

Saint John's Arboretum Advisory Council Meeting
Monday, June 15
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 – 11:30 a.m.	Tour the land and visit with the various student crews working the land this summer (brush & burn, land laborer, trail construction, education).
11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 p.m.	Welcome and introduction of new council members – John Geissler and Glenn Miller
1:05 – 1:30 p.m.	Fundraising – Tom/Jenny
1:30 – 2:00 p.m.	Community Education – Sarah/ Alison
2:00 – 2:15 p.m.	Administration – Tom/Sarah/Jenny
2:15 – 2:30 p.m.	PR & Membership – Jenny
2:30 – 3:00 p.m.	CSB/SJU Education – Sarah/ Alison
3:00 – 3:15 p.m.	BREAK
3:15 – 3:45 p.m.	Lands – Tom
3:45 – 4:15 p.m.	preK-12 Education – Sarah/ Alison
4:15 – 5:00 p.m.	General discussion and wrap-up

Each committee will lead a discussion addressing the following questions regarding that committee's work during FY09:

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 have we learned this year?

Mark your calendars for the remaining 2009 Council Meetings:

Monday, October 5: longer-range planning (looking 12-36 months into the future)

Friday, December 4: short meeting, mid-year update, unfinished business, committee meetings, open house celebration in the evening

Committee Updates – for June 15, 2009

PreK-12 Education

- Two 8th grade classrooms and six 7th grade classrooms participated in the pilot phase of our 'Environmental Issues Investigations' this spring. 8th graders tested the water quality in East Lake Gemini and 7th graders analyzed the invasive earthworm populations around East Lake Gemini. The students and teachers had great feedback on what they enjoyed about the experiences and how we can make it better for next year. The next phase will be writing curriculum this summer for teachers to use in the classroom before and after the field experience.
- As of this writing, we still have 2 weeks of field trips left but early analysis of numbers says we had another incredibly busy and successful year of student participation!

CSB/SJU Education

- We have 3 great summer naturalists on staff this summer! Bobby Mandell worked as a Student Naturalist Aide during the school year, Karl Nohner just graduated from SJU with a degree in social science and secondary education, and Megan Van Loh has worked as a biology TA during the school year. They are already busy coming up with new events for the summer of 2009!
- Five students from EDUC 111, *Teaching in a Diverse World*, spent the spring semester completing service learning hours by helping out with our education classes. We would like to thank Spencer Beta, John Euteneuer, Sienna Kuhn, Cassie Smith, and Victoria Yamry for their help this spring!
- Biology 221 labs came out for another year of maple syrup labs with the Arboretum staff. In an effort to increase interaction from the lab students (mostly because we are so used to the energy of 2nd graders!) we started the 'Maple Syrup Spirit Award.' The lab section that showed the most 'maple spirit' during their time at the sugar shack was awarded an ice cream and maple syrup sundae on the last day of their lab for spring semester. While it was a difficult choice, with many lab sections showing their spirit through songs, cheers, and great questions, Sister Jeanne Lust's lab was awarded the 2009 spirit prize! (Better luck next time, Saupe!)

Community Education

- We had record attendance at the two Maple Syrup Festivals this spring! Nearly 1500 people participated in the two festivals, including almost 200 boy and girl scouts. The scouts that participated in various activities received a "Saint John's Maple Syrup" patch for their work. Student musicians from CSB/SJU and members of the CSB/SJU Ducks Unlimited club provided more entertainment and activities throughout the afternoon.
- The Spring Plant Sale on Saturday, May 9, was a great success. Plants and tools were donated by Thomsen's, Klein, Huls, and Bailey's nurseries, and Flexrake Corp. The Arboretum made about \$2500 in sales.
- Spring Birding Day, also on May 9, was a successful event as well. About 40 people participated in the early morning hike around Saint John's with 8 birding guides. Co-hosting the event with the Minnesota Ornithologists Union brought in several new people. We saw 91 species of birds at the Arboretum in the morning and 20 people joined the MOU for a driving tour of the greater Avon Hills area in the afternoon.
- We completed our first series of monthly Minnesota natural history lectures (held the 3rd Tuesday each month from Sept-May, free and open to the public). We had an average of

15-20 people attend the lectures each month and plan to begin our second series of lectures again in September.

Public Relations and Membership Benefits

- Feedback on the newsletter layout has been positive, especially the look of the back page. There may be a few remaining minor changes, but people seem satisfied with the balance of presentation and readability.
- The Administration committee is working on ways to improve membership benefits, or improve our message about the benefits of being an Arboretum member – i.e. addressing the challenges and rewards of stewardship.

Fundraising

- We are beginning a campaign to raise money for our transportation reimbursement program for education. People can donate money to “buy a seat on the bus.” Special bus donation cards are inserted in the summer newsletter and will be included in all renewal notices in FY10. Our goal is to raise \$7000, or half our bussing costs, through donations to this campaign.
- We are currently exploring several new foundations for grants for various needs – fellowships, bussing, boardwalk floats, etc.

Lands

- We have 19 students working the land this summer (see below). Brother Walter’s crew has already begun construction of a new bridge to replace the first bridge to the Chapel. The brush and burn crew is actively pulling buckthorn and honeysuckle and making very good progress. They also helped burn 27 acres of prairie on May 21.
- We contracted with the DNR to do an aerial deer survey which was completed in Feb. If the estimates are correct, we now have 11-14 deer per sq mile which is an acceptable number in order to achieve forest regeneration.
See http://www.csbsju.edu/arboretum/land_steward/Historical%20Records.htm

Program Administration and Volunteer Management

- We have 19 students working for the Arboretum this summer as part of the SJU Summer Initiative created by Dan Whalen, SJU Interim President. The initiative provides \$121,000 to the Arboretum for the students, supervisors, and supplies. The initiative was created to provide more opportunities for summer work for SJU students at a time when employment is hard to find. The 19 students are divided into four crews: education (3), land laborer (4), brush & burn (6), and trail construction (6). The student salary budget for the summer is \$94,000. Funding was also included to pay for Br. Walter Kieffer’s salary as trail construction foreman as well as for Jeff Evander to work a day a week as foreman of the brush and burn crew (\$13,750). Another \$13,350 is available to pay for materials and the Arboretum agreed to match that with \$6,000. The crews are working out wonderfully to date and we are very grateful.
- We welcome our two new Environmental Educator Fellows for the 2009-10 school year. Andrew Elton is a 2008 graduate of SJU and spent the last year teaching in Japan. Rosalie Leiner is a 2009 graduate of CSB with a degree in biology.
- Office space is of continuing concern in the science centers at SJU as department needs grow and change – we’re all feeling a little squeezed for space in these two buildings and strive to find workable conditions for all.