Appalachian Food Justice: Toward Equity, Solidarity and Sovereignty
Mini-Conference @ West Virginia University
Morgantown, WV
August 3-5, 2018

The WVU Food Justice Lab in conjunction with the Geography Program at WVU invites papers from scholars and activists for a mini-conference and writing workshop August 3-5th in Morgantown, WV focused on the theme Appalachian Food Justice. Building on a history of social justice scholarship in the region, we invite academics and activists working on food, foodways and food systems to submit paper proposals that advance our understanding of how to promote equity, solidarity and sovereignty in the region. We are particularly interested in the participation of underrepresented people, voices, stories, and strategies from the region. Our goal is to use this weekend to help build up our understanding of critical scholarship, literature and community of practice working to achieve food system change in the Appalachian context and beyond. We will provide modest travel and lodging support for scholars and activists whose paper proposals are accepted. All papers will receive extensive feedback for publication and all participants will be invited to publish in edited book by the same title forthcoming from WVU Press in 2019.

What can the global food justice movement learn from Appalachia? In recent years we have seen a growing multi-disciplinary field of scholarship and rich network of activists and organizations working to transform our foodways through research and action addressing hunger, heritage, racism, local farming, toxic exposure, migrant rights, land access, community planning, agro-biodiversity, nutritional disparities, cooperative development and so much more. While this work has often been documented and theorized in other states, regions or urban contexts, research and activism around these issues in Appalachia has received less attention. We want to rectify that situation. Indeed, there is much to learn about building equitable food systems, forging solidarities and promoting food sovereignty in Appalachia.

The Appalachian Food Justice mini-conference is intended to provoke critical thought on the historical and contemporary inequalities associated with foodways in the region and the strategies to create just food systems here and beyond. The kinds of questions we are interested in exploring together are:

- What makes Appalachia a critical site for learning how to do food justice work?
- What can historical or contemporary struggles for food, labor, health and environmental justice in the Appalachian region teach us about movement building today?
- How do we understand food system inequalities in the region from historical perspective? What are the major concerns about inequality today?
- Who are the historical and contemporary protagonists advancing food justice in Appalachia?
- How can we use food, agriculture and agro-industrial activity as a lens into broader social and environmental justice issues in the Appalachian region?
- What or who are the seeds of hope in cultivating food sovereignty?
- How to we forge inclusive solidarities and diverse collectivities to advance equitable food systems in the Appalachian region?
We invite any papers that explore these questions and more including work on:

- Food heritage, place, memory, identity, and race
- Nutritional inequalities, critical public health, food policy
- Stories of community and food-oriented organizing
- Indigenous, plantation, agrarian, industrial and post-industrial food systems
- Labor rights and environmental justice in food production and processing agro-industries
- Working class foodways, racialized foodscapes and wider political struggles
- State food programs and anti-hunger policies and strategies
- Sustainable agriculture, land, subsistence and sovereignty
- Community food strategies, work, activism, cooperation
- Feminist, anti-racist, LGBTQ food and farm perspectives
- Appalachia in the global food system
- Quiescence and rebellion in the food system

Scholars who wish to participate in the conference should send a brief 1 page CV, 500 word abstract including its relevance to the theme to Bradley Wilson brwilson@mail.wvu.edu by Friday April 6, 2018.

Activists/Practitioners who wish to participate in the conference should send a 500 word description of 1) their experience/standpoint, 2) issue, project or strategy they intend to present 3) and how it relates to the conference theme to Bradley Wilson brwilson@mail.wvu.edu by Friday April 6, 2018.

All submissions will be peer reviewed by a committee composed of WVU Food Justice Lab staff and peer affiliates including Jonathan Hall (Geography), Cheryl Brown (Ag. Economics), Kristin McCartney (Extension), Priya Baskaran (Law), Cynthia Gorman (Women’s and Gender Studies / Geography), Daniel Renfrew (Anthropology), and Mike Costello (Lost Creek Farm).

Notice of acceptance of papers and travel funding arrangements will be announced on or before April 20, 2018.