

The Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation

Timeline History Document 2017



Contents

Introduction	3
CWCF Beginnings.....	4
1992 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation	8
1993 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation	9
1994 Historic Joint Conference of the Canadian and FQCT Worker Co-op Federations	10
1996 Conference of the Canadian and Ontario Worker Co-op Federations	13
1997 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation	14
1998 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation	15
1999 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation	16
2000 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation	17
2001 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation	18
2002 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation	19
2003 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation	20
2004 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation	21
2005 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation	22
2006 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation	23
2007 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation	24
2008 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation	25
2009 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation & CoopZone	26
2010 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation & Coop Zone	27
2011 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation & CoopZone	28
2012 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation & CoopZone	29
2013 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation & Coop Zone	30
2014 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation & CoopZone	31
2015 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation & CoopZone	32
2016 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation & Coop Zone	33

Introduction

CWCF Beginnings

CWCF was federally incorporated under the Canada Co-operative Association Act on December 2nd, 1992.

According to the articles of incorporation, CWCF was formed as a non-profit organization to work for the development and expansion of business organized to cooperative principles and the principles of worker ownership and control and to promote the ideas of democracy in the workplace. Also CWCF was to provide leadership and a voice for worker co-operatives.

CWCF, upon organizing, had five regions: Atlantic (NB, NS, PEI, NFLD), Quebec, Ontario, Prairies (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and NWT), and BC (including Yukon). Directors were to be nominated regionally and ratified by CWCF at the AGM. They were elected for two-year terms.

Directors elected at the founding meeting in Antigonish in April, 1991: Cliff White (Atlantic), Bob Allen (Ontario), Nick Orton (Prairies) and Deb Foot (BC).

The history leading to the incorporation and the inaugural meeting April 17, 1991

Prior to the incorporation meeting the idea of a worker co-op federation evolved from the ideas of three worker co-op leaders. Bob Allen was at that time the financial manager of The Big Carrot, a Toronto worker co-op specializing in organic foods. Marty Frost was a general manager and worker owner of CRS Worker Co-op in Vancouver. Jack Quarter was the editor and publisher of Worker Co-op Magazine, a national publication produced quarterly. Allen, Frost and Quarter attended a meeting of NASCO (North American Students for Cooperation) in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Nov. 1989, where they together came to the conclusion that worker co-ops in Canada should have a federation to speak for them. Frost and Allen began work in late 1989 by proposing to the Co-op Secretariat that a national meeting be organized to determine if sufficient interest was there. Ken McCready of the Co-op Secretariat agreed to their request and it was Alain Roy who championed it for us and brought the Secretariat to the table in a big way. It (and he) has never left. Over the course of the first few years, the Secretariat was always there, they gave us contracts that funded us for the first few years, they supported the magazine, they've been great."

Frost says as he recalls the meeting came together in this way.

"I sort of drew in all the names on my contact list, as did Bob and Jack, we sort of bulk-mailed out notices. I'm not sure who else came in at this stage. CRS was very supportive of my doing this. We wanted to get in folks from the existing co-op sector, so invited Lynden Hillier, who was then executive director of CCA (which was at the time only three years old or so), the folks from the Secretariat, and pretty much everyone we could find an address for. We all put out all the feelers around worker co-ops that we'd even heard rumours about. I don't remember who was doing the contacts in the Maritimes, but we sure got great representation there." Frost says that the federation actually took shape at this meeting.

"I don't remember who all was involved in crafting the agenda, I'm guessing again that it was mostly the three of us. I also remember that we didn't really know how it would go. Our fear was that the folks there wouldn't see a need for a Federation, then what would we talk about for the rest of the time? The fear was unfounded. By noon of that first day, the group was electric! There was such positive energy for the idea. We workshopped out the creation of the mission statement, the vision, etc which was pretty much done by the end of the day. I think we met for a half-day on Sunday as well. I think that's where we presented the final wording for the vision and mission and it got adopted by the group. That's where we set up the interim steering committee (me, Peter, Huguette Girard, Jim Winter and Bob, I think, made up the steering committee) and set its terms of reference, task list, etc." at that meeting in 1990 in Ottawa where

20 people came together representing seven provinces. According to the registration records the following attended:

Ottawa meeting, 1990:

Alcide Bernard, PEI	Peter Hough, NS
Ron Grant, NS	Jim Winter, NF
Ralph Rogers, NF	Huguette Giard, PQ
James Richie, MB	Marty Frost, BC
Deb Foote, BC	Nick Orton, BC
David Lach, BC	Richard Roussein, PQ
Jacques Gauvin, PQ	Bob Allan, ON
Mary Lou Morgan, ON	Luc Labelle, ON
Maurice Laverty, ON	Paul Gibbard, ON
Jack Quarter, ON	

A steering committee was formed and the founding convention and 1st AGM was held in Antigonish, NS on April 5-7 at the Coady Institute. Seventy-five people attended. This was to create a structure that would with limited financial resources undertake in the next 10 years initiatives on behalf of its membership.

For a small organization CWCF has substantially impacted on the history of co-operatives in Canada during the last decade of the 20th century.

But the idea of a federation was discussed as early as 1980 by co-operative leaders involved in the the Future Directions Project.

In April, 1981, John Jordan authored a working paper “Developing Worker Co-operatives” as part of the Co-op Future Directions Project. In the opening he credited his interest in the subject from being a member of a worker co-op in 1971 and noted that ICA had recently (1980) endorsed them as a priority for development. Jordan was at that time adjunct assistant professor, Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University. Yet it took another 10 years for a Canadian federation to evolve.

Worker co-operatives were not a new idea. As far back as 1854 Rochdale Pioneers had started a cotton mill as a worker co-op. But the idea of worker co-op enterprise, perhaps ahead of its time changed and became more a “wholly owned subsidiary concept” during the next 30 years. In Canada after WWII, Quebec had notable worker co-op development. In Europe, strong worker co-op movements evolved in the 1950s in the Basque region in Spain and in the 1970’s France and Italy had success with worker co-op development.

Jordan noted that in the 20th century “democracy has advanced least in the world of work. Yet work is a central experience of adults; much of our sense of identity springs from our work.”

Jordan suggested in his concluding remarks: 1) a model be developed and legislation be made appropriate 2) a reliable access to funding be established 3) assured markets be established (government or other co-ops) to insure viability in the early stage. Today 20 years after Jordan’s paper and 10 years after the formation of the CWCF, the first two of his suggestions have been realized.

**Informal meeting while attending the Nasco (North American Students for Cooperation) Conference
In Ann Arbor, Michigan, November 1989**

Marty Frost, general manager and worker owner of CRS Worker Co-op in Vancouver, B.C.; Bob Allen, financial manager of The Big Carrot, Toronto, Ontario; and Jack Quarter, editor and publisher of Worker Co-op Magazine came to the conclusion that worker co-ops in Canada should have a Federation to speak for them.

Later in 1989 Marty Frost and Bob Allen proposed to Ken McCready of the Co-ops Secretariat that a national meeting be organized to determine if sufficient interest was there, and they agreed and provided funding. Alain Roy championed our request to the Co-op Secretariat and brought the Secretariat to the table in a big way, and the Secretariat and Alain supported CWCF from then on.

An invitation went out to Lynden Hillier, executive director of CCA, the folks from the Secretariat and pretty much everyone we could find an address for.

Meeting in Ottawa, February 1990

The Federation actually took shape at this meeting

Wording for the vision and mission were adopted by the group

Marty Frost, Peter Hough, Huguette Girard, Jim Winter and Bob Allen made up the steering committee and set its terms of reference, task list, etc.

20 people came together representing seven provinces

Registered participants

Alcide Bernard, PEI
Peter Hough, NS
Ron Grant, NS
Jim Winter, NF
Ralph Rogers, NF
Huguette Giard, PQ
James Richie, MB
Marty Frost, BC
Deb Foote, BC
Nick Orton, BC

David Lach, BC
Richard Roussein, PQ
Jacques Gauvin, PQ
Bob Allen, ON
Mary Lou Morgan, ON
Luc Labelle, ON
Maurice Laverty, ON
Paul Gibbard, ON
Jack Quarter, ON

**1991 Founding Convention and the 1st AGM of the Canadian Worker Co-op
Federation
Coady Institute, Antigonish, Nova Scotia, April 5 – 7, 1991**

Theme: Founding of the Federation

Speakers

Keynote Speaker - Alexandra Wilson, Director of the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada
Ian MacPherson, President of the Canadian Co-operative Association

Highlights and Achievements

Received a Co-operatives Secretariat contract to study capitalization in Worker Co-ops
Objectives, articles and by-laws were agreed upon, as was the worker co-op dues formula.

Staff Volunteer

Peter Hough

Board of Directors

Bob Allen – Ontario Region
Nick Orton – Prairie/NWT Region
Cliff White – Atlantic Region
Deb Foote – B.C. Region/Yukon
Huguette Giard – liaison, Quebec Region
Jacques Gauvin – represented Quebec on the taxation committee

1992 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation

Camp Alexandra, Crescent Beach, B.C. March 27 – 29, 1992

Theme: The Role of Worker Co-ops in Community Economic Development

Speakers

Judith Martin, Administrator of the Saskatoon Community Clinic

Panels

Noel Stoodley, Director of Field Services for the C.L.C.

Shane Simpson, Worker Ownership Resource Center in B.C.

Maureen Lavery, Our Times

Highlights and Achievements

CWCF started lobbying for worker co-op development centres.

Staff

Peter Hough – Executive Director

Hazel Corcoran – Corporate Secretary

Board of Directors

Louise Champagne – Prairie Region

John Brouwer – Ontario Region

Nick Orton – B.C. Region

Cliff White – Atlantic Region

Hugette Girard – contact for Quebec Region

1993 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation

The First Nations Education and Training Centre Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, October 1 - 4, 1993

Theme: Worker Co-op Development and Growth

Highlights and Achievements

- CWCF was incorporated December, 1992
- CWCF successfully lobbied Revenue Canada along with the Quebec Forestry Co-op Conference (now Federation) to allow members to place shares in worker co-ops in RRSP's, thus deferring tax and facilitating capitalization. Subsequently CWCF worked with Concentra Financial to have Concentra offer a program for self-directed RRSPs in their co-ops to CWCF members.
- Participated in Growth Task Force of the Canadian Co-operative Association.
- CWCF met with Chaviva Hosek, Director of Policy and Research, and her staff; Robert Theriault, Human Resources Department; Pierre Gireau, Executive Assistant to the Minister of Trade; David Chase and George Woods, Ministry of Industry; and Warren Kinsella, Executive Assistant to the Minister of Government Services of the Federal Government to solicit support for a Proposed Co-op Venture Capital Fund and for an amendment to the Income Tax Act regarding Labour sponsored Venture Capital Corporations.
- CWCF was invited to join CICOPA
- Director Nick Orton attended ICA conference in Tokyo

Staff

Peter Hough – Executive Director

Hazel Corcoran – Corporate Secretary

Board of Directors

Mark Goldblatt – Ontario Region

Louise Champagne – Prairie Region

Jackie Somerville – B.C. Region

Cliff White – Atlantic Region

Pierre Laberge – Quebec Advisor

1994 Historic Joint Conference of the Canadian and FQCT Worker Co-op Federations

**University of Quebec
Montreal, Quebec, December 2 – 4, 1994**

Theme: Member Services, Member Linkages: The Role of our Federations

Speakers

Keynote Speaker – Euclide Chiasson of Co-op Atlantic

At the Saturday night Banquet the FQCT presented – 1st Annual Recipient of the “Worker Co-op Merit

December 2, 1994 9:30 p.m. HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUEBEC WORKER CO-OP MOVEMENT – JULIETTE BONNEVILLE (Director of Economic Development with the Desjardins Movement; formerly Executive Director of the Conseil de la coopération du Quebec)

Facilitator Jean-Pierre Girard, UQAM

Welcome and Introduction to the Conference

Mauro Malservisi, Director, Chaire de Coopération Guy-Bernier, UQAM

Address by Majella St. Pierre, President of the Conseil Canadien de la coopération and Exec. Dir. Of the Conseil de la coopération du Quebec.

Address by Barbara Milsap, Vice-President of the Canadian Co-operative Association

Appreciation

Award” to Paul-Andre Boucher, a worker co-op activist for over 20 years and at that time with the Regroupement Quebecois des Coopérateurs et Cooperatrices de travail (RQCCT)

Highlights and Achievement

- In the early 1990’s the Ontario Worker Co-op Federation ran a worker co-op development program funded by the Ontario government. OWCF also supported CWCF quite substantially in order to help build a strong national component.

Staff

Peter Hough – Executive Director

Hazel Corcoran – Corporate Secretary

Board of Directors

Mark Goldblatt – Ontario Director (and 1st President)

Cliff White – Atlantic Director (and Vice-President)

Jackie Somerville – British Columbia/Yukon Director (and Treasurer)

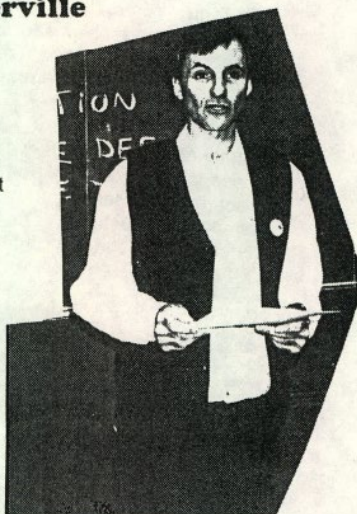
April Bourgeois – Prairie/NWT Director

Pierre Laberge – Quebec Advisor

**Hazel Corcoran, Seán Hennessey
and Jackie Somerville**

The Canadian Worker Co-op Federation* (CWCF) and The Quebec Worker Co-op Federation (FQCT) held a joint conference and annual general meetings in Montreal, December 2 -4, 1994. This was the first time the two federations had held a joint conference. The theme of the conference was "Member Services, Members Linkages: The Role of our Federations. The major direction coming out of the AGMs was an emphasis on new alliances. Multistakeholder and shareholder co-ops are now eligible for full membership in the CWCF. Another sentiment that was common was the emphasis on working together across the nation no matter what happens politically. The CWCF will continue to work on the federal level lobbying, encouraging more information sharing among worker co-ops and seeking resources for worker co-op development.

The CWCF is set up on a regional basis and two regions provided particularly interesting information. Quebec has 3,300 co-ops, including credit unions. Government support has been important. John Brouwer provided an excellent summary of the Ontario Worker Co-op Federation's mission and work, which is advanced for the rest of Canada but still well behind that of Quebec. The conference included tours of worker co-ops in the Montreal area, including Harpell Printers, Scopcat, CACI Consultants and ACPAV Audio-visual. ACPAV has been operating for about 20 years. Scopcat recycles tires to produce a variety of products such as rubber hangings, bushings, mats, bumpers, granules and...



Marcel Arteau of FQCT

Worker Co-operation Vol. 1 No4 Fall 1994 1

1995

1996 Conference of the Canadian and Ontario Worker Co-op Federations

**Room 308, Metro Hall, 55 John Street,
Toronto, Ontario, May 31 – June 2, 1996**

Theme: Ingredients for Co-op Success

Highlights and Achievements

- Discussion of a “Developers’ Network” plan
- CWCF did research on the Employment Insurance Rules in relation to Worker Co-operatives (with support of the Co-operatives Secretariat), and started to provide this information to members.
- Plan to encourage members to use the RRSP Program which was recently established by CWCF and Co-op Trust (now Concentra Financial) to enable worker co-ops to take advantage of the new RRSP regulations.
- Discussion of a Web site

Staff

Hazel Corcoran – Executive Director

Peter Hough – Chief Financial Officer

Board of Directors

Mark Goldblatt – Ontario Director (and President for most of the year)

Greg O’Neill – Atlantic Director (briefly President, from June through August)

Marty Frost – B.C./Yukon Director (and Treasurer)

Mitch Diamontopoulos – Director for the Prairie Region

1997 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation

**Bowen Lodge by the Sea, Bowen Island, B.C.
October 10 – 12, 1997**

Theme: Building Strong Regions

Speakers

Keynote Speaker – Lynden Hillier, Executive Director of the Federal Co-operatives Secretariat and past Executive Director of the Canadian Co-operative Association.

Highlights and Achievements

- CWCF did a survey on whether there was interest among WC Developers in forming a Worker Co-op Developers' Network, with support from the Co-operatives Secretariat.
- Marty Frost was chair of Development Committee of the CCA region, which means he is also a member of the region's executive.
- Created the Worker Co-op Award of Merit
- Decided that there is a need for a database
- CWCF to twin with Shanghai co-ops

Staff

Hazel Corcoran – Executive Director

Peter Hough – Financial Officer

Board of Directors

Mark Goldblatt – Ontario Director (and President)

Pat Hann – Atlantic Director

April Bourgeois – Prairies, NWT Director

Marty Frost – B.C. & Yukon Region (and Treasurer)

1998 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation

**Memramcook Institute, Moncton,
New Brunswick, November 20 – 22, 1998**

Theme: Creating Lasting Employment: The CWCF Job Creation Fund

Speakers

Carl-Eric Guertin of the Quebec W.C. Federation.

Awards

1st Annual Worker Co-op Award of Merit to Ron Grant of Future Forestry Services Co-op

Highlights and Achievements

- CWCF successfully negotiated new administrative fees with Co-op Trust for our jointly administered Self-Directed RRSP plan.
- CWCF sought and obtained a contract with HRDC to research and document how the worker co-op sector could contribute to job creation and maintenance.

Staff

Hazel Corcoran – Executive Director

Peter Hough – Financial Officer

Board of Directors

Mark Goldblatt – Ontario Director (and President)

Jeff Moore – Atlantic Director

Marty Frost – B.C. & Yukon Director (and Treasurer)

April Bourgeois – Prairie & NWT Director

Gilles Tardif – advisor for Quebec Region

1999 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation

Centre 7400, Montreal, Quebec
November 12 – 14, 1999

Theme: Co-operation without Borders

Speakers

Keynote Speaker – Walter Tesch of the Brazilian worker Co-op movement and President of the new CICOPA-Americas region.

Commentary by Gilles Tardif, president of the Quebec W.C. Federation

Awards

Worker Co-op Merit Award went to Peter Hough

Highlights and Achievements

- Negotiations for a Capital Fund were progressing with CWCF providing three different versions of the pilot proposal.
- Quebec caucus agreed to accept a limited form of membership in the CWCF for the first time ever.
- The new Federation of Regional Development Co-ops of Quebec expressed its interest in joining forces with the worker co-op movement.
- The informal North American sub-committee of CICOPA-Americas was created, under the leadership of Walter Tesch.

Staff

Hazel Corcoran – Executive Director

Peter Hough – Financial Officer/Fund Manager

Lori Hough – Administrative Assistant

Board of Directors

Mark Goldblatt – Ontario Director (and President)

Maureen MacLean – Atlantic Director (and Vice-President)

Lynn Hannley – Prairies, NWT, NU Director (and Vice –President)

Marty Frost – B.C. & Yukon Region (and Treasurer)

Gilles Tardif – advisor for Quebec Region

John Brouwer – advisor

2000 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation

John Paul II Centre, Regina, Saskatchewan November 3 - 5, 2000

Theme: Financing and Growing Worker Co-ops – The Worker Co-op Fund

Speakers

Marty Frost, FWC B.C. Devco, Vancouver, B.C.
Deb Chobotuk, Saskatchewan Region of CCA

Highlights and Achievements

- Approval received for a Fund pilot project from Human Resources Development Canada after lobbying the Government since 1993.
- Took first steps to launch the Worker Co-op Developers' Network

Staff

Hazel Corcoran – Executive Director
Peter Hough – Financial Officer/Fund Manager
Praem Poobalan – Fund Assistant
Lori Hough – Bookkeeper and Conference Administrator

Board of Directors

Mark Goldblatt – Ontario Director (and President)
Maureen MacLean – Atlantic Director (and Vice-President)
Lynn Hannley – Prairies, NWT, NU Director (and Vice – President)
Marty Frost – B.C. & Yukon Region (and Treasurer)
Gilles Tardif – advisor for Quebec Region



Worker Co-operative Developers' Network
The CWCF has formed the Network to help ensure there are competent consulting resources available to groups wishing to start worker co-ops or who need assistance in their co-op dealings.

Worker Co-op Capital Fund
The CWCF has obtained a \$1.5 million capital fund, plus funding to cover administration for two years, from Human Resources Development Canada. The Fund will help capitalise worker co-operatives and provide leverage to obtain conventional financing. It will work in conjunction with the Developers' Network, which will provide the development capacity.

The co-ops in which the Fund invests will have to fit one of the following criteria:
(1) job-threatening situations, i.e. closures from existing businesses which are threatened with closure; or
(2) job-creation situations where approximately one-half of those hired are people who are currently receiving EI or who have done so in the previous three years.

The Fund will be operational December, 2000. For information contact fund manager, Peter Hough
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Canadian Worker Co-op Federation
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Vision
To develop and support an integrated network of democratically controlled worker co-ops which provide a high quality work-life, and which work together to support the development of healthy and sustainable local economies, based on co-op principles.

Mission
To recruit and co-ordinate national development resources, to develop support for the worker co-op spirit both within the co-op sector and within government throughout Canada, and to create an infrastructure to enable Accredited Regional Federations to provide value-added business services to their member worker co-ops.

Membership
Regular membership is open to any worker co-op in Canada which supports the objectives of the Federation. The CWCF also has two other classes of membership: Associate Members and Worker Co-operative Developer Members. Associate membership is open to any organization that supports the objectives of the Federation. Worker Co-operative Developer membership is open to individuals and organizations that are working in or supporting co-operative development initiatives.

Objectives
The Federation was formed:
• To work for the development and expansion of businesses organized according to co-operative principles and the principles of worker ownership and control, and to promote the ideals of democracy in the work place.
• To provide leadership and a voice for worker co-operatives by creating a vision and a strategy for the development of worker co-operatives in Canada.
• To represent the interests of worker co-operatives to the co-op sector, governments, other organizations and the public.
• To create and maintain adequate resources for the development of existing and new worker co-operatives, both alone and in co-operation with others.
• To increase support for, and understanding of, worker co-operatives.
• To provide forums for networking between worker co-operatives and support for regional and industrial actions on appropriate issues, and to encourage the development of worker co-operatives internationally.

Benefits of Membership
Members can access information on issues such as EI eligibility, taxation, sweat equity, other worker co-ops etc.
Through membership in the CWCF members have access to a large co-operative buying group sponsored by the CCA. Currently discounts on office supplies and long distance are available.
Members of the CWCF have access to the CWCF-Co-operative Trust Company's RRSF program. The program facilitates the members of a worker co-operative to invest the share of their worker co-operative in the individual member's self-directed RRSF set up under the program.
Members receive discounts on fees and travel subsidies to attend the CWCF conference. The conference includes training workshops, worker co-op business tours and grant socializing.
Members have the opportunity to seek election as a director of the CWCF.
The CWCF is committed to ensuring that worker co-operatives have a level playing field with other forms of business, and members share in this benefit.



2001 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation

Loyola House, Guelph, Ontario November 16 – 18, 2001
10th Anniversary

Theme: Vision for a Vibrant Worker Co-op Sector

Speakers

Welcome speech from Karen Farbridge, Mayor of Guelph

Keynote Speaker – Doug Davison, senior vice-president of the Crocus Investment Fund in Winnipeg

Awards

Worker Co-op Merit Award went to Jack Quarter, an important thinker, author, and advocate for worker co-ops in Canada over the past twenty years.

Highlights and Achievements

- Anniversary booklet compiled for the 10th annual general meeting of the CWCF in 2001 was prepared by Maureen MacLean, Claudette McNeill and Brenda MacKinnon, member owners of Rising Tide Co-operative Ltd.
- Peter Hough and Marty Frost carried out a successful worker co-op development project in Mongolia which extended our links internationally.
- Resolution passed to formalize a youth advisor position to the Board.
- “Ballad of CWCF” was written.
- Loans were placed in : Wild Island Foods (Sointula, BC), Moncton Restaurant Equipment Co-op, and the Atikokan Fish Co-operative, and several others.

Staff

Hazel Corcoran – Executive Director

Peter Hough – Financial Officer/Fund Manager

Susan Nabors – Fund Assistant

Lori Hough – Bookkeeper and Conference Administrator

Board of Directors

Mark Goldblatt – Ontario Director (and President)

Maureen MacLean – Atlantic Director (and Vice-President)

April Bourgeois – Prairies, NWT, NU Director (and Vice –President)

Marty Frost – B.C. & Yukon Region (and Treasurer)

Gilles Tardif – advisor for Quebec Region

2002 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation

**Villa Maria Retreat House,
Winnipeg, Manitoba, November 14 – 17, 2002**

Theme: Developing Leadership

Speakers

Keynote Speaker – Tim Huet, Lawyer/Consultant serving Worker Co-ops, member of the Arizmendi Development & Support Co-operative
Louise Champagne, President of Neechi Foods Co-op and one of the founders

Awards

Worker Co-op Merit Award went to Louise Champagne

Highlights and Achievements

- Tenacity Works Fund continues. Loans were placed in: La Siembra Co-op (Ottawa), Prairie Dog (Regina), Nell's Garden Co-op (Nova Scotia), Come as You Are (Toronto), and more.
- Lobbied with the rest of the co-op sector for a federal Co-operative Development Initiative, and the lobby succeeded.

Staff

Hazel Corcoran – Executive Director
Peter Hough – Financial Officer/Fund Manager
Lori Hough – Bookkeeper and Conference Administrator
Susan Nabors – Fund Assistant

Board

Mark Goldblatt – Ontario Director (and President)
Maureen MacLean – Atlantic Director (and Vice-President)
April Bourgeois - Prairies, NWT, NU Director (and Vice-President)
Marty Frost – B.C. & Yukon Region (and Treasurer)
Gilles Tardif – advisor for Quebec Region

2003 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation

Bowen Island, B.C. November 14 – 16, 2003

Theme: Supports for Workplace Democracy

Speakers

Keynote Speaker – Mike Lewis, Center for Community Enterprise
Dr. Ian McPherson, B.C. Institute for Co-op Studies

Awards

Worker Co-op Merit Award was not awarded

Highlights and Achievements

- CWCF became an advisory services delivery partner in the Co-operative Development Initiative.
- The Fund invested in la Coopérative de solidarité Boirec (Maniwaki, Que), Organic Planet (Winnipeg), Café Chaos (Montreal), and Little Slokan / Laughing Coyote (Nakusp, BC) and several others.
- CWCF completed the successful pilot period of the Fund, and pursued capitalization strategies that would allow the Fund to become self-sustaining.
- Colin MacDougall of La Siembra was appointed Youth Advisor to the CWCF board

Staff

Hazel Corcoran – Executive Director
Peter Hough – Financial Officer/Fund Manager
Lori Hough – Bookkeeper and Conference Administrator
Michelle Kowalski – Executive Assistant

Board

Mark Goldblatt – Ontario Director (and President)
Maureen MacLean – Atlantic Director (and Vice-President East)
April Bourgeois – Prairies, NWT, NU Director (and Vice –President West)
Marty Frost – B.C. & Yukon Region (and Treasurer)
Gilles Tardif – advisor for Quebec Region
Colin MacDougall – youth advisor



2004 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation

**Memramcook Institute, near Moncton New Brunswick
October 28 – 30, 2004**

Theme: Making Co-ops Work – Practical Learnings

Speakers

Keynote Speaker – Normand Campeau, MCE Conseils, Learnings from the Quebec Development Experience

Awards

Worker Co-op Merit Award went to Gilles Tardif

Highlights and Achievements

- Research on the Worker Co-op option for retiring owners/business succession to Worker Co-ops was undertaken, funded by the Innovations and Research program of CDI.

Staff

Hazel Corcoran – Executive Director
Peter Hough – Financial Officer/Fund Manager
Lori Hough – Bookkeeper and Conference Administrator
Christine Michell – Administrative Assistant

Board

Mark Goldblatt – Ontario Director (and President)
David Daughton – Atlantic Director (and Vice-President)
April Bourgeois – Prairies, NWT, NU Director (and Vice-President)
Marty Frost – B.C. & Yukon Region (and Treasurer)
Gilles Tardif advisor – Quebec Region
Colin MacDougall – youth advisor

2005 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation

The Centre 7400, Montreal, Quebec, November 17 – 19, 2005

Theme: Building Strong Worker Co-ops

Speakers

Lise Jacob, Director, Co-operatives Directorate, Quebec Government
And Nancy Neamtan, Executive Director of the Chantier de l'économie sociale.

Awards

Worker Co-op Merit Award went to Peter Cameron

Highlights and Achievements

- The Co-operatives Secretariat asked CWCF if it would administer the CoopZone Network of Co-op Developers, and CWCF accepted.
- Tenacity Works Fund– now in the 5th year of operations and continuing to seek additional capital, notably under the federal Social Economy program. CWCF's proposal to administer \$5 million under this program in the Fednor region was initially accepted, but the program was cancelled after the change in the federal government.

Staff

Hazel Corcoran – Executive Director
Peter Hough – Financial Officer/Fund Manager
Lori Hough – Bookkeeper and Conference Administrator
Holly Magnus – Administrative Assistant

Board

Mark Goldblatt – Ontario Director (and President)
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April Bourgeois – Prairies, NWT, NU Director (and Vice –President)
Marty Frost – B.C. & Yukon Region (and Treasurer)
Marc Paquette – advisor for Quebec Region
Colin MacDougall – youth advisor

2006 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation

**Providence Renewal Centre,
Edmonton, Alberta November 16 – 18, 2006**

Theme: Taking Global to Local

Speakers

Keynote – Worker Co-ops Around the World by Javier Salaberria, President, International Worker Co-op Federation (CICOPA); President, Confederation of Basque Co-operatives, Mondragon and a member of the Board of CEPES (Spanish Entrepreneurial Confederation of the Social Economy)

Awards

Worker Co-op Merit Award went to Multicultural Health Brokers Co-op

Highlights and Achievements

- CWCF now offers the self-directed RRSP program directly to our members, with Concentra Financial as the bare trustee.
- CWCF supported the creation of the Prairie Labour - Worker Co-op Council to enable collaboration among worker co-op and trade union activists, to support attempted worker buy-outs especially in the forestry sector, and to draft guides for trade unions. CWCF co-hosted a seminar to launch the Council.
- TW Fund loans were placed in La Siembra, Planet Bean, and the Calgary and Region Taxi Drivers' Co-op.

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Marty Frost – B.C. & Yukon Region (and Treasurer)
Marc Paquette – advisor for Quebec Region
Colin MacDougall – youth advisor

2007 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation

Canterbury Hills, Ancaster, Ontario, November 22 – 24, 2007

Theme: Worker Co-ops and Community Sustainability

Speakers

Keynote Speaker – Lynn Williams, President Emeritus of the United Steelworkers of America

Awards

Worker Co-op Merit Award went to Mark Goldblatt

Highlights and Achievements

- CWCF changed its bylaws to enable direct membership by worker co-ops, and to have a distinct membership category for Regional Federations, with modest dues.
- We worked on developing a diagnostic tool (later called the “Co-op Index”) for worker co-op performance based upon multiple bottom lines including assessing worker participation, and actualizing the co-op principles and values within the co-op’s operations.
- CWCF co-hosted a second seminar with leaders of the union movement in the Prairies to discuss the possibilities for financing union-led employee buy-outs of large or medium-sized businesses.
- CWCF became a member of The Co-operators.

Staff

Hazel Corcoran – Executive Director

Peter Hough – Financial Officer/Fund Manager

Lori Hough – Bookkeeper and Conference Administrator

Adrian Yip – Administrative Assistant

Board

April Bourgeois – Prairies, NWT, NU Director (and President)

David Daughton – Atlantic Director (and Vice-President)

Marty Frost – B.C. & Yukon Region

Colin MacDougall – Ontario Director

Marc Paquette – advisor for Quebec Region

2008 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation

**Laureate's Landing Conference Centre
Winnipeg, Manitoba November 13 – 15, 2008**

Theme: Co-ops that Work!

Keynote Panel: Co-ops that work! – Is Your Worker Co-op Working, and How Do You Know? What are the Criteria You Use to Evaluate That? Peter Hough provided an introduction and moderated a panel of 3 worker-owners in different worker co-operatives: Colin MacDougall, La Siembra Co-op (Ottawa); Emily Stevens, Organic Planet Worker Co-op (Winnipeg) and Alain Bridault, Orion Coop (Quebec City).

Awards

Worker Co-op Merit Award went to SEED Winnipeg

Highlights and Achievements

- After many years of outreach to Quebec, it was truly historic for CWCF to be able to welcome *le Réseau de la coopération du travail du Québec* and *la Fédération québécoise des coopératives forestières* to membership.
- CWCF carried out a member relations project which took staff to several different regions across the country to meet with worker co-ops.
- CWCF co-hosted a third seminar with leaders of the union movement to discuss how the labour movement and co-operative movement could collaborate more effectively.
- CWCF's Diversity Committee developed a set of criteria for board candidates.

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April Bourgeois – Prairie, NWT, NU Director (and President)
Marty Frost – B.C. & Yukon Region
Colin MacDougall – Ontario Director
Alain Bridault – Quebec Director
Eric Tusz-King – Atlantic Director (and Vice-President)
Yuill Herbert – Director-at-Large
Tigist Dafla – Director-at-Large

2009 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation & CoopZone

Centre Memramcook Resort, Moncton, New Brunswick

November 19 – 21, 2009

Theme: From Crisis to Recovery

Speakers

Keynote speaker – Elizabeth May, leader of the Green Party of Canada

Awards

Worker Co-op Merit Award went to David Daughton

Highlights and Achievements

- CWCF produced a draft guide called “Starting a Worker Co-op: A Canadian Handbook” for new worker cooperators with the support of the Innovation and Research program of the Cooperative Development Initiative.
- CWCF researched and wrote a paper on worker co-op development as a strategy for immigrants.
- CWCF welcomed la Fédération des coopératives de paramédics to membership.
- CoopZone was incorporated as a separate entity in 2009, with CWCF managing it on contract.

Staff

Hazel Corcoran – Executive Director

Peter Hough – Financial Officer/Fund Manager

Lori Hough – Bookkeeper and Conference Administrator

Adrian Yip – Administrative Assistant

Board

Alain Bridault – Quebec Director (and President)

Lee Fuge – B.C. & Yukon Region

April Bourgeois – Prairie, NWT, NU Director

Colin MacDougall – Ontario Director

Eric Tusz-King – Atlantic Director (and Vice-President)

Yuill Herbert – Director-at-Large

Tigist Dafla – Director-at-Large

2010 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation & Coop Zone

YWCA Hotel, Vancouver, B.C. October 28 – 30, 2010

Theme: Worker Co-operatives and Sustainable Development

Speakers

Keynote Speaker – Peter Robinson, CEO, David Suzuki Foundation – The Role of Worker Co-ops in Building the Green Economy

Awards

Worker Co-op Merit Award went to Marty Frost

Worker Co-op Best Practices Award went to Dominion Newspaper/Media Co-op

Highlights and Achievements

- CWCF started its regular e-newsletter.
- CWCF did research in order to find out what factors were most important to a growing, dynamic worker co-op movement in a country, with a view to informing CWCF's lobby strategy.
- CWCF wrote a research paper on employment law in worker co-operatives.

Staff

Hazel Corcoran – Executive Director

Peter Hough – Financial Officer/Fund Manager

Lori Hough – Bookkeeper and Conference Administrator

Position added for Communications and Member Services Manager; David Wilson hired

Board

Alain Bridault – Quebec Director (and President)

Colin MacDougall – Ontario Director (and Treasurer)

Eric Tusz-King – Atlantic Director

Jamie Campbell – Prairies/NWT/NU Director

Lee Fuge – British Columbia/Yukon Director

Claude Jourdain – Director-at-Large

Reba Plummer – Director-at-Large

2011 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation & CoopZone

**with the Réseau de la coopération du travail du Québec (RESEAU) (& others)
Clarion Hotel, Quebec City, Quebec October 13 – 15, 2011**

Themes:

- 1) International Business Succession and Employee Ownership Conference**
- 2) North America Worker Co-op Conference**

Speakers

Keynote Speakers - Marie-Claude Boisvert, Chief Operating Officer of Desjardins Venture Capital
Amy Goodman, Journalist and Founder, Democracy Now!, United States
Bruno Blais, founding member and General Manager, La Barberie, Quebec

Steven Blaney, Federal Member of Parliament for Levis-Bellechasse
Rebecca Kemble, US FWC President

Bruno Roelants, General Secretary, International Organization of Industrial, Artisanal and Service Producers' Cooperatives (CICOPA)

Rejean Lantagne, Executive Director, Societe de cooperation pour le developpement international (SOCODEVI) and the Canadian Representative to the International Co-operative Alliance-Americas Region (ICA-Americas)

Highlights and Achievements

- Formation of CICOPA – North America
- Alain Bridault joined the Executive Committee of CICOPA, the international worker co-op organization.
- RRSP rules were changed: meaning that no one holding more than 10% of shares of any class in a worker co-op could use the program.
- CoopZone on-line training program on co-op development was launched.

Staff

Hazel Corcoran – Executive Director
Peter Hough – Financial Officer/Fund Manager
Lori Hough – Bookkeeper and Conference Administrator retires after 11 valuable years
David Wilson – Communications Manager

Board

Alain Bridault – Director-at-Large (and President)
Eric Tusz-King – Atlantic Director
Lee Fuge – British Columbia/Yukon Director (and Treasurer)
Jamie Campbell – Prairies, NWT/NU Director
Jessica Provencher – Quebec Director
Reba Plummer – Ontario Director
Yuill Herbert – Director-at-Large (and Vice-President)

2012 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation & CoopZone

Canterbury Hills, Ancaster, Ontario November 8 - 10, 2012
International Year of Co-operatives

Theme: Building Strong Worker Co-ops – to Build a Better World: Surviving and Thriving of a Co-op

Speakers

Keynote Speakers – Annanda DeSilva and Jack Lamon, Come As You Are Co-operative

Awards

Worker Co-op Merit Award went to Alain Roy

Highlights, Achievements and Bad News

- CWCF was actively engaged in activities of the UN-declared International Year of Co-operatives in 2012.
- CoopZone Legal Network was launched.
- CWCF passed an AGM resolution to pledge \$250,000.00 to the National Co-operative Development Fund.
- Co-operatives Secretariat was closed, and responsibility for co-operatives was moved to Industry Canada.
- CDI (Co-operative Development Initiative) program was cancelled

Staff

Hazel Corcoran – Executive Director
Peter Hough – Financial Officer/Fund Manager
James Mitchell – Communications Manager
Pamela Farrow – RRSP Program Manager and Bookkeeper

Board

Alain Bridault – Director-at-Large (and President)
Eric Tusz-King – Atlantic Director (and Vice-President)
Boris Schaffer – British Columbia/Yukon Director
Jamie Campbell – Prairies, NWT and NU Director
Jessica Provencher – Quebec Director
Reba Plummer – Ontario Director (Treasurer)
Yuill Herbert – Director-at-Large

2013 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation & Coop Zone

St. Albert, Alberta, November 7 – 9, 2013

Theme: Educating Each Other for Empowerment

Speakers

Keynote Speaker – Yvonne Chiu and other members of the Multicultural Health Brokers Co-op shared their story of how they built their worker co-op that empowers immigrant workers.

Rebecca Kemble, President of the US Federation of Worker Co-ops

Awards

Worker Co-op Merit Award went to Lynn Hannley

Highlights and Achievements

- CWCF became a founding member of Co-operatives and Mutuels Canada
- CWCF created a Worker Co-op Business Succession Committee
- Key Highlights of the Conference included Worker Co-op Showcase Ignite presentations, presentations and discussion of the Indivisible Reserve and a session on Effective Meetings and Decision-Making in a Worker Co-op.

Staff

Hazel Corcoran – Executive Director

Peter Hough – Financial Officer/Fund Manager

Kaye Grant – Communications Manager

Pamela Farrow – RRSP Program Manager.

Board

Alain Bridault – Director-at-Large (and President)

Eric Tusz-King –Atlantic Director (and Vice-President)

Stephen Elliot – Buckley, British Columbia/Yukon Director

Jamie Campbell – Prairies, NWT and NU Director (and Treasurer)

Jessica Provencher – Quebec Director

Reba Plummer – Ontario Director

Yuill Herbert – Director-at-Large

2014 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation & CoopZone

Old Orchard Inn, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, November 6 - 8, 2014

Theme Co-operative Collaborations: Member Engagement & External Partnerships

Speaker

Keynote Speaker – Jose Orbaiceta, President of CICOPA-Mercosur, from Argentina, Building the Worker Co-op Movement in Argentina

Awards

Worker Co-op Merit Award went to Kevin Thomson (posthumously)

The Worker Co-op Best Practices Award went to Careforce Homecare, for their Co-op Member Orientation Program

Tribute to Peter Hough upon retirement – for providing vision, strategic direction, on-the-ground work and tireless dedication.

Highlights and Achievements

- Since 2010 CWCF carried out consultations and education about the indivisible reserve. The result of the consultations was that most members supported seeking preferential tax treatment for those worker co-operatives with an indivisible reserve.
- CWCF defined its lobby priorities.

Staff

Hazel Corcoran – Executive Director

Peter Hough – Financial Officer/Fund Manager

Kaye Grant – Communications Manager

Kristin Glenn – RRSP Program Manager and Bookkeeper

Jess Noriega-Lessard, Four Month Intern – Administrative Helper

Board

Alain Bridault – Director-at-Large (and President)

Eric Tusz-King –Atlantic Director (and Vice-President)

Stephen Elliot-Buckley – British Columbia/Yukon Director (and Treasurer)

Jamie Campbell – Prairies, NWT/NU Director

Jessica Provencher – Quebec Director

Reba Plummer – Ontario Director

Yuill Herbert – Director-at-Large

2015 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation & CoopZone

**in collaboration with the Quebec RESEAU
Lord Berri Hotel, Montreal, QC, October 29-31, 2015**

Theme: Building Bridges / Pour Réussir Ensemble

Speakers

Keynote Speaker – Esteban Kelly, USFWC's New Co-Executive Director

Awards

The Mark Goldblatt Worker Co-op Merit Award went to Isabel Faubert Mailloux, Strategic Development Advisor at the Quebec Worker Co-op Réseau . (CWCF named its Merit Award after its past president Mark Goldblatt, who passed away suddenly in early 2015.)

The Worker Co-op Best Practices Award went to Les Constructions Ensemble Worker Co-operative of Quebec City, for its management succession process

Highlights and Achievements

- CWCF launched a new web site.
- CWCF did a Member Road Trip to meet and get to know most of our membership.
- CWCF added the option of TFSA's to the RRSP program
- CWCF signed an agreement with the Worker Co-op Confederation in France (CGSCOP) to enable sharing of resources regarding worker co-op business succession
- Issued the CWCF Climate Change Statement – advocating a focus on an integrated regulatory approach to reducing GHG emissions in Canada
- At this Conference in Montreal there was a strong sense that the Quebec-based worker co-operators and those from the rest of Canada were truly part of one movement

Staff

Hazel Corcoran – Executive Director

Kaye Grant – Communications Manager

Kristin Glenn – RRSP Program Manager and Bookkeeper (on maternity leave)

Jocelyn Durston – RRSP Program Manager (during Kristin's maternity leave)

Board

Alain Bridault – President

Eric Tusz-King – Atlantic Director (and Vice-President)

Stephen Elliott-Buckley – British Columbia/Yukon Director (and Treasurer)

Jamie Campbell – Prairies, NWT and Nunavut Director

Jessica Provencher – Quebec Director

Reba Plummer – Ontario Director

Yuill Herbert – Director-at-Large

2016 Conference of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation & Coop Zone

**Sandman Hotel and YWCA Hotel
Vancouver, B.C., November 3 – 5, 2016**

Theme: Solidarity Works – CWCF Celebrating 25 Years

Speakers

Keynote Speaker

Kathy Bardswick, CEO of the Co-operators – “Solidarity in the Co-operative Movement”

Presenters

Rebecca Kemble, US FWC President and City Councilor, Madison, Wisconsin

Jessica Gordon-Nembhard, Professor, Dept. of African American Studies, City University of New York (CUNY), and member, Grassroots Economic Organizing Collective

Isabel Faubert, Executive Director, Quebec WC Network/Reseau de la cooperation du travail du Quebec

Andy Broderick, Vice President of Impact Market Development at Vancity

Tracey Kliesch, General Manager and CEO CCEC Credit Union “Financing Worker Co-ops”

Awards

Melanie Conn winner of the 2016 Mark Goldblatt Worker Co-op Merit Award

Music by Juno Award-winning musician Bill Bourne

Highlights and Achievements

- The Tenacity Works Fund committed two loans : to the Grain Exchange, and REV Language Co-op.
- CWCF worked with a group of partners including Smart Change and the US FWC to submit a proposal for a 3-year initiative to the McConnell Foundation to scale up workplace democracy in Canada. This initiative would promote and develop worker co-ops especially among youth and indigenous people, through new communication tools (video, web, etc.), fellowships for local network development, a leadership institute, and funding for early stage worker co-op development.

Staff

Hazel Corcoran – Executive Director

Kaye Grant – Communications Manager

Kristin Glenn – RRSP Program Manager and Bookkeeper

Josh Dyke – RRSP Program Assistant

Board

Alain Bridault – President

Eric Tusz-King – Atlantic Director (and Vice-President)

Lee Fuge – British Columbia/Yukon Director (and Treasurer)

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Yuill Herbert – Director-at-Large