

**Lil'wat First Nation Agricultural Plan**  
Phase 3 Report  
FINAL

Submitted to:  
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**Mount Currie Band**  
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## Acknowledgements

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Many Lil'wat citizens attended workshops and other events during the course of the project and provided valuable input and feedback. This information has been critical in producing the Agricultural Plan.

# 1.0 Introduction

Lil'wat Nation initiated an agricultural planning process in early 2013. The three phase process has consisted of investigation, analysis and consultation to develop an agricultural plan to utilize Lil'wat agricultural lands in ways that meet the aspirations of Lil'wat citizens and community.

The planning process started with the *Phase 1: Agriculture Situation Analysis* (November, 2013). This report expanded on earlier investigation of business and market opportunities for Lil'wat agriculture. It examined the status of agriculture in the community and the lands utilized for agriculture. It also discussed agriculture within the context of the community's land use plan and agricultural heritage. The *Phase 2: Agricultural Issues and Options Report* (April, 2014) examined in detail several issues to be addressed and proposed options that could be pursued in the plan.

The planning process has involved consultation with the Agricultural Steering Committee, Lil'wat resource personnel, and a number of structured workshops with Lil'wat citizens. Contacts were made with organizations and individuals with capacity, knowledge and expertise useful to the Agricultural Plan.

## 1.1 Purpose of the Agricultural Plan

LFN has about 910 hectares of some of the best agricultural land in British Columbia, of which 365 ha (40%) is communal pasture, 223 ha (24%) is occupied by citizens, and 324 ha (36%) is currently not farmed or utilized. While the agricultural capability of Lil'wat land is unquestioned, the full potential has yet to be realized.

Lil'wat Nation has tackled the challenge of planning how it wants to utilize this land and generate additional community benefits from the land's potential productivity. The Agricultural Plan is meant to provide a framework as well as a roadmap for Lil'wat to pursue its vision and objectives regarding the management of its agricultural land resources. The Plan sets out Guiding Principles, a Vision and Objectives for what it wants to achieve. The Agricultural Plan also lays out an Implementation Strategy that sets priorities and tasks for making the plan a reality.

## 1.2 Phase 1 Findings

The Phase 1 report provided an analysis of the Lil'wat agricultural situation with the objective of identifying the scope for further effort to expand and grow Lil'wat Nation's agricultural potential, so that agricultural opportunities may also be realized for the benefit of the community.

The Phase 1 Lil'wat Agriculture Situation Analysis (January, 2014)<sup>1</sup> included findings in the following areas:

- **Soil and Climate Capability for Agriculture** - As the Phase 1 Report confirms, the soil and climate capability of Lil'wat land is high, with the unimproved rating of the agricultural land base ranging between Classes 2 to 4.

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<sup>1</sup> Zbeetnoff Agro-Environmental Inc. and Quadra Planning. 2014. Lil'wat Nation Agricultural Plan: Agriculture Situation Analysis.

- **Limitations to Agriculture** – The major limitations to land capability are inundation and excess water. With improved flood control and drainage, and offsetting aridity with irrigation water, the soils are improvable to Classes 1 and 2, as has been achieved for much of the Pemberton Valley.
- **Agricultural Challenges and Opportunities** - Citizens identified various challenges and opportunities for farm enterprise on Lil’wat land. Challenges include livestock trespass, irresponsible management practices, degraded resources, and limited agricultural knowledge. Opportunities include potential for producing for the local food market, interest in family gardening, and promotion of community-oriented agriculture.
- **Identifying Agricultural Aspirations** – Insights into the type of agriculture desired were obtained through consultation with the Steering Committee and a community workshop. Citizens were questioned on cropping, the quality of land base, the state of the agricultural resources, current management arrangements for agricultural land, and about what types of agricultural pursuits were most compatible with community aspirations.
- **Lil’wat Agricultural Heritage** - An interesting facet of this study was the work done by Lil’wat citizens on the agricultural history and early farming in the community. Some Lil’wat citizens have a long association with agriculture as farmers and ranchers, including employment on Pemberton Valley farms.
- **Situation Analysis** – the investigation characterized issues facing Lil’wat farmland, now and potentially in the future. These issues included:
  - Maintaining the agricultural resource
  - Role of agriculture in community well-being
  - Tenancy
  - Potential for emerging land use conflicts
  - Transitional land management
  - Land improvements
  - Flooding and drainage
  - Habitat provisions and management obligations.
- **Strategic Considerations** – the discussion of a farm plan explored practical considerations related to:
  - Improving the resource base
  - Making efficient use of Lil’wat lands
  - Acquiring agricultural knowledge
  - Supporting existing agricultural businesses
  - Providing for individual and community gardening opportunities
  - Gaining access to agricultural land by citizens who do not currently have access
  - Relating Lil’wat Nation agriculture to regional initiatives
  - Looking at funding implications and potential options
- **Developing an Agricultural Vision** – This last topic was the springboard to the agricultural planning process. The range and breadth of agricultural options was explored. A decision was made to take the progress of Phase 1 to a member workshop for feedback.

### 1.3 Phase 2 Findings

Phase 2 consisted of an agricultural issues and options analysis.<sup>2</sup> This involved taking the key issues that flowed from Phase 1 and a community workshop and then outlining several options for addressing each

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<sup>2</sup> Zbeetnoff Agro-Environmental Inc. and Quadra Planning. 2014. Lil’wat Nation Agricultural Plan: Agricultural Issues and Options. April.

issue. It is these issues upon which the current plan is based. Eleven key issue areas were identified and examined:

1. Protect Agricultural Land and Resources;
2. Limited Use of Agricultural Lands;
3. Barriers to Current and Potential Agricultural Resource Use;
4. Need to Improve Agricultural Skills of Citizens ;
5. Attracting Capital for Agricultural Development;
6. Generating Jobs and Employment;
7. Access Existing Agricultural Business Opportunities;
8. Creating Band-Based Agricultural Business Initiatives;
9. Increase Community Food Self-reliance;
10. Engaging the Community in Pursuing Health and Wellness through Agricultural Activities;  
and
11. Administration of Agricultural Resources and Enterprises.

The issues and options in the Phase 2 report (April 2014) were discussed at a community workshop in June, 2014. Based on this consultation, the spectrum of issues distilled down to the “highest ranking” issues, which were:

- Protect Agricultural Land and Resources;
- Limited Use of Agricultural Lands;
- Access Existing Agricultural Business Opportunities;
- Creating Band-Based Agricultural Business Initiatives;
- Generating Jobs and Employment.

Options were then discussed to address the highest ranked issues. This consultation provided valuable input into the selection of options that have been carried forward as recommendations in this Agricultural Plan.

## 2.0 Guiding Principles for Lil’wat Nation Agriculture

The following Guiding Principles were crafted in consultation with community citizens and are meant to reflect the values that the community holds with regard to agriculture.

### *Agriculture is **valued***

The Lil’wat agricultural lands are some of the most fertile and valued farmlands in the Pemberton Valley. With efforts made to improve the agricultural capabilities of the land, the climate and soil capability support a diverse range of crops. Lil’wat people see agriculture as a way to reconnect with the land through a tradition of land and environmental stewardship passed down by ancestors through the generations.

### *Agriculture is a **sustainable community benefit***

Agriculture should nurture the Community, and is an important activity that provides revenues, local food, jobs, education, improved health and wellness, and an enduring cultural connection for present and future generations. Agriculture will provide sustainable environmental, social and economic benefits to the Lil’wat people.

Lil'wat citizens envision working together within the community to support and strengthen agriculture for the benefit of the entire community. This will involve families, individuals, the schools, land management and Band Council.

*Agriculture is **diverse***

Agriculture interest is present at a various levels and intensity, ranging from commercial agriculture and farm markets to community gardens, school and training projects, and family plots. Agricultural growth and development will support and make room for all of these interests.

*Agriculture is **collaborative***

Agriculture provides the opportunity to develop partnerships with like-minded individuals, groups and organizations for the benefit of the Community as a whole. These will include: arrangements with post-secondary institutions that can provide training and knowledge to Lil'wat citizens; organizations that are dedicated to farming, the long term viability of agriculture and local food production; entrepreneurs who may wish to partner with the Lil'wat Nation in training, employment, and new crop business opportunities; and funding agencies interested in supporting community-based agricultural businesses.

Lil'wat citizens also envision working together with other First Nations to expand economic, social and cultural approaches to agricultural development.

*Sustainable agriculture is **productive***

Lil'wat citizens see the need for agriculture resources to be improved and more effectively used in order to be productive. This means the physical capability of the agricultural resources needs to be upgraded, individual initiatives encouraged and supported, and the agricultural land use better managed in the interests of the whole Community.

## **2.1 Agricultural Vision**

Flowing from the guiding principles, a proposed agricultural vision is presented below for consideration by the community. This draft version describes the agricultural vision for the use of Lil'wat Nation agricultural land over the next 20 years:

***“Agriculture contributes to the cultural, economic and social fabric of the Lil'wat Nation through local food production, job creation, business and educational opportunities. Through community engagement in the stewardship of farmland resources, agriculture invigorates the physical and mental well-being of Lil'wat Citizens.”***

## **3.0 Agricultural Plan Recommendations**

The Agricultural Plan is designed to address the highest community ranked issues and achieve Lil'wat Nation's vision for agriculture. A strategy is proposed that works toward long term goals by focusing on building capacity for agriculture, pursuing band and community-based initiatives; supporting opportunities for individual citizens, and getting initiatives working in the community. These objectives include:

1. Protect and enhance farmland and resources;
2. Increase the use of agricultural land;
3. Improve agricultural knowledge and skills;

4. Support individual local business initiatives ;
5. Pursue a Band-based approach to exploring agricultural opportunities;
6. Develop agricultural planning and management.

### **3.1 Objective #1: Protect and Enhance Farmland and Resources**

Lil'wat Nation has some of the best agricultural land in British Columbia, which can be improved to Classes 1 and 2 with control of flooding and provision of drainage and irrigation.<sup>3</sup> The long term sustainability of agriculture will require that Lil'wat have in place policies and guidelines for maintaining the productivity of farmland, protecting land and resources from degradation by unsustainable practices, and preventing encroachment by non-farm developments. Protecting land and resources includes the following approaches:

- Ensure that flood control and drainage improvements take agricultural needs into consideration in their design, construction, and operation;
- Consider agricultural-specific flood control, drainage and irrigation improvements in the 5 year start-up agricultural business plan and include in capital expenditures budgeting;
- Apply good stewardship practices in using and managing communal pasture and forage lands;
- Ensure that farmland is protected from encroaching residential, industrial, storage, parking and other non-farm developments; and
- Promote sustainable use of the natural biodiversity and botanical resources found on agricultural land.

#### **Recommended Actions:**

1. Build a case for the improvement of water management activities with funding agencies to justify large capital expenditures, based on economic benefit- cost analysis, employment and job creation;
2. Work with Pemberton Valley Dyking District and AANDC to improve water management for agriculture;<sup>4</sup>
3. Review agricultural bylaws in other jurisdictions and adopt bylaws and enforcement to prevent range practices on the communal lands that are degrading grasslands;<sup>5</sup>
4. Consider strengthening zoning and defining allowable uses more specifically on Pasture Lands and Rural Residential Zones to ensure that non-farm development does not encroach onto or reduce the capability of farmland;<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Zbeetnoff Agro-Environmental and Quadra Planning. 2014. Lil'wat Nation Agricultural Plan: Agriculture Situation Analysis. Appendix A; Soil Investigations.

<sup>4</sup> See Zbeetnoff Agro-Environmental and Quadra Planning. 2013. Lil'wat Northwest Hydraulic Consultants sub-consultant report: Lil'wat Nation Agricultural Lands, Flood Hazard Final Report.

<sup>5</sup> In addition to provincial laws, virtually all rural municipalities have animal control bylaws and enforcement to support the responsible management and control of livestock. See Alberta. Stray Animals Act.

<http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/s20.pdf> . See BC Livestock Act.

[http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96270\\_01](http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96270_01)

5. Create policy around protecting crops and livestock from wildlife, stray animals, soil deposition and/or removal, possibly using municipal bylaws from farming areas as a starting point;
6. Create an Agricultural Impact Assessment mechanism that would require that non-farm development and activities on or adjacent to agriculturally designated land be reviewed to ensure no adverse effects occur to designated farmland;
7. In coordination with BC Ministry of Forests Lands and Natural Resources Operations (FLNRO), undertake an inventory of botanical resources and investigate opportunities for utilization on Lil'wat agricultural lands.
8. Undertake an invasive weeds study to identify where infestations are and develop a strategy to limit their spread on farmland. Consider joining and working with the Sea-to-Sky Invasive Species Council which offers awareness and education programs and works with local governments and First Nations in the Sea-to-Sky Corridor.<sup>7</sup>

## 3.2 Objective #2: Increase the Use of Agricultural Land

While an interest in agricultural activity has been expressed by citizens, land designated for farming continues to be underutilized and a substantial portion of suitable land is idle. Efforts to increase the use of agricultural land will require ways of encouraging citizens to farm and making land available for farming. In addition, there is a need to eliminate management shortcomings on Lil'wat agricultural lands that are discouraging or compromising the ability of willing farmers to engage in agricultural activities.

### Recommended Strategy

The strategy should encourage agriculture most vigorously where it currently exists, with persons that are genuinely interested in this activity or are committed to agricultural vocations already. In addition, locations should be selected where the least potential for land use conflict exists and where land rights are most clearly defined. The strategy needs to be sensitive to:

- Existing traditional rights to, or use of, the land;
- Making farmland parcels with no access accessible by tying into the Nation's asset management program and capital planning activities;
- Providing mechanisms for landless citizens to gain access to farmland;
- Creating incentives for those with land and no interest in farming to make their land available to those who wish to farm;
- Protecting agricultural efforts from roaming livestock.

### Recommended Actions:

The goal of these actions is to encourage and facilitate the use of Lil'wat agricultural lands for sustainable agricultural activities initiated by citizens and/or the band. The recommended actions include:

1. Explore projects to improve current farming efforts, the most important being improved livestock control, pasture fencing and sustainable management, and more productive family gardening;

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<sup>6</sup> For example, see Bert Van Dalfsen et al., *Guide for Bylaw Development in Farming Areas*. BC Ministry of Agriculture. 2013.

[http://www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/guide\\_to\\_bylaw\\_development/Guide\\_to\\_ByLaw\\_Dev\\_index.htm](http://www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/guide_to_bylaw_development/Guide_to_ByLaw_Dev_index.htm)

<sup>7</sup> See status of regional initiatives. [www.ssisc.info/blog](http://www.ssisc.info/blog)

2. Explore incentives and/or eliminate drawbacks to encourage traditional occupiers of lands designated or zoned for agriculture to farm, such as providing assistance to construct irrigation wells or build exclusion fencing;
3. Examine the feasibility of having a coop or community owned pool of equipment for community-based agriculture (e.g., tractor, implements and tools);
4. Identify sites and provide access to irrigation water at locations considered appropriate for agriculture;
5. Create a village or community garden sub-zone in the Land Use Plan and promote family community gardening;
6. Assist citizens to access growing areas in the lowlands and at the town site by keeping an up-to-date inventory of citizens wanting to farm and linking them with those willing to provide land for this purpose;
7. Develop rental and leasing agreements that accommodate traditional occupier interests and create security for undertaking farming activities under the authority of the Nation's Land Code;
8. Develop band-administered leasing arrangements based on enforceable contractual arrangements, e.g. under the new Lil'wat Nation Land Code;
9. Identify landlocked farmland and design, designate and build a road system that provides physical access by citizens to their inaccessible properties;
10. Eliminate damage caused by roaming livestock by creating and enforcing a policy or bylaw under the authority of the Nation's Land Code to:
  - Require that livestock be registered (tagged or branded);
  - Require that livestock owners keep their animals fenced in;
  - Fence livestock out of environmentally sensitive areas;
  - Regulate and enforce irresponsible farmer behaviour (e.g., impound stray animals, fine for breach of conditions, auction off if not resolved in a timely manner).
11. Attain sustainable use of communal pasture and hay lands by:
  - Establishing a system of pasture management to manage these resources for the benefit of Citizens and the community;
  - Limiting herd population in the communal area to a sustainable level based on an assessment of what the land can provide;
  - Setting up a system to allocate pasture quota fairly to animal owners;
  - Implementing a plan to rehabilitate the grass lands, including a fencing plan;
  - Preparing a capital and financing plan for managing the pasture, possibly including a user fee system to cover repair and maintenance.

### **3.3 Objective #3: Improve Agricultural Skills of Citizens**

Agriculture is most rewarding when work results in the growing and harvesting of the fruits of labour. Improved knowledge of farm planning, management and production skills are essential tools required to instil confidence to engage in agricultural pursuits, as a career or lifestyle activity. This objective also has the potential to enhance community involvement through events related to sharing of knowledge, traditional plants and recipes, seed exchanges, and community harvest.

#### **Recommended Strategy:**

The goal is to increase the agricultural knowledge base of citizens, with the expectation that improved skill levels and knowledge of agriculture will lead to more and more diversified agricultural activity on Lil'wat agricultural lands. This strategy should include:

- Appointing or hiring a coordinator to provide necessary oversight and training delivery, building upon interest already created in farm plots and family gardening in the community;
- Partnering with volunteers, associates, and investors to engage citizens in a community gardening project;
- Bringing in specialists with expertise to talk about improving livestock husbandry and pasture management, as well as crop growing, handling and local marketing;
- Supporting a high school curriculum that includes courses, gardening and/or livestock projects.

**Recommended Actions:**

1. Work with Kwantlen Polytechnic University to establish and operate a multi-year hands-on Farm School on Lil’wat agricultural land;
2. Work with the local School District and Xet’olacw Community School to introduce agricultural topics and classes;<sup>8</sup>
3. Work with local funding organizations to encourage family gardening and create community gardening projects;<sup>9</sup>
4. Engage non-profit organizations in initiatives related to composting opportunities at Lil’wat Nation and training in community oriented agricultural activity;
5. Explore opportunities to partner with organizations with personnel and resources in food areas of interest to Lil’wat citizens, including traditional foods, nutrition and food preparation;
6. Explore opportunities for Lil’wat citizens to mentor with agri-businesses in Pemberton, possibly in cooperation with the Pemberton Farmers Institute.

### **3.4 Objective #4: Support Local Existing Farming Initiatives**

While small, agricultural activities on Lil’wat lands are good indicators of citizens’ current agricultural interests. These activities should be enabled and encouraged in a sustainable fashion by creating a favourable atmosphere for growth and development.

**Recommended Actions:**

1. Develop pasture management and livestock control on Lil’wat lands to provide opportunities for sustainable land use;
2. Research agricultural policies and bylaws in other jurisdictions for application, as appropriate, to Lil’wat agricultural lands;
3. Assist in making water resources available to small lot operators, by accessing supply from nearby rivers in an environmentally sustainable fashion;
4. Develop working relationships with Pemberton Farmers Institute and Pemberton and Whistler Farmers Markets to make citizen entrepreneurs aware of market opportunities for local products;
5. Invite groups, entrepreneurs and agencies to speak at workshops on agricultural opportunities and business development;
6. Develop a community supported farming project catering to Lil’wat citizens, for example expanding the demonstration garden managed by the school in 2014 or partnering with like-minded community gardening advocates in the Squamish Lillooet Regional District to garner citizen support and involvement.

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<sup>8</sup> For example, explore the potential of the BC Agriculture in the Classroom Program. <http://www.aitc.ca/bc/>

<sup>9</sup> For example, grants are available from Community Foundations in Pemberton and Whistler to support local community building projects (see Appendix A).

### 3.5 Objective #5: Develop Lil'wat Agricultural Planning and Management Capacity

A key component for implementing agricultural initiatives is the developing and hiring of in-house expertise to plan and manage projects. Of central importance, as raised in community workshops, Lil'wat Nation does not want to lose control of any agricultural initiative involving partners or capital infusion. As well, citizens are frustrated by the problems caused by management of the current agricultural land use situation.

A favoured approach is to have the Band participate in setting up and developing agricultural projects on Lil'wat land. There is trepidation about attracting external business start-ups to Lil'wat land and in creating dependency relationships with outside interests at this time. It is fortunate that a number of programs and entities are available to assist a Band-lead initiative.

The Agricultural Plan contains a number of agricultural opportunities that will need sponsorship, proposal and application writing, coordination, organizational stability, multi-year funding, and budgetary and administrative oversight. In addition, there is likely to be liaison with a number of organizations and agencies with the skills and capacity to assist the Lil'wat nation in pursuing its agricultural goals.

#### **Recommended Strategy:**

It is essential that the implementation of the Agricultural plan be pursued in a coordinated and efficient manner. This requires personnel, planning and organization to carry out the following activities:

- Choose and pursue projects that complement existing agricultural activity based on existing farmland use on Lil'wat lands, such as rehabilitation of pasture lands, fencing, water supply;
- Develop a strategy to support fledgling Lil'wat farm entrepreneurs serving the local market for food, such as berries, vegetables and meat;<sup>10</sup>
- Choose and pursue projects where potential "low-hanging" agricultural business opportunities may lie and are of high interest to citizens;<sup>11</sup>
- Lead initiatives to partner with organizations and expertise, as appropriate, to plan and develop agricultural programs and projects, obtain skills and training; and accelerate agricultural development on Lil'wat land, as identified in the other objectives of this plan;
- Locate sites and resources on Lil'wat Nation land for starting projects and locating partnership initiatives;
- Coordinate and liaise with the Lil'wat community to develop support for key agricultural pursuits, such as agricultural training, village gardening, food preparation, and nutritional knowledge;

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<sup>10</sup> This program could be comprised of an outreach to current and/or willing Lil'wat farmers to identify constraints to growth and development, accessing feasibility assessments and business plans and to pursue opportunities, linking their operations with the local Pemberton Valley farm marketing network, supporting these entrepreneurs in obtaining investment capital (micro-loans or sponsorship to the First Nation Aboriginal Lending Association), and developing community supported alternatives to generate operating capital.

<sup>11</sup> For example, citizens have expressed interest in exploring the potential of non-timber botanicals and nutraceuticals, crops particularly suited to the isolation, soils and climate of the Pemberton Valley such as tubers and seed crops, and fresh food production for local and regional markets. A business development strategy utilizing feasibility assessments sponsored by innovation funding may also be expected to lead to the identification of new opportunities.

- Promote agricultural initiatives within the community by engaging and enrolling citizens in appropriately-sized doable projects that they support and have a high prospect of success;
- Represent Lil'wat in discussions with local and regional governments and organizations in support of agricultural interests;
- Write grant applications, secure funding, prepare budgets and implement projects;
- Work with Lil'wat Nation governance to promote agriculture as part of community goals related to culture, health, food choices, and diet;
- Attract business and capital for agricultural opportunities of high community interest as appropriate opportunities are identified.

**Recommended Actions:**

1. Create a Lands Section authority/responsibility within the Band for supporting citizens and participating in agricultural projects. This could be an entity within Band government delegated with the authority for the management of Lil'wat agricultural land.
2. Establish an Agriculture Advisory Committee to oversee the implementation of the Agricultural Plan and advise Chief and Council and the Agricultural Coordinator, as required. It is anticipated that the Steering Committee guiding the agricultural planning process has several individuals who could continue to serve in this function.
3. Support citizen agricultural initiatives by assisting in accessing lending programs;
4. Engage government agencies and programs to financially assist in feasibility studies and business start-up planning, such as Investment Agriculture Foundation, Community Futures, Aboriginal Business Development Program, CESO Aboriginal Services; Business Development Bank of Canada.<sup>12</sup>
5. Create an Agricultural Coordinator position within the Lands Section of the Lil'wat Nation governance structure. The role of this position would be to implement the Lil'wat Nation Agricultural Plan, including coordinating and liaising with partners and participants and implementing the plan's recommendations. Another important function of the Agricultural Coordinator would be to represent the interests of agriculture in dealing with potential impacts to agricultural resources from local, non-agricultural developments.
6. Engage in strategizing on how to access sources of outside funding to support the envisioned functions of the Lil'wat Agricultural Land Management entity and an Agricultural Coordinator. Options would include applications to engage in pilot projects in high priority areas that fund coordination and administrative responsibilities.

## 4.0 Implementation Strategy

Several activities are required to implement the Agricultural Plan. Not all these have to be done immediately but some, by necessity, need to be done before other things can be undertaken. It is recommended that the plan's recommendations be implemented based on priority over the next five years – Immediate, Short and Medium Term. The strategy is summarized in Table 1.

The lead time required to act on the immediate, short and medium term priorities set out below, is highly dependent on establishing a workable management structure to oversee the agricultural plan implementation. To the extent that the Agricultural Management responsibilities would be an additional government function, lead time would be required to amalgamate agricultural considerations into the 2015 Community Land Use Plan (CLUP) and then to plan capital allocations towards agriculture.

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<sup>12</sup> See Appendix A and Zbeetnoff Agro-Environmental Inc. and Quadra Planning. 2014. Lil'wat Nation Agricultural Plan: Agricultural Issues and Options. April.

Budget considerations have to be weighed into the first few immediate priorities, and budget are not approved and adopted until March. The Land Code also plays a big factor, as Land Use Plans are adopted as legal documents under the authority of the Land Code, which wouldn't take effect until April 2015. The community would also have to adopt the final CLUP document which would cause further time extensions through a community awareness and approval process. Since AANDC is funding this program, they will also have an approval or acceptance process.

## **4.1 Immediate Priorities (0 to 15 months)**

Given the considerations noted above in 4.0, immediate priorities may have to be addressed after April, 2015. It would be helpful to have the management authority and agricultural coordinator in place before the growing season. As such, 2015 may be better used a period of implementation planning and budgeting, applying for program and grant funding, and strategizing for the 2016 growing season.

### **4.1.1 Create Agricultural Management Authority (AMA) within Lil'wat Government**

This activity would see the creation of an entity within Band government with responsibility for leading agricultural initiatives, having signing authority in agreements with agencies and programs, and leveraging Band contributions to agriculture.

The AMA could be contained within the Lands Department or a new Business Unit under the umbrella of the Nation's corporate division. An option is to see the AMA being both a function of the Nation's corporate arm, but also having a strong connection to the Lands and Resources department. In this scenario, the Agricultural Manager would be an employee of Lil'wat Management Inc. and would report to the Director of Business, but the Lands Manager would also be involved at a planning, capital works, and policy development level.

### **4.1.2 Hire an Agriculture Coordinator (AC)**

A coordinator or manager is required to oversee overall administration of the business plan and agricultural plan. The individual should have a background in agricultural enterprise, knowledge of sources of funding for assisting with agriculture, grant application writing skills, and an engaging manner to attract Lil'wat member participation. The manager will also be required to establish partnerships with external organizations and work towards raising the profile of LFN agriculture in the community and with local governments.

Initially, this position might have to share the duties and responsibilities of another program, such as bylaw enforcement, or Lands Clerk, due to funding constraints.

#### **Highest Priority Tasks:**

- Develop Band bylaw regulation and enforcement to control roaming livestock;
- Initiate discussions with KPU to negotiate commitments on a Farm School, with timelines, financial estimates, develop funding sources, selection of location, and student recruitment;
- Work with other Lands Section staff to access programs and make grant applications, independently and with partners, for funding of local agriculture initiatives to complement the Farm School and other agriculture-related community projects;
- Develop a plan to rehabilitate and manage the communal pasture sustainably;

- Work with FLNRO and other resources to investigate botanical opportunities on agricultural lands;<sup>13</sup>
- Engage with Lil'wat citizens to solicit interest and participation in community gardens, family plots, village gardening and agricultural related events;
- Support current farming activities by identifying constraints to activities and exploring opportunities to enhance the viability of operations.

### **4.1.3 Establish an Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC)**

During the course of the agricultural plan development, the Steering Committee was instrumental in guiding the planning process. This valuable resource should not be disbanded, but instated as an Agricultural Advisory Committee, so as to continue to inform the agricultural community about developments affecting agriculture at Lil'wat and to advise staff and Executive Council as the plan is implemented. The Nation may want to consider if a member(s) of the Executive Council and/or staff should sit on this Committee as a liaison between the AAC and Lil'wat Nation governance.

The AAC would meet on a scheduled basis that could range from monthly to quarterly, depending on the volume of business needing to be done. Members are often appointed to terms of 2 years or so from active farmers in the agricultural community, representing the diversity of agricultural activity present in the community. There are provisions for a quorum, distribution of agenda and materials, keeping of minutes, rules of conduct, voting, and reporting to Council. If an Agricultural Management Authority is created, the AAC would be expected to be an important source of information and dialogue with the farming community on agricultural initiatives.

The usefulness of an AAC stems from its members' knowledge of farming and ranching, an understanding of its issues, and providing a link to the farm community. The role of the AAC is envisioned as one of advising Lil'wat government on day-to-day issues and broader initiatives that have longer term impacts on agriculture. While the composition of an AAC is usually mostly farmers, it is possible to have other interest groups in the community represented, particularly if the agricultural plan has elements that require broad support and consideration to achieve desired outcomes.<sup>14</sup>

While the AAC would advise on agricultural matters, it would not have the authority to make decisions that are normally the prerogative of elected officials. Nonetheless, the AAC has been shown in other jurisdictions to be a good sounding board from which to receive agricultural perspective and input on community initiatives.

### **4.1.4 Develop an Agricultural Start-Up Plan**

A 5-year business plan (start-up and operations plan) would be prepared to identify specific initiatives to be undertaken within the time frame and outline the schedule for their implementation. The Plan would build upon findings from previous investigation of agricultural opportunities and strategy preferred by Lil'wat Nation.<sup>15</sup> The business plan would also include a budget for agricultural plan implementation that

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<sup>13</sup> See Appendix A

<sup>14</sup> A Model Terms of Reference is provided in [http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/Ag\\_Advise\\_Comm/Model\\_Terms\\_of\\_Ref.pdf](http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/Ag_Advise_Comm/Model_Terms_of_Ref.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> For example, a Lil'wat Nation Agricultural Strategy was developed in 2012 by Ms. Judith Bosire, ISI, Sauder School of Business, UBC. [http://www.sauder.ubc.ca/Faculty/Research\\_Centres/ISIS/Research/First\\_Nations\\_Economic\\_Development/Lilwat\\_Nation\\_Agricultural\\_Strategy](http://www.sauder.ubc.ca/Faculty/Research_Centres/ISIS/Research/First_Nations_Economic_Development/Lilwat_Nation_Agricultural_Strategy)

identifies capital and operating cost requirements; sources of revenue (e.g., programs, grants, Band contributions), and human resource requirements. The business plan will pursue the highest short term priorities of this implementation strategy, as shown for Years 1 to 3 in Figure 1. The blue boxes in the Figure 1 represent key implementation milestones of the Agricultural Plan.

#### **Highest Priorities:**

- Have Agricultural plan adopted by Chief and Council in the last quarter of 2014;
- Coordinate Lil'wat Land Use Code development with agricultural considerations in support of the Agricultural Plan, such as land access, Pasture Land management; livestock management
- Develop schedule of role, responsibility and budgeting for AMA and Agricultural Coordinator position and incorporate into 2015 fiscal planning process;
- Prepare a detailed agricultural implementation plan based on responsibilities, budget and selected projects;
- Develop a plan to further engage families in community gardening at the village site at the Tsi-Pun grocery store location and identify other potential sites, if warranted;
- Prepare applications to access funds and resources of programs (See Appendix A) available to develop the agricultural initiatives and support investigations, pilot projects, provide business development services, carry out feasibility assessments;
- Plan through 2015 with Kwantlen Polytechnic University to get the Farm School up and running in the spring of 2016.

### **4.1.5 Engage Potential Partners**

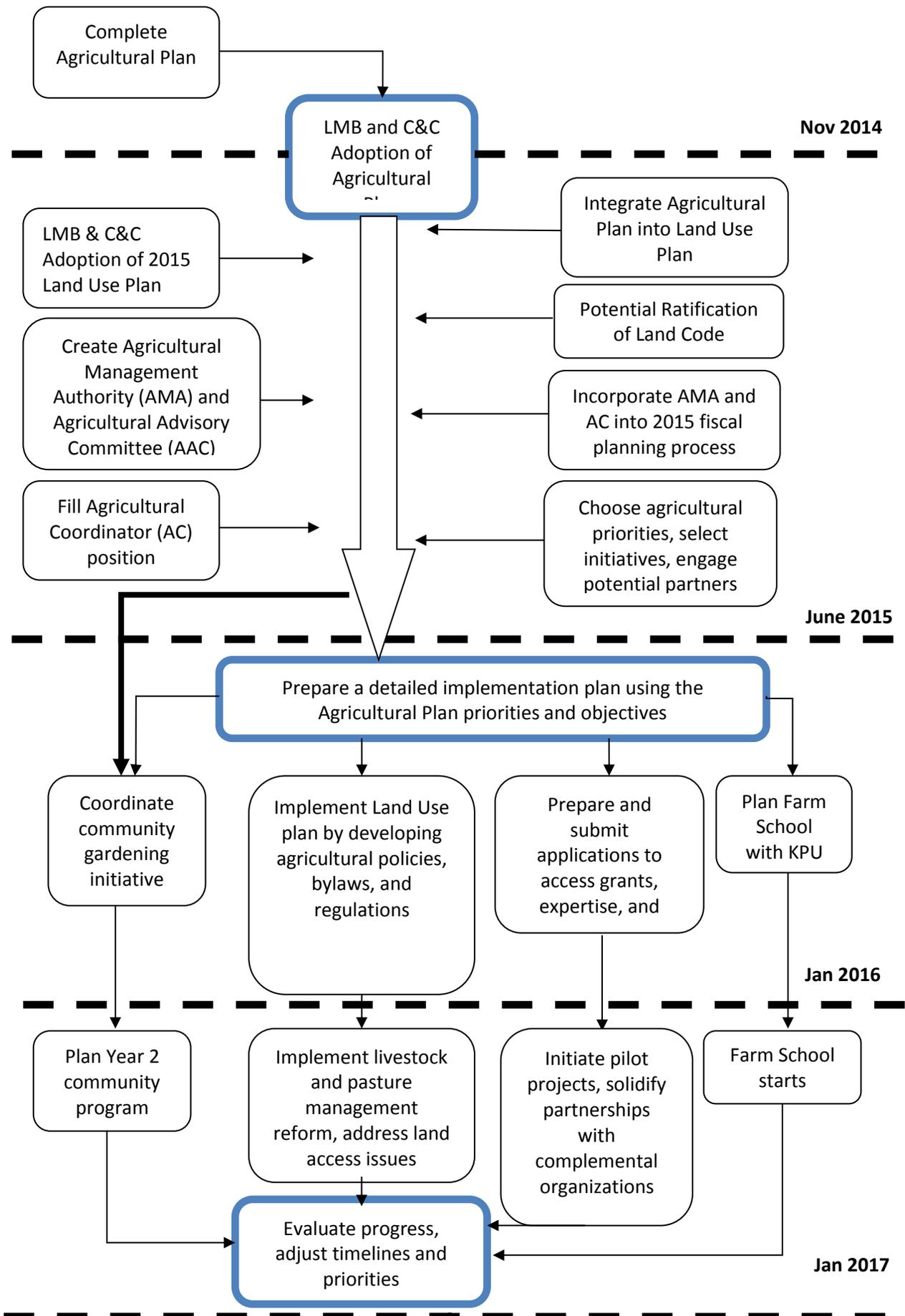
A high priority farm development action item is needed to initiate discussions with potential partners who can assist with on-the-ground training and development. These projects need their timelines coordinated in order to gain traction as soon as possible. Some potential initial partners are:

#### **Kwantlen Polytechnic University Farm School**

This program will require several months of planning in 2015 to get up and running in 2016. In 2015, decisions will need to be made on the size of the school, location and size of the farmland base, recruiting students and staff. Other considerations include:

- Farm building requirements and fencing;
- Provision of services such as drainage and irrigation and power;
- Applying to appropriate agencies to obtain seed development funds; and
- Assisting a Lil'wat citizen to enroll at a farm school in Richmond or Tsawwassen First Nation in 2015, with the intent to employ this individual by the Lil'wat Farm School when it is ready to proceed.

**Figure 1: Flow Chart of Agricultural Plan Implementation Years 1 to 3**



### **Local Non-Profit Community Oriented Initiative**

Investigation is being undertaken by a graduate student working on the Lil'wat community farm project<sup>16</sup> to assess Citizen's needs and barriers to starting their own gardening. These initiatives should be taken to the next level by engaging these groups in participating in demonstration gardens and providing hands-on experience. There appears to be abundant opportunity to engage a like-minded food security program or organization to assist in developing capacity, such as a local Community Foundation (see Appendix A).

### **Pemberton Farmers Institute (PFI)**

The Pemberton Farmers Institute represents the interests of many Pemberton Valley farmers. The Institute would be a good starting point to explore opportunities for mentoring citizens that are ready to undertake farm activities. PFI members may be willing to share knowledge and expertise about crops/livestock to grow, production techniques, marketing, and other aspects of local agricultural production.

### **Partnering with BC Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources Operations (FLNRO)**

There is opportunity to work with FLNRO on a recently initiated pilot project looking for commercial opportunities for non-timber forest products, some of which are found on Lil'wat agricultural designated lands. A Cultural Resource Working Group is exploring ways to assist First Nations to identify and harvest botanical forest products, such as mushrooms and wild-harvested nutraceuticals, and is interested in exploring partnerships to develop economic opportunities. This initiative would build upon ongoing research and extension conducted by the Research Section of the Center for Non Timber Resources at Royal Roads University.<sup>17</sup>

To pursue this initiative, the agricultural coordinator should prepare a grant application to investigate the feasibility of NTFP at Lil'wat Nation. Potential funding sources include the BC Agri-Investment Program administered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation.

## **4.2 Short Term Priorities (15 months to Year 3)**

With the Farm School up and running potentially by the spring of 2016 the focus will expand to include:

- Engaging the Lil'wat Nation community in agriculture-related community activities;
- Encouraging more students to enroll in the Farm School;
- Collaborating with FLNRO to start a project to investigate botanicals on Lil'wat Nation agricultural land;
- There is also an opportunity to attract Farm School students to contribute to Lil'wat agricultural objectives once they graduate.

The Agriculture Coordinator will have the following tasks to act on:

- Providing opportunity for community supported gardening in the community;
- Working with livestock owners to manage the community pasture and develop a pasture management plan;
- Developing a plan for drainage and irrigation improvements;
- Identifying and working towards resolving access barriers to farmland;
- Providing business plans, budgetary and manpower assessments, and funding proposals to support new initiatives.

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<sup>16</sup> Ms. Kari Mancer, Whistler, has initiated planning on this project.

<sup>17</sup> See <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hre/ntfp/>

### **4.3 Medium Term Priorities (Year 3 to Year 5)**

Through Year 3 to Year 5, the Agriculture Plan will continue to monitor the progress of the immediate and short term priorities identified above. Medium term priorities extend into the period once graduates from the Farm School have completed their training at the Farm School and are ready to enter the workforce or develop businesses of their own. At this point, there may be additional demand for farmland and/or facilities to carry out agriculture on Lil'wat Nation lands. It is anticipated that potential farmers will be able to make proposals to the Nation for its consideration.

Other possibilities include that graduates become trainers in the Farm School, or coordinators of broader agriculture programs within Lil'wat.

In Year 4/5 the Agricultural Plan should be assessed and modified if necessary to build on successes and address new challenges and situations. This would include a new 5 year budget, with rolling one year work plans and budgets, while re-developing short and medium term priorities.

Lil'wat Nation Executive Council and staff may want to consider the accomplishments and challenges of the Agricultural Plan and future directions, including:

- Assessing the needs of the community including agricultural land uses, commercial and community ventures;
- Developing a multi-year funding model to provide support to Lil'wat Nation agricultural initiatives until they are self-sustaining;
- Expanding agriculture-related activities and services into designated agricultural areas;
- Working with government agencies to ensure adequate ongoing drainage and irrigation services, such as Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and Pemberton Valley Dyking District;
- Continuing partnerships or alliances with organizations to further interests of Lil'wat agriculture.

## **5.0 Budget Considerations**

Budget considerations are limited to the immediate start-up phase of the agricultural implementation strategy.

### **5.1 Agriculture Coordinator**

It is anticipated that this position should be filled by a qualified professional agrologist (P.Ag.) with extensive experience in agriculture and a starting salary in the vicinity of \$60,000 per annum. The successful applicant should have extensive experience working with First Nations and preference could be given to qualified Nation citizens. Options for partial or full funding this position include the following:

- Successful application for an Investment Agriculture Foundation (IAF) grant towards a three year pilot project geared to developing community based agricultural development on LFN Land;
- Successful application(s) to sustainable community initiatives funded by Community Futures, Coast Capital, or community minded corporate interest;
- Obtaining funding for an innovation project related to the commercial development of non-timber botanicals opportunities;
- Salary contribution from the Band, as a function of other potential responsibilities (e.g., Land Clerk, agricultural bylaw enforcement officer)

## 5.2 Farm School

The KPU Farm School, in its 5<sup>th</sup> year of operation, is essentially funded on a cost recovery basis from fees charged to students. Currently, the program provides 10 months of training followed by access to a leased “incubator” farm, where the graduate can farm up to 0.5 acres for three years upon program completion, with technical support and shared equipment supplied. The program is offered for \$5,000 per enrollee. Lil’wat may want to consider making this program open to the general public in addition to attracting its own citizens in order to attract sufficient registration in the initial stages of the school. Over the longer term, the school has demonstrated its ability to attract students in Richmond, BC. It may be useful for the Agricultural Coordinator to consult with Tsawwassen First Nation to gain first hand insight into the operation of this type of school there.

The estimated budget for the Farm School is as follows:

### Land Requirement:

- Year 1: Start with 2 acres
- Year 2: 5 acres total
- Year 5: Potentially 10 to 20 acres
- Dependent on number of students taking on incubator farms

### Revenue:

- 8-15 students - \$40,000 to \$75,000 @\$5,000/student/year
- Fundraise
- Grants (approach a bank that Lil’wat Nation deals with)

### Costs

#### Farm School Staff and Personnel Requirement:

- Staff: Instructors and part-time coordinator - \$45,000
- Farm manager (could be a local farmer) = \$30,000. Some of this requirement may be addressed by the Lil’wat Agriculture Coordinator.

#### Equipment/Facilities Requirement:

- Startup - \$25,000, provision of irrigation, utilities

The total financial requirement for the Farm School is estimated at about \$100,000 annually, not including land and buildings. The total fee revenue at the outset may be expected to amount to \$40,000 to \$50,000, leaving a shortfall of \$50,000 to \$60,000, annually. This shortfall would be sought through grants and other fundraising.

## 5.3 Other Partnerships

At this point, it is not possible to predict which other partnerships might be developed between Lil’wat Nation and other organizations. These initiatives would require independent budgeting and feasibility assessments on a project-by-project basis, probably related to the success of grant applications. It is anticipated that the Agriculture Coordinator would pursue these opportunities, under the advice of the Agricultural Advisory Committee and Executive Council. There may be occasions where the resources of the Farm School may be shared at marginal cost.

## 6.0 Benefits and Risks

The Agricultural Plan offers the potential for several benefits for the Lil'wat community. At the same time, there are some risks involved as well. Below is a summary of the expected benefits and potential risks.

### 6.1 Potential Benefits

Under the proposed Implementation Strategy, Lil'wat Nation will be able to:

- Use existing staff to apply for grant funding for agricultural projects and recruit the Agricultural Coordinator;
- Leverage Nation funds with grant monies to carry out projects, including a portion of the Agricultural Manager position;
- Access community programs and partnerships to develop projects, share agricultural development costs, and target those areas of greatest interest; and
- Create a management and regulatory framework for sustainable use of Lil'wat Nation agricultural lands.

### 6.2 Potential Risks

The following risks have been identified that could expose Lil'wat Nation efforts, along with responses to each potential risk.

- 1. Agricultural Coordinator Position**
  - a. Risk Exposure:
    - i. Agricultural initiatives may not succeed;
    - ii. Salary paid by Lil'wat Nation would be spent.
  - b. Risk Management:
    - i. Review performance on a regular basis;
    - ii. Reduce/terminate position if not productive.
  
- 2. Farm School Project**
  - a. Risk Exposure:
    - i. May experience low student uptake;
    - ii. Citizens may not participate;
    - iii. Will know within first 3 years.
  - b. Risk Management:
    - i. Modify/cancel program.
  
- 3. Other Agriculture Initiatives**
  - a. Risk Exposure
    - i. May not be able to attract interest;
    - ii. Citizens may not participate;
    - iii. May not be able to commit to partners.
  - b. Risk Management

- i. Defer projects;
- ii. Suspend partnership initiatives.

**4. Weather-related Factors**

- a. Risk Exposure
  - i. Extreme temperatures;
  - ii. Pests and disease;
  - iii. Drought;
  - iv. Flooding.
- b. Risk Management
  - i. Develop good farm management practices through training and education;
  - ii. Work with local farmers to identify and manage production risks;
  - iii. Control stormwater flow onto agricultural land;
  - iv. Improve agricultural drainage;
  - v. Install irrigation infrastructure;
  - vi. Dig wells to support agricultural projects.

**5. Institutional Factors**

- a. Risk Exposure
  - i. Inadequate governance and policy relating to agricultural land use and initiatives;
  - ii. Inconsistent multi-year support for agricultural initiatives.
- b. Risk Management
  - i. Reform land use policy by adopting a Lil'wat Land Code;
  - ii. Create bylaws and enforcement respecting irresponsible livestock management;
  - iii. Develop policy in support of sustainable agricultural land use, such as pasture livestock carrying capacity, weed control, water conservation, indigenous plants harvesting;
  - iv. Create structure and mechanisms within Lil'wat government to pursue agricultural opportunities in a systematic fashion.

**6. Economic and Market Risks**

- a. Risk Exposure
  - i. Inadequate markets for agricultural products;
  - ii. Inability to compete with imports leading to loss of market;
  - iii. Inadequate capitalization of new initiatives.
- b. Risk Management
  - i. Undertake feasibility studies before committing to projects;
  - ii. Develop comprehensive business plans to guide agricultural projects;
  - iii. Utilize partnerships to provide expertise, resources and momentum to support new ventures.

# Appendix A: List of Programs and Agencies with Potential to Support Lil'wat Agricultural Initiatives

1. Food security-related grants programs:<sup>18</sup>
  - a. Walmart –Evergreen Foundation - Green Grants
  - b. Vancity - Community Project Grants; Core Grants and Community Lending
  - c. Vancouver Foundation – Grants and Community Initiatives Programs
  - d. Shell Canada – Fuelling Change
  - e. Investment Agriculture Foundation – Local Government Agriculture Planning Program; BC AgroForestry Initiative
  - f. Farm Folk City Folk - Feast of Fields Grant
  - g. Agricultural Research and Development Corporation – Agriculture Environment and Wildlife Fund
  - h. Vancouver Coastal Health – Community Food Action Initiative
  - i. Canadian Cooperative Association/Government of Canada – Innovative Cooperative Projects, Cooperative Development Initiative
  - j. Union of BC Municipalities – School Community Connections
  - k. Farm Credit Canada – Agri-Spirit Fund
  - l. Environment Canada - Eco Action Community Funding Program
  - m. Western Economic Diversification Canada - Western Diversification Program
  - n. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Rural Secretariat – Community Development Program: Building Rural and Northern Partnerships
  - o. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada – New Horizons for Seniors: Community Participation and Leadership
  - p. Toronto Dominion Bank – Friends of the Environment
  - q. BC Ministry of Agriculture – Farm Business Advisory Services Program
  - r. Pemberton Chamber of Commerce – Pemberton and Area Community Endowment Fund
  - s. Community Foundation of Whistler – Community Grants Program
  
2. Training and Education
  - a. Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Institute for Sustainable Horticulture (Kent Mullinex) - Farm School<sup>19</sup>
  - b. BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation<sup>20</sup>
  
3. Community Business Development
  - a. Community Futures<sup>21</sup>
  - b. Business Development Bank of Canada - Growth Capital for Aboriginal Business (GCAB) program<sup>22</sup>
  - c. CESO Aboriginal Services<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> See <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/foodsecurity/pdf/foodsecurityrelatedgrants.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> See <http://www.kpu.ca/science/agriculture/rfs/contact>

<sup>20</sup> See <http://aitc.ca/bc/programs/>

<sup>21</sup> See <http://www.communityfutures.ca/aboriginal-engagement>

<sup>22</sup> See [http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/goc/growth\\_capital.shtml](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/goc/growth_capital.shtml)

<sup>23</sup> See <http://abdc.bc.ca/uaed/other-aboriginal-research-practice-networks/c/canadian-executive-service-organization-aboriginal-services/>

- d. BC Ministry of Forests Lands and Natural Resources Operations (Neil Edwards) – First Nation botanical opportunities

**Table 1: Recommended Actions for Key Timelines in the 5 Year Implementation Strategy of the Lil'wat Nation Agricultural Plan**

Tasks	Period Ending												
	Oct 2014	Nov 2014	Jan 2015	Feb 2015	Mar 2015	April 2015	June 2015	Sept 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018	Jan 2019	Jan 2020
Task #1: Complete Agricultural Plan	-----												
Task #2: Land Management Board and Chief & Council approval of Ag Plan		_____											
Task #3: Integrate Agricultural Plan into Land Use Plan			-----	-----	-----								
Task #4: Potential ratification of Land Code					_____								
Task #5: LMB & C&C Adoption of 2015 Land Use Plan					_____								
Task #6: Create Agricultural Management Authority (AMA) and Advisory Committee (AAC)			_____	_____	_____								
Task #7: Incorporate AMA and AC into 2015 fiscal planning process			_____	_____	_____								
Task #8: Fill Agricultural Coordinator (AC) position						_____							
Task #9: Choose agricultural priorities, select initiatives, engage potential partners						_____	_____	ongoing					
Task #10: Prepare a detailed implementation plan using the Ag plan priorities and objectives						_____	_____	_____					
Task #11: Coordinate community gardening initiative				_____	_____	_____	_____	ongoing					
Task #12: Implement Land Use plan by developing agricultural policies, bylaws, and regulations						_____	_____	_____					
Task #13: Prepare and submit applications to access grants, expertise, and resources						_____	_____	_____					
Task #14: Plan Farm School with Kwantlen Polytechnical University			_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____				

Task #15: Plan and implement Year 2 of community program									_____	_____				
Task #16: Implement livestock and pasture management reform, address land access issues									_____	_____	_____			
Task 17: Initiate pilot projects, solidify partnerships with complementary organizations										_____	_____			
Task 18: Farm School starts											_____			
Task #19: Evaluate progress, adjust timelines and priorities												_____		
Task #20: Review and modify the Agricultural Plan as required													_____	_____
Task #21: Update Land Code and CLUP to reflect Agricultural Plan priorities													_____	_____