



## STUDENT DESIGNED PROJECT PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

### **PROCESS:**

Submit this proposal to Nancy Bell and Heather Furmidge for review and approval by the review committee. NOTE: allow at least TWO weeks between the time you submit your proposal and the time you can present it to the class.

Proposal Submissions accepted: October 12 thru November 1  
Proposal Presentation dates: November 1 thru November 15

### **STUDENT DESIGNED PROJECT PROPOSAL TEMPLATE:**

Date: November 22, 2011

Project Title: Focus on Sustainability – Slow Food Marin-Petaluma

Submitted by: Christine Schantz

### **Purpose:**

**To move strategically from a simple “locavore” focus toward a sustainability/advocacy focus within the Marin-Petaluma chapter of Slow Food**

### **Immediate Goal: (include March 20<sup>th</sup> deliverable)**

**Primary goal:** To redesign the Slow Food Marin-Petaluma website with a deeper focus on local food/agricultural entities and sustainability issues and practices.

March 20 deliverable: Website map & page design completed and ready for submission to coder, initial producer profiles 100% complete, remaining web content at least 50% complete, resource list substantially complete.

**Secondary goal:** To begin planning of two Slow Food-sponsored events: one targeted to sustainability; one to advocacy

March 20 deliverable: Both events defined and scheduled for 1<sup>st</sup> half of 2012, with partner-organizations identified and event plans in progress.

### **Long Term Goal: (if applicable)**

See Purpose and Background sections.

### **Background:**

Slow Food USA exists to advocate the principles of Good, Clean, Fair Food. Its individual chapters, entirely volunteer-run, tailor their pursuit of these principles to local circumstances. Some chapters are heavily focused on community gardening, some on seed-saving, some on urban agriculture, some on preservation of heritage breeds, etc. By all rights, a chapter of Slow Food in Marin County would be busy, visible, and vibrant, having at its disposal a highly educated, food-aware populace and an intense local focus on agriculture, the environment, and sustainability issues.

Slow Food Marin-Petaluma, however, experienced a long fallow period from 2008 to 2010. As a result, the regional governance of Slow Food USA recruited a new board in January 2011, and work was begun to increase both awareness and membership in 2011. I am a member of that board.

In the past 10 months, we have concentrated our efforts on increasing visibility and gaining traction. We've done that by updating an existing (but imperfect) website, implementing a facebook presence, and creating events with a "taste-education" focus.

These efforts have been quite successful. We've increased our mailing list substantially, become a monthly presence at the Civic Center Farmers' Market, and held five local mixers, 2 dinners, 1 farm picnic, and an artisan cheese tasting (in conjunction with MALT) in 10 months – all of which partnered local farmers, ranchers and locavore-minded restaurants.

While that's cause for celebration, our chapter has yet to turn its attention to the larger issues facing our food system. While the national organization is pressing ahead with greater advocacy work, our focus is more aptly described as "what's on my own table."

In order to bring us onto the "Good, Clean, Fair Food" playing field, we'll need to broaden our scope. Creating advocates requires education and emotional investment, with the latter typically sprouting from the former. Our next step, then, is to create educational opportunities for Slow Food members and friends about the hard work and challenge involved in getting the food to their tables. Our local agricultural landscape exhibits a far more sophisticated, time-intensive attention to the land than the more common Big Ag model.

Focusing on sustainability, and pointing to its benefits, can lead us nicely into member-involved advocacy on many levels – GMO labeling, Farm Bill focus on conservation & organics, pesticide use, health-related food issues, farm labor rights, humane livestock treatment – and place us squarely within the Good, Clean, Fair Food movement.

The best place to start education is with our website ([www.slowfood-marin.com](http://www.slowfood-marin.com)). It currently contains useful cursory information about local events and organizations with a Slow Food philosophy. The goal will be for it to reflect our broader issues of focus. Using interviews with local food producers and members of agricultural organizations, the site will be redesigned and new content – including profiles of representative farmers, producers, nonprofit activists and their best practices -- developed.

In addition, two Slow Food events with sustainability education and advocacy at their core will be planned. My initial thoughts are to develop: a)an event in conjunction with artist Douglas Gayeton's "Lexicon of Sustainability" at its core, and b)a GMO-labeling petition drive, but I want to be open to these changing as my conversations with interviewees unfold.

### **Opportunities/Challenges/Benefits:**

**Opportunities:** Creating a deeper awareness, appreciation and support for Marin's agricultural resources and practices; fostering a desire to see those practices replicated broadly elsewhere.

**Challenges:** This is a large project. My March 20 deliverables may be wildly optimistic, so I want to be open to their shifting as I encounter hurdles or changes in scope. My timing will rely on taming an already busy schedule and the availability of many people. I do find, though, that I work best with a defined timeline. ☺

The other challenge is that this shift in priorities may not be viewed positively by all Slow Food members. "Taste education" is very satisfying to most members because it's

beneficial specifically to them. Moving people's focus away from their own table may cause some to lose interest rather than to "double down."

Benefits: Greater awareness of critical agricultural issues, and a more deeply invested membership.

**Scope/Milestones: (include March 20<sup>th</sup> deliverable(s))**

Website

By Jan 9

- Review websites of Slow Food chapters and similarly aligned organizations
- Create interview template for food/ag contacts
- Develop preliminary website map and page designs
- Create target schedule of interviews

By Feb 15

- Interview of food/ag contacts in progress
- Refine website design and content based on interview results
- Create detailed website timeline

By Mar 20

- Content development
- Submit page design and content for coding
- Create resource listing and schedule for ongoing website content updates

Events

- Discuss event ideas with Slow Food board (Dec 8)
- Develop initial event scope and potential partners (Jan 9)
- Calendar events (Feb 6)
- Partners identified and planning substantially complete (Mar 20)

**Size of team/Skills needed:**

The project will require interviewing and information-gathering with members of the food and agricultural community. It will also require general design of website pages and content development. Event planning will require general organization skills and contact with potential partners.

I'll be completing the interviews and information-gathering on my own, as well as most of the content, but will be utilizing the necessary input from a board member with website design experience as well as others who have assisted with content editing in the past. For event planning, I'll be gathering consensus with the Slow Food event chair and, once I've finalized the event scope and partners, will choose an event committee rep to work with on the planning and execution.

**External Partners/Sponsors: (if any)**

The following is a list of contacts, most of whom I've had initial conversations with in 2011. While I may not have the time to speak with all of them during the course of the project, the hope is to have contact with the majority of them. I expect the list will expand or shift as conversations lead to additional contacts.

Slow Food Marin-Petaluma Board, Adrienne Baumann (Marin Organic), Bob Berner (MALT), Janet Brown (All Star Organics), Sue Conley (Cowgirl Creamery), Anna Smith Clark (Slow Food Regional Governor, SF Bay Area), Michael Dimock (Roots of Change), Dave Evans (Marin Sun Farms), John Finger or Terry Sawyer (Hog Island Oyster), Mark

Pasternak (Devils Gulch Farm), Dominic Phillips (123 Bolinas & Seedling Projects), Jim Reichardt (Liberty Ducks), Mark Retsky (County Line Harvest), Tara Smith (Tara Firma Farms), Paul Wallace (Petaluma Seed Bank), Bernie Stephan (!! ) (Marin County Grange), Mary Stubbs (Stubbs Winery), Constance Washburn (MALT).