



Hand in Hand: Working Together to 'Green Up' Communities

What do Batman and Robin, Han Solo and Chewbacca, and peanut butter and jelly all have in common? They are all partners, dynamic duos that couldn't do what they do without the other one by their side.

Same thing goes for you and the environmental organizations in your community. You might not realize it, but there are environmental organizations around you doing great things to protect the environment. They have so much to teach us about keeping our communities clean.

ShopRite has been active in environmental and community initiatives for more than four decades. But we would not be able to make as big an impact without our partners.

Just like chocolate chip cookies in need of a glass of milk, local

organizations are constantly in need of volunteers to help them with their environmental initiatives. For example, the Connecticut Fund for the Environment/Save the Sound organization will be working with ShopRite stores on beach cleanups later this year. And our friends from Blue Water Baltimore plan to use kayaks and local ShopRite volunteers to clean up Baltimore Harbor later this year.

ShopRite is lucky to work with so many important organizations that do amazing things to help the environment. We sponsor nearly 30 environmental organizations that protect land, water quality, endangered species and natural resources. You will see many others highlighted throughout this issue of *Earth News*. Just like salt and pepper, they are our perfect partners!



Ecosystems and Our Everyday Lives

It is a big world, but we are all connected by ecosystems. A healthy **ecosystem** is a large community of living (plants, animals, vegetation and organisms) and nonliving (air, water and soil) things in a particular area working together and in balance. Everything within an ecosystem has a specific role. If these roles are altered, everything within that ecosystem may be thrown out of balance or become unhealthy.

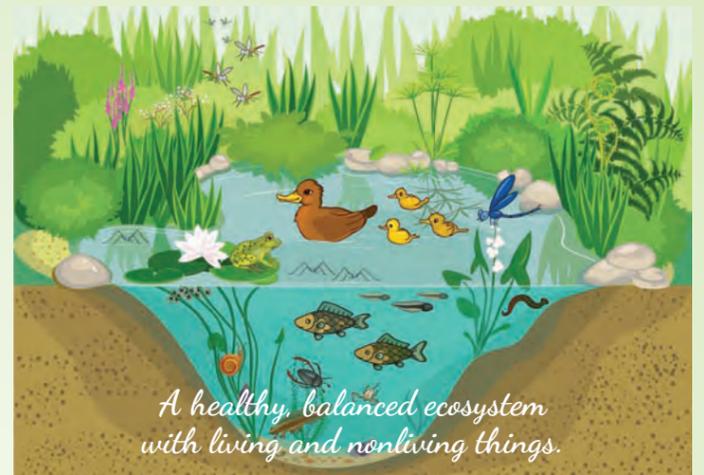
Ecosystems can be large or small, from forests to ponds. They are essential to our everyday lives,

because they provide us with food, clean air, fresh water and more. We need to be mindful of our interactions with nature and take steps to help protect our ecosystems so they can work in harmony to give us what we need. Here at ShopRite, we are committed to getting produce from local farmers. Buying local fruit and vegetables has a positive impact on our ecosystems in many ways. It helps to reduce air pollution because those fruits and veggies do not have to travel long distances to get to our plates. Better air quality is important for everything on the planet.

Sourcing food **locally** also helps support local farmers in our own communities, which in turn helps maintain farming as a lifestyle and preserve open spaces. It's also important to keep our pollinator population strong so we can continue to get the fruits and veggies we need to stay healthy. Think about our relationship with pollinators, and their relationship to plants and trees. A **pollinator** is an insect, bird or animal that helps plants to eventually bear fruit. It does this by moving pollen from one part of the flower of a plant to another part. This pollen then fertilizes the plant and creates seeds.

Plants that grow blueberries, tomatoes, almonds, apples and avocados all need pollination. Our friends at the Pollinator Partnership suggest planting gardens that provide essential habitats for bees, butterflies, moths, beetles, hummingbirds and other pollinators.

But healthy ecosystems are not just about producing enough food. They also help create a safe community, and this is sometimes quite a balancing act. Take living in coastal areas. Shorelines, sand dunes and marshes act as barriers to land in coastal areas, preventing water from flooding communities. But in many places, these barriers have experienced erosion, not only causing areas to flood, but harming all of the living and nonliving things in that ecosystem as well. Since people and wildlife both depend on shorelines, sand dunes and marshes, it is crucial to restore these in eroded areas. For example, the New Jersey Nature Conservancy, a ShopRite partner, constructed a



half-mile oyster reef off Gandy's Beach in Delaware Bay. The restored reef helps decrease flooding of nearby communities and also provides a home for young fish, crabs and other marine life.

Outdoor recreational activities also rely on healthy ecosystems. We can't go hiking in places such as the New Jersey **Highlands** if our parks and outdoor spaces aren't well-maintained. The Highlands — a collection of 860,000 acres of ridges, farmland and historic treasures in the Appalachian Mountains — attract thousands of visitors each year.

So whether you're buying local fruit or hiking along the Appalachian Trail, remember how vital it is to protect our local ecosystems.

ShopRite's 2016 Sustainability Accomplishments

- 143,965 tons **cardboard**
- 3,883 tons plastic film, bags and hard plastic
- 983 tons **newspaper**
- 281 tons office paper
- 57 tons metal

Did you know...

ShopRite has recycled over two million tons of material in the past four decades?

There are over 100 ShopRite retail green teams?

ShopRite **composted** approximately 21,500 tons of food waste in 2016?

Nearly 40,000 volunteers took the ShopRite **Earth Day Challenge**? Call 1-800 ShopRite for more information.

The Importance of Pollinators



The Pollinator Partnership works with ShopRite to protect bumblebees and other pollinators. Together, important ecosystems and our food chain are preserved.

Preserved Forests Protect Drinking Water



The New Jersey Highland Coalition protects important drinking water sources by preserving surrounding ecosystems. Together, we can make a difference!

Volunteers Restore Important Habitat



ShopRite supports The Nature Conservancy's ecological restoration efforts. Volunteers work together at Gandy's Beach to build much needed habitat for oysters.