

Show Transcript
Deconstructing Dinner
Kootenay Co-op Radio CJLY
Nelson, B.C. Canada

March 5, 2009

Title: The Local Grain Revolution VII - Sailing Grain

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Transcript – Pat Yama

Jon Steinman: And welcome to Deconstructing Dinner, produced at Kootenay Co-op Radio, CJLY, Nelson, British Columbia. I'm Jon Steinman. Today marks Part VII of our ongoing Local Grain Revolution series, which has been tracking the evolution of Canada's first Community Supported Agriculture, or CSA, project for grain. On today's episode we hop on board one of four sailboats that took part in the fossil-fuel free distribution of the locally grown grains harvested from the Creston Valley as part of the CSA project. Five thousand pounds of the grains were loaded onto the four boats and transported to the city of Nelson. Both Nelson and the Creston Valley lie along the shores of Kootenay Lake, one of the provinces largest inland bodies of water.

Since the local grain project was first conceived in late 2007, Deconstructing Dinner has been documenting the evolution of this innovative initiative of linking eaters up with grain farmers. The project has been using a CSA or Community Supported Agriculture model, which by bridging the gap between the producer and consumer seeks to ensure that the farmer is fairly compensated for the bounty produced on their land. The model also assists the eater to become more aware of how their food is grown and who is growing it.

Since Part I of the series aired in March 2008 our Local Grain Revolution series has featured recordings from the many meetings of the CSA's steering committee. We featured inspiring audio from the first grain CSA tour when many of the 180 CSA members were introduced to their grains and farmers for the first time. We've aired three-hour episodes of recordings from the Kootenay Harvest Revival, a celebration of the CSA's first harvest of grain. And today, the next phase in the project – the distribution. When a group of sailors first heard about the CSA back in 2008, they jumped upon the opportunities to donate their time and skills to this innovative model of accessing local food.

Of course the idea of sailing locally grown grain is ripe to generate a lot of attention and indeed it has. Since the grain was unloaded off of the sailboats in October 2008, the CSA has been featured in Canada's largest agricultural periodical – The Western Producer. It was a feature in the January/February 2009 issue of Small Farm Canada. It received exposure in a recent issue of Briarpatch Magazine and it became the topic for a lecture at the University of Alberta's International Week in February. And that's only a sampling of

the attention the project continues to receive. A well-documented account of this attention can be found on the Deconstructing Dinner website at deconstructingdinner.ca where audio, photographs, newspaper clippings, and a host of other resources continue to be compiled as part of our Local Grain Revolution page.

As this broadcast goes to air we are also now adding a wealth of new photographs from the sailing trip that we're about to embark upon on today's show. And we certainly recommend that you check those out either while you listen in on the show or whenever you next get the chance. Also on the page you'll find some maps of the route that the sailboats took and where the grain was grown on the three farms growing as part of the CSA.

soundbite

JS: As we've now been doing quite often here on the show, today's broadcast is in stereo. If you're listening on the radio not all of our participating stations broadcast in stereo but we highly recommend you take the opportunity to listen to today's episode using either a good set of headphones or on a set of home speakers. Of course, if you're in a vehicle just be sure you stay on the road because the sensation of actually being on the sailboats featured today is significantly enhanced by taking advantage of these stereo recordings.

Back on October 16th we heard from Nelson sailor Jay Blackmore, one of the four sailors who took part on the October 26th weekend sailing event. And helping launch today's show, here again is a segment from that episode followed by the voices of CSA cofounder Matt Lowe, sailor David Oosthuizen, and musical talents of Earl Hamilton and Norman Richard.

Jay Blackmore: Basically the first I heard about it was when the newspaper articles here locally came out and like you know it sounded like a great idea and we spoke about getting involved with it the following season. And then I didn't really think too much about it more as a summer went along until I saw more articles that it was a success and the farmers were coming across with quite a crop. And I started thinking that the whole idea of folks getting their food locally, more sustainably, and with a smaller footprint – why not use the transportation corridors that we have occurring naturally with the lake – so it just seemed like a natural progression to why not try and get some more folks locally involved with the community especially from the Kootenay Lake Sailing Association. It seemed like a natural progression to think about bringing a cargo back rather than just getting out there, you know, for fun.

David Oosthuizen: (sound of sails flapping) I love sail cloth. Just feel that. It's sort of like a nylon product, the stuff lasts and it makes such a beautiful shape. The foil – I guess for sailors, at least for me anyways, the shape of the foils that's created by a sail is just, I don't know, a thing of beauty.

JS: What do you mean by foil?

DO: Like a shape of a wing or a bird's wing when you look at the profile, that kind of tear-drop shape. Say for example if you lay on the deck and just stare up at the sails, they look like birds wings, you know, they're just absolutely gorgeous things.

Close To Home

We can buy our wheat from Creston now
The farmers got a sure sailing go
It gives me a sense of content somehow
To get our bread so close to home.

See I grew up with Monsanto and Dow
Chemical living you know
They had all of us convinced on how
That fuel made everything close to home.

If you want to have a future
Get your food from close to home
If you want to see your children grow
Get your food from close to home.

You guys have a responsibility

(on boat, sails flapping and other)

DO: Hey Matt, so this line here is a halyard, it's one of the main lines on a boat. So I pull up the sail a bit and you see that next brass flip, put it on similar to the one above it and what you're doing, you're hanking the sail onto the forestay, that's our foresail. Just hold on. Once we get under motion it's amazing, the force of the sail, it drives the boat through the waves. Like it cuts through like a motorized vessel. Never feels the same. Like if the weather kicks up, there's a lot of times where a small boat like this is fine out in a six foot, eight foot swell but if there is a 30 knot wind whereas motor boats would be incapacitated. And the way it feels, I don't know what the dynamics are but it's driven through the waves, with of waves of ...

JS: So that's the sound of grain. (laughs) That's the sound of fresh bread.

Matt Lowe: We're coming.

DO: It's delicious. It's funny that sails sound like bread because you have to raise them. Bread has to rise too. So, quite a lot in common. Raise the sails. This lake is actually brilliant for sailing. It's the main lake, there's a lot of steady winds. The wind will either come out - generally on the lake what I've seen is the winds either will be coming from the north, which is what we've got today, which is sort of the prevailing wind. If there's a big storm it can change and start coming from the south. Today we've got our prevailing winds.

JS: So this is the first beer?

DO: Yeah, you know what?

JS: and who's this courtesy of?

ML: This is courtesy of our local brewery, Nelson Brewing Company.

DO: And you know to honour the brewing company and to honour the sea gods, I would suggest that before drinking that you place a small amount of this precious beverage into the lake. (sound of liquid pouring) And because we want the sea gods to be ...

ML: And the mermaids.

DO: And the mermaids (more liquid sound) we want to be in their favour.

JS: Well, to barley.

ML and DO: To local barley.

DO: To the wonderful grains. Hmm, this is good.

music

ML: To local barley.

DO: To wonderful grains. Tastes good eh?

(music increases, guys enjoy their beer and express same comments, sound of water and fades out)

JS: This is Deconstructing Dinner and those were the musical talents of the group, Culture and the late Joseph Hill. On today's Part VII of The Local Grain Revolution series, we're currently on board with Creston Grains CSA co-founder Matt Lowe and sailor David Oosthuizen. The three of us were just one part of a fleet of sailboats that departed the west arm of Kootenay Lake enroute to the Creston Valley - the mission to pick up 5,000 pounds of grains grown as part of the first year of this innovative food project. As heard in that last segment, it didn't take long before the act of sailing began to shed its many similarities to the grain project that this trip was now a part of. Just as David recognized how sailing versus motorized transport lends itself to the idea of man and nature working in concert, so too has the Grain CSA sought to reduce the reliance upon a fossil-fuel dependent food system in exchange for one more reliant on the rhythms of nature.

As we exited the calm waters of the sheltered bay of the community of Balfour, we entered into the main body of the lake where conditions became somewhat ocean-like. Before the big winds hit we found just enough time to chow down on a few local specialties known as fougassé, a French type of bread that is traditionally made to resemble an ear of wheat. The bread was the product of Au Soleil Levant, the one bakery who purchased 20 shares as part of the CSA's inaugural year.

DO: Sometimes you just got to have a little patience, you wait it out and the wind will come to you, like it is right now. (sound of flapping sails) Can you hear - see that flap, flap, flap of the sail. It's like telling us - we're kind of getting bobbed around and we don't have any wind, we've got no drive, nothing. But we're just going to wait a second or two here, see what happens.

ML: I love it. Sailing can teach you a lot where society is so obsessed with doing things so fast and you know, no patience.

DO: There it is. Look at that eh, it looks quite windy around.

JS: Right there eh?

DO: Yeah. Taking her down.

JS: It's ocean-like out here.

Mix of their voices: It's great. What a day. What a day, is right.

DO: Fifteen knot breeze, Two foot swell. We're heeled over about twenty degrees. We got quite a bit of sail up, so we're probably kicking down about six knots. It's a good little clip. So we're beating into the wind. We're not heading straight to Creston, we're working our way. They call this working when you're heading into the wind. We have to go back and forth and make our way there. But we're going right now say twelve kilometers an hour so, that's not so bad. Eight hours.

ML: Feels great.

DO: See what I mean by cutting through the waves. Like if we were out here on a power boat, it would be like bang, bang. Motor would be roaring, we wouldn't hear each other.

JS: Yeah this is pretty smooth.

DO: Oh yeah.

ML: It's was like cutting through butter.

DO: We did get to the point, I'm serious, like this boat cannot sink, just so you know. Like if we had the hatch supports up. Because even if I get broached, which we are not

going to be broached because the wind is nice and steady. But if the water starts pouring into the cockpit, we have those boards up, no water goes down below. We've got a huge amount of floatation.

JS: Yeah.

DO: I mean I could also put sail up but we're going at hull speed. It's kind of tempting to, sort of.

ML: Is that like horse speed on water?

DO: It's like it's as fast as you can go. If you look down the lake it looks like they've got the same wind, fifteen knots or so, for awhile. Feels good to me. How do you guys feel?

ML: Awesome.

JS: I'm amazed that that fougassé is sitting there. (laughter) It's like defying gravity.

DO: Now I'm going to tack over, so what I need you to do Matt is you're going to be on the helm. And you're going to hold the boat right into the wind and things are going to start flapping a bit. But I want you to point right up towards Creston. Okay?

ML: Now?

DO: Yeah, exactly. Watch the boom. Head up Creston way please.

JS: After slicing through the waves at the fastest speed that Dave Oosthuizen's boat could go, the winds eventually died down. It was during this calm that another interesting lesson to be learned from sailing nicely complemented the very reason why the Grain CSA was formed.

DO: It's interesting eh? Like our motion. There might be a bit of a current going in here because we're .. I think relative to ... you kind of use their eyes and you can actually see there's a bit of a wake. That's another thing I love about sailing is you're always aware of your wake. Like a lot of people they go through life and they're not thinking you know what wake, what am I leaving behind? Right? They're just full speed forward and not even thinking about it, right? But in sailing, you're pretty much forced. You got to take a look it's important information. Like what, we can see these little waves radiating out from the transom of the boat. That's giving us an indication about our motion relative to the water and we need that information to know what's going on. Like are we going to end up on the rocks or are we going to end up in big trouble?

JS: Maybe it would be effective to have, out of the exhaust of vehicles instead of being clear, where you can't see it, there would be some sort of device that would make it red, so you could always look behind in your rear view mirror and see what you're spewing out.

DO: Yeah. So many things, yeah. (laughter) That's a brilliant example I think. Because you could easily be driving and not thinking about it. Now, what is the wake?

ML: Now are we actually moving ahead?

DO: Well the best way to determine that is to look on the land. And I'd say relative to the water we're moving quite slowly. But relative to the land we're not because we are just in the mouths of the arm here. It's possible in the current you can be moving backwards. I read a book about this fellow who's doing sailing around 1800 in Australia, he was making his living moving stuff. You know he has to drop his anchor because the tides are going in and out. He might be a 100 feet from where he wants to be to drop off his payload. If the currents going the wrong way, he drops the anchor and he waits for the fair conditions.

JS: Paying attention to one's own wake is recognizably of greater importance today than ever before. And it was the accompanying act of becoming more mindful that allowed CSA co-founder Matt Lowe to conceive the Grain CSA. You might recall that it was Matt's commitment in August 2007 to pay closer attention to what he was consuming that led him to recognize the heavy environmental footprint that his diet was having. And becoming more mindful of his actions, of his wake, he sought to reduce that impact and there we now were, on a sailboat enroute to pick up the locally grown grain that grew out of that mindfulness. This idea of becoming more mindful was best captured on a past episode of Deconstructing Dinner that aired in that very same month featuring Cecile Andrews, the author of the book, "Slow is Beautiful".

Cecile Andrews: I always like Martin Buber who talked about I-Thou versus I-It. That I-It is when you objectify, when you make people into commodities and nature into commodities. And what you want is an I-Thou relationship that you want a real connection with people, with the planet. And so mindfulness is a lot of different things. One it is very conscious decision-making. But mindfulness is also like wow, going through your day in a way that you notice things. That you connect with it. And if you're going fast through your day, you're not noticing anything, you're not experiencing happiness. And the word again from food, when we talk about savouring our food, we're talking about savouring our lives, savouring your day as you go through it. And so mindfulness lets you get in touch with nature as well. And when you care about nature you want to save nature. Experiencing life is also experiencing nature. It's the universe. So it's savouring, it's being mindful and it connects you with everything that our rushed lives take you away from.

(back on the boat)

DO: Yeah it's quite amazing. I mean, especially out here on the big lake where the activity of changing direction and putting up sails, it slows right down with the distances, because we're going to be doing sort of long tacks as we cross back and forth. So we might be sitting here for 15, 20 minutes between times that we do things. And it's just, it

makes for a concentration and focus and brings everything down; slows everything down, meditative. It sort of comes, it just comes, there's nothing you really have to do. I really notice it afterwards. After, like we're going to be out here sailing for a few days and when we get back, that feeling. I don't know there's like an exhilaration; it's a purity; it's like we've been cleansed out here, you know like the wind constantly blowing over us and just working with the elements. It's hard to describe but it's definitely a calming down and slowing down is part of the process.

JS: So how did you first hear about this trip; the idea for the trip? What was your response?

DO: Jay had spoken with Matt and he said - oh well you know we've got this local organic grain co-op and you know we've come up with the idea to transport the grain by sail as part of the slow food movement and local food movement. And I was just immediately lit right up because, like I said, in that slowing down that takes place here, when you're out sailing and the thoughts sort of cross your mind, it had crossed my mind a number of times before, how easy it would be to transport goods. And you know you see the people, you can see the villages, you see the people living by the shore. And there's something about sailing; it takes you back in time. It's to a degree what we're doing right is the same as what people were doing a 100 years ago or 500 hundred years ago. And there's something, I guess it's deep within our chemistry, our bodies cells, I don't know. It's a natural thing to be partaking in an activity like this, and I was excited - yeah. Because I think that's the way we should be living. It just seems to make sense, especially when you're out here sailing.

JS: So have you ever blended purpose and leisure together before, at least with sailing?

DO: You know that's a good question. I guess when you're out here, think the time passes and you get time to think right? And that's where you're like, you know this boat can carry quite a bit of weight and it's pretty effortless it almost seems, right? So it's like, it doesn't take long to start to think, well you know I'm going to Nelson to Crawford Bay or to Creston, why don't I take something with me because it wouldn't slow me down. And I'll bring something back.

soundbite

Female: The average cable or satellite TV bill runs a viewer \$45 per month.

Male: The average daily newspaper subscription - \$30.

Female: Internet - \$35.

Male: Magazine subscription - \$30.

Female: A book a month - \$24.95.

Male: Deconstructing Dinner's weekly one hour episodes – free.

Female: We believe in media being accessible to everyone, regardless of income. And for those of you who are able to support this radio project, please donate when you can or become a voluntary monthly subscriber by visiting deconstructingdinner.ca. Or for more information on how to send a cheque or money order, call 250-352-9600.

Male: Deconstructing Dinner, helping ensure a perpetual harvest.

JS: This is Deconstructing Dinner, a syndicated radio show and podcast produced at Kootenay Co-Op Radio, CJLY in Nelson, British Columbia. I'm Jon Steinman. You've been on board the boat of David Oosthuizen, one of four sailors who volunteered to become part of Canada's first Community Supported Agriculture or CSA project for grain. Since March 2008, Deconstructing Dinner has aired six episodes featuring the evolution of this innovative project for accessing locally-grown food. The CSA seeks to fairly compensate farmers for their work and create closer connections between farmer and eater.

On this Part VII of the series we're enjoying an auditory journey into the weekend and when I, alongside four sailors, their friends and families, and co-founder CSA Matt Lowe embarked on a 56 hour fossil-fuel free journey to pick up the grain from the Creston Valley where it was grown and deliver it to the roughly 150 members of the CSA in Nelson. You can view photographs and maps of the sailing trip posted on our website at deconstructingdinner.ca on our page titled, "The Local Grain Revolution."

Since this grain project was first conceived, the goal has been to create a sector of the local food system that would be less reliant on fossil fuels and more focused on creating a long term and more sustainable model of food production. Now while many critics of such an idea may view such ideals as being too radical or too romantically interested in replicating the models of yester year, the fossil-fuel free sailing was far from it. Because there we were, in the darkness of nighttime in the middle of Kootenay Lake trying to find the other three boats, who had likely already arrived at our planned overnight location. The sheltered bay where we were heading was on the side of the lake where no one lived. No lights, no markers, and only a train track hugging the shoreline. But as you'll hear in this next clip, it was GPS technology and cell phones that helped guide us to shore. When we arrived we were greeted by a celebratory night of music, food, and drink.

DO: So everyone, we're going to be really cognizant about staying very careful because at nighttime, we have a little bit of reflective material on the

ML: Life jacket?

DO: Yeah. Think I've got some down there.

ML: Down here there's some.

DO: But anyways, make sure you're careful because basically if you're overboard there's no ...

ML: Yep.

DO: ... for certain that we can bring you back. So everyone stay on board, I'd like that. Hello Jay.

Jay Blackmore: Yeah, you see us.

DO: Oh, ah...no, are you shining a flash?

JB: Yeah, we're just flashing the flashlight on and off.

DO: Well, you're on the northern side of Drury point.

JB: Yeah, the north side.

DO: Yeah we'll find you, I'm going to bring it up on the GPS. I'll probably give you a call in about 20 minutes.

JB: I have a little strobe light and I'll just set it out here and you'll see it when you come around the corner.

JS: What's the plan?

DO: We're going to phone him and ask him when the train light, we can see the light. We're turning the computer off because I think we're going to have better successes. We'll phone him we'll say, "when the train passes, tell us" and we can take a bearing on that with the compass.

JB: Hey.

DO: Hey Jay. Do you copy?

JB: Ya, where are you now?

DO: There's a train coming. Can you ...

JB: There's a train coming get out of its way. (laughter)

DO: When the train comes right behind you do you think you could give us a call then we can take a fix on that.

JB: When the train passes I'll give you a holler. You're staying along the shore eh?

DO: Oh yeah we're in the middle of the lake so, we're safe, we're just trying to find the right time to head towards the west shore.

JB: Yeah well we'll see your lights as you come around the corner here too. As soon as the train gets here I'll call you.

DO: Over.

(back on land - music, group now relaxing and talking)

(conference applause, group reunion in background)

JS: The first thing I want to acknowledge is that this morning, Matt Lowe who conceived this Grain CSA and who is also one of the organizers of this event along side myself tonight, he went down to the Greyhound station and picked up some grain that was shipped on the Greyhound from Creston this morning just so it could part of this Sunday event at the All Seasons. And I would guess that it is probably one of the first times that grain is actually being transported on a Greyhound. And just earlier I was up at the intermission speaking with some other people from the area here and we were talking about maybe next year putting some of the grain on to some sailboats which is probably another potential first if we can pull that one off next year.

anonymous: And I have something here that I wrote down. It's a little plagiarized but it really fits in to what we're about, what we're here for tonight. The small farm does bring the family back to the table, both the farm family and the farm community. And food directly from the farm prepared with artistry and local pride and served in celebration to those who do the work becomes a bonus payment to us the farmer of the highest order. People are looking for clear evidence of values they may connect with. They are interested in how we grow their food and why. To this end, the stories of our choices and concerns become important. In my case heritage, true horse power, organics, and family involvement. For what we do is important. We are farmers, we feed people. How we do it is more important - true, sustainable, organic farming. Why we do it is the most important of all. Why is like an explosion of connected spiritual economic and physical reasons with a little magic sprinkled in and when woven together, creates community. I recently read if someone dreams a dream alone, it's only a dream. However if we all dream the same dream together, it's a beginning of a new reality. So here's to a new reality.

(applause, music, and group celebration continues)

(back at the grain site location)

ML: As we're travelling this morning, I mean we're right in the middle of an incredible painting. It's all these fall colours on these mountainsides and snowcapped mountains and this big gorgeous lake. What an utter joy to be going and getting the grain this way. It's amazing.

JS: This is Deconstructing Dinner. Within only a few hours of leaving our overnight location, we arrived at Kuskanook Harbour, the southern end of Kootenay Lake and the northern reaches of the Creston Valley. It was there where farmers Roy Lawrence and Drew and Joanne Gailius were greeted by a couple dozen CSA members who live in Creston. It wasn't long before the grain began to be loaded onto the four sailboats and a buffet of food was set up by the farmers and volunteers. Of course the food was entirely local. And some of it made with the grain grown in Drew and Joanne Gailius's farm. Also on the table were samples of the first production of a new cheese being made by the Harris family at Kootenay Alpine Cheese. And we'll learn more about this dairy and this new cheese on an upcoming episode of the show.

Now for myself, the sharing of food was the end of my sailing journey because shortly after the grain had been loaded I continued east to the City of Cranbrook where the College of the Rockies was hosting a conference titled, "Fair Change: Fair Trade & Climate Change in the Kootenays." I was invited there to host an evening dinner that was part of the conference and of course it only seemed appropriate to tell the story of the Grain CSA and the sailboat that transported me at least halfway to Cranbrook.

(back on the sailboat)

JS: Wow, look at the end of the lake.

DO: This is exciting. So, wing on wing here, going dead down wind and we'll do a last jive. We might try coming under sail. Do you guys feel like doing something spectacular but slightly risky?

JS: That's why we're here. (laughter)

DO laughing: I guess that kind of sums up this whole trip. So I believe we're going to pull up on the...we're going to do a starboard tie. We actually almost at this point start getting ready for our docking.

(back at the conference – applause)

JS: So Catherine talked a little bit about how I got here. And I did arrive here, at least halfway by sailboat and that it connects in very much with what I'd like to talk about tonight. So for those of you who are unfamiliar with the Nelson Creston Grain CSA or Community Supported Agriculture project, it was started back in the summer of 2007 by a colleague of mine, Matt Lowe, who is with the West Kootenay EcoSociety. And he took a local eat local challenge that the group I am also a part of - Community Food Matters started last summer. And we challenged the community of Nelson to eat as locally as they possibly could for the month of August. And people took a pledge. And Matt Lowe took that pledge. And he decided once a week he was going to for that entire day only eat local food. And after that month he realized, well there's one thing really missing from my diet. He could find everything from meat at the time, he could find dairy, he could find fruits and vegetables but he couldn't find grain. And so he went and

did something that most people who would take an eat local challenge wouldn't do, he just went out and connected with a colleague of his in Creston who works with Wildsite and she contacted some farmers in Creston and the next thing you know it, there were three farmers who were willing to grow grain as part of this project.

audio clip: people talking and bagging the grain - They are beautiful. Look at that label too. Check the label. We should get it changed.

JS: And one of the amazing things that's also been happening outside of the media coverage has been the people who have been coming forward to be a part of this CSA. Because a month ago there was a group of sailors who are a part of the Kootenay Lake Sailing Association in Nelson and they heard about this grain project because we had a celebratory event just about a month ago which got a lot of media attention. And they heard about the event and they contacted Matt Lowe and they said – hey, you know, we know how to sail this lake and we love sailing and we want to be a part of this. And they came forward and said let's go pick up that grain as close as we can to Creston and load it onto some boats. And so that's what I was doing this morning and halfway to here was on the boat with these four other boats. And as we pulled in this morning at around, well I should say around noon, early afternoon, there were two farmers there with their trucks loaded with grain all in the bags and there was a group of people that went down to help bag it.

audio clip: people talking while they load the grain.

JS: And this morning I was taking pictures and also recoding farmers loading grain onto sailboats. And there were kids involved, there were people of all ages just passing grain from one to another. We did a symbolic breaking of a baguette on the side of the boat.

audio clip: breaking of the baguette and laughter

JS: It's not stale enough.

ML: Well, it's not going to break.

JS: Ah, the symbolism's there.

(back at the conference)

JS: Unfortunately the baguette was too fresh (laughter) so it didn't break but the idea was there, the symbolism was there. So next time maybe we'll bake it a few weeks in advance or something and get it really stale. But the boats were taken off filled as much as they could with grain. Not all the grain was able to make it back.

audio clip: people at the buffet of apples, cheese; Matt recognizing the farmers and giving a token of appreciation to Joanne, Drew, and Roy; departure of boats filled with about 1250 pounds of grain.

JS: This is deconstructing Dinner. Now there was one rather tense moment during the process of loading the grain, not captured in those last segments. As the grain was transferred from the trucks to the boats, the bags were stacked neatly at the end of the dock where the boats were moored. What was not predicted was that the weight of the 20 pound bags stacked on top of each other would cause the dock to become submerged under the water, taking the grain with it. When that exact scenario transpired, a moment of panic ensued. And here's a quick recording where everyone including myself can be heard scrambling to save the grain from drowning in Kootenay lake.

audio clip: woman cautioning not to break the plastic on the bags, movement of grain onto the docks, and then lots of activity to move the bags of grain.

JS: After another over night stay on Kootenay Lake, the sailboats began to arrive at Nelson, two days after they had first departed. While the community of Nelson and CSA members were encouraged to come down to welcome the arrival of the boats, one of the boats arrived ahead of schedule and ahead of the crowds. On board was the boat's skipper, Dave Heath along side, Matt Lowe and a crew of three others.

JS: So who had more room, the grain or you?

anonymous: The grain.

JS: Did you have to sleep in the corner?

anonymous: We went to Balfour and transferred to Guy's boat. We were comfy last night (laughter).

Male: Oh so you didn't have to sleep in this boat.

anonymous: No. Two of them, Matt and Dave.

(more talking while unloading the grain)

JS: So what's the horsepower on this wagon.

ML: Horsepower ha. Well I think, what am I, about one tenth of a horse (laughs)

JS: So where's the grain going to hang out until the members can get it.

ML: It's going into my basement. The basement's tenants just moved out so there's lots of room. And yeah hopefully the oats will be here in about two weeks time and then we will be ready.

ML: That's pretty good only, one wet bag. That's great.

JS: How did it get wet? The one that fell in?

ML: I don't know how it got wet. It's a little bit damp. You should have seen the waves that went over the bow of the boat last night as we were coming back. So, Dave was worried about the door and the bow. It's not totally sealed so he was worried about a little bit of water getting in but it seems to be good.

JS: So no one slept on any spelt to see how comfortable it was.

Male: Oh yeah. (girl laughs)

Male: I used one for a pillow.

JS: You used one for a pillow?

Male: I did nap on the spelt.

JS: You napped on the spelt.

Male: Yeah.

JS: So what was more comfortable like the Red Fife wheat or the spelt.

Male: I like cuddling up with Guy. (girl laughs)

Female: Matt likes cuddling up with the Red Fife.

JS: Matt was cuddling up with the Red Fife.

JS: Not long after the first boat had been unloaded of its grain, the remaining three boats arrived. Waiting on the dock was a crowd of about 40 people of all ages, eager to see the conclusion to the successful first year of the Creston Grain CSA.

(boat honking, clapping and cheers as boats arrive)

Male: Hold on. Chris, can you release the bow a little bit. Loosen it up.

Male: This is awesome.

Female: Should we make a chain?

Male: Sure.

Female: Do you guys want to make a chain so that we can pass the bags up the ramp? Pick a partner and face your partner and we'll pair the bags up. (children talking) You guys want to do that? We can all help unload...

JS: The chain of people of all ages was formed to transfer the bags of grain between the boat and the parking lot. There was a similar level of enthusiasm in the air that would in years past would have been felt at a good old barn rising. Again, good old photographs of this are posted on our website at deconstructingdinner.ca. And what likely best captured this enthusiasm were the helping hands of Roy Plummer who had arrived on the dock shortly before the first boat arrived. Roy had heard about the arrival of the boats and travelled from the community of Fruitvale to see what all the local grain fuss was all about. In no time Roy was fully involved in helping unload the grain and he even donated his pickup truck to transport the grain from the dock to the basement of Matt Lowe's home.

JS: What is it that brought you out here?

Roy Plummer: Well because I realized that our food chain is in peril. I don't like this idea of eating food that's been poisoned. So if people can support this type of thing I think it's going to be a real benefit. So that's why I'm here to see what I can do to help out in whatever way to make sure that this type of activity is able to carry on.

JS: So how did you hear about the CSA?

RP: I was over in Castlegar at a community garden that they are going to get started there. So I went over there to try and get some ideas about what can I do back home to see that this type of thing will happen. So I went over there looking for ideas and then from there, this came up. So I thought well I'm going to come over and see what's happening and get more energy. There's different connections you can make to enable other people to get on board. I think the more people that become aware and I guess that's really what I want to do is become aware myself – what can I do so that I can inform other people of how this thing can really work.

JS: So you travelled here from Fruitvale or Castlegar. (RP confirms Fruitvale) Wow. And so now that you actually see this whole process with all these people helping and all the kids coming out, is this what you expected?

RP: Well, no I didn't. You know I never really expected there would be this amount of involvement.

JS: And now I see you've just thrown yourself right into this.

RP: Well yeah, I mean it's a wonderful thing to be able to help out. You know and I mean that's what I want to do is to do something constructive. I've been spinning my wheels for a long time, trying to come up with an idea what can a person actually do to see. I mean I believe we're so corporation controlled, that there can be all kinds of things that can go wrong and if somehow or another people can realize that they actually have to put their own energy in rather than looking for other people to help them out.

Unfortunately any help you seem to get from the government has a lot of strings attached to it so.

JS: Exactly.

RP: I just want to see that the grain, it can work.

(more mix of conversation while moving bags onto trucks)

JS: And that was Roy Plummer, an enthusiastic volunteer whose interest to reach out and be part of the Grain CSA, even for just that brief moment sums up so much of the wide-spread community support that has contributed to the successful first year of this innovative local food project. You can expect many more installments of this Local Grain Revolution series as we continue to document the evolution of the Creston Grain CSA and where we will continue to also track the inspiration that this project is lending to people in communities across North America, who are seeking to create more environmentally and socially responsible food systems. To conclude this ceremonial unloading of grain in Nelson, musicians Earl Hamilton and Norman Richard set themselves up on the pier and performed their Grain CSA inspired tune, “Close To Home.”

Close To Home

The situation is in our hands
To leave the threads of our community
Gotta find our tools
Close to home.

We can buy our wheat from Creston now
The farmers got a sure sale to go
It gives me a sense of content somehow
To get our bread so close to home.

You see I grew up with Monsanto and Dow
Chemical living you know
They had all of us convinced somehow
That fuel made everything close to home.

If you want to have a future
Get your food from close to home
If you want to see your children grow
Get your food from close to home.

We recognize our responsibility
The situation is in our hands
To weave the threads of our community

Gotta find our tools, close to home.

(music fades but continues)

anonymous farmer: So much of what we do is truly in my heart what it is I want to look after the land. And from what I've been reading our health comes from the health of the soil. And so really what I'm endeavouring to do is to sort of grow very healthy food. It isn't the productivity, the money, it's just I'm an idealist right. And I really want to make it work and I want to grow healthy food, look after the land and like I said to somebody you know, farming beyond oil is my ultimate plan. I've got some information from people in the States and they really have gone to just the minimum till and their ground is always growing. And that's what they do. They keep it growing in green manures and covered crops and they keep that because they believe that all that health, the soil, all those microorganisms need to keep growing all the time. That's the healthiest thing you can do.

telephone message: Hello, this is West Kootenay EcoSociety calling to inform you that your grain is available for pickup. You can collect your share at Sunday, September 7th at 9:00am to 7:00pm at 1817 Falls Street. We ask that you pick up your share on the designated day or to have someone else come for you. And if you can't arrange to collect your grain on that day, then please contact us and we will arrange another time.

When you get your grain we ask that you freeze all of it for one week to kill any organisms that may be in it because it is organic grain. And keep oats in the freezer because they have high oil content and it can go rancid.

If you have any questions please call us at 354-1909. Thank you and have a nice day.

JS: Well, it's like in complete opposition to this one place. I don't know if it's still there at Granville Market – Granville Island Market in Vancouver. There's a small little outlet there called Jet Fresh. It's Jet Fresh and everything they have in this little booth at the Granville Island Market is fresh off of a jet. So things like you know, fresh peppercorns, the kinds of stuff that you normally wouldn't find in a grocery store. And like you know, gourmet foods, the kinds of things that you know, chefs would probably go to this place to buy. And that's how they sell it, it was Jet Fresh. And I remember there was an image of an airplane beside the sign and that's how they were marketing it. And that was only a few years ago when I saw that and maybe it's still there. But talk about complete opposition to have then a label, 'it's sailboat fresh.'

DO: Sailboat stale.

JS: Sailboat stale. (laughter)

DO: Well I guess grain I think it will still be fresh.

JS: No I think we'll be able to keep it fresh, yeah.

ending theme

JS: That was this week's edition of Deconstructing Dinner, produced and recorded at Nelson British Columbia's Kootenay Co-op Radio. I've been your host Jon Steinman. I thank my Technical Assistant John Ryan.

The theme music for Deconstructing Dinner is courtesy of Nelson area resident Adham Shaikh.

This radio program is provided free of charge to campus/community radio stations across the country and relies on the financial support from you, the listener. Support for the program can be donated through our website at deconstructingdinner.ca or by dialing 250-352-9600.