



## **Community Gardens Oregon Solutions Team**

### **Meeting Notes – January 22, 2010**

The meeting was convened in Room C of the Portland Building by Commissioner Fish shortly after 9 am. Round table introductions were followed by remarks from Mark Ellsworth, Northwest Regional Coordinator for the Governor’s Economic Revitalization Team. Mark conveyed the Governor’s interest in and support for the project, particularly insofar as it can serve as a model for growing food in other Oregon communities. He said he will be reporting back to the Governor on the commitments made in the Declaration of Cooperation and stands ready to help if there is a role for the Governor’s office.

Kat West, Sustainability Manager for Multnomah County gave a Power Point presentation on the Multnomah Food Initiative (her materials will be posted on the Oregon Solutions website for community gardens). Kat said that a Food Summit is 99% scheduled for April 17 of this year. She talked about the importance of aligning all the efforts around growing food in Portland – the Food Policy Council, Climate Action Plan, Portland Plan, Multnomah Food Initiative, and Oregon Solutions. Multnomah County is working on a website they hope to have ready in February.

Jean Fike (for Alix Eastman) of East Multnomah SWCD reported on the “Immediate Needs” Task Force chaired by Alix that is addressing the community gardens waiting list for the current growing season. The Task Force had two meetings and has scheduled a phone bank to call through everyone on the waiting list to determine status and offer alternatives. The Task Force is also requesting assistance from PPR to input the waiting list information into a data base – it is currently all tracked by hand.

The rest of the meeting was spent walking through a draft of potential commitments to be made by the Team in the Declaration of Cooperation. Commissioner Fish talked about the tight budget at the City and the need to make 4% cuts. He plans to sit down with several bureaus and discuss what can be done to support the city’s community garden program as part of the mandate of the Climate Action Plan to increase garden plots. He also plans to speak with the chair of the Parks Foundation board about assisting with capacity building in the Friends of Portland Community Gardens 501(c)(3). He said he understands the need for professional development staff to attract funding for community

gardens outside the city's general fund. The Commissioner asked the group to brainstorm ideas for talking about community gardens in a compelling way. Ideas mentioned were:

- Habitat for urbanity
- Produce for people
- People and hunger (food banks, food safety)
- Children (eating well, nutrition, environmental education)
- Next generation of veggie eaters & veggie growers
- Getting hands dirty/connecting to the earth
- Social connection and exercise
- Food security (related to fuel shortages)
- Dignity in growing your own – not a handout
- Link to obesity and diabetes
- Pride/sharing skills
- Generational sharing
- Multicultural sharing
- Promote the concept of sharing
- Public safety
- Being good stewards of land and creatures

Stephanie Hallock, Oregon Solutions, announced that the Organizational Structure workgroup would host a discussion of establishing a regional food network, beyond just community gardens, on February 1 at Metro. A show of hands indicated that many of the Team members were interested in that discussion and planned to attend.

**Next Meeting:** (And probably last) meeting of the full Oregon Solutions Team will be Friday, March 19 from 9 to Noon in Room C of the Portland Building.