

The first meeting of the Eatonville Community Cooperative resounded with excitement, vision, and commitment. Despite greatly diverse backgrounds and expectations, the group quickly reached a common tangible goal. Rural communities often have the unique ability to sustain themselves: plenty of good clean water, enough land to provide housing, food, and recreation, and citizens who have learned the skills of self-reliance. Ironically, some of the best products our rural areas can offer are not available to local residents unless we travel to the city to purchase them. Eatonville Community Cooperative intends to change that.

Cooperatives aren't a new concept. Thousands of groups like ours have banded together all over America and the world to meet goals in agriculture, business, education, housing, and health. Did you know credit unions are Cooperatives? All have one thing in common, or more accurately, seven common principles that stand as guidelines by which cooperatives put their values into practice. These "Principles of Identity" are: voluntary and open membership, democratic member control, member economic participation, autonomy and independence, training and information, cooperation among cooperatives, and concern for community.

The immediate goal of Eatonville Community Cooperative as a non-profit entity is to establish a Cooperative-owned or leased store. All members share the desire to shop for organic and naturally manufactured products in our own community. Further, in maintaining such a store, we provide support necessary for the entire sustainable agriculture industry.

We invite you to join us Thursday, April 18th from 7:00pm to 9:00pm at the Eatonville Public Library meeting room. The agenda for the evening includes an evaluation of possible sites for the Cooperative store, discussion of business structures appropriate for our operations, and choosing dates for additional meetings. In the meantime, please check out these websites for great information about existing Cooperatives: www.coop.org, www.navaho-coop.org, www.chfhq.org, and www.outpostcoop.com.