

The Harvest Beet

SPRING 2023

est. 1979

NATURAL
HARVEST

FOOD CO-OP

*Locally owned,
organically grown.*

Board Member Contact Info

• BOARD OFFICERS •

PRESIDENT • **Stephen Levchak**
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Your quarterly source of information for healthy living!

General Manager's Report: Spring is Finally Here!

Briana Sterle, General Manager & NHFC Owner

Spring is finally here! Let these words bring music to our ears as the snow disappears and the great north woods come back to life. With spring comes growth for both nature and our Co-op, as we look forward to our local farmers tilling their soil in preparation for the growing season and I get rooted in the position of General Manager for our Co-op.

Please allow me to introduce myself — my name is Briana Sterle, I returned to our Co-op in mid-January to take on the role of General Manager. Some of you may recognize me from my previous role as the Marketing & Owner Services Manager, in which I enjoyed working for five years in cooperation with our Co-op Staff, our Board of Directors, and all of you, Co-op Owners and shoppers. After just a couple months in this new position, I can report it feels good to see you all once again and to be back working for an organization with a mission we are all passionate about.

In wondering what I should write about for this first newsletter article it was suggested I share a little bit about myself with you all so we can get better acquainted. So here goes... I was born and raised here on the Iron Range, then spent a decade in our Zenith City of Duluth and returned home to the call of the great north

woods. Living in this region has inspired a love for outdoor recreation which has led to many adventures in mountain biking, xc skiing, hiking, and more. When I'm not at the Co-op I spend my time advocating for the sport of mountain biking through my volunteer work with the Iron Range Off-Road Cyclists and Redhead Mountain Bike Park.

I look forward to seeing you all at our Co-op and on our local trails! When you see me in the store, don't be shy, please take some time to introduce yourself and share what you love

about our Co-op.

As we continue to ride through the wake of the pandemic and all the challenges it has handed to our Iron Range Community and our Co-op, I ask for your patience, kindness, support, and continued patronage as our Co-op's team of staff and board members work together to regain momentum in continuing with our Co-op's Mission and it's ENDS.

Thank you for taking the time to read this article and cheers to getting better acquainted! If you are an Owner of our Co-op please join us for the Annual Meeting of Owners on May 11th as we come together in community spirit for our Co-op! 🍷

— In Cooperation,
Briana Sterle



NHFC MISSION STATEMENT:

At Natural Harvest Food Co-op, we are committed to a sustainable future through communication, cooperation, and education. We provide quality food, products, and services for the health and well-being of our families, our community, and our planet.

ENDS POLICIES OF NATURAL HARVEST FOOD CO-OP:

- A greater sense of community.
- Community members are better informed about cooperative principles and personal and environmental health.
- People in our area have access to healthy foods.
- A vibrant local food economy.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF OWNERS OF NATURAL HARVEST FOOD CO-OP, INC.

*Thursday,
May 11, 2023*

The Annual Meeting of the Owners of Natural Harvest Food Co-op, Inc. (the "Co-op") will be held on Thursday, May 11, 2023, at the Eveleth Curling Club, 901 Hat Trick Ave, Eveleth, MN 55734. All Owners are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Social hour will be held from 5:30 to 6:30 PM, dinner will be served promptly at 6:30 PM, and the business meeting will be called to order by 7:00 PM. Upon arrival be sure to register for a chance to win raffle prizes. Social hour will feature live music by Christopher David Hanson and a cash bar. The dinner will be catered by the Natural Harvest deli and will include a vegetarian option.

The Co-op will present its Owners with the following agenda items: (1) review fiscal year; (2) final chance to vote for board of directors; and (3) announcement of new board members.

Registration for the event will open April 17. Watch for the sign-up sheet to be posted in-store. Please be sure to register in advance so you can select your meal option and allow us to prepare accordingly.

In order to minimize time counting votes at the Annual Meeting, the Co-op prefers to receive Owner votes in advance by mail or in-store. You can submit your vote in-store using the official ballot box located at our customer service counter or you can mail your ballot to the store. Register online today at www.naturalharvest.coop/annual or in-store at the Customer Service Desk.

Spring Board Report

Stephen Levchak, NHFC Board President

Happy spring everyone! While it may not seem like it yet, we all know the weather will soon start to warm, the snow will melt, and the growing season will be right around the corner.

Spring also means our Annual Meeting of Owners is coming up soon. It's a time for us to gather with friends, have a great meal prepared by our own deli staff, and get updated on the goings on at our store over the past year. It's also the time to elect our newest board members and decide whether or not to approve an increase in our number of Class A and B shares, but more on that later. Over the past year, a big change has occurred at Natural Harvest. After almost a decade of leadership, our GM, Anja, had resigned in order to pursue other endeavors. This left us with the task of finding the right person to succeed her. Much work was put into finding the right replacement, and in the end, the time and effort was well worth it.

After almost a year in the making, your Board of Directors is excited to announce we have hired Briana Sterle to fill this role. Briana brings with her a multitude of skills and experience in marketing, sales, and human resources. She is excited to be a part of our community and to lead our Co-op into the future. Having previously worked as our marketing manager for five years, you may

already even know her. Please help us in welcoming Briana, and when you see her around the store, feel free to introduce yourself and say hi! You'll also have the opportunity to meet Briana at our annual meeting, and we've been very busy planning this event as well. Normally held in April, this year it will take place in May to allow us a little more time to prepare, as we had focused much of our attention on finding our new GM.

During our meeting, we will be electing four new directors who will help to set the vision for our Co-op and ensure that our store is here for our community far into the future. We will also be asking you, our owners, to approve a change to our Articles of Incorporation. Currently, we are capped at 5,000 Class A shares, and with our steady increase in the number of owners over the years, we are nearing that number. What a great thing indeed! We'll need to increase the number of available Class A and B shares so we can continue to welcome new people to our Co-op.

Like the seasons, it's been a year filled with change. Thank you everyone for supporting our store during this time. We're looking forward to the year ahead and excited to work with Briana as we move forward. Hope to see you May 11th at our annual meeting! In cooperation, 🌱

— Stephen

Time to Choose New Board Members!

Spring is here — time to elect your new Natural Harvest Food Co-op Board Members!

This year, there are four open seats on the Board of Directors to be filled by driven Owners like you.

What do Board members do for the Co-op? A vital, efficient, and effective Board of Directors is necessary to provide guidance and leadership to keep your Co-op healthy, active, productive, and responsive to Owners' needs. The Board employs the principles of policy governance to focus on big-picture issues to evaluate and help plan for the future of your Co-op without managing day-to-day operations.

Use the ballot (see page 4) to select your choices for open Board Member positions and vote on the proposed Amended Co-op Articles & Bylaws. Ballots must reach the Co-op by Tuesday, May 9th. If you miss this deadline, no worries! You will be allowed to submit your ballot while attending the Annual Meeting on Thursday, May 11th. One vote per Owner number, please. We'll have a ballot box at the front of the store, or you can choose to mail your ballot. New Board members will be

announced at the Annual Meeting.

We asked each candidate about their interest in becoming a Co-op Board Member (see answers on pages 3-4). Information on each candidate will also be available in-store and online at www.naturalharvest.coop/board. 🌱

1 Why would you like to serve on the Board of Directors of Natural Harvest Food Co-op?

2 Describe any volunteer or paid experiences relevant to your service as a Co-op Board Member. What skills or experience will you bring to the board?

3 What opportunities and challenges do you see in the future of Natural Harvest Food Co-op?

4 Other Comments

NHFC BOARD CANDIDATE BIOS

Edie Carr



1 My husband and I have been members for over 30 years and have always supported the principals of the Co-op. This is a time of my life I am ready to commit to a board position and am ready for the opportunities and challenges this brings.

2 My career includes work in budget management and preparation, grant writing, evaluation, customer service, program development and promotion, personnel and labor relations, delegation, collaboration, organizational development and board management. I am highly skilled in facilitation techniques and consensus building. I have served on a number of boards and groups in the nearly 40 years I have been on the Range which provide me extensive experience. These skills would be useful for working with the Board and helping Natural Harvest progress towards their vision and goals.

3 Opportunities exist in collaborating with partners in areas that align with the values and mission. There is always room for growth, ideas and innovation that move this organization into the future. The pandemic has changed the way everyone does business these days. We must remain nimble and flexible to allow Natural Harvest to keep up with constant changes that occur in the nation and in our communities. A challenge is to manage everyone's expectations of what the Co-op can and does provide.

4 My common-sense approach to things and a pretty good sense of humor will assist in making me a productive member of the Natural Harvest team. Thank you for your consideration.

Christina Forsythe



1 Co-ops have been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. My family has been involved in co-ops both as customers and producers over the years. I love the holistic approach and the way they can create and support communities. However, I don't think I truly appreciated them until the last five years when I lived in a place that didn't have a co-op nearby. After moving back to Northeastern Minnesota I would like to be more involved in something that I have come to realize is so special and important.

2 I am a Lutheran pastor so I have worked on a lot of boards over the years. I understand the role the board plays in supporting the Co-op. My husband and I also sustainably farm and raise animals. We are very connected to local food.

3 What I like about Natural Harvest is its focus on building community, offering learning opportunities, and welcoming folks. I also like that it carries

so many things that are culturally special to our area. These are opportunities that this Co-op has already embraced and continues to grow. One challenge/opportunity I am curious about pursuing is reaching out to so much of the Iron Range population that would benefit from all the things Co-ops offer but haven't come through the doors yet. I think Natural Harvest has the right atmosphere for folks to feel welcomed and willing to ask questions about what a Co-op is.

4 Thanks for your consideration.

Nancy Henderson-Korpi



1 I'm not sure how many years I have been a member of NHFC other than my membership began when we were on Chestnut Street several decades ago. Having enjoyed our Co-op and supported it through my membership, it's time for me to step-up to help the Co-op flourish and continue for many more decades (and beyond) in service to our membership and community. I think NHFC is a critical link to sustainability in locally sourced resources/product, in environmental awareness and responsibility, and in connecting the past, present, and future with continued quality products/food sources and customer care.

2 I spent my career of 28 years with the Mesabi Family YMCA having retired after serving my last eight years as CEO. Prior to holding the role of CEO, I was a program director for twenty years of working with virtually all programs, events, promotions, fund-raising, staffing, training, outreach, budgeting, capital, and sustain campaigns, and everything in between. Even though the Y is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, there are identifiable parallels with the Co-op that I understand. Both entities are mission-driven, purpose driven, member owned and operate under their member established principles. I am familiar with the inner workings of the business, including finances, personnel, policy, and procedures, human resources, building capacity, and more. I realize that there are also some definitive differences that I look forward to learning about and embracing.

3 Like all businesses and organizations in today's world, the Co-op has to face an uncertain economy with wise calculated speculations and decisions. I consider decision making, albeit challenging at times, not just financially driven, but member driven as well. So, not only do we ask "how do we best keep our Co-op fiscally sound, viable, valued and supported" but we need to ask ourselves "how best do we serve our members today and tomorrow". I like to look at the challenges we face as opportunities for growth and learning; for stepping outside of the box; and for understanding and knowing what we do well and doing it exceptionally well.

4 I have always been proud to be a member at our Co-op and appreciate your consideration as a board member.

Allison Hill



1 As a business owner, volunteering as a board member is a great opportunity to give back to the same community I have resided in my entire life.

2 Although my previous family and professional obligations have limited the time I have had available to volunteer for community organizations, I did serve as the PTA vice president for a local school and enjoyed the opportunities and new connections that were granted with that position.

3 I see many opportunities and challenges with the future of the Natural Harvest Food Co-op, i.e. inflation, competition, community awareness, etc. However, as a business owner, solving problems and finding equitable solutions while working with others is something I have a great interest in.

Jenna Kuitunen



1 As a member-owner of Natural Harvest Food Co-op, I feel that I have a responsibility to offer my time, education, and experience to the Board of Directors for the collective benefit of all members and the co-operative in general. I returned to the area a few years ago after a long time in the Twin Cities and am looking for opportunities to give back to my community. Healthy and sustainable living is important to me and being a part of the Natural Harvest board is a way to promote those benefits right here in my own neighborhood.

2 My education includes a bachelor's degree in Business from the University of Minnesota – Carlson School of Management and a Juris Doctor from William Mitchell College of Law. My professional career includes over fifteen years of financial experience, the majority of which has been in small business lending, and six years as an executive assistant for a non-profit that financed U.S. Small Business Administration loans. As an executive assistant I sat in on board meetings and summarized discussions to incorporate into the Board minutes. Although I do not currently practice law, I am a licensed attorney with the Minnesota State Bar.

3 Locally with large chains like Aldi, Super One, Target, and Wal-Mart, but also with the increase in home meal subscription boxes from companies like Blue Apron and Hello Fresh, for example, I also think that we are going to see more people paying attention to where their food comes from and looking for sustainable options, and that is where Natural Harvest will compare favorably to chain shopping or delivery meals. As a shopper, I always appreciate seeing seasonal produce and local suppliers, fair trade coffee,

having the option to bring my own bulk storage containers, and alternatives to plastic. The deli is another great advantage for Natural Harvest as the rotating options give customers the chance to try new things, instead of just the same boring options you see at other stores. I think if Natural Harvest continues to focus on these strengths to drive membership and repeat customers, it can become the go to place to shop for many.

4 I am thankful for the opportunity to run for the Natural Harvest Food Co-op Board of Directors, and ask for your votes so that I can serve this amazing community.

Mike Nystrom

1 Thank you, NHFC members, for entertaining my desire to again inhabit a seat on our Natural Harvest Food Coop's Board of Directors. I've been a part of this Coop since its very early days.



I first shopped at the little store on main street back in 1980, the year I graduated high school, my interest in healthier foods just beginning. So here's my resume — 43 years patronage, member 207. I have a true love for the mission, the food and the community. I know a few things about running a business, having owned and operated a few that worked, and some that taught me harder lessons. I am eager to work with others towards our common goals, making our community and the world a better place. If the above sounds like I'm a good fit, please toss my name on a ballot, or however that works. I'd be honored to give my best effort towards our member's common interests. Thanks again for your consideration!

2 I left the area for a few years in about 1984, but upon returning in 1990, was fortunate to land a job at a little repair shop across the street from that first humble storefront. NHFC became my daily happy go-to for lunch, and Wayne Wilberg and Michelle Greene soon talked me into coming on full time as staff. It wasn't long before I got totally hooked! I found my way on to the Board. Next thing you know, we were building a new store by Bailey's Lake. Between buying

for the supplement section, attending to a full plate of Board interests and pounding nails in the tongue & groove paneled ceiling in the new beautiful log building, I may as well have had a cot in the back room! Then life got a little more complicated. My young family grew, and I got an entrepreneurial urge. I started an entertainment business, became a landlord, and I bought a building on main street and opened a natural products store carrying mostly natural fiber clothing and indoor growing equipment and supplies. Wearing all those hats got to be a little too much, so I closed the retail business. My interest, however, has never waned. Fast forwarding to today finds me semi-retired, still dabbling in natural foods-related projects and still shopping at NHFC for about 90% of our groceries. I've watched, thankful and amazed at what the organization has been able to accomplish since those early days. We are incredibly lucky to have this solid, successful resource in our community. I'm thinkin', hey Mike, you should get back on the board and put a little more time into helping ensure this wonderful place stays here for another 50 years!

Proposed Changes to NHFC Articles of Incorporation

Over the years we have welcomed over 4,000 Natural Harvest owners. We are nearing our cap of 5,000 Class A shares, so in order to continue growing our cooperative, we'll need to increase this number of shares within the next few years. We'll also need to increase our number of Class B shares since each new owner is also issued four of those with the equity payment.

For your consideration are the proposed changes to our Articles of Incorporation.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE AMENDED AND RESTATED ARTICLES:

(Current wording in ~~red strikethrough~~, proposed changes are black and underlined)

Amended and Restated Articles of Natural Harvest Food Cooperative Amended and Restated effective as of June 1, 2020

Amended and Restated Articles of Natural Harvest Food Cooperative Amended and Restated effective as of June 1, 2023

Article V: Capital Section I. Authorized Shares.

The total amount of authorized capital stock of the cooperative shall be ~~One Million Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,200,000.00)~~ One Million Six Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,600,000.00) and shall be divided into ~~Five Thousand (5,000)~~ Ten Thousand (10,000) shares of class A stock of the par value of Sixty Dollars (\$60.00) each, and ~~Thirty Thousand (30,000)~~ Forty Thousand (40,000) shares of Class B Stock of the par value of Ten Dollars (\$10.00) each, and Three Thousand shares (3,000) shares of Class C Stock at a par value of Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00) each.



BALLOT

Board Election & Proposed Changes to Articles of Incorporation

RETURN BALLOT BY 5/9/2023

Use the ballot box at the front of the store or mail your ballot to: 732 N. 4th St. • Virginia, MN 55792

There are four spots open on the Natural Harvest Board of Directors. Please choose up to four Board Member candidates here.

- _____ Edie Carr
- _____ Christina Forsythe
- _____ Nancy Henderson-Korpi
- _____ Allison Hill
- _____ Jenna Kuitunen
- _____ Mike Nystrom
- _____ (Write-in Option)

Please review the proposed change to the Co-op Articles of Incorporation then cast your vote either "for" or "against" the proposed changes.

With respect to the proposed **Amended and Restated Articles** of the Co-op:

For _____ Against _____
Approving the proposed Amended and Restated Articles of the Co-op.

If approved by the ownership, the proposed Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation will go into effect June 1, 2023.

ONE VOTE ALLOWED PER OWNER NUMBER. YOUR VOTE REMAINS CONFIDENTIAL.

Name & Owner # _____

Sustainability & Longevity at Your Co-op

Margo Giese, Marketing Manager & NHFC Owner

After another trip around the sun, we begin to say goodbye to N-95's and say hello to new beginnings. Here at your Co-op, we have been searching out new ways to uphold our sustainability mission in the ever-changing world around us. As single-serve products begin to phase out, where do we fit in? How can we navigate and support this new terrain of sustainability challenges? We have a few ideas.

Eating in-Season

What better way to promote sustainability than eating what's in season? To reduce the carbon footprint left by producing & transporting out of season fruits and veggies, we limit the amount we carry. Instead, we opt to stock up on produce that aligns with the Earth's natural growing cycles. At the time of writing, chives, horseradish & sprouts are currently in season, so get them while they're hot!

Adopt an Earth-Friendly Diet

Support the Earth's natural capabilities by opting for food grown directly from the soil. At our Co-op, we carry a multitude of plant-based products aside from our plethora of produce options. Swapping cans of produce for bulk, dried versions are easier on the planet (and your wallet). We carry a large assortment of bulk items in order to support this mission. Take a look around our Co-op for a variety of produce, bulk goods, & plant-based goods to get started!

Go Plastic Free or Minimize Plastic Usage

Did you know that since its inception, plastic has been steadily increasing in global production? In 1950, the world produced 2 million metric tons of plastic waste. In 2019,

that number skyrocketed to 460 million metric tons. (Source: biologicaldiversity.org)

So, how can we help? At our Co-op, we carry recyclable single-use products, glass-bottled beverages, reusable storage containers, real plates & silverware and work actively to cut down on plastic waste. By swapping traditional plastic coverings, bottles & storage containers for glass alternatives, we're all voting for a greener planet. Our selection of glass containers are perfect for the switch, otherwise old jars work just fine too. Clean the label off of an old spaghetti jar and you now have a place to store dried beans, lentils, granola, or anything you can think of!

Stay Mindful About Food Waste

Have you wondered what happens when we receive imperfect produce? We don't just throw it out! When we get fruits and vegetables that aren't quite showroom-ready, we gather them aside for donation to the Salvation Army to distribute to local hungry families. Any scraps we throw from washing/cutting produce are gathered and given to shoppers who ask for them (often for their chickens!)

Choose Products from Sustainable Sources

Behind the scenes at our Co-op, the team that holds the show together are hard at work to ensure we carry the highest quality, most sustainable products on the market. From the flour in our bulk bins to the sage bundles in the Wellness aisle, we do our research to deliver our mission's promise to provide quality food, products, and services for the health and well-being of our families, our community, and our planet. Shop easy knowing the Co-op has your back! 🌱

SAVE THE DATES:



SATURDAY, APRIL 22nd
EARTHFest
IRON RANGE 2023
FOR THE *children.*
FOR US ALL

Join us at the Iron Trail Motors Event Center for Earth Fest on **Saturday, April 22** for a day of sustainable fun! This 9 AM-3 PM event will include children's activities, exhibits, speakers, local marketplace and silent auction, music and local lunch by Go Figur's.

In addition, stop by to celebrate **Earth Day @ Your Co-op** on **Saturday, April 22**. Receive a free reusable tote with purchase! 🌱

Owner Appreciation Days

Ownership has been the foundation of our successful cooperative business for 40+ years and we'd like to thank you by hosting Owner Appreciation Days at the Co-op.

Wednesday, May 17 through Sunday, May 21 owners will receive a one-time 10% discount on the shop of their choice. There will also be a raffle table to register for prizes. Thank you for shopping at your Co-op! 🌱



Do you have a skill to share? We're looking for talented community members to teach new classes! For more information, please reach out to us by email at info@naturalharvest.coop.



Are you a creator? We're on the lookout for more local artists to spotlight their work on our Featured Artist wall! Email us at info@naturalharvest.coop or give us a call to learn more!



Extra! Extra! Since our last edition we have launched our brand new monthly email update, The Loon's Dive. Subscribe to our email list on our website to receive news from your Co-op!



Change Within Reach — Looking Back and Ahead into 2024's Program

As another year begins, we celebrate and reflect on all of the support our shoppers have given to local non-profits. Without your help, this program wouldn't be possible! To participate, shoppers may donate by allowing their purchase amount to be rounded up to the next higher dollar. Since the program started in April of 2014, Natural Harvest shoppers have raised over \$150,000 for local non-profit organizations. In 2022 alone, over \$21,000 was raised! Every penny contributes toward a better future for Iron Range non-profit organizations.

Are you affiliated with a local non-profit that could benefit from this community-powered program? Applications for the 2024 Change Within Reach Round-Up Program are now open! Learn more about eligibility and download the digital application from our website.



During December, 2022, shoppers raised \$1,659.52 for Project Care Free Clinic.



In January, 2023 our shoppers contributed \$1,909.83 for Twelfth Step House.



MAY 2023 DONATIONS

Your May donations will support the **Mesabi Humane Society's** medical care for homeless Iron Range pets, including vet checks, spay/neuter services, vaccinations and emergency vet care.



JUNE 2023 DONATIONS

June donations will support Virginia's own **Growing Together Community Gardens**, a program that aims to assist residents from our area with gardens to grow their own produce.



JULY 2023 DONATIONS

July donations will support the **Embarrass Regional Fair Association** with improving the efficiency of the Timber Hall, their own local event center.



100% Recycled Fiber

"The Harvest Beet" is a quarterly publication of Natural Harvest Food Co-op. Editor: Margo Giese

~ ON SILVER LAKE ~
OPEN MONDAY – FRIDAY:
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WEEKENDS: 9 AM - 6 PM

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