



From the Board of Directors:

New & Improved Owner Benefits

The Medford Food Co-op is fortunate to have a growing owner base that is dedicated to the Co-op. Our owners have supported the Co-op for over 10 years and made it possible to become a successful, growing business. The [3rd Cooperative Principle is Member Economic Participation](#). Consistent and continued support from our owners is essential to our existence, and we're grateful for each and every one of your grocery and Café purchases. In appreciation, the Co-op is upgrading benefits for all owners starting April 1st.

Owners will receive 10% off all Co+op Deals every day, not just on Tuesdays! The daily discount provides owners everyday value for their commitment to our Co-op. See the current Co+op Deals at medfordfood.coop/coop-deals and know you save an additional 10% off the advertised Co+op Deals prices. Look for the green Co+op Deals signs in the store for additional savings.

We're also making improvements to the monthly owner coupons. Four times each year, owners will receive a 10% off coupon good on any single purchase. While we previously offered 10% off coupons periodically, now 10% off coupons will be offered in February, May, August, and November. The predetermined schedule can help you plan to get the most out of this benefit. Start your list now for May and plan to save 10% off a large shop at your Co-op!

Making healthy food accessible to our community is in alignment with



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Positive Change Profile:

KS Wild

KS Wild, aka the [Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center](#), is our Positive Change recipient this April. We connected with Jessica Klinke, the Communications Director at KS Wild, to get to know more about their work to protect the Klamath-Siskiyou region.

MFC: Give MFC shoppers a brief overview of KS Wild's work. What's your why?

KSW: At KS Wild, we fight to protect the forested mountains, wild rivers, rare plants, and endangered



wildlife of the Klamath-Siskiyou region, which stretches from southwestern Oregon through northwestern California. As a non-profit advocacy organization protecting wild places, we are dedicated to bringing you science-based information on issues impacting forests, waters, wildlife, and climate in the region. We protect eight million acres of public lands in the Klamath-Siskiyou region from threats like old-growth logging and strip mining. Legally, we challenge the actions of federal land managers, who continue to put corporate profits ahead of clean water, clean air, climate smart conservation, and wildlife habitat. Politically, we apply pressure to our elected leaders and engage with state and federal officials to develop policies that impact the region's communities, economies, and ecosystems. We organize in communities to take action, providing a larger collective movement that reconnects people to their community and to the wild places that make this a home like no other.

MFC: Protecting and safeguarding millions of acres of forest and wildlands sounds like an enormous and daunting task. How does KS Wild manage the breadth and depth of the work?

KSW: KS Wild has been protecting the Klamath-Siskiyou region for 25 years. Our 13 staff members work across 4 major program areas, as well as coordinating volunteer stewardship efforts, events, communications, and fundraising.

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[Forest Watch](#) works to advocate and defend our forests and wildlife by evaluating every logging, mining, and grazing project that is proposed by the Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management (BLM). We then provide site-specific comments based on the agency proposals and staff field observations. If something happens on public lands in the Rogue River or Klamath River watersheds, ForestWatch will likely know about it!

The [Climate Program](#) works to advance climate smart conservation and community wildfire resilience throughout southern Oregon and northern California. This past year our program served on a negotiating team for the Private Forest Accord, to revamp the dismal forest practices across 10 million acres of private industrial forests in Oregon, moving them away from clearcuts, herbicides, and tree farms and working toward improved buffers on streams, fish-friendly revisions to roadways, and greater protections for beaver and other aquatic species. Just this last month, the Accord passed the state legislature and is headed to Governor Brown's desk to be signed into law!

[Rogue Riverkeeper](#) works to defend the Clean Water Act throughout the Rogue Basin, which includes streams and tributaries that feed into the Rogue River. A member of the Waterkeeper Alliance, RRK was formed in 2009 as a response to the Jordan Cove LNG pipeline that was proposed through southern Oregon, which would have greatly impacted clean water and healthy communities along the Rogue River. In 2022, years of community organizing succeeded and the Jordan Cove LNG Export Terminal and Fracked Gas Pipeline is dead.



*Hanging Rock Vista, Rogue River Canyons.
Image provided by KS Wild.*

KS Wild's [Special Places](#) program works behind the scenes to advance policy and permanent protections, which may include public lands expansions or designations. Most recently, we are a partner in the [Southern Oregon Wildlife Crossing Coalition](#), which is focused on improving infrastructure and wildlife passages along southern Oregon's Interstate 5 corridor between Ashland and the California state line at the Siskiyou Crest. In addition to this policy work, Special Places engages in stewardship efforts where we mobilize a volunteer base in collaboration with agencies, businesses, and partnership organizations to restore areas damaged by illegal off-road vehicles and to secure



*Upper Rogue River with pearly everlasting and spirea flowers.
Image provided by KS Wild.*

long-lasting protections for places like [Eight Dollar Mountain Botanical Area](#).

MFC: *What are the most pressing issues for the Klamath-Siskiyou wilderness today? And are there any proposed solutions or support to help overcome the challenges?*

KSW: Wildfire and climate change continue to be the most pressing issues facing our region, with the wildfire season growing in length and intensity each year. We need to do more to protect communities and build a better relationship with fire. In response to this, KS Wild published the [Rural Forest and Fire Toolkit](#), a critical resource on how to prepare for wildfire. We also helped secure funding for defensible space around homes, treating fire evacuation routes, and building support for prescribed burning in the Rogue Basin. We created KS Wild's first podcast, [One Foot in the Black](#), exploring solutions to living with wildfire in the era of climate change. Finally, with the influx of over \$50 million to land management agencies in our region from recent state and federal investments in infrastructure, KS Wild is engaging collaborative efforts to ensure this funding supports projects that protect old-growth forests and clean water sources through Climate Smart conservation.

MFC: *How can the community get involved and support your organization?*

KSW: The best way to get involved with [KS Wild](#) and [Rogue Riverkeeper](#) is to [sign up for our eNews](#), where you'll find out about events, get information on ways to volunteer, and be given opportunities to take action in support of our programs and campaigns.

You can also help support KS Wild by participating in this month's Positive Change fundraiser – round up the total of your next purchase or make a donation of any amount at checkout. The Positive Change program is one of the many ways your Co-op upholds the [7th Cooperative Principle: Concern for Community](#). ■

our [Vision and Ends](#). In the past, 10% off coupons were tied to a \$50 minimum purchase. To make this benefit accessible to our owners regardless of how much they spend per visit, we've removed the minimum purchase requirement. You choose which purchase you want to apply your coupon to for maximum savings!

Owners will continue to receive the \$5 off one \$25 purchase coupons in the remaining eight months of the year. In addition to monthly coupons, new owners receive 10% off their first purchase of \$50 or more and a free reusable canvas tote. We're also holding an owner drive this April with extra incentives to join! [New owners that join in April](#) will receive a free reusable bamboo utensil set, as well as a reusable cotton bag perfect for bulk and produce items – while supplies last.



[Ownership](#) comes with additional benefits. Owners have the opportunity to earn dividends in profitable years. Owners vote for the local charities that will benefit from the Co-op's [Positive Change](#) program. One other benefit of being an owner is receiving an invitation to the [Annual Owner Meeting](#). Owners have the opportunity to run for a seat on the board of directors, in addition to voting for the board of directors and bylaw revisions in the Annual Election.

Our owners are the backbone of the Medford Food Co-op. These expanded benefits add everyday value and increase the overall value of your ownership. The daily savings on Co+op Deals and the removal of the minimum purchase requirement on quarterly 10% coupons make benefits more accessible for all our owners – another step toward nurturing a healthy community. We hope these new and improved owner benefits give you even more reasons to shop at and support your Co-op. If you're not an owner yet, [join your community-owned and operated Co-op this April](#) for additional incentives! ■

Staff Spotlight

Get to know the staff!

Rachel Reyes

How long have you been cooperating?

I've been here just over 3 years. This is the first co-op I've ever worked at, but my younger brother works at the Ashland Co-op so I have been known to drop in there from time to time.

What do you do at the Co-op?

Several different things. Sometimes I feel like I'm all over the store. I started out in the Café regularly, but have cashiered and now I've moved to the Floor Supervisor position.

What brought you to the Co-op?

I was actually looking for a job to help pay for a trip I was taking. I liked the idea that the Co-op was small and not conventional.

What do you like best about your job?

Definitely the people. I like getting to know our owners and regular customers.

Tell us your Co-op favorites:

This is a tough question. I would have to say Blue Monkey Sparkling Watermelon Juice and our housemade salsa.

How has working at the Co-op affected your life?

It has definitely helped me realize my own potential and abilities. It has also helped me connect with others and the community. There is a disconnect when you shop at big box stores, I feel it when I have to go to one. Here, you can tell that we care about our shoppers and they care about us.

Tell us something we don't know!

Due to an accident several years ago I lost some of the use of my right arm. I used to be right handed and have learned how to do most things with my left.

What do you like to do outside of work?

I like to concentrate on my hobbies. I like to create new things and if I don't know how to do something I learn how. I like to spend time with my family and watch old sci-fi movies.

Where did you grow up/where have you lived in your life?

For the most part I grew up here in Southern Oregon. I was born in Alaska, we moved to Texas when I was 7, and came up here when I was 11. I mostly only remember how beautiful Alaska was, but it was the flat lands of Texas (which is a beautiful state in its own right), that made me fall in love with Oregon. It has the mountains that Texas lacked, but not 10ft of snow like Alaska, and a beautiful coast that you can sometimes swim in. ■



An Update on Sustainability Efforts

by Halle Riddlebarger – Outreach Manager

The last two years exposed countless supply chain issues in and around the food system, all the way to food and beverage packaging and the raw materials used to make it. On top of shaky supply chains, the beginning of the pandemic created a demand for more single-use plastics. Over the course of the last several months, some of these supply chains began to show renewed reliability. And as science discovered more about the transmission of the virus, the demand for single-use plastics naturally began to wane. Throughout this time, Co-op staff have been monitoring supply chains and packaging trends in search of more sustainable alternatives for the Café.

The search for sustainable alternatives for single-use plastics is full of challenges. Each challenge must be accounted for and overcome. Three big challenges for plastic-free alternatives are: food safety, freshness and quality, and presentation. As per the [Oregon Department of Agriculture](#) (ODA), “packaging processes and materials shall not transmit contaminants or

objectionable substances to the products, and shall provide adequate protection from contamination.” Ensuring the safety of prepared foods is definitely the largest concern. Packaging materials that don’t seal tightly or are made of naturally permeable materials just don’t meet the regulations.

In addition to food safety, packaging also needs to ensure the quality and freshness of the prepared foods. Tight-fitting lids and air-tight materials help preserve shelf-life and maintain quality standards. And quality extends to the presentation of the product. We want to be able to see exactly what we’re getting when we pick up a packaged salad or sandwich, so the products can’t hide behind the packaging – it needs to be visible!



Being a small business can present additional challenges. The search for alternatives takes staff time, and our small space can impose limitations in terms of storage and sanitation. Packaging alternatives also come with additional costs. As the industry standard, the low cost of plastic packaging is difficult to balance against the desire for greener alternatives.

Despite the challenges, MFC staff have identified a few areas where we can make immediate improvements. To start, we’re reviving the [Sustainable Silverware Project](#) in the Café. Here’s how it works: when you need a utensil on the go, borrow one of our metal utensils! On your next visit, return borrowed utensils to the bus tub by the front door of the Café. Staff will wash and sanitize the utensils, and put them out for reuse. We’re also replacing plastic straws. If you find yourself in need of a straw the next time you order a smoothie, you’ll receive a biodegradable bamboo straw upon request.

Plans are also underway to introduce the [Rogue To Go](#) program in the coming months, and there’s still plenty of work to do ahead. We’re still working through each challenge to affordable, practical alternatives for single-use plastic packaging for our prepared foods.

In the mean time, you can help make Earth Day every day by opting for reusable bags and containers for produce and bulk items, and remembering your reusable shopping totes! ■

Important Dates

Bear Creek Stewardship Day

In celebration of Earth Day, volunteers will be removing litter along the Bear Creek Greenway in Central Point, Medford, Phoenix, Talent, and Ashland. There are nine check-in locations to choose from - find the location nearest to you and register for the event on Saturday, April 23rd at bearcreekstewards.org.

Annual Election & Owner Meeting

Voting in the Annual Election is the right and responsibility of every MFC owner, as well as an opportunity to express your voice. For every ballot cast, we’ll donate \$2 to [Rogue Farm Corps](#) (up to \$1,000). Ballots will be emailed to owners on Friday, April 15th. The election will end prior to the start of the Annual Meeting on Sunday, May 1st.

The [Good Food Festival](#) is back! The event will be held from 12-4pm on Sunday, May 1st, and the Annual Owner Meeting will be held in the Café beginning at 1pm. Join us for delicious samples, family-friendly activities, and a chance to interact in-person with the Board of Directors and your fellow Co-op owners.

Rogue Valley Growers & Crafters Market

The outdoor market season started on March 1st and goes through the end of November. Markets are held on Tuesdays in Ashland at the National Guard Armory from 9am-1:30pm and on Thursdays in Medford at Hawthorne Park from 8:30am-1:30pm. The Saturday Ashland Market will begin in May. Keep up with the markets at rvgrowersmarket.com.

Board of Directors Meetings

Third Monday of each month from 5:30pm – 7:30pm. Meetings are currently being held online via Zoom until further notice. If you are an owner who would like to participate in an online Board meeting, please email Board President Kellie Hill for an invitation to the online meeting: board@medfordfood.coop.