

A New Coop on the Lower North Shore. The Coop Solidarité de Bioproduits Basse-Côte-Nord (Lower North Shore Bio Resources Solidarity Coop) is a source of pride for the Lower North Shore. It is building a sense of ownership, as it is the start of a structure that will cover a multitude of other Non-Timber Forestry Products.

A brief history of the Wildberry and Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) initiative at the Coasters Association:

In 2005 the Coasters Association received a three year project funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada entitled, "A Portrait of the Food Industry relating to residents of the Lower North Shore." One of the project goals was to develop a long term initiative relating to healthy eating on the Lower North Shore. As a result of some of the work carried out, in July 2006 a group of residents from the Municipality Bonne Esperance formed a committee ("BerryLicious Committee,") thus creating and establishing ownership within the community for the wildberry initiative. This group of women came up with the idea of creating an

enterprise by developing food recipes from wildberries that grow across the Lower North Shore.

Move forward to July 2009, Ministère des Affaires municipales, des Régions et de l'Occupation du territoire (MAMROT) funded a 58 month project entitled, Revival and diversification of activities and exploitation of resources on the Lower North Shore, laying the groundwork for this new industry.

In February 2010 Canada Economic Development (DEC) came on board by funding a 27 month project towards the development of a Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP) industry on the Lower North Shore.

Also in 2010, we received funding from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada on two projects. Through the Rural Secretariat, the "Power of Partnerships: Initiating Economic Diversity of the LNS" project provides a foundation and framework for long-term sustainable partnerships and support of the Wildberry/NTFP initiative. Through the Co-op Secretariat, a 16 month project was received to set-up a coop structure to

eventually take over the business aspect of the project.

This past year the Conférence régionale des élus de la Côte-Nord (CRE) and Ministère du Développement économique, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation (MDEIE) have come on board with funding to further assist as the project prepares to transfer the knowledge and work carried out so far to the Coop structure.

In addition, three inventories of the wild fruit and NTFP have been carried out in the municipalities of Blanc Sablon, Bonne Esperance and St. Augustine - funded by the Council of Mayors/MRC du Golfe-du-Saint-Laurent, in partnership with the Municipality of Bonne Esperance, under the Volet II program.

Throughout the process our financial partners also include the CLD de la Basse-Cote-Nord and Emploi Quebec, Young Canada Works and Service Canada.

The Lower North Shore Bio Resources Solidarity Coop is quickly becoming a reality.



The labels for the Coop's two initial products (Wildberry jellies and wildberry Purees,) have been prepared!

After organizing an online competition, we obtained many designs from all over the world. The winning designer captured the essence



of our wild and natural surroundings. Unicorn Designs from Latvia, where berries such as the bakeapple, redberry and others also grow, presented the winning design. These product labels are used in the jelly and puree packaging, so be sure to look for them in the near future!

What is the Coop Solidarité Bioproduits de la Basse-Côte-Nord?

During the summer of 2011 development initiatives have taken place to establish a business structure that will oversee the activities and operations of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) on the Lower North Shore. It was decided that a cooperative structure would be established so that its members, the population, could have more control over the success of the business. A Non-Timber Forest Product Cooperative Founding Committee was established with representation from the Coasters Association, Caisse Populaire Desjardins Blanc-Sablon, CLD Basse-Côte-Nord, MRC du Golfe-du-Saint-Laurent, as well as the population, through the BerryLicious Committee. Presently the committee,

coordinated by Tyler Buckle, NTFP Regional Development Agent, meet on a regular basis to ensure the Coop Solidarité de Bioproduits Basse-Côte-Nord is established properly.

Thank-you to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Co-op Secretariat program for funding to assist with the setting up the Coop structure. Tyler is hired through the Co-operative Development Initiative and is working, with the assistance of Mr. Martin Gagnon, General Director of the Coopérative de Développement Régional (CDR) Bas-Saint-Laurent/Côte-Nord to form the Coop Solidarité de Bioproduits Basse-Côte-Nord.



Tyler Buckle, NTFP Development Agent

Preparing for production!



Tina Pigeon, Wildberry coordinator Priscilla Griffin, Marlene Keats and Coreen Goddard in La Pocatière, November 2011

The meeting focused on aspects of getting selected products ready for production this coming fall. Melanie Girard showcased the products already developed and provided samples for comments and feedback. The products sampled were jellies, syrups and sherbets. These products have been refined from the previous recipes, thanks

This was part of the planning for the pre-production phase, which started November 2011.

Workers hired from the Lower North Shore received training from Biopterre, on production and packaging techniques in preparation for moving full production to the Coast, in 2012.

This was made possible through funding from CRE, MDEIE, MAMROT and DEC.

On July 14th, 2011 Wildberry Coordinator, Priscilla Griffin and Coasters Association consultant, Hugh Maynard, participated in meetings with the Biopterre team; Maxim Tardif, Pierre Daigle, Guy Langlois and Melanie Girard, at the Agri-food Technology Institute in La Pocatière, Quebec. Tyler Buckle, NTFP Regional Development Agent joined the meeting via teleconference.

to significant improvements made by the Biopterre team since the beginning of the project.

A visit was also made to the Biopterre Research Centre to look at production and packaging equipment.



Coreen Goddard, Marlene Keats and Tina Pigeon receiving training at the Biopterre Research Center La Pocatière

What products are being developed?

The Coasters Association partnered with Biopterre (College Centre for Transfer Technology specializing in bio-products) to develop products made from the wild berries growing on the Lower North Shore. The berries selected for product development were bakeapple, squashberry, blackberry, meshberry and redberry.

Biopterre developed various recipes for potential product development. These products were taste tested in order to sample, evaluate and compare the products and to help anticipate consumer response to the products. This process was carried out, on and off the Lower North Shore, with organizations, individuals and chefs. The final decision on which product to develop was made based on the results from the taste test as well as market input. Two products were identified to be developed for 2012; fruit purees for the Hotel Restaurant Institutions (HRI) market and fruit jellies for the retail market.

In correlation with the development of the NTFP Cooperative, the Coasters Association along with Biopterre and Pierre Daigle (Marketing

Consultant) have been putting forth tremendous efforts in establishing a solid product and customer base to prepare for when the Cooperative takes over the day-to-day operations. The 2011-12 sales year will act as a trail run for those products selected most desirable by potential consumers, as per market researched conducted by the Marketing Consultant. For the 2011 holiday season, the NTFP Cooperative will unveil its two initial products under the Coop Solidarité Bio-produits brand; Wildberry Jellies and Purees. The jellies will be sold directly to consumers in a 130 gram package through specialty retail shops throughout the province of Quebec and will also be available locally on the Lower North Shore! The purées will be sold directly to hotel, restaurants and culinary chefs for use in their respective menus. By Valentine's Day, a new product will be on the market; the 250-350 gram gift box containing jellies.



Bakeapple Purees ready for gourmet palates across Quebec and beyond!

“Two products were identified to be developed for 2012; fruit purees for the Hotel Restaurant Institutions (HRI) market and fruit jellies for the retail market.”



Wildberry Jellies made from Lower North Shore berries. Look for them soon in your local store!

What does the future hold?

The berry harvesting season has just finished and we are now planning for 2012 and beyond. The past year has been a learning experience for all involved in this demanding project. New partnerships were formed and old ones renewed, with the goal of creating a new sustainable industry on the Lower North Shore. The foundation for the Lower North Shore Bio Resources Solidarity Coop is underway and should be finalized and operational early in the new year. The founding meeting, to formally establish the Coop and elect it's first governing board, will be held in early January. If you would like to be a part of this historical event or for more information, please do not hesitate to contact Tyler Buckle, NTFP Development Agent by phone at 418-461-3207. Tyler can also be reached by fax at 418-461-3204 or email at tylerbuckle@coastersassociation.com. You can also contact Cornella Maurice, Executive Director, at 418-379-2006 extension 223 or email at coasters@globetrotter.net

Look for our next newsletter in early February 2011, which will include information on the founding meeting, new product development and more!

For more information by mail:

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Coming soon to the world wide web!
Look for us January 2012 on the Coasters Association website!
www.coastersassociation.com

You are essential to the success of the Coop Solidarité Bioproduits!

This season, due to the high prices of the bakeapple, most of the fruit was purchased by outside buyers and shipped raw off the territory. That raw product will provide work elsewhere and not on the Lower North Shore. It is understood that pickers will sell for the highest price, however, next year when production begins in our region, hopefully pickers will think of the jobs it will generate and sell to the Bio Products Solidarity Coop. In order for the Coop to succeed and be sustainable, buy-in from all communities along the Lower North Shore is essential.

We must consider the benefits of selling locally for a reasonable and fair price that will sustain an industry on the Lower North Shore. Next year there may be an over abundance of bakeapples and the same outside buyer that paid \$8 a pound this year may only offer \$3.00 a pound next year. They are not interested in creating local jobs or sustaining an industry.

Join us to sustain the economy on the Lower North Shore.

