

NWO Regional Food Charter

What is the NWO Food Charter?

A vision of how we can collectively sustain a thriving local food system that supports our health and well-being in our communities, our environment, and our regional economy.

How can a NWO Regional Food Charter make a difference?

- A “reference document” for municipal, First Nation, and Unorganized Township decision makers.
- Raises awareness and education about food issues.
- Forms a basis for action for local government bodies, schools, service organizations, co-ops., and non-profit organizations
- Encourages collaboration across municipalities, First Nations, and unorganized townships for existing and new local food projects in NWO.
- Provides a mechanism for the diversity of communities’ voices to collectively create a healthy, resilient food system accessible to all residents of NWO.

Vision

We will engage with all residents of our region to respect a diversity of approaches to sustain a thriving local food system that supports our health and well-being in our communities, our environment, and our regional economy.

Our Purpose

To create a just food system that ensures all members of our community have access to adequate, healthy, safe, affordable, and culturally appropriate food.

Guideposts

- *To enhance the production, processing, and purchase of regional local food*
- *To enhance food initiatives that build on wild local food strengths such as mushrooms, blueberries, fresh water fish, and wild rice*
- *To build a viable regional transportation system that enhances market access for producers, processors, and foragers*
- *To support an ecological and economically-viable sustainable food system*
- *To build an identity of Northwestern Ontario’s produced and harvested foods to support culinary tourism and market access for food entrepreneurs*

Actions

Because we value education, we support:

- Initiatives in the community and through our schools that develop food skills in growing, harvesting, preparing, and preserving food for all ages;
- Programs on traditional teachings in foraging, hunting, and fishing including preserving and cooking;
- Initiatives that celebrate local foods such as chef competitions, blueberry festivals etc.;
- Programs to enhance knowledge of food safety and food labeling regulations;
- Programs that enhance knowledge for raising bees, backyard and small-scale chicken flocks, and small-scale livestock production.

Because we value a strong farming community, we support:

- Initiatives that build long-term viability for our regional abattoirs;
- Initiatives to expand greenhouses to lengthen the growing season;
- Initiatives that enhance storage capacity for perishable local foods;
- Support innovation in crop and fruit tree varieties adaptable to our region;
- Training in farming practices that are appropriate to the boreal forest ecosystem;
- Initiatives to recruit new farmers to the region;
- Enhanced access within region to locally produced grains, seeds, and feed.

Because we value a healthy ecosystem, we support:

- Programs that enhance knowledge of habitat needs of native bees for food pollination;
- Programs that promote the value of underutilized fish species in NWO diets;
- Protection for viable farmland;
- Respect for traditional territorial land use for sustaining food security;
- Promote public policy that increases food security through more access to sustainable commercial fishing licenses, crown land for local food harvesting and production, and access to wild meats for culturally appropriate uses by non-profit organizations.

Because we value social justice, we support:

- Programs that provide access to affordable, dietary, and culturally appropriate foods;
- Generation of adequate incomes for farmers, harvesters, processors, and distributors.