Columbia Gorge Earth Center
and Gorge Grown Food Network

Community Profile

Population  75,000 (Columbia Gorge Region)
Location   Hood River

Position Description

Sponsor  Columbia Gorge Earth Center
and the Gorge Grown Food Network
Supervisor  Ann Kramer,
Steering Committee Member

Assignment  As the network coordinator, the RARE participant will take the lead on many
projects designed to ensure a sound organizational structure for this new and
growing regional initiative. The RARE participant will: manage
gorgegrown.com, the group’s web site and region’s information clearinghouse for
data on small farmers, farm resources, and access to food grown in the region;
write a monthly e-newsletter and promotional pieces; and help coordinate Gorge
Grown’s seven active volunteer committees as they develop projects integral to
Gorge Grown’s 10-year goal. The RARE participant will also work to bring new
and diverse stakeholders into the network, while collecting more information on
the community’s needs in an effort to craft a network action plan. The participant
will pursue several available opportunities for the Gorge Grown Food Network to
manage land and grow food for members and residents. In the future, this project
could provide Gorge Grown with a sustainable funding source through sales to
members and at area farmers’ markets.

Required Skills  The ideal RARE participant should have strong skills as a communicator and
will need to enjoy talking in front of groups. The participant should have strong
organizational skills and should be able to effectively balance many projects at the
same time. The participant should be professional and mature, should be able to
work with a wide variety of people and projects and should have strong leadership
skills. The participant should also have a passion for food systems work.

RARE Participant

Katie MacKendrick, a second year RARE participant, is a native of southern
Wisconsin and received her bachelor’s degree in natural resources from the
University of Wisconsin-Madison. During school, Katie worked with several
state and non-profit environmental organizations and gained experience in field
and lab research, writing, outreach, advocacy, and education. After college, she
spent time monitoring endangered plant populations and taught environmental
education. In 2005, Katie completed her first term in the RARE program,
working for 11 months with the Mid-Columbia Economic Development
District in The Dalles where she gained experience working with small businesses
in the Columbia Gorge area. This year, she looks forward to combining her
past experience in natural resources with her recent experience in community
building.