

COOK COUNTY  
WholeFoods  
CO-OP



# the blueberry jam

Winter 2022

The Board Report  
A Season of Transitions  
Co+op Forest Takes Action





## About the Blueberry Jam

The opinions of the authors featured in the Blueberry Jam do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Cook County Whole Foods Co-op.

Nutritional & health information found in these pages is not meant to substitute a consultation from a licensed health care provider.

### GO PAPERLESS!

Send an email to: [info@cookcounty.coop](mailto:info@cookcounty.coop), and get on the email list. Once a year the ANNUAL REPORT is mailed to all owners by mandate of our bylaws.

### Our Board of Directors:

**JILL BARBER**  
President  
Term expires 2022

**YUSEF OREST**  
Vice President  
Term expires 2023

**LIBBY LARSON**  
Secretary  
Term expires 2022

**DON GRANT**  
Treasurer  
Term expires 2022

**ALYSSA HEDSTROM**  
Term expires 2023

**ERIK HAHN**  
Term expires 2024

**JAYE WHITE**  
Term expires 2024



## All Begins with the Ends

*Erik Hahn, Board Member*

I hope you have had a chance to meet our new General Manager and wish him well. It is a tough job, navigating a sea of decisions and choices, unexpected changes and challenges. Just as Jennifer before him, Ahren has the skills and character to be our captain. So if Ahren is the captain, what does that make the board? The ship? The wind? The crew? We are the mapmakers.

The destinations laid out on the map for the General Manager are in the form of Ends, and these Ends represent the collective values of the Co-op owners. They are more aspirational than goals, which are easier to reach. In truth, our Ends may not be ‘check-the-box’ outcomes. As we make progress, the bar is set higher and higher. Our Ends help keep our Co-op unique, and more than just a grocery store. If our only goal was to sell as much product as possible, we would make a lot of profit but be leaving a lot of our core values behind.

That said, the Co-op has been making a very healthy profit in recent years. So much so that the board has begun looking at our Ends with a fresh eye to see how we can use some of our resources in new ways to help meet our ends. We ask that you, the owners, take a look at the Ends with the same critical eye.

As a result of all that the Cook County Whole Foods Co-op does, we will be:

- A successful grocery rooted in the Cooperative Principles
- A trusted source for affordable, healthy, local and sustainable products and services for all
- A leader in environmentally sustainable practices
- A source of employment that provides meaningful work and fair compensation
- A welcoming and friendly gathering place where the community has a sense of belonging

Do the Ends represent your values? Is the Co-op emphasizing some Ends at the expense of others? Is there anything we are missing? We would love to hear from you, and your feedback is another way that we keep the ship on course. Send us an email, and remember, our monthly meetings are open to owners.

Reach us at:  
[board@cookcounty.coop](mailto:board@cookcounty.coop)



# A Season of Transitions

By Ahren Grunow, General Manager

First, I want to say a warm thank you to all of the amazing people of this community. You have made my first month as GM so incredible.

I'm grateful to have already met so many kind and passionate people with such deep connections to the cooperative in my short time here.

Second, I want to thank the staff of the co-op. Their support, humor, and kindness makes it an absolute pleasure to work with them, and has helped me during my transition into this role. They are the lifeblood of the store and I appreciate everything they do.

Transitions are a natural part of life. Some are easier than others. I once heard a quote that said something like: "action is the key to transition". I'm reminded of this quote as I work through the first couple of months because there certainly has been a lot of action. I plan to continue with that momentum as we move through winter and into spring. One thing that I'm hoping to implement is to start carrying more items from local, BIPOC, and women owned businesses. Local partnerships are what gives the cooperatives their uniqueness and Cook County has an immense amount to offer.

Another thing I'm working on with the help of staff is to find more eco-friendly packaging (or ways to reduce single-use packaging) in our deli and other departments. Although it's sometimes difficult to source, I believe it is a necessary step with our continued efforts of creating a more sustainable workplace.

Finally, I'm meeting with staff to listen to their insights and suggestions about where they would like to see changes within the organization.

I want to thank you again for the warm welcome as I transition into this community. It's truly an honor. I believe that my values, experience, and love for this town will help me navigate through continued positive growth for the cooperative.



**We support local, BIPOC and women owned businesses!**





# Co+op Forest Carbon Offset Program Slows Climate Change

By: Co+op

Paddle up the Huayabamba River in northern Peru, and amidst the roar of breathtaking waterfalls and chatter of tropical

songbirds, you'll come across the Co+op Forest. This lush, mountainous landscape is thought to be one of the most bio diverse regions in the world, home to over 160 mammal species, more than 300 bird species and hundreds of butterfly, amphibian, reptile and plant species as well.

It is paradise, but sadly much of this region is recovering from decades of deforestation, while its remaining old growth forest remains at risk for petroleum development. But thanks to intervention by concerned cooperative businesses, this region continues to play a meaningful role in slowing climate change.

## Food Co-ops Seek to Tangibly Slow Down the Rate of Climate Change

Since 2012, the Co+op Forest has been thriving under the stewardship of a carbon offset program funded by National Co+op Grocers (NCG), the organization behind this website, in partnership with PUR Projet. NCG believes that environmentally responsible businesses like food co-ops have an important leadership role in addressing climate change.

The idea behind this unique carbon offset program is simple: NCG calculates their annual carbon emissions (from business travel, utilities, etc.), then funds the planting or protection of a corresponding number of trees to absorb (offset) that carbon. When trees naturally absorb carbon dioxide — a greenhouse gas — from the atmosphere, it effectively slows the rate of climate change.

Learn more about our annual projects below and check out the video to take in some of the region's breathtaking landscape and get a sense of why this work is so critical.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNzpa25KglE&t=115>

## Responding to the Climate Crisis through Rainforest Reforestation & Conservation Projects

Co+op Forest includes both reforestation and conservation projects. Reforestation projects, in which farmers plant native tree seedlings, are important because as these trees grow they are absorbing carbon dioxide from the air and storing some of the carbon in their trunks. Planting native trees in tropical areas is especially beneficial because tropical trees reach maturity quickly, allowing them to store more carbon over their lifetimes.

Conservation projects protect old-growth trees from being clear-cut for timber, or burned to make way for crops or other development. Protecting these trees is critical because their massive trunks are made up of tons of tiny carbon atoms; every carbon atom that remains locked up in a tree is one less carbon atom that will otherwise contribute to global warming.

## Co+op Forest Supports Fair Trade Farmer Cooperatives & Improves Quality Of Life

Co+op Forest is also unique because it is grown in a way that respects the surrounding Peruvian community, ensuring that they benefit from the project, too. Drawing on the rich South American tradition of embracing the cooperative model, NCG partners with fair trade, organic farmer cooperatives to plant and maintain native trees in Co+op Forest. The cooperatives offer training to farmers in sustainable agroforestry because protecting the native forest around their farms produces higher quality fruits and reduces erosion, improving water quality for the entire community. Additionally, Co+op Forest trees that farmers plant on their own land will eventually provide them with much-needed retirement income from sustainably harvested FSC-certified timber.

## See How We've Grown! Co+op Forest Milestones

As of 2021, Co+op Forest includes an estimated 1.8 million trees which will offset at least 7,052 metric tons CO<sub>2</sub>e within their lifetimes, while also providing income and environmental benefits to the surrounding community.



# A National Co+op Grocers Partnership Sprouts

By: Co+op

NCG staff traveled to Peru to meet with PUR Projeet and the ACOPAGRO farmer cooperative, which produces organic cacao. While visiting the region, NCG staff joined PUR Projeet and ACOPAGRO farmers to plant what will become the first Co+op Forest native tree seedlings among the crops.

## 2013

### Co+op Forest Takes Root

Inspired by the potential to make a meaningful impact, NCG commits to offsetting carbon emissions associated with annual business travel and becomes PUR Projeet's first U.S. partner to plant trees as part of the Alto Huayabamba reforestation project. NCG calls it Co+op Forest.

**Native Trees Planted: 1404.**

## 2014

### Co+op Forest Expands to Protect Old-Growth Trees

In addition to business travel, NCG begins tracking and offsetting emissions associated with gas and electric utilities in its offices. Co+op Forest expands to include the San Martin BioCorridor, an old-growth forest located just up river from the existing project. This conservation project protects a highly biodiverse region which is at-risk for petroleum extraction.

**Native trees planted: 1,100. Acres of protected forest\*: 1,226.**

## 2015

### Co+op Forest Branches Out

Co+op Forest expands to support a reforestation project in the Alto Shamboyacu community, home to roughly 150 families, many of whom are indigenous Quechua belonging to the Oro Verde cooperative. In addition to producing organic, fair trade chocolate and coffee, the Oro Verde co-op is revitalizing indigenous beekeeping to help pollinate crops, improve biodiversity and provide farmers with additional income.

**Native trees planted: 2,187. Acres of protected forest\*: 1,201.**

## 2016

### Co+op Forest Internationally Honored

Due in part to NCG's continued support, the region in which Co+op Forest resides is honored as UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, to serve as a model of sustainable communities.

**Native trees planted: 600. Acres of protected forest\*: 2,634.**

## 2017

### Co+op Forest Regenerates Farmland

Seeking a solution to the over one million acres of degraded farmland produced by years of slash-and-burn deforestation in the region, local farmers join with PUR Projeet and funders like NCG to undertake a new farmer-led project, Finca a la Media. Together, they plant trees to reduce erosion and improve the soil, so farmers don't have to cut down old growth rainforest for new farmland. Farmers also learn methods such as agroforestry and carbon (or regenerative) farming, which according to Project Drawdown, show promise to help slow global warming.

**Trees planted: 1158 Acres of protected forest\*: 1907**

## 2018

### Co+op Forest Funds Farmer-Led Climate Solutions

NCG funds the planting of 377 sustainable timber trees for farmers participating in Finca a la Media, further empowering the community to put climate solutions like agroforestry and farmland restoration into practice. These practices improve crop resiliency and income security for farmers in a changing climate.

**Native trees planted: 2,777. Acres of protected forest\*: 340.**

## 2019

### Co+op Forest Investment Increased in Response to Climate Crisis

In 2019, the Amazon rainforest endured the most destructive fires in almost a decade. Over 2,000 square kilometers of rainforest were burned in July alone. In addition to the planting of over 3,270 trees in the Jubilacion Segura program and an additional 82 trees for Finca a la Media agroforestry project to offset 2018 carbon emissions, NCG increased their investment with the planting of another 7,000 trees to show solidarity with the fair trade farmers within food co-ops' supply chain.

**Native trees planted: 10,352.**

*Continued on next page.*



# An NCG Partnership Sprouts

Continued from previous page

## 2020

### Co+op Forest Offers Hope During a Trying Time

In a year marked by crisis and tragedy, planting trees is a welcome, tangible act of hope for the future. NCG planted 3,348 native tropical trees in 2020 to offset 2019 carbon emissions. The year's historic wildfires in the Western U.S. underscore scientists' observations about how these natural disasters have increased in size and intensity because of climate change. The need for global reforestation efforts remains urgent. Planting native trees in tropical areas is especially beneficial because tropical trees reach maturity quickly, allowing them to store more carbon over their lifetimes.

Native trees planted: 3,348.

## 2021

### Keeping Focus On Regenerative Supply Chains, Co+op Forest Moves To Brazil

With the projects in Alto Huayabamba, the San Martin BioCorridor and Alto Shamboyacu drawing to a close, NCG chose to expand its impact in 2021 by moving the focus of Co+op Forest to Brazil, where they join international partner PUR Projet and the French National Forestry Office (ONF) in funding an established farmer training and reforestation project at the Fazenda São Nicolau in the state of Mato Grosso, Brazil. With their carbon emissions greatly reduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, NCG nevertheless chose to fund Co+op Forest at the same amount as prior years.

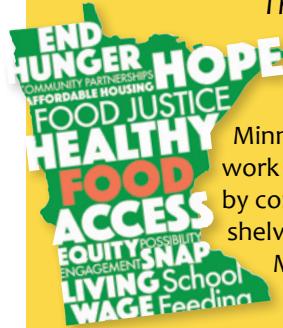
**Rainforest trees planted: 3,000.**

\*Acres of old-growth forest protected in the San Martin BioCorridor. Depending on maturity and species of trees present, each acre is home to between roughly 200 to 600 trees.



## We support the MN Foodshare March Campaign

The Largest Grassroots Food & Fund Drive In Minnesota!



Minnesota FoodShare began its work in 1982 as a campaign advanced by congregations to restock food shelves in the 7-county Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. The effort was so successful, and the need so evident, March Campaign

became a statewide initiative just one year later and is now in its 41st year.

Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign, the largest grassroots food and fund drive in the state, brings together organizations, businesses, faith communities, and individuals to help stock and support the capacity of nearly 300 food shelves.

To date, GMCC's Minnesota FoodShare has distributed over \$18.3 million dollars via the FoodFund. 100% of donations designated to Minnesota Foodshare during the March Campaign go into the FoodFund and are distributed to participating food shelves.

We envision a future where all Minnesotans have access to healthy food and no one struggles with food insecurity. This initiative directly addresses these issues. We invite you to join our efforts and advocate for long-term solutions to food insecurity in our communities.

Please get ready to round up at the register in March. Let's make this year's campaign the best one yet! All donations go to our own Cook County Food Shelf.



\*Global Monitoring for Climate Change





## Restorative Libations

Britta Kelson, Wellness Coordinator

The holidays can run us ragged, with being over committed, and under hydrated. January is a great time to focus on coming back into balance, and system restoration. I have formulated a pair of beverages to support us when we are out of balance, whether it be from stress and lack of sleep, or a disturbed gut from overindulgence.

### Golden Glow Moon Milk

Golden Milk is based on a traditional Ayurvedic recipe, and can support both mind and body in states of stress and inflammation. While you can make Golden Milk from scratch, we carry a convenient powder from Gaia Herbs that makes this recipe come together fast. This is my favorite beverage on cold winter nights, or when I'm feeling especially stressed. With the addition of Vital Proteins Collagen Peptides and our local CBD company, Good Harbor Vanilla CBD Oil, this Golden Milk offers deep relaxation and soothing support for the whole body.

#### Ingredients:

- 1 Scoop Gaia Herbs Golden Milk Powder
- 12 oz milk of your choice (I like Oatly Oat Milk)
- 1 scoop/stick pack Vital Protein Collagen Peptides
- 1 dropper Good Harbor Vanilla CBD Oil

Heat milk to desired temperature, and pour into mug. Whisk in Golden Milk powder and Collagen Peptides. Drop in Vanilla CBD Oil. For extra creamy texture, use a milk frother to finish.

### Elderberry Bliss Fizz

While the holidays can be a joyful time of togetherness, sometimes we need an antidote to the excesses of the season. This mocktail brings together immune powerhouse Black Elderberry with Urban Moonshine Bitters, to support digestive and immune health. WishGarden Herbs Liquid Bliss lets the good times roll, with herbs that support a light heart in the dark of winter.

#### Ingredients:

- 1 cup sparkling water
- 1 tsp Gaia Black Elderberry Syrup
- 1 spray to taste Urban Moonshine Maple Bitters
- 6 pumps WishGarden Herbs Liquid Bliss
- Squeeze of lemon

Add sparkling water to cup of ice, and swirl to chill.

Add Elderberry Syrup, stir to combine.

Add Liquid Bliss, Maple Bitters, squeeze of lemon.

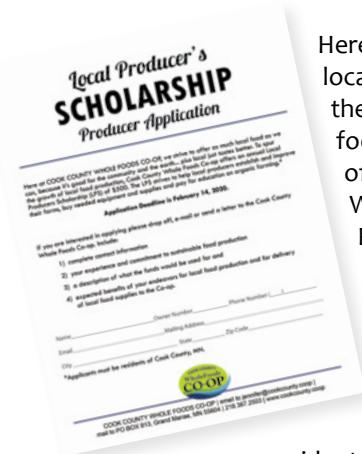
#### Garnish:

Sugar rim with lemon juice, mint leaves, rosemary sprig, or lemon twist and enjoy!



We support local food!

## Local Producer's Scholarships



Here at the Co-op, we strive to offer as much local food as we can, because it's good for the community and the earth... plus local food just tastes better. To spur the growth of local food production, Cook County Whole Foods Co-op offers annual Local Producers Scholarships (LPS). This year the Board voted to increase the scholarships to **\$1,000**. The LPS strives to help local producers establish and improve their farms, buy needed equipment and supplies, and pay for education on organic farming. Applicants must be residents of Cook County, MN.

**The Application deadline is February 15, 2022.**

If you are interested in applying please drop off, e-mail or send a letter to the Cook County Whole Foods Co-op. Include:

- 1.) Complete contact information
- 2.) Your experience and commitment to sustainable food production
- 3.) A description of what the funds would be used for and
- 4.) Expected benefits of your endeavors for local food production and for delivery of local food supplies to the Co-op

Pick up an application at the Co-op or download one from our website.

## Welcome New Owners!

New Owners from 10/01/2021 to 12/15/2021

Matea Acero  
 Stephen & Sarah Bennett  
 Mike Benz  
 Alex Blust  
 Laura Brown  
 Marty & Amy Clough  
 Joe & Kat Conerton/Meyo  
 Clayton Erdal  
 Jacob Evans  
 Ginny & Peter Fletcher/Woltz  
 Ahren & Laura Grunow  
 Lauren & Andrew Haberman/Henley  
 Evonne & John Halvorsen  
 Lonnie & Stefan Helgeson  
 Elisabeth & Doug Holod  
 Kalista Jordan-DeBruin

Kent & Karen Keith  
 Kaitlin & Robert Kimmel/Hass  
 Pat & MaryAnn Likos/Capps  
 Luke Miller  
 Marah Moore  
 Lorrie Ogren  
 Krista Olson  
 JoAnn & Kent Peters/Swanson  
 Signey Sherman  
 Gilaine Spoto  
 Shaun Tudor  
 Katie & Sam Usem  
 Jared Warpack  
 Skylar Whitcomb  
 Shawn Worden

## Lunch Box Winners!

Kids love our Explorers Club Program! Who wouldn't love a juicy piece of fruit while shopping, and the chance to win a fun & fantastic lunchbox?



Grant Humphrey



Whitman Hurth



Margaret McIntyre



# Chili Season

**A good bowl of chili brings together simple ingredients to create big flavor. Warm up with these hearty and nutritious vegetarian recipes.**

## **Black Bean Chili**

Servings: 4 – 6

Prep time: 1 hour & 20 minutes; 15 minutes active

- 1 cup dried black beans
- 4 cups water
- 2 large carrots, chopped
- 1 medium green pepper, chopped
- 1 15-ounce can diced tomatoes
- ¼ cup quinoa
- 1 ½ tablespoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon salt

Sort and rinse the black beans. Place in a large pot with the water and bring to a boil, then cover and cook on medium-low for 45 minutes. Add the carrots, green pepper, canned tomatoes and juices, quinoa, chili powder and salt. Return to a boil, then reduce to medium-low and cover the pot. Cook for 20 minutes, until the beans and vegetables are tender. Uncover and simmer for five minutes to thicken slightly. Serve hot.



### Veggie Chili with Beer

Servings: 5

Prep time: 30 minutes; 15 minutes active

- 2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- ½ teaspoon chipotle powder
- 1 medium yellow bell pepper, chopped
- 1 medium green pepper, chopped
- 1 large carrot, chopped
- 1 cup wheat beer, red ale or lager
- 1 14.5-ounce can fire-roasted tomatoes, pureed
- 1 15-ounce can kidney beans, drained
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon salt

In a large pot, heat the olive oil. Sauté the onion for 5 minutes over medium heat, until soft.

Add the chili powder and chipotle and stir until fragrant, then add the peppers, carrot and beer. Raise heat to high and bring to a boil, then cover and reduce to medium-low for 5 minutes.

Uncover and add the remaining ingredients, stirring to combine. Simmer for another 5-10 minutes to combine the flavors and thicken the chili.



### Simplest Three Bean Chili

Servings: 6

Prep time: 1 hour; 40 minutes active

- 2 tablespoons canola or vegetable oil
- 1 cup onion, diced
- ½ cup green bell pepper, diced
- 7 ounces vegetarian ground beef
- 1 28 ounce can diced tomato
- 1 15 ounce can kidney beans
- 1 15 ounce can red beans
- 1 15 ounce can pinto beans
- 1 packet chili seasoning



In a medium, heavy-bottomed pot, heat the oil over medium heat.

Add the diced onions and pepper and sauté on high heat until soft, about 5 minutes.

Crumble vegetarian ground beef into the onion mix and brown, as you would with ground beef.

When cooked through, add beans and tomatoes, and bring to a boil. Simmer, stirring often, for 30 minutes, or until thick.

*Note: If you prefer, substitute ground turkey or beef for the vegetarian meat.*

**Adding beer elevates a simple chili!  
Cornbread flecked with diced jalapeños  
makes a tasty accompaniment.**





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