

Saint John's Outdoors Advisory Council Meeting
Monday, August 5, 2013
Natural History Museum, Saint John's Abbey and University

The focus of the summer meeting is to evaluate the work of the past year. The evaluation will help identify areas in need of work and provide direction for the upcoming fiscal year.

9:30 – 10:00 a.m. Coffee and rolls in the Museum

Arboretum Advisory Council Meeting 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

10:00 a.m.	Welcome and introductions
10:00 – 10:30 a.m.	New name, New logo discussion – action item
10:30 – 11:30 a.m.	Revised mission/council bylaws – action item
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch at the refectory (walk from science center)
1:00 – 1:20 p.m.	preK-12 Education – Sarah
1:20 – 1:40 p.m.	Community Education – John
1:40 – 2:00 p.m.	CSB/SJU Education--John
2:00 – 2:20 p.m.	BREAK
2:20 – 2:40 p.m.	Fundraising – Tom/Jenny
2:40 – 3:00 p.m.	PR & Membership--Jenny
3:00 – 3:20 p.m.	Administration – Tom/Sarah/John/Jenny
3:20 – 3:30 p.m.	Abbey Arboretum Land updates
3:30 – 4:00 p.m.	General discussion and wrap-up

Each committee will lead a discussion addressing the following questions regarding that committee's work during FY13:

1. In what ways have we been effective or successful in our work? In what ways have we made progress toward our desired outcomes and impacts?
2. What challenges or concerns need to be addressed? What can we do to improve and enhance our work?
3. What are the priorities for next fiscal year?

Mark your calendars for the remaining 2013 Council Meetings!

Monday, October 7: longer-range planning (looking 12-36 months into the future)

Friday, December 6: short meeting, mid-year update, unfinished business, committee meetings, open house celebration

Committee Updates – for August 2, 2013

PreK-12 Education

- For the 2012-13 school year we recorded 8428 student visits, the most ever! The increase from last year was mostly due to a large number of preschool students from the ISD 742 school district participating in both a Winter Exploration and Maple Syruping field trip.
- Saint John's was the host for the 2013 Minnesota State Envirothon this past May. Teams of high school students from all over the state participated in regional events and earned their trip to the state event. The students rotated through different stations such as forestry, soils, and water which tested their environmental knowledge. It was great to have so many 'big kids' on campus with such great background knowledge about the natural world!
- 'Little Larry' was an amazing addition to the Sugar Shack this year. Because it is a smaller evaporator, we were able to fire it up every day we had a field trip out at the Sugar Shack. The Maple Syruping Crew built a great set of steps so kids and adults alike could get a close look into the evaporator while still staying safe. Over 1000 preK-12th grade students participated in a maple syruping field trip during this historic season!

CSB/SJU Education

- PRP facilitated over 900 CSB/SJU students and potential students (fly-in weekend participants) through challenge courses this past year!
- Collgebound brought 68 participants into the wilds of Northern MN and BWCA last year, however this number looks to be much lower this year with an estimated 50.
- Adventure programming hosted a wide variety of events this past year including old favorites such as Banff Mountain Film Festival, Warren Miller Films, Ice Fishing Tournament, Winter Week, Winter Camping, Earth Week, Adventure-challenge (a race that involves portaging canoes, orienteering to find paddles and pfd's, canoeing, camp set-up and lighting a fire with 1 match), Fruit at the Finish Triathlon, and SCUBA certification classes.
- Additionally PRP lead many new trips including: Backpacking the Appalachian Trail in Smokey Mountain National Park, Kayaking in the Apostle Islands, Long Weekend on the Lake Superior Hiking Trail, Surfing/backpacking in California, and Horseback riding in Colorado!
- Not including OLC rentals, the Arboretum served 5,008 CSB/SJU participants!

Community Education

- We added two new great events this year Skiing with the Stars, a night of cross-country skiing partnering with the CSB/SJU Nordic Ski Team and Collegetown Kidstock, with family fun and music by the Okke Dokee Brothers.
- It was another record breaking year for maple syrup production...this time for the better! We broke many records and ran out of both wood and jugs to bottle the finished syrup. Last sap was collected on Apr 26th which is a record this year also set a record for the gallons of sap collected per tap (14.4)!
- The annual "Living in the Avon Hills" Conference had 300 participants and brought back Stan Tekiela as the keynote speaker.
- The Challenge Course brought 408 community members to Saint John's
- In conjunction with the 'Dig into Reading' summer reading program at Minnesota libraries, we are offering "Soil Rocks!" as our library travelling program.
- This past year we served 5528 community participants!

Public Relations and Memberships

- We are planning for the big public relations challenge of this next year as we spread the word about our new program name. We're preparing a big mailing to current Arboretum members, friends, and associates to coincide with the roll-out date of August 15.
- We are updating our Facebook presence to reflect our new name, and we are joining the world of Twitter and Instagram. With the help of Admin committee member, Maria Surma Manka, we are developing a stronger social media presence and a plan for using it well for events, membership, and other PR.
- Re-design of Arboretum publications is underway – membership letters/forms, website, brochures, etc. will reflect the new program name.
- We had 571 household members in FY13 (compared to 570 in FY12), so we are nothing if not consistent!
- Our income from membership gifts in FY13 was as high as it's ever been – nearly \$27,000 – a \$6,000 increase from FY12. New and student memberships were steady, so the increase came from our renewing and new sustaining members!
- Our new sustaining memberships are proving to be a great success, with members contributing nearly \$2,000 so far in automatically-renewing gifts (either by credit card or CSB/SJU payroll deduction).

Fundraising

- A \$60,741 gift from the estate of Fr. Jack Conway was received in June. This was a wonderful surprise delivered by Fr. Jack's sister. Fr. Jack was a graduate of SJU and has a life-long connection to nature. We are very grateful.
- Over \$6,500 in plants, soil, and merchandise was donated for this year's plant sale in May, and our net income was just over \$3,000.
- The 'Buy a Seat on the Bus' campaign continues to steadily raise funds – almost \$2,000 in FY13. The EE Endowment received nearly \$10,000 in donations, and the Land Legacy Fund \$1,300.
- We received a grant of \$772,000 from the LCCMR for work with the Avon Hills Initiative and the MN Land Trust. Most of the funding will go toward conservation easements, but some will be used to support education like the Avon Hills conference beginning in FY14.
- With the help of Marco Restani as a part-time grant-writer this year, we applied for grants from the Gannett Foundation and the Irwin Andrew Porter Foundation for the EE Fellowship and/or bussing. Both were rejected. Additional inquiries were sent to a handful of other foundations with no success.

Program Administration and Volunteer Management

- We welcomed our new EE Fellow, MJ Bach, to the Arboretum staff beginning in July. MJ is a 2010 Saint Ben's graduate, and you may recognize her from her time as an all-star student naturalist for the Arboretum during her student days. We are thrilled to have her back.
- Jenny Kutter has returned to working 92% FTE this year.
- John O'Reilly and his wife will be leading a Study Abroad group to Australia from Feb 15, 2014 through June.

- Sarah has arranged to get an AmeriCorps Promise Fellow to join our staff in September for the school year.

Abbey Arboretum Lands Committee

This is not an education committee, but the report is included as it is of keen interest to many council members.

- On July 1, 2012 the Abbey and University officially became separate corporations. All lands remained with the Abbey, but the inner campus is leased to the University. The effect of the separate incorporations should not significantly affect the environmental education programs of the Arboretum. It is important to remember that as before July 1, the Abbey is the owner and steward of the land. It is inherent that the Arboretum's educational activities note that fact both in any public recognition and in any assumptions about using the land.
- A significant logging season from January through mid-July focused again on salvage of the wood brought down by the August 2, 2011 storm. We are about 70% done with the salvaging.
- We completed 2 prescribed burns in late June that were very effective at setting back the invading willows.
- Maple Syruping in 2013 was nearly an all-time record, making nearly 600 gallons of syrup!
 - We had the benefit of the new production 4x14 evaporator with pre-heater that also provides endless distilled hot water.
 - We also found the 2x6' evaporator donated by the Schwietz family and used for teaching to be a huge addition to our teaching program.
- The AmeriCorps NCCC crew has done a fantastic job of installing 3,000+ feet of deer fence to protect 19 acres.
- There will be an archery deer hunt in fall 2013. See our website for details.