ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE SEEKS EXPERIENCED NEW MEMBERS

May 5, 2026



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The mission of the committee is to provide education, research and advisement to ensure the Food Coop is aligned with its environmental policy to support “the best products and practices with regard to the health, safety and preservation of humans, animals and the overall biosphere.” Learn more about the Environmental Committee’s history and activities.

We are looking for members with relevant education and/or professional experience in environmental topics. Your work with the committee constitutes your Coop workshift requirement. To apply, fill out our web form.

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

May 5, 2026



COURTESY OF THE PARK SLOPE FOOD COOP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

Come join the Environmental Committee and friends to celebrate Earth Day at the Garden of Union a.k.a. Annie’s Garden (636 Union Street), on Sunday, April 19, 12:00–3:00 p.m. It will be family friendly! Happy Earth Day!

FIBER CRAFTING & MENDING CIRCLE

May 5, 2026



COURTESY OF THE PARK SLOPE FOOD COOP FUN COMMITTEE

Calling all Coop members who are serious or aspiring fiber crafters and menders (knitting, darning, crochet and embroidery!).

Join the Park Slope Food Coop Fun Committee and the Park Slope Food Coop Environmental Committee on Saturday, April 18, from 4:00–6:00 p.m. in the Coop's second-floor meeting room to work on our projects together, learn from each other and be inspired by our crafty neighbors.

We will have donated fiber available from our partner Brooklyn Creative Reuse for participants! You are also welcome to bring extra yarn you would like to swap with others! Please note that while we have some extra tools available, we cannot guarantee you tools to work with, so please bring your tools!

We have 25–30 slots for this event. Please RSVP here for this event to let us know you are coming!

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE REPORT: RECYCLING IN NYC IS EASIER THAN YOU THINK

May 5, 2026



March 11, 2025

By Stephanie Wilson for the Environmental Committee

The City, a nonprofit news organization that reports on local issues for New Yorkers, recently published an article called “Recycling in NYC Is Easier Than You Think: A Guide for the Confused.” It includes an interview with a New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) spokesperson, provides general information about recycling in NYC, and debunks myths about the topic. The PSFC Environmental Committee has summarized the tips to help us recycle more effectively:

I’m not sure I can recycle this object. I should throw it in the trash to avoid wishful recycling and potentially contaminating the recycle stream, right?

Nope! In New York, if you think it might be recyclable, it's better to put it in the recycle bin than in the garbage. "If you're not sure, let us take care of it. We are the experts. If you put it in the trash, it definitely doesn't get recycled," said Joshua Goodman, spokesperson for DSNYC.

What materials are most likely to be recycled?

Paper and metal are more likely to be repurposed. Plastics and glass are more likely to end up in landfills if they can't be resold.

Is this plastic-lined carton (e.g. the ones that contain soup stocks and plant milks) recyclable? Does it belong in the paper recycling?

Plastic-lined cartons do not belong in paper recycling, but they do belong in the other recycling stream which consists of metals, plastics, and glass.

Should I recycle this paper?

Yes, any paper product you can think of, besides the plastic-lined cartons, can be included with paper recycling.

Can I recycle paper coffee cups?

Yes, plastic coffee cup lids should go in the metal, plastic, and glass bin. The cup goes into paper recycling.

How about brown take-out containers with a wax or plastic lining?

Yes, throw it in paper recycling. All the material can't be pulped because of the lining but they can use some of it.

Envelopes with plastic film windows? Do I need to remove the film?

You can put the whole thing in paper recycling. Recyclers can take out the plastic liner and metal pieces.

Used pizza boxes?

Yes, these can be thrown in the paper recycling, even if it’s greasy or cheesy. Just remove the crusts or any leftovers first.

Wood like a cutting board or chopsticks?

These should go in the compost, not in paper recycling.

Can I recycle this rigid plastic thing?

Yes, any rigid plastic can be recycled. It’s rigid plastic if it maintains its shape when it’s on the counter.

What items can be recycled that are surprising?

Empty hairspray and aerosol cans, pots and pans even if they are non-stick, plastic takeout containers and small appliances made of mostly metal or plastic without rechargeable batteries, such as microwaves or toasters.

What about this broken glass, knife or other sharp objects?

No, it’s better to double bag the items and put them in the trash for worker safety.

What else is definitely not recyclable?

Styrofoam, fake Christmas trees, disposable gloves, face masks, ceramics, eyeglasses, mirrors, lightbulbs, floppy and filmy plastic bags, bubble wrap, cellophane (i.e. cling wrap), cables, string lights, hoses and extension cords.

What do I do with plastic bags then?

Though larger retailers are required to provide bins for recycling plastic bags, these are hard to recycle and often have fewer reuses than rigid plastics.

Do I need to throw containers with certain numbers away?

Nope! In NYC, throw all plastic containers with a number in the recycle.

Do I need to scrub containers clean before I recycle it?

No, rinse off recyclable items, but no need to scrub or use too much water. If it's mostly empty, you can put it in the recycling bin.

What about this greasy aluminum foil?

Yep, NYC accepts all aluminum foil, even if it's soiled.

What about this item with mixed materials, such as an oatmeal tin which has a paper middle, metal bottom and plastic top?

It can go in either recycle bin. You can rip it apart and recycle each component separately, but you don't have to. Just don't throw it in the trash.

How about metal and plastic caps?

Ideally the plastic caps should be kept on the bottles or containers, but it's okay if you forget and put them in the bin separately. Metal caps can be tossed in by themselves or kept on the bottles.

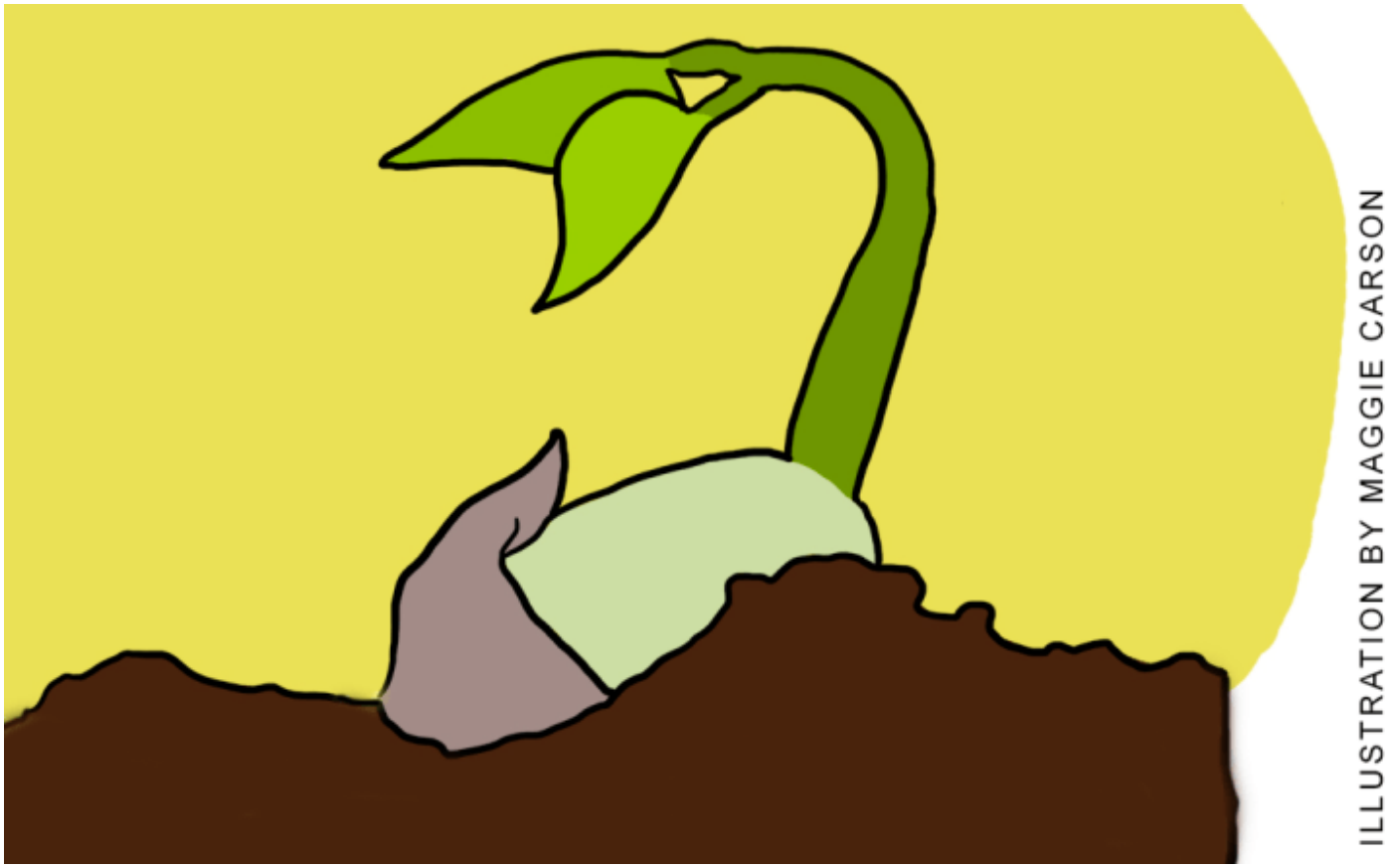
Where can I find more information?

Again: Recycling in NYC Is Easier Than You Think: A Guide for the Confused. Also, check out DSNYC's website. PSFC Environmental Committee: psfc.environmental.committee@gmail.com

Image source: Courtesy of SWANA

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE REPORT: WHY THE RECENT DROUGHT AND WILDFIRES?

May 5, 2026



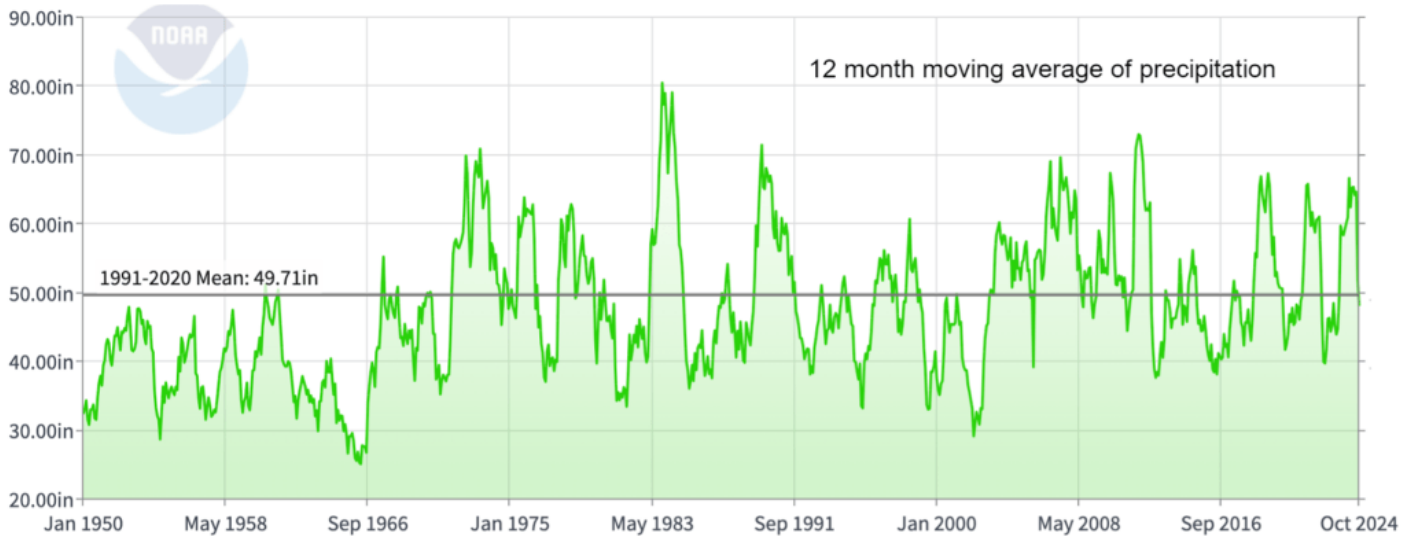
By Damon Turney, for the Environmental Committee

January 7, 2025

Our recent sunny autumn weather is not all warm news. Our heavily forested ecosys-

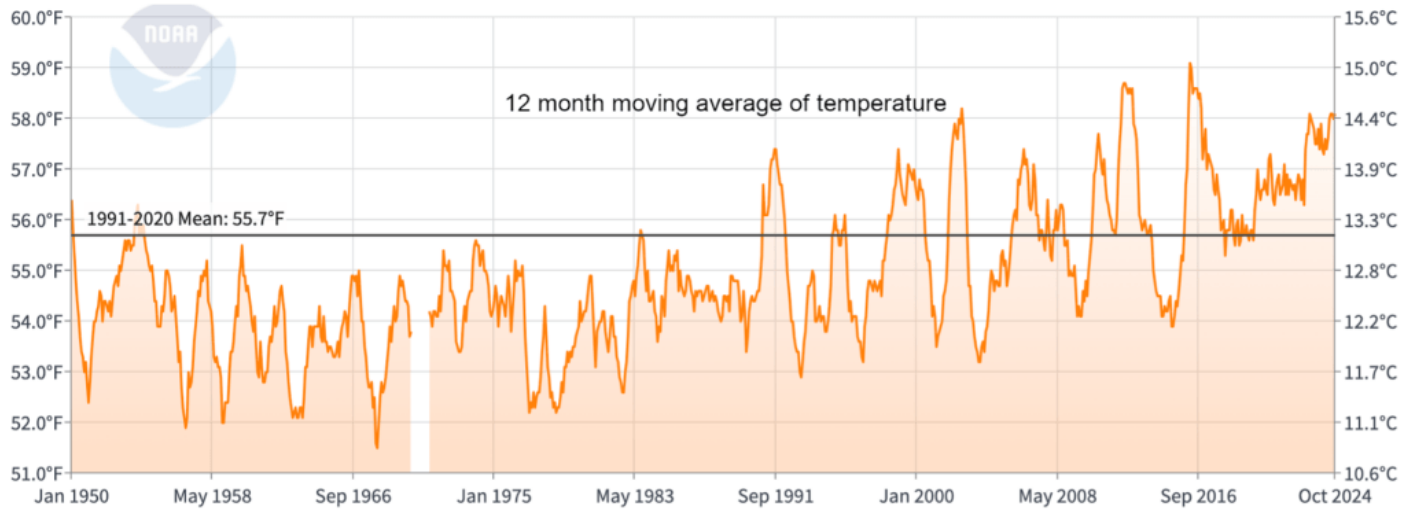
tem is drying out[1], a fact clearly visible in the recent fall foliage having more brown than previous years. Of particular concern is the connection between our dry forests and the rise of forest fires in the tristate area, including many close to the city, which made air hazardous to breathe a few weeks ago. Our local Prospect Park was also damaged by a large forest fire that consumed two acres of trees and land on November 8.

So what's the reason for this, and what can be done to help? The data from environmental science points a clear finger at climate change but with a plot twist. Actual precipitation in our watershed has *increased* over the past 75 years, notwithstanding the exceptionally dry October we just had, as shown by the data below from the famous Central Park meteorological observatory.[2] Climate change is known to increase rainfall. This is due to increased evaporation of water from the oceans, which translates to more rainfall—what goes up must come down.



So how are we in drought then, you ask? This is the key issue. The higher temperatures on our forest and land nowadays mean they dry out much faster. Remember, evaporation occurs faster in warm temperatures, and the forest is a living system that

loves to consume groundwater when it has a warm sunny day to do so. Below is the temperature history from the same observatory in Central Park—temperature rise is clearly the dominant factor here. These trends of precipitation and temperature are stronger in upstate cities like Albany or Binghamton, near our NYC watershed and reservoirs. The effect of higher evaporation means New York reservoir levels are a much better metric of drought severity than rainfall. Recent rains, just before November 27, have not been enough to improve reservoir levels.



Climate scientists call this faster drying process a “flash drought” effect[3], meaning a month of low rain now can have the same bad consequences as 12 months of drought a century ago. And increased rainfall is now necessary to keep our watershed in the same state as it was 50 years ago. At present date the reservoirs that hold water for New York City are unusually low, likely due to just a couple months of low rain. A worsening of this trend could threaten major costs or damage to NYC water quality, or to the subterranean tunnels that feed water to the city, not to mention the forest fires and air quality.

What can we do to help? The good news is that rain will return to New York, likely at

increased levels. It remains to be seen if increased rainfall will be enough, given the higher temperatures, and higher evapo-transpiration. At some point in the future, environmental issues will need to be taken seriously by city/state/federal voters and officials, because bigger problems may arise that will not be pleasant. Recommended actions to help are:

- Stay engaged politically: Ensure our elected officials keep a smart focus on environmental issues.
- Conservation: Fix leaks, reduce waste, consider rainwater barrels if feeding a large garden or landscape. Cover pools.
- Be fire conscious, particularly when outdoors at barbecues or similar events.
- Research and innovate: Study known solutions[4] and be active in developing new ones.

Want more? So do we. The Park Slope Food Coop Environmental Committee collects tips and hacks on issues of concern to the shopping members, so please feel welcome to reach out with additional information or suggestions at psfc.environmental.committee@gmail.com.

Notes

1. Hillary Howard, “New York City Drought Warning Declared for First Time in Over 20 Years,” *New York Times*, 11/08/24.
2. National Centers for Environmental Monitoring, website for meteorological site USW00094728, accessed 11/26/24.
3. Yuan et al., “A Global Transition to Flash Droughts under Climate Change,” *Science*, 2023
4. U.S. E.P.A., Prepare for Drought, www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/prepare-drought, accessed 11/29/24.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE REPORT

May 5, 2026



Banking on Change: Make a Difference at the Cash Register

By Alice Roche-Naude

At the Park Slope Food Coop, we're all about making mindful choices. We prefer to buy from local Earth-friendly producers. We recycle. We try to lead by example, educating ourselves and others about health and nutrition, cooperation and the environment. But our commitment to a healthy planet doesn't stop at the checkout aisle. Have you considered the environmental impact of your bank?

Your Money's Environmental Footprint: Kicking the Fossil Fuel Habit

Banks don't just store your money; they use it to fund various projects and industries. By choosing a sustainable bank, you can ensure your hard-earned cash isn't indirectly supporting practices that harm the environment. Traditional banks often invest heavily in fossil fuel companies. This fuels climate change, leading to extreme weather events, sea-level rise and disruptions to agriculture—all impacting our food system and communities.

"Since the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, the world's 60 largest banks have poured US$ 5.5 trillion into the fossil fuel industry," according to Banking on Climate Chaos, a report published by a coalition of civil society groups.

Banking with a Green Conscience: Divest from Fossil Fuel

The good news? There's a growing movement of sustainable banks that align with our Park Slope Food Coop spirit. These banks choose to divest, meaning they sell their investments in fossil fuel companies. Instead, they invest in projects that are more aligned with our values at the Coop. These banks might:

- Support Renewable Energy by investing in solar, wind and other renewable energy sources, promoting clean energy transition.
- Fund Sustainable Businesses through loans and investments directed towards sustainable agriculture, green building projects and eco-friendly businesses.

Making a Difference, One Dollar at a Time

By choosing a sustainable bank, you become part of a growing movement towards a greener economy. Here's how your decision can create a ripple effect:

- Put pressure on banks and big polluters with increased demand for sustainable banking. The realities of climate change put pressure on traditional banks to shift their practices, making fossil fuel expansion eventually too high a risk. Last month, Barclays announced they would stop directly financing new oil and gas projects.
- Invest in a healthy planet. Your money supports projects that combat climate change and promote environmental health.
- Align with Coop values. Choosing a sustainable bank reflects the same environmental consciousness we practice at the Coop.

Small Steps, Big Impact

Switching banks may seem like a small action, but collectively these choices have significant power. By aligning your banking choices with your values you can make a real difference for the environment and support a more sustainable future. Remember, every dollar counts and with conscious banking we can invest in a healthier planet, one transaction at a time.

Finding the Right Fit

Not all sustainable banks are created equal. Research their practices, investment strategies and commitment to environmental responsibility. Don’t be afraid to ask questions and compare options.

See these resources to find a fossil fuel free bank:

Mighty Deposits

Green America

1 Million Women

Green Portfolio

Alice Roche-Naude is a member of the Environmental Committee.