

MAY 3 2024

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# Environmental Justice

## COPAL NEWS

Hola comunidad,

Welcome to COPAL's Environmental Justice Newsletter where you can expect to find information about outdoor events, access to greenspaces, forced migration, green jobs, pollution reduction, and an equitable transition to clean energy.

If you have any news or events that you would like to add to next month's newsletter, reach out to [info@copalmn.org](mailto:info@copalmn.org).

## Become a COPAL Member

If you are interested in the work being done at COPAL, consider [becoming a member!](#)

Membership at COPAL is crucial as it unites voices for advocacy, ensuring representation and support for our community's needs. Being a member of COPAL ensures that you have access to resources, educational opportunities, and community leadership skill development, while also enabling collective action for policy changes that directly impact the quality of life for Latine individuals in Minnesota.

Members shape COPAL's work through 5 membership committees:

- Workers' Rights & Economic Justice Committee
- Healthcare for All Committee
- Southcentral Regional Committee
- Southeast Regional Committee
- Environmental Justice (EJ) Committee: The next upcoming EJ Committee meeting is **Monday, May 13th at 6:30 p.m.**



A group picture of COPAL staff and members posing during COPAL's Day at the Capitol 2024

## Workers' Rights and Environmental Justice

May 1st celebrates International Workers' Day, so the month of May is a chance to reflect on workers' rights. Environmental justice and workers' rights are intersecting themes: Workers in our communities often face harsh working conditions, including exposure to pollution and climate extremes.

There are several jobs where workers are forced to work in extreme weather conditions including street vending, construction, farming, and roofing. Often, these workers face the dangers of hot weather, freezing temperatures, and exposure to harsh toxins and pollution.

It is through knowing our workers' rights and advocating for better working conditions that we have the power to change these injustices faced by our workers. COPAL advances worker education and worker organizing through the Primero de Mayo Workers' Center.

This is a call to action! If you are or know a worker experiencing any of these issues reach out to learn how you can get involved.



Send us an email at [info@copalmn.org](mailto:info@copalmn.org)



Call us at **(612) 249-8736**



Or fill out our [contact form](#), and we will reach out to you



## Carolina Ortiz: CERTs Community Energy Ambassador

Carolina Ortiz, Associate Executive Director of COPAL, joined CERTs (Clean Energy and Resource Teams) to share her story and leadership in advancing COPAL's mission through environmental justice to ensure that there is a just energy transition for all communities in Minnesota.

Carolina shares her personal story and draws connections between her lived experiences and the systematic issues faced by community members. Through Carolina's leadership, COPAL has been able to share ways to make the transition to clean energy more equitable. COPAL has hosted workshops and events discussing clean energy and resources available such as the [Inflation Reduction Act](#), a federal law passed to incentive people to reduce their carbon emissions.

This project was conducted as one of CERTs Community Energy Ambassadors stories. Community Energy Ambassadors advance clean energy projects within their communities and gain access to the knowledge and skills needed to help others meaningfully participate in the clean energy transition.

[READ CAROLINA'S STORY HERE](#)



Photo Credits: CERTs [Community Energy Ambassador Story: Environmental Leadership with Carolina Ortiz](#); COPAL staff standing in front of the future Latino Center for Community Engagement (LCCE)

# Cooking with COPAL and Macalester College

This past month, COPAL collaborated with Macalester College students enrolled in the class, Environmental Justice. For their final project, they hosted a community event, where community members learned about the benefits of electric stoves, all while eating delicious food that was cooked on electric stoves.

During the event, there were over 40 students and community members from different backgrounds and experiences. We had the perspective of locals, people out of state, people from Ecuador, Venezuela, Mexico, and more! The diverse audience allowed for great conversations and dialogue about clean energy and the importance of electrification!

If you want to learn more about this topic, visit <https://cleanheatmn.org/>



Community members gathered at Macalester College for the Cooking with COPAL event, where members learned the benefits of electric stoves.

## Mixed Martial Arts in Plymouth and Mankato

Part of the Environmental Justice work being done at COPAL is understanding the connection between health and our environment. To make the connection and encourage healthier practices for our communities, COPAL, along with Baztec, Mark44 MMA, and The Academy, hosted a free mixed martial arts event in Mankato and Plymouth.

During these events, participants learned basic self-defense moves, Muay Thai, and Jiu-Jitsu, all taught by professional trainers and coaches.

If you are looking for a safe, inclusive, and welcoming gym where you can learn mixed martial arts, check out the following:

- [Mark44 MMA in Mankato, MN](#)
- [Academy Plymouth in Plymouth, MN](#)



Participants of the Mixed Martial Arts seminars in Mankato and Plymouth. Self-defense, Muay Thai, and Jiu-Jitsu were taught during these seminars.

# Festival del Sol

To celebrate Earth Month, COPAL held a virtual concert, Festival del Sol!

During this event, COPAL was honored to have guest speakers and musicians join to celebrate and honor Madre Tierra.

Zory Avila, Leadership and Capacity Building Manager, at Alianza Americas discussed the history and importance of Earth Day. A preview of the video series from Puerto Rico was aired during the show, where artist Samuel Lind discussed the connection between his art and the Earth.

Throughout the show, we had amazing performances from musicians such as Miguel y Nacho Con Su Tornado Funky Band, Los Atrevidos, and Ina-Yukka.

If you missed it, no worries, [you can watch it here!](#)

## Time Stamps:

**2:50** – Zory Avila

**6:55** – Miguel y Nacho Con Su Tornado Funky Band

**16:46** – Samuel Lind

**21:26** – Los Atrevidos

**29:26** – Vladimir Garrido Biagetti / Ina-Yukka



Caption: Graphic for Festival del Sol, a virtual concert held to celebrate Earth Month.

## Upcoming Outdoor Events

One aspect of COPAL's Environmental Justice work is connecting community members with outdoor activities. BIPOC Minnesotans are less likely to utilize and connect with Minnesota's outdoor spaces. COPAL recognizes the importance of connecting to nature to invest in efforts to preserve it. Therefore, we are always looking to host and promote outdoor events. If you have an outdoor event that you would like advertised in future newsletters, please email [info@copalmn.org](mailto:info@copalmn.org).



### [FISHING DAY AT BOOM ISLAND](#)

**11 de Mayo | 9am – 1pm**  
Boom Island Park  
**Cost: free**



### [TENNIS POP-UP](#)

**18 de Mayo | 1pm – 3pm**  
Augsburg Park, 7000 Nicollet Ave, Richfield  
**Cost: free**

## Radio Jornalera MN

Radio Jornalera is COPAL's online radio station. It has grown and now has five weekly shows every day of the week.

Join us every Thursday, from 5 p.m. - 6 p.m., for our Environmental Justice show, What's Up Minnesota? ¿Qué onda Minnesota? where we will discuss environmental issues relating to health, economics, forced migration, public policy, and much more.

[Tune in here!](#)

