



BOW VALLEY FOOD ALLIANCE FOOD CHARTER

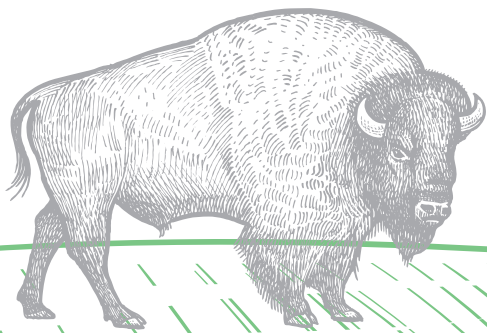
BACKGROUND

In recent years, food movements have been gaining momentum across Canada. With a growing awareness about the need to create community-based food systems, one of the ways these movements advocate for change is through the creation of Food Charters, which outline a community's values surrounding the foods they grow, harvest, and eat. Building on the creation of Food Charters that have been adopted by municipalities across the country, the Bow Valley Food Alliance began work on the Bow Valley Food Charter in early 2018. Central to the creation of this Charter was a series of community conversations, workshops, and take-home conversation kits available to all Bow Valley community members. These community consultations occurred over a year and half with food producers, health practitioners, non-profit organizations, cultural groups, community-based organizers, business owners, and concerned individuals from Lake Louise, Banff, Canmore, the MD Bighorn, and the Îyârhe Nakoda Nation.

While each part of the Bow Valley Food Charter is rooted in these community conversations, work on the Charter was also done in the spirit of broader movements and agreements. For example, the Food Charter draws on

the work of international food sovereignty movements that advocate for communities' rights to determine what their food systems look like. The Charter also draws from United Nations Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights that states that all people have a fundamental right to be free from hunger and was signed by Canada in 1976. By working to create different relationships to each other and our food, this Charter aims to strengthen local programs that tackle issues of hunger in Bow Valley communities, work towards reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, and contribute to solving the climate crisis. The Bow Valley Food Alliance has also worked on this Charter with the hopes of creating different relationships within our communities in the spirit of The Buffalo: A Treaty of Cooperation, Renewal and Restoration.

The Îyârhe Nakoda Nations of the Chiniki, Bears paw, and Wesley have been integral in contributing to the Charter process, including highlighting the relationship between the Buffalo Treaty and Bow Valley Food Charter. The Bow Valley Food Alliance is particularly grateful for the time that community members have contributed in sharing their knowledge.



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MOVING FORWARD

The below is an extended version of the Food Charter which includes suggestions generated during the community conversations about how people would like to move forward. This list is not exhaustive but provides guidance regarding how Bow Valley communities understand and envision each of the Food Charter values. We hope these items will inspire the creation of a more detailed action plan for different communities in the Bow Valley.



Because we value:

Accessibility, we support:

- Appropriate kitchen facilities and cooking areas in staff housing, community spaces and housing developments
- Local food programs and initiatives that are welcoming and dignified
- Culturally appropriate seeds, food, and spaces for gathering, celebrating and ceremony
- Land and innovative spaces for growing food, harvesting and keeping bees and livestock
- Diverse retail outlets that sell a wide variety of fresh affordable local foods
- Transportation options that enable all people to safely acquire food

Health, we support:

- Public policies based on the relationship between food and physical, mental and spiritual well being
- Health and safety regulations that encourage food sharing, including wild meat
- Whole nutritious foods that are affordable for all

Earth and its environment, we support:

- Indigenous knowledge holders and their relationships and responsibilities to the land
- Regenerative food systems that champion composting, waste reduction, and recycling
- Sustainably produced local food, including organic and biodynamic farming
- Efficient transportation that minimizes our carbon footprint
- Policies that increase biodiversity while reducing pollution, water usage, intensive mass production, impacts on wildlife, and other negative ecological impacts
- Caring for the land and all living creatures

Vibrant regional economies, we support:

- Food self-sufficiency in the Bow Valley, including food providers who offer local food to Bow Valley residents
- Raising awareness about local food, programs, and businesses
- Small and medium-scale retail outlets that provide local, sustainable, and fresh produce
- Alternative economic initiatives based on sharing, cooperation, and collaboration
- Institutional procurement policies that focus on working with local food producers

Collaboration and diversity, we support:

- Diverse cultures and nations, their foods, ceremonies, and celebrations
- Partnerships based in cooperation, renewal, and reconciliation
- Connecting community members to all aspects of our food systems, including encouraging relationships between farmers, ranchers, hunters, harvesters, fishers, and eaters

Knowledge and education, we support:

- Learning from Indigenous food systems and treaties that guide our communities
- School food programs and curriculum for children
- Training and resources about waste reduction, sustainable food practices, and balanced nutritious diets
- Community conversations about where our food comes from, its social, environmental, and economic impacts, and how we can advocate for positive change
- Sharing intergenerational skills relating to cooking, preparing, growing, hunting, fishing, and gathering food

Social justice, we support:

- Dignified access to adequate, appropriate, and affordable food for all
- Fair wages and working conditions for all food system workers and eaters
- Secure and affordable housing for all peoples
- Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples through food
- Programs, businesses, and initiatives run by and for marginalized communities
- Comprehensive supports for marginalized and vulnerable peoples, including women and children, individuals who are homeless and/or precariously employed, and racialized communities

Local food systems, we support:

- Restoration of Indigenous food systems, including the buffalo as a keystone food source
- Community members' ability to harvest, fish, garden, hunt (outside of existing wildlife sanctuaries), and keep livestock and bees
- Coexistence with the wildlife
- Resilient food systems that meet our communities' needs in times of crisis
- Community members' ability to advocate for policies that impact our food systems