



WESTERN UP FOOD SYSTEMS
COLLABORATIVE

**3RD ANNUAL
REPORT**

2021

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We first acknowledge that Michigan's Upper Peninsula is the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary lands and waters of Indigenous nations, including the Anishinaabeg—the Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples. We also acknowledge our many more-than-human relatives who call this region home, and have done so since time immemorial. The Upper Peninsula is located within Ojibwa (Chippewa) homelands and ceded-territory established by the Treaty of 1842, the territory of Native American nations in Gakiwe'onaning (Keweenaw Bay), Gete-gitgaaning (Lac Vieux Desert), Mashkii-ziibing (Bad River), Odaawaa-zaaga'iganing (Lac Courte Oreilles), Waaswaaganing (Lac Du Flambeau), Miskwaabikong (Red Cliff), Wezaawaagami-ziibiing (St. Croix), and Zaka'aaganing (Sokaogon Mole Lake). As the original caretakers of our region's lands and waters and life beings, we are most grateful to all our relatives. We thank you for your continued care for our foodways in partnership with Upper Peninsula communities, and local, state, federal, and other governance entities throughout the Great Lakes.

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

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WESTERN U.P. FOOD SYSTEMS COLLABORATIVE

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Western U.P. Farm to School

BY MADELINA DILISI

In 2021, Taste the Local Difference and the Western U.P. Planning and Development Region were awarded funding from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund to improve access to fresh and healthy food in our communities through a growing regional farm-to-school project! With the shared goal of increasing fresh food in schools and supporting local farmers, Taste the Local Difference and the Western U.P. Planning and Development Region are collaborating with various organizations and individuals to make this dream a reality. The Farm to School project aims to facilitate connections between school coordinators and food producers in the Western U.P. as well as identify and address the barriers to getting fresh food into our schools. Activities include providing technical assistance to food service directors, 10 Cents a Meal application support, educational webinars, creation of a Western U.P. Farm to School directory, farmer food safety training, mini-grant support for farmers, interviews and focus groups, and so much more.

To invest in project deliverables and the larger initiative, Taste the Local Difference hired Madelina DiLisi as the Western U.P. Local Food Coordinator to work on the ground facilitating connections between farmers, school food service directors, and strategic partners. The progress on the project thus far includes partner identification and outreach and creating a rough draft of the F2S directory. Additionally, the first kick-off meeting was held in December to connect farmers, school food service directors, and strategic partners and discuss the goals of the project. As the project moves into the next phase, we are looking forward to hosting informational webinars with partnering organizations such as Groundwork, on the 10 Cents a Meal program, and Michigan On Farm Produce Safety. We are excited and committed to increasing access to fresh local food in our schools and supporting farmers in the Western U.P.



Photograph by Alex Palzewicz



WESTERN UP FOOD SYSTEMS PHOTO CONTEST WINNER

Apple Pressing - Heather Wright Wendel

DEBWEYENDON INDIGENOUS GARDENS UPDATE

BY KARENA SCHMIDT

In Summer 2021 some dreams became reality at the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Debweyendon Indigenous Gardens (DIGs). KBIC Natural Resources Department staff and community members continue to dedicate themselves to the mission of the garden to provide access to fresh garden-grown foods, and with this commitment, the garden continues to strengthen from within and reach out to increasing numbers of members in our community. More and more we connect with people who appreciate the deliciousness coming from the garden.

A significant accomplishment was the installation of two new hoop houses. When word went out that we would need help with the hoop house construction, we received professional volunteer help from a local carpenter. With exceptional skill, he took on the challenge and mentored an assorted crew of KBIC staff, students from the Michigan Tech REU program, volunteers from our Garden for Heart events, and crew from the Superior Watershed Partnership Great Lakes Climate Corps. The result is two beautiful new hoop houses. Keepseagle and NRCS incentive programs were among the funding sources for our hoop houses.

Already planted along the interior edges of the hoop houses are rows of delicious strawberry plants. In the spring of 2022, we will be planting asparagus, rhubarb, garlic, and horseradish along the outer edges of the hoop houses – caring for these plantings will serve to curtail the encroachment of any weeds alongside the hoop houses. Harvests from these crops are for all the community to enjoy once these plants become established. In the open pathways between the hoop houses, we planted about 50 blueberry shrubs, more strawberry plants, and black raspberries. Just to the northeast of the garden, we have an amazing resource -- two walleye ponds, cared for by the KBIC Fish Hatchery Program. After the fish are released to Lake Superior, the ponds are drained and what remains is nutritious fish residue. We filled twenty 30-gallon barrels with the dregs and hauled them to the garden beds – a much-needed superior soil amendment.



*Photograph by Keweenaw Bay Indian Community -
Natural Resources Department*

Another significant accomplishment in the summer of 2021 was the planting of over 100 additional fruit trees and black elderberry shrubs into our fruit tree orchard and the establishment of two cranberry beds. Students participating in the MTU REU program -- the National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduates -- did a majority of this planting. In the sultry July days, while digging holes, planting trees, mulching, and watering, these students proved to be capable, sincere, and cheerful. We have some ambitious plans underway for summer 2022. An irrigation system for the nearly 200 trees in our fruit tree orchard will be installed. This will be accomplished with help from the Engineers without Borders students of MTU. In addition, our new Fish Processing Facility and Teaching Center are completed. These new facilities support those individuals in our community who put into practice living their food sovereignty in a vital way. Fish waste coming from the Fish Processing Facility will be composted and incorporated into the garden beds.

A record number of 37 11' x 30' garden plots were rented out in 2021. Nurturing soils, plants, and people has been a lot of fun. A little education and infusion of clarity benefitted our three compost heaps for community gardeners. The bins were labeled as RECEIVE, REST, and READY, and the recycling/composting of organic waste is now a dynamic, functional system with plenty of nutritious compost available for gardeners to incorporate into their garden plots.

Garden for Heart has been so very fortunate to have many dedicated volunteers and we are thankful to all who have helped our garden thrive. As we reflect on all that was accomplished this summer, a sense of awe and gratitude brightens our hearts.

Our DIGs are a community of life. Debweyendon, believe in it, does guide our actions. It would seem that the abundant gratitude we feel is spilling over and giving nourishment to the soil, plants, and gardeners – the garden gave us excellent harvests this year! Migwech – because of our partnerships and collaborations the love and generosity that emanate from the DIGs blesses so many.

SAVING BUFFALO REEF AND PROTECTING TREATY RIGHTS

BY ANNABEL NEEDHAM

The promises made in the Treaty of 1842 gave white colonizers the right to mine and live on sacred native land and ensured the ability of the indigenous community to hunt, gather, and fish indefinitely. White colonizers almost immediately broke these promises by stripping the land and poisoning the water.



Recently, grants from the EPA and other organizations have allowed for dredging and removal of the harmful stamp sands along the shore on Gay, Michigan has drastically reduced the potential for more damage to Lake Superior and Buffalo Reef's whitefish hatchery.



US Army Corps of Engineers
Detroit District



Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) President Warren C. Swartz testified before the US Senate to bring attention to the pollution threatening Buffalo Reef.



Copper mining by white colonizers produced 22 million cubic yards of stamp sands, which were dumped on the shores and directly into Lake Superior. Buffalo Reef is just south of this dumping location, which is a vital spawning habitat for lake trout and whitefish.



Buffalo Reef is a culturally significant harvesting grounds for the local indigenous communities. The Treaty of 1842 ensures their rights to fish in Lake Superior waters. The pollution left by mining activity is estimated to inhibit spawning by 60% in 2025.

Solutions to this issue continue to be of interest today in order to honor treaty rights and keep a native food system strong.

Assignment from Dr. Angie Carter's MTU Food Systems and Sustainability Course by Annabel Needham, Used with permission

FALL FEASTING AT DYNAMITE HILL FARMS

By Dynamite Hill Farms + Alex Palzewicz



Photograph by Alex Palzewicz



Photograph by Alex Palzewicz

This past fall, Dynamite Hill Farms hosted the 2nd Fall Feast Fest on their property located within the KBIC reservation boundaries in L'Anse, Michigan. The celebration was centered around the story of food and looked to continue to shift the paradigm to strengthen our relationships and responsibilities to each other, this land, and to honor past and future generations.

Traditionally, the fall was a time for communities to gather, share, prepare, and appreciate the gifts provided to us by these lands, waters, and shared work. This celebration attempts to revitalize those traditions. The event was a week long, and all attendees were invited to participate and share in whatever capacity they could. Throughout the week we had around 40 guests join us and help with tasks including cutting wood to keep the fires burning, building a traditional Ojibwe lodge, cooking over a fire, pressing apples for cider, making hominy, processing a deer, cleaning the hide and so much more!

A big thank you to all the folks who helped make the event happen, especially our teachers:

Howard Kimewon

Biskakone Greg Johnson

Alexandria Sulainis (AnungoKwe)

Wabanungoquay M. Alakayak

Katy Bresette

Jerry Jondreau

Memorable meals from the week included local ingredients from the following:

Whitefish and Lake Trout, KBIC Tribal Commercial fishermen

Onions and Carrots, MSU North Farm

Squash, North Harvest CSA Farm

Wild Rice, Wild leek salt, maple sugar, maple syrup, maple vinegar,

dehydrated Oneida white corn, Dynamite Hill Farms

Local Apples, foraged from around the UP

Venison, harvested that week by teacher Biskakone

Potatoes, garlic, and many other items donated by many!



Photograph by Alex Palzewicz



WESTERN UP FOOD SYSTEMS PHOTO CONTEST WINNER

Nixie - John Gierke



Photograph by Portage Health Foundation

LOCAL COOKING SERIES CONTINUES WITH SEASON 2 IN 2021

**BY MEGHAN JASZCZAK, RD -
COMMUNITY HEALTH EDUCATOR
WITH PORTAGE HEALTH FOUNDATION**

Biblio Bistro (BB) is a fun, quick, and dynamic cooking series featuring local, nutritious, and seasonal produce. This cooking series finished up its second season in 2021 and is created in collaboration between the Portage Health Foundation (PHF) and the Portage Lake District Library (PLDL). The co-hosts for the series include Chef Michael and Dietitian Meghan, where they break down barriers in the kitchen and discuss health benefits of eating seasonally and locally. In 2021, BB featured 2 special guests – Dr. Lauren Jescovitch with Michigan State University Extension and Michigan Sea Grant and Margaret Hanson, food educator with Teach to Taste. This series aims to be accessible to all cooking comfort levels, ranging from beginners to a well-tuned chefs. Find the videos, recipes, and shopping lists at <https://pldl.org/biblio-bistro/>.





WESTERN UP FOOD SYSTEMS PHOTO CONTEST WINNER

Chick on Buffy - Heather Wright Wendel

GROWING FROM THE HEART

BY ANGIE CARTER



Growing from the Heart is a grassroots initiative facilitated by WUPFSC that focuses on increasing access to fresh, local, and nourishing food grown by and for our friends and neighbors throughout the Western UP region. As individuals, groups, and organizations taking part in this community-led effort, we share a collective mission and vision. You can learn more about this group on the WUPFSC website; please contact wupcommunityfoodsurvey@gmail.com if you'd like to be added to our list.

In 2021, community members shared knowledge together through a number of events organized through the collective. Members met virtually throughout spring 2021 to coordinate and plan the events that took place over the summer. We kicked off the season with a sign-making and compost party, with compost donated by the MTU Sustainability Demonstration House; participants learned how to deconstruct wood pallets and make Growing from the Heart signs for our gardens. Members helped with the construction of gardens at the Horizons Alternative High School in Ahmeek and the Barbara Gundlach Shelter in Calumet. Growing from the Heart also collaborated with the Portage Lake Seed Library and Wild Ones to host a seed sharing event. Kathleen Smith hosted a foraging walk through the Pinery trails near L'Anse, teaching us about wintergreen and other plant friends. Evan Lanese and Dr. Michelle Seguin both hosted fermentation workshops, inviting us to bring our own vegetables and engage in some hands-on learning. One fermentation workshop featured North Harvest CSA and Margaret Hanson's Teach to Taste, highlighting how to integrate the season's fresh foods into easy ferment recipes. Together, we shared skills, learned, and had fun; we invite you to join us in the 2022 season!

*Kat Dvorak stands with sign featuring her design;
Photograph by Angie Carter*

KBIC Deer Camp

BY AUSTIN AYRES



Participants processing deer meat; Photograph by Austin Ayres

On Saturday, November 6th the KBIC Natural Resources Department (KBNRD) hosted its first annual Waawaashkeshi Camp. The event took place at the newly constructed Teaching Center on Brewery Road near the NRD Community Gardens. The purpose of this event was to teach participants how to properly skin and process a harvested deer. The event was supported by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College (KBOCC), Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC), and Michigan Technological University (MTU).

Lyndon Ekdahl served as the main teacher for this camp. He taught techniques for skinning and processing. Howard Kimewon was our support educator/tribal elder, sharing language and traditions of the hunt. KBOCC was able to gift each attendee an 8-piece processing kit purchased from Woodland Firearms in Baraga. Conservation Wardens from the GLIFWC (Cody Clement and Steve Amsler) educated the participants on treaty rights, land use, and field/hunter safety. Our project partners from MTU captured video and pictures, as well as interviews with teachers for KBNRD's archive.

The camp had 43 registered participants, each having the opportunity for hands-on experience skinning and processing two harvested deer. Each family or participant went home with a processing kit, Chronic Wasting Disease educational materials, information on treaty rights, survival guides, cookbooks, and guides for field dressing deer. Overall the event was a success and we look forward to future events, hopefully increasing participation, especially from the youth.



WESTERN UP FOOD SYSTEMS PHOTO CONTEST WINNER

Calumet Farmers Market - Madelina DiLisi



Michigan Sea Grant Extension booth at Lake Superior Day; Photograph by Michigan Sea Grant

CELEBRATING LAKE SUPERIOR DAY IN COPPER COUNTRY

There is a lot to celebrate about Lake Superior. Known for its sparkling waves and rugged shorelines, the “Big Lake” contains more water than all the other Great Lakes combined. It is also the lake least affected by invasive species and habitat degradation. And just ask anyone who has dipped their toes in the water -- Lake Superior is cold!

Each year on the third Sunday in July, residents who live, work, and play around the lake are invited to learn more and celebrate its beauty during Lake Superior Day. In 2021, Copper Harbor community volunteers, along with the Lake Superior Stewardship Initiative, held its 8th annual Lake Superior Day Festival providing lots of special activities at the 6th Street Dock along the Copper Harbor Boardwalk.

A crowd of nearly 150 enjoyed activities such as eating fish stew (Kalamojakka), rieska (Finnish flatbread), cake, and other treats at a community picnic. They watched a log rolling demonstration on the water, learned about Lake Superior’s geoheritage,

BY LAUREN JESCOVITCH

and were able to take an excursion on Michigan Tech University’s research vessel - the Agassiz. Also, adults and children were invited to learn about the value of Michigan’s fish and fishing traditions with Michigan Sea Grant Extension educator Lauren Jescovitch.

Jescovitch shared her vast knowledge about commercial fishing, aquaculture, recreational fishing, and seafood processing in Michigan as well as described the fish species that can be found in Lake Superior. Those with fishing licenses or under the age of 17 (per DNR regulations) were also invited to go fishing or learn how to fish. Nearly 40 youth learned how to fish from the Isle Royale Queen boat dock. They could learn to use a push-button or a spinning reel rod, and how to put live bait on a hook. Many parents assisted with the fishing while others relaxed on a bench overlooking the harbor and fishers.

Lake Superior Day highlighted the special connections people have to the land and water -- something to be celebrated every day.



WESTERN UP FOOD SYSTEMS PHOTO CONTEST WINNER

Eat the Rainbow! - Lisa Reitz



Members of KYCA planting fruit trees near East Houghton Waterfront Park; Photograph by Keweenaw Youth For Climate Action

Keweenaw Youth For Climate Action Community Fruit Tree Project

BY EVAN LANESE

Keweenaw Youth for Climate Action (KYCA), funded by environmental activist Rob Greenfield's organization, led and organized a project to plant fifteen fruit trees across the Houghton/Hancock communities. Our goal is to create more local food access, promote food sovereignty, increase community nutrition, and lead a project that brings our neighbors together with something fun that we can all nurture. Who doesn't like having more free apples, pears, cherries, plums, and peaches around their parks and streets?

We posted fliers around town, advertised in local newspapers, and broadcast on local radio stations to look for people that were also committed to these goals and were willing to take care of the trees. Over the next few months, many individuals and groups in the community reached out to us and were interested in helping with the project.

In early spring 2021, KYCA received a call from Flowers by Sleeman, a local plant nursery in Houghton, letting us know that the trees had arrived and were ready for planting. It was empowering to see 20+ members of the community take time from their Saturday to come together and get all fifteen trees in the ground, fertilized and mulched. Over the summer the caretakers have been watering the trees so that they will be well established for years to come and provide fruit for everyone.

SCHOOL GARDEN ESSENTIALS

BY LANDEN TETIL

In August of 2021, the Lake Superior Stewardship Initiative hosted a "School Garden Essentials" workshop for Western U.P. K-12 teachers, which was a day full of educational activities, excited and cooperative educators, and lots and lots of sunshine. One component of the workshop included a segment on building a culture of food safety in school gardens. Landen Tetil, the U.P. Produce Safety Technician for the Michigan On-Farm Produce Safety program, shared tips, strategies, and insights on food safety in school gardens. At the EB Holman school garden site, participating educators carried out a collective pre-harvest risk assessment, from hand washing to monitoring for animal damage to cleaning and sanitizing harvest containers and tools. Landen brought along a homemade, inexpensive, portable hand washing station with instructions on how to construct them, which was used for demonstrating proper hand washing techniques. Teachers also had the chance to practice identifying potential risks to food safety in the garden, learning about water quality, wildlife deterrents, and cross-contamination. The participating educators that day left with new skills and resources for their food safety toolboxes and the option for continued support from Landen along the way. For produce safety resources or questions, reach out to landen.mqtcondist@gmail.com for assistance!



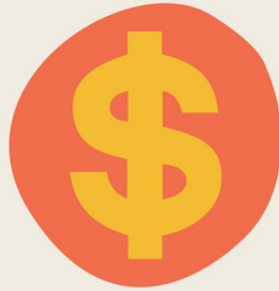
*(Left) Teachers learn about and tour the Copper Country ISD Greenhouse;
(Right) A handmade handwashing station is easy to make and cheap to build. Photographs by Landen Tetil*

Double-Up Food Bucks

How it Works

For people that have active Bridge Cards or are SNAP eligible can have their fruit and vegetable purchases matched dollar for dollar, up to \$20 daily.

250+ participating stores and markets in MI



Fighting for Food Justice

- 18M pounds of fresh, healthy food has been purchased using double up since 2009
- 2019 statistics say that \$6.9 million of fruits and vegetables were purchased using Double Up
- Meals for 85,000 households in 2019



Farmer Facts

- 90% of participating farmers sold more fruits and vegetables
- 85% of participating farmers reported making a greater income



Helping in Other Ways

Double Up assists in fueling local economies through encouraging purchases of local produce.

- One dollar spent on local produce can generate \$2.80 for the local economy

Did You Know?

The human population is estimated to reach 10 billion by the year 2050. AS the population grows a majority of the U.S. population is estimated to be middle-lower class. This means that More people may be in need of food assistance and access due to rising expenses of fresh food because of limited sources for so many people.

INFORMATION SOURCE

DOUBLE UP FOOD BUCKS MICHIGAN
[HTTPS://DOUBLEUPFOODBUCKS.ORG/HOW-DOUBLE-UP-WORKS/](https://doubleupfoodbucks.org/how-double-up-works/)
"THE GREEN REVELUTION: CAN EARTH FEED 10 BILLION PEOPLE?" BY CHARLES C.MANN

INVESTMENTS IN COPPER COUNTRY FARMERS MARKETS AID IN GROWTH

BY MICHELLE SEGUIN MD,
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY HEALTH AT THE PORTAGE HEALTH FOUNDATION

The Portage Health Foundation (PHF) awarded more than \$25,000 in grant funding to three area farmers markets in an effort to further build capacity and expand market-based food assistance programs in the region. The farmers markets funded included: Mainstreet Calumet Farmers Market (\$14,966.60), Hancock Tori & Farmers Market (\$8,000), and the Lake Linden Farmers Market (\$3,692). This RFP cycle marks the 2nd year that PHF has allocated funds specifically for farmers market support within Houghton, Keweenaw, Baraga, and Ontonagon counties. These funding opportunities have served as a catalyst for the expansion of SNAP/EBT acceptance within several area farmers markets including the Hancock Tori & Farmers Market and the Mainstreet Calumet Farmers Market. Notably, the Mainstreet Calumet Farmers Market has observed exponential growth in food assistance benefit dollars spent at the farmers market from 2018 to 2021.

Infographic (right) Assignment from Dr. Angie Carter's MTU Food Systems and Sustainability Course by Sierra Williams, Used with permission



MTU Food Systems and Sustainability students visit the Pewabic St. Community Garden; Photograph by Angie Carter

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

BY ANGIE CARTER

The Western UP Food Systems Collaborative provides important opportunities for Michigan Tech University students to learn more about community research and regional food systems. As a professor at Michigan Tech, I have had the good fortune to learn through these collaborations from the students I advise and teach whose passion for food systems equity motivates their curiosity and from the many local leaders in our community who are active teachers, mentors, farmers, and advocates leading food systems change. These experiences were especially important as we continued through our second year of the COVID pandemic and students were eager to participate in meaningful projects to support our communities in this hard time.

While the pandemic continued to make in-person connections challenging, students and partners worked together to find ways to continue the needed work and to share connections. Courtney Archambeau, a masters student in Environmental and Energy Policy, conducted research for her thesis project studying the accessibility of our local farmers markets, engaging in hours of participant observation and conversation at markets over the summer, fall, and winter and interviewing many community leaders.

Zach Hough-Solomon, also a masters student in Environmental and Energy Policy, learned more about rural Farm to School programs in other communities to help support our region's pilot Farm to School program.

Alannah Woodring, a senior graduating in Sustainability Science & Society, completed a study of therapy gardens to inform the construction of a garden at the Barbara Kettle Gundlach Shelter in Calumet. Savannah Obert-Pfeiffer, Maya Klanderman, and Madelina DiLisi, all undergraduate Sustainability Science & Society students, completed projects studying Growing from the Heart, seed libraries, and the Lake Superior Living Lab network's food sovereignty efforts, respectively. Madelina DiLisi also served as the Calumet Farmers Market Manager during the summer 2022 market season, providing important coordination for the market vendors and volunteers.

Dr. Hongmei Lu, an Environmental and Energy Policy Ph.D. student and then research associate, assisted with the finalization of the Western UP's first community food survey with support from many volunteers whose feedback on early survey drafts made the survey stronger. Many members of our regional food system, including Western UP Planning & Development Region's Rachael Pressley, Portage Health Foundation's Dr. Michelle Seguin, and Meghan Jaszczak, Ryan St. Community Garden, Pewabic Street Community Garden's Elena Busova, Dynamite Hill Farms' Jerry Jondreau, and Wabanungoquay Alakayak, North Harvest CSA's Ashley TenHarmsel, and Metsä Hill Farm's Keren Tischler, shared knowledge with students and hosted visits for those enrolled in my 2021 Food Systems & Sustainability course. These students did not only make connections across our communities through these experiences, they participated in relationships that contribute to the strengthening of our regional food systems for all.



WESTERN UP FOOD SYSTEMS PHOTO CONTEST WINNER

Maple Syrup - Heather Wright Wendel

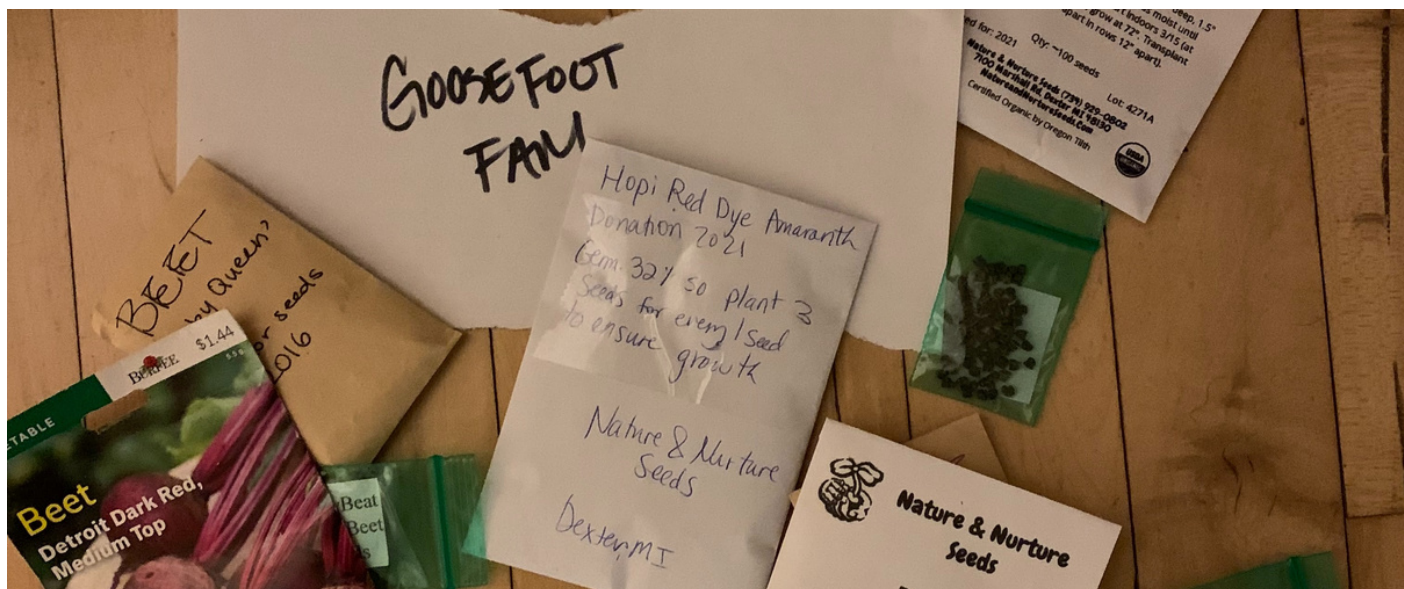
Portage Lake Seed Library Reflection

BY EMILY SHAW

Throughout the spring and summer, my Wednesday evening ritual was visiting with friends at the Seed Library, located inside the Portage Lake District Library. Sometimes these were human friends, like Rachael, and sometimes they were seed friends: spinach, beans, and tomatoes. Gathered around the table, we would catch up and make introductions to others. During these evenings I made new friends, too. I met Evan and Abe but also okra and salsify. From the seeds, I learned about their life cycle (Swiss Chard goes to seed only every other year) and their habitat needs (my Wisconsin Pickling Cucumbers needed much more water than I was giving them). From the people I learned new recipes and how to leave the stalks and vines to overwinter so that nutrients return to the soil.

As I write this reflection, my friends and I are making plans to gather and prepare for another Seed Library season. Together we are learning about the plant families to better organize the seeds. In the drawers, we will group seeds together with their relatives; radishes, kale, and turnips belong to the Mustard family; tomatoes, potatoes, and eggplants belong to the Nightshade family; beets and swiss chard belong to the Goosefoot family. In the spring we plan to host garden planning events to share knowledge around companion planting and starting seeds. Later in the year, we will host workshops to learn about seed saving and food preservation. What a gift to reflect on the previous year while planning for the next!

Building seed caretaking into my life is an opportunity to practice being hopeful and I am regularly nourished by the food I grow, the things I learn, and the responsibility of caring for the seeds. I hope for a bountiful harvest to share with friends. I hope for new visitors to the Seed Library who discover new friends. I hope for curious volunteers to share in the joy of seed organizing. Lastly, I hope to see you there!



Photograph by Emily Shaw



PHF COLLECTIVE CSA PROGRAM EXPANDS IN 2021

BY MEGHAN JASZCZAK, RD -
COMMUNITY HEALTH EDUCATOR
WITH PORTAGE HEALTH FOUNDATION

The Portage Health Foundation (PHF) completed its second year of their Collective CSA Program in 2021, with a total of 29 families, 62 kids, and 4 local farms in participation for the duration of the program. This program was initially developed in 2020, as an effort to increase food access and support local growers during the COVID-19 pandemic. On a broader level, this program ultimately aims to connect local families with nutritious produce grown in their own community. Throughout the 12-week duration of the Collective CSA program, families were provided with boxes of fresh locally grown produce on a weekly basis. These boxes also included a variety of cooking tools and weekly educational materials and recipes, as a means to support families in utilizing the produce, as well as to learn more about the health benefits of the foods provided. Home delivery and curbside pick-ups were provided at designated sites in the outlying communities. PHF was fortunate to continue their partnership with the following non-profit partners: UP Kids, Keweenaw Family Resource Center, BHK Child Development-L'Anse, and KBIC Health System. These organizations identified and referred participants to enroll in the program. The Portage Lake District Library (PLDL) also served a vital role in the success of the program, serving as the packing and distribution site, as well as a pick-up location. Lastly, a small group of local volunteers generously offered their time to directly pick up the produce from the farm and deliver to PLDL. Given the continued success of this program, PHF is looking to further expand the Collective CSA Program in 2022.

Infographic (right) Assignment from Dr. Angie Carter's MTU Food Systems and Sustainability Course by Austin Nguyen, Used with permission



THE SUSTAINABLE MUSHROOM

Mushrooms are the biggest living organisms on the planet! They keep forests healthy and people as well! Mushroom farming is one of the most sustainable farming practices and some mushrooms are considered superfoods.

MUSHROOM FACTS



- One of the most important decomposers
- Mushrooms have been found to clean up plastic waste and oil spills!
- in Oregon, the honey mushroom fungus spans a great 2.4 miles across the forest all connected
- some mushrooms have anti-cancer properties

SUSTAINABILITY



- Mushrooms are one of the easiest, cheapest, and most profitable crops to grow
- They can grow on a variety of materials such as recycled paper, dead trees, straw, and much more
- The use of chemicals is not common in mushroom farming and it is almost entirely waste free and natural

HEALTH BENEFITS



- Sources of Vitamin D, C, & B
- Anti Cancer
- Treats Neurodegenerative diseases (Alzheimer's etc)
- Immune Boosting
- Cardiovascular Health
- Gut health
- Antioxidants

Many people don't know much about mushrooms which is something that needs to change. The world is seeing a shift towards organic and vegan foods and mushrooms are one way to farm sustainably and safely and can make the future early a better place.

Sources:
YesMagazine
National Forest Foundation



Photograph by Portage Health Foundation

KEEPING BEES AT THE MICHIGAN TECH SUSTAINABILITY DEMONSTRATION HOUSE

BY SAMANTHA BORZICK

In the backyard of the house stands a beehive where about 30,000 honey bees reside. During the warmer months, our honey bees fly around and pollinate the local plants and in the winter they huddle together to stay warm. The bees create honey for themselves to eat in the winter and any excess honey will be collected by the house. Although some tenants may jokingly say we have to take the bees for walks every day, the upkeep of the bees is actually fairly simple. A bucket of sugar water is set outside to supplement pollen as a food source during warm months and dry sugar along with mite protection medicine is provided inside the hive in the winter. When it is nice outside we enjoy watching the busy bees race around the yard.





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