed. Some child care centres have a high or sole percentage of Indigenous children, such as those funded through the Aboriginal Head Start program (including both on and off reserve programs). This type of initiative would also be aligned with B.C.'s new Early Learning Framework which includes a commitment to resist language, concepts, and pedagogies that perpetuate legacies of colonization and marginalization of Indigenous people. Non-Indigenous early childhood educators are often uncertain how to integrate Indigenous worldviews into play, and traditional food toys would be an educational tool for both adults and children.

These toys could also be integrated into the Indigenous literary kits many libraries have begun to offer. For example, Pam Moore from the Qualicum First Nation Child Care Centre has developed a series of kits including books and toys that can be loaned to child care centres, schools, and family programs for a month at a time. The kits are focused on themes and individual nations' cultures. Pam acts as a cultural advisor to organizations who borrow the kits and provides guidance on their use. Pam has produced lists of the items in the kits, to support their replication in other communities. Several school districts are working with Pam to develop similar kits for use in the school system, and other organizations have gifted her kits to the Vancouver Island Regional Library system.

Considerations: Longer Term Actions

In the longer term, the following ideas were identified by the project team as being worthy of consideration as options for increasing the availability and use of traditional foods and Indigenous recipes in B.C.'s public institutions.

Work with First Nations to develop regional food dispensaries across B.C.

Food dispensaries, as envisioned by the project team, would be a structure to:

- coordinate the harvest and processing of traditional foods in commercial kitchen facilities;
- monitor the supply of traditional foods in the wild and support stewardship and conservation practices;
- work to rebuild Traditional Knowledge within the nation of harvesting practices and protocols;
- contribute a pre-determined portion of processed foods to be distributed at no cost to members and for nation events; and
- sell the remaining portion of processed foods to B.C. institutions or other bodies seeking to serve traditional foods.

At the outset, prior to any changes in regulation or policy, food dispensaries could be created to process low risk food items which are not excluded from use in food premises or for sale, such as wild berries, plants, or aquatic plants. Gatherers would be paid a salary, regardless of how much food is gathered, so the incentive to overharvest is removed.

Some nations may be interested in creating a game farm as part of the food dispensary, enabling the supply of game such as fallow deer, bison or reindeer to their community and processing facility, until such time as it is possible to process, sell and serve wildlife meat. While game meat is available for sale, it is expensive, and is unlikely to follow the nation's protocols in slaughter (for example, some First Nations offer tobacco before and after a kill as thanks to the Creator and to the animal). In this case, food dispensaries could seek license as a Class E slaughter house, having established that the specialty slaughter services are not available in existing local facilities. Others might choose to seek commercial fishing or shellfish licenses, or simply to begin by processing and packaging commercially available food they purchase into Indigenous recipes for sale.

Dispensary facilities could have a separate space available for community use to process individually harvested animals, supporting both food safety and gathering information on the numbers of birds, fish, or animals which have been harvested from a territory following [Indigenous] harvesting rights protected under section 25 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. The creation of a food dispensary is in no way intended to replace Indigenous individual or family harvesting of traditional foods, rather it is intended to assist individual harvesters, and increase access to these foods amongst those who are not able to harvest them.

Hunters, trappers and fishers could also be hired, also on salary, to monitor stocks for ecosystem health and stewardship needs, and harvest as appropriate but initially only could provide food for community. As changes are made which allow the sale and service of wildlife meat, this meat could be prepared for sale.

The first priority for use of wild sourced traditional foods is the community. If stocks were insufficient to gather enough to meet community needs and sale, the processing would shift to using a different

wild source (if its quantities are high enough) or to a sustainably produced commercial source. Following community needs being met, each nation would set priorities as to where the remaining food would be sold.

The monitoring of wild stocks would provide valuable new information to support stewardship. Currently, much of the information available for the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRD) to monitor wildlife stocks comes from the Harvest Questionnaire, which gathers information from hunters on the number of animals killed and the effort required, with distinct questions asked for particular species such as the Limited Entry Hunting. This approach is aligned with more recent provincial and federal government initiatives to co-manage ecosystems with Indigenous communities, such as the Indigenous Guardians Program.

Not all of the 198 First Nations within B.C. would need to create food dispensaries. First Nations could work together regionally to determine where food dispensaries should be located, and how they can be administered to meet the needs of all nations within the region. It is possible for a distributed model of food dispensary to be created, where facilities or dispensary staff are distributed across multiple nations.

A key element of the food dispensary model is to try to rebuild Traditional Knowledge about food harvesting which was deliberately broken through colonial practices and legislation limiting access to hunting, trapping and fishing and removing children from communities. As the revitalization of Indigenous language and culture is urgent, so too is the revitalization of traditional harvesting practices. Much of this information is held by a small group of Elders and Knowledge Keepers, and there needs to be trustworthy and culturally safe and appropriate systems for this information to be shared. Each year, more of this information becomes harder to recover.

The Indigenous Food Processing facilities proposed within the Shorter-Term Project Ideas could be expanded to create food dispensaries.

Create regulation for a First Nations food dispensary

The Wildlife Act states that it is an offense to buy, sell, trade or distribute for gain wildlife meat, except as authorized by regulation or a permit. The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations prohibiting or regulating the trafficking or possession of wildlife or fish or parts of either.

There are already guidelines in place to donate culled game meat, including the B.C. Centre for Disease Control *Standards for the Donation of Culled Game Meat* and the *Guideline for Cutting and Wrapping of Uninspected Meat and Game in Approved Food Premises*. These guidelines were put in place to address challenges that economically disadvantaged individuals and families may face in obtaining high quality and nutritious food, particularly the high protein and low fat meat from game animals. Standards are designed to ensure that game meat quality is assessed by trained and

experienced personnel, to reduce the risk to human health presented by unsuitable meat, parasites or diseases.

However, this donated meat can only be donated through a food bank or directly to an individual, and is not eligible for use in soup kitchens, charitable organizations or any facility in which compliance with the Food Premises Regulation is required. A separate consideration explores options to address the “approved source” requirement, through granting Environmental Health Officers authority to approve food sources following review of a HACCP plan.

This study has identified two options for consideration to address the limitation:

1. Determine if a First Nations food dispensary model constitutes trafficking in wildlife meat.
 - The model as proposed would not pay hunters per animal, but rather would pay a salary to a hunter who would also be responsible for supporting monitoring and conserving wildlife stocks and herd health and participating in youth education on the Nation’s hunting protocols and processes. This approach removes the risk of overharvesting in order to meet income needs, and follows principles behind traditional Indigenous generosity systems, where hunters are honored for the food contributed to the community.
 - However, if the proposed change to the Food Premises Regulations could be made, the model as proposed would sell processed and packaged meat for service in Food Premises. Determinations could be made as to whether these meat sales are restricted to food premises where food is provided at no cost (e.g. in-patient meals, child care or school programs) or if, stocks permitting, it could be allowed to be sold to post-secondary or other for-profit food premises which are seeking to serve traditional foods or Indigenous recipes.
2. Create a regulation of the *Wildlife Act* which specifically names First Nations food dispensaries as exempt from the clause preventing wildlife meat from being bought, sold, traded or distributed for gain (see recommendation for the creation of First Nations food dispensaries).

Work with Knowledge Keepers to develop HARVESTSAFE

FOODSAFE Level 1 is compulsory for many people working in the B.C. food service industry. FOODSAFE is a comprehensive food-safety training for the food industry and is managed by the B.C. FOODSAFE Secretariat in partnership with the B.C. Centre for Disease Control, regional health authorities, B.C. Restaurant and Food Services Association, and WorkSafe B.C.

A similar program could be developed to provide safety training for harvesters, integrating Indigenous safe harvest handling practices and knowledge with western food safety principles, including the B.C. Centre for Disease Control *Standards for the Donation of Culled Game Meat*. The course could also provide harvesters with tools which can be used to document their harvest, if required.

Any new course focusing on harvesting as related to game carcasses may overlap with the one-day training program conducted by FLNRO that provides individuals with the knowledge needed to examine, handle and prepare game carcasses for human consumption, and to understand the risk presented by the contamination of meat and the presence of zoonotic organisms

As with FOODSAFE, the course could be widely available for anyone who harvests food, and for those who make decisions which affect food harvesters. A course like this which explicitly respects and validates Indigenous harvest practices would also help to shift societal bias against Indigenous knowledge.

Work with dietitians on Indigenous recipes for correctional centres

The menu plans for inmates in correctional centres are reviewed by dietitians who ensure alignment with nutrition requirements, and multi-year supply contracts are in place. One company holds the contract for food services within correctional facilities, and this contract is in the process of being extended until 2023. This provides a three-year window to build on the lessons learned from increasing service of Indigenous recipes in health facilities, to determine what the logistics and budget implications might be to begin supplying Indigenous recipes in correctional centres, especially those with a high percentage of Indigenous inmates.

One option is to offer these foods as part of a special menu diet, though this approach conflicts with the one of the guiding principles the consulting team proposed - to offer the Indigenous recipes widely, and not target their service to Indigenous people. Special menu diets tend to be more expensive, and there are currently protocols in place for inmates to be able to demonstrate a need for a particular diet, such as with medical or religious confirmation. However, Indigenous recipes could be included as a regular menu option which highlight common Indigenous food ingredients.

Support the integration of traditional foods into K-12 Indigenous language curriculum

A strong message coming from Indigenous people who spoke with the project team during this phase was the close connection between Indigenous languages and traditional foods. For example, many Indigenous place names are descriptions of types of foods which can be harvested there (e.g. where clams were gathered). Indigenous languages reflect Indigenous worldviews, including relationships

with animals and the natural world which are directly linked with Indigenous traditional food practices. When language describes animals with equal respect to people, and plants and trees as animate, it highlights the marked difference between Indigenous worldviews of food from western agricultural and natural resources management approaches.¹¹ Further, the combining of language lessons and food gathering offer a perfect Indigenous based activity that gets students on the land, teaches Indigenous language, and contributes to Indigenous food sovereignty.

Within B.C., there are 34 unique Indigenous languages and over 60 dialects. Ministry approved curriculum has been developed for over half of these languages through the provincial Languages Template development process. A 2016 review of the development and implementation of Ministry approved First Nations second language Integrated Resource Packages (IRP) noted that the curriculum development template has “relied heavily on existing curricula for French and international second languages, and IRPs that have been developed so far are only beginning to touch on the complex features of First Nations languages.”(p.15) One of the review recommendations regarding the future development of curriculum proposes that the language template that guides the IRP development should be designed so that it is aligned with Indigenous worldview, Indigenous language structures, Indigenous instructional patterns, and Indigenous values and relationships within communities, land and ancestors.¹²

The Ministry of Education provides a Languages Template development package to school districts and communities to assist them to develop language education programs. The current package has limited interaction with traditional foods, though food vocabulary is introduced.

An update to the IRP Languages Template is underway, to better align with B.C.’s new curriculum, and the integration of land-based activities like food gathering has been part of the discussion. No one from the project team reached out to the First Nations Education Steering Committee, who is currently leading the development of language curriculum options.

Explore options for new ways of production

A question needing substantively more discussion in a subsequent phase is the possibility to produce traditional foods in new ways, while maintaining respectful harvest protocols. Participants expressed concern about the quantity of traditional foods available in the wild, and noted that ongoing environmental degradation, pollution, and climate change are likely to further reduce these stocks.

While some felt that only wild sourced traditional food ingredients, harvested appropriately, could be used to make traditional foods, others felt that the way to protect wild stocks and increase the

¹¹ <https://www.facinghistory.org/stolen-lives-indigenous-peoples-canada-and-indian-residential-schools/chapter-1/language-and-worldview>

¹² <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/ways-to-learn/aboriginal-education/aboriginal-languages-irp-review.pdf>

service of traditional foods was to begin to produce these foods in new ways. These alternative approaches do not reflect mainstream agriculture, livestock or aquaculture techniques; it would not, for example, be sufficient to replace a wild caught salmon with an open net pen farmed salmon, given the potential harm to the environment resulting from these practices.

However, some participants used the example of closed containment land-based fish farms¹³ as potential supply sources, while substantial efforts are made to protect and rebuild wild stocks. Others noted that many traditional foods require active management and tending, such as clam beds, or root vegetables like sunchokes, nodding onions or wild camas.

As an increasing number of First Nations establish greenhouses or shellfish farm businesses, some questioned if this could be one of the routes to providing a consistent, Indigenous controlled supply of traditional foods without further impacting the limited wild supply. Whether meals like elk stew can be made with sustainably-farmed game and still be part of supporting traditional foods is a conversation for Indigenous communities to continue to have.



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¹³ For example, the Kuterra product produced by the 'Namgis First Nation: <http://www.kuterra.com/>