



## Northwoods Food Project Hires First Director

Media Contact: Hartley Newell-Acero, Northwoods Food Project Board Chair, [nwfoodproject@gmail.com](mailto:nwfoodproject@gmail.com)

Grand Marais, MN (8/21/2024)- Northwoods Food Project is excited to announce the hire of its first Director, Marcia Eiyneck. In moving from an all-volunteer organization to having a staff person for the first time, the group looks forward to increasing their programming, events, and systems work to connect, grow and support a sustainable local food system in Cook County.

The Northwoods Food Project was formed as a non-profit organization in 2008 by a group of volunteers interested in supporting local food producers and consumers in Cook County. In its 15-year history, the organization has had many significant accomplishments, including incubating and launching several projects and programs that have gone on to have lives of their own. These projects have included starting four community gardens in Grand Marais, and in 2023 serving as fiscal sponsor for the development of a community garden in Tofte. Collectively these gardens now have over 75 plots to be used by community members. In 2017, the Food Project launched what is now called the Grand Marais Farmers Market, which operates from June-October on Thursday afternoons. It has grown through partnerships with the Cook County Community Center to support 15 vendors and numerous cost-reducing programs that make shopping at the market accessible to all. Other projects have included convening the Cook County Food Systems Network to bring together partners across the local food system to learn from each other, offering an annual gathering for local farmers, starting the Northern Gardening radio show on WTIP and starting the Cook County Seed Library housed at the Cook County Extension office.

With the addition of Marcia Eiyneck as Director of the Northwoods Food Project, the organization will be expanding their work in the coming months and years. Initial projects will include supporting the expanded Farmers Market access programs this year including the Power of Produce Club for kids and seniors, Together We Grow for WIC families, and SNAP/EBT access at the market. In addition, Marcia will lead a project that the organization is working on to research and understand the needs for local foods processing equipment in the community that could lead to launching an equipment library or other means of sharing equipment for processing local foods.

Marcia joins the organization with a rich background in farming, gardening, administration, and food sovereignty work. She has previously led agriculture and tribal food sovereignty work with the Fond du Lac and Grand Portage Bands, owns a small business creating ethically foraged botanical products and education, and is the John Beargrease Sled Dog Marathon race coordinator. "Food is medicine, and everyone should have access to local, healthy food that isn't reliant on a truck rolling into town. I have followed the North Woods Food Project for many years and I'm excited to have joined the team", says Marcia.

This exciting step for the organization would not have been possible without the generous support of multiple funding organizations. The Food Project is grateful to have received funds through grants, projects and sponsorships this year from Arrowhead Electric's Round Up program, the Cook County Oral Health Task

Force, Empty Bowls, UMN Northeast Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, and the North Shore Collaborative. In addition, the Food Project has launched three working groups this year to focus our efforts and provide avenues for community involvement. The work groups are focused on local food production, processing, and education.

Individuals and organizations interested in connecting with the work of the Northwoods Food Project are invited to get involved. Whether that's as a volunteer, donor, board member, project partner, just joining the contact list, or in another way, we encourage you to reach out! You can contact Marcia at [nwfoodproject@gmail.com](mailto:nwfoodproject@gmail.com) or by calling 715-220-5382.