Lake County Local Food Group

After the successful publication of the Lake County Sustainable Local Food Systems Report in June of 2013, a group of representatives—primarily from the public and nonprofit organizations that helped to write the report—formed the Lake County Local Food Group to advance several of the report’s recommendations.

The group is co-chaired by Pat Carey, outgoing Lake County Board Commissioner, and Brad Leibov, President and CEO of the Liberty Prairie Foundation. Founding members include a cross-section of public and private organizations and include: the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), College of Lake County, Lake County, Liberty Prairie Foundation, Libertyville Township, and Openlands. New members include Beacon Place, University of Illinois Extension, and Village Homesteading Mundelein.

The group’s original charter was to help carry the Lake County Sustainable Local Food Systems Report recommendations forward through a subcommittee structure. In 2013, members launched a new land access pilot project, worked to support new Lake County bee and chicken keeping regulations, and promoted the group’s work via several media channels.

Starting this fall, the group adopted a new structure to improve the exchange of information and potential for collaboration. Going forward, the group will leave behind the formal committee structure and will now focus quarterly meetings on information sharing, education, and identifying opportunities for collaboration. Each member organization is advancing the recommendations outlined in the report, whether by supporting farmers and local food production, conducting innovative land access projects, working from a conservation perspective, pursuing policy initiatives, education, grassroots programming and more, thus it is imperative that members are apprised of projects underway county-wide to foster a more cohesive local food system.

Moving forward, quarterly meetings will include member updates, then an education program such as a presentation or tour that highlights the work of a member organization or outside entity that can be related back to the report recommendations. The group is currently considering new members to help engage additional stakeholders and build a broader network of groups interested in building the local food system.

Under the new structure, the group will occasionally hold meetings in various communities throughout the county to hear from local stakeholders about what is happening on the local food scene in their community. This will give members an opportunity to get a more comprehensive picture of what is happening on the ground throughout Lake County and will plug members into countywide resources and projects.

Goals

• Provide a forum for the purposes of information sharing, collaboration, and cooperative action that will foster a more sustainable, just, and economically vibrant food system in Lake County.
• Highlight key local food projects and initiatives throughout the county.
• Build a strong and diverse network of stakeholders engaged in local food work across Lake County.

Members

• Beacon Place
• CMAP
• College of Lake County
• Lake County and Lake County Forest Preserve District Board Members
• Lake County Health Department
• Lake County Planning, Building and Development Department
• Lake County Sustainability Coordinator
• Liberty Prairie Foundation
• Libertyville Township
• Openlands
• University of Illinois Extension
• Village Homesteading Mundelein