

Saint John's Arboretum Advisory Council Meeting
Monday, June 13, 2011
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.

- 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.** preK-12 Education Committee Meeting - New Science 150 (Natural History Museum)
- 10:30 – 12:30 p.m.** CSB/SJU and Community Education Committee Meeting - New Science 150 (Natural History Museum)
- 12:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.** Lunch at the refectory (Walk from Arb offices at 12:30)

Arboretum Advisory Council Meeting 1:30 - 5:30 p.m. (New Science 150)

- 1:30 p.m.** Welcome and brief introductions/updates:
1:45 – 2:00 p.m. Administration – Tom/Sarah/John
2:00 – 2:30 p.m. CSB/SJU Education – John
2:30 – 2:45 p.m. Fundraising – Tom
2:45 – 3:00 p.m. PR & Membership – Tom
3:00 – 3:30 p.m. Community Education – John
3:30 – 3:45 p.m. BREAK
3:45 – 4:15 p.m. Lands – Tom
4:15 – 4:45 p.m. preK-12 Education – Sarah
4:45 – 5:30 p.m. **General discussion and wrap-up**

Each committee will lead a discussion addressing the following questions regarding that committee's work during FY11:

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. Where are the priorities for next fiscal year?

Mark your calendars for the 2011-12 Council Meetings!

Monday, October 3: longer-range planning (looking 12-36 months into the future)

Friday, December 2: short meeting, mid-year update, unfinished business, committee meetings, open house celebration

Thursday/Friday, February 16/17, 2012: committee meetings to plan for FY2013

Monday, June 18, 2012: FY2012 year-end review

Committee Updates – for June 13, 2011

PreK-12 Education

- 6th graders from Saint John's Prep school completed a unit on biomimicry this winter, which included creating an invention inspired by something in nature. The inventions were entered in the international Biomimicry Youth Challenge sponsored by the Biomimicry Institute. One of the groups won the 5th-8th grade age category with their 'Cozy Paws' boot inspired by wolf paws and one group received honorable mention with their 'Fork Extreme' inspired by owl talons.
- While we are still totaling the numbers, the spring field trip season felt like our busiest yet, despite the snowy, cold, and wet conditions!
- A new nature journaling class was offered this spring to 2nd graders from Foley Elementary. While walking along the chapel trail, students worked on writing and drawing activities while using their senses to explore the natural world around them.

CSB/SJU Education

- The inclusion of the OLC and PRP seems to feel very "comfortable" with all parties. The adventure programming has expanded the Arboretum's ability to connect people with the outdoors with over 75 students participating in wilderness trips through PRP and 1,657 "customers" renting outdoor gear through the OLC, and over 2,000 itemized gear rentals (i.e. 1 customer may rent backpack, stove and sleeping bag). Additionally the PRP facilitated 449 CSB/SJU students through challenge courses this year.
- Adventure programming also brought new outdoor activities to the arboretum repertoire including Winter Carnival (sledding, ice fishing, moonlight ski etc.), Eco-challenge, Fruit at the Finish Triathlon, Wilderness Medicine certification and SCUBA certification classes.
- Building on the success of last year's maple syrup campaign, arboretum student staff hosted a variety of events that featured maple syruping, such as maple syrup sundaes in the dining halls, serving maple syrup 'shots' at Brother Willy's pub, and syrup at Coffee Mondays at the SJU library. They also added a maple syrup cook-off in the McKeown Center that was well received!
- Maple syrup bio classes were made more entertaining for Arboretum staff with the maple syrup spirit award going to the most engaged bio lab. This year's winner: Bill Lambert's class. They were rewarded with maple syrup sundaes the following cycle.
- Earth Week was another success this year with a variety of events for both CSB/SJU students and community members. Events included the tree give away sponsored by the environmental studies department, making Biosphere bottles, OLC/PRP led bike to class day, a Sustainability forum, and a hog roast which included a pig that came from the farm that uses our dining services waste for feed.
- We have been cleared by life-safety to have a primitive remote campsite on Lake Ignatius which will be used for wilderness backpack camping clinics including "a leave no trace" workshop in late June.
- Not including OLC rentals, the Arboretum served over 2,500 recorded student participants!

Community Education

- While not a banner year for syrup production, our maple syrup festivals and tapping day brought more than 1,489 people out to the sugar bush.
- The annual "Living in the Avon Hills" Conference had 380 participants and featured Jim Brandenburg as the keynote speaker.
- The Challenge Course brought 433 community members to Saint John's
- In conjunction with the 'One Planet, Many Stories' summer reading program at Minnesota libraries, we are offering an 'Animal Stories' program designed for kids 6-12 yrs.
- We offered a Morel hunt evening with John Miller which had 37 participants and yielded over 90 beautiful morels for a one-time opportunity to collect from the arboretum.
- This summer we will be offering a nature photography class, a tour of River Glen Gardens, a Dutch oven dinner and a trip to Yellowstone National Park.
- This year to date we have had 4,140 community participants.

Public Relations and Membership Benefits

- The new 'Marketplace' is now available on the Arboretum website. People can now pay for memberships, donations, merchandise, and events online!

Fundraising

- Over \$9200 in plants, soil, and merchandise was donated for this year's plant sale and our gross income was just over \$3500. New this year was 200 native wildflowers from Ron Weinhold's River Glen Gardens.
- We received a \$5,000 donation in memory of Fr. Paul Schwietz from some of his friends.
- We received \$10,000 in salary reimbursement from the LCCMR grant for staff work in on the Avon Hills.

Lands

- "Big John", the tagged loon returned from the Gulf of Mexico and provided the ability to track him every day. We now know why the loons are able to arrive on a lake the day the ice goes out. He had been sitting on open water of the Mississippi river for a few days before ice the went out and probably checked the lake each day.
- We have 3 nesting pairs of loons this year. Lake Sag (Big John and family), Stumpf Lake, and new this year, Wimmer Pond.
- The eagle pair has hatched 2 young.
- Br. Gregory was featured on Ron Shara's TV show with his Purple martins. (Many thanks to Jim and Jeana Koenig for all their help.)
- The summer crews have started. One of the big projects will be fencing oak regeneration areas.
- The CAPX2020 powerline will hold its (final?) hearing before the Public Utilities Commission on June 10th. At this time the route selected by the Administrative law Judge is route G which will swing 6 miles south of Saint John's and Saint Ben's.
- We completed a unique "bidding process" to identify and prioritize lands for Conservation Easements in the Avon Hills. Tom has been invited to speak before the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Commission on the process in June 2011.
- Due to very wet weather, only two burns were completed: at the Cemetery Rain Gardens and the north half of High Gemini.

Program Administration and Volunteer Management

- We are changing the fellowship program for next year. Instead of hosting our own full time fellow, we are partnering with Anita Harris and the Center for Youth Development in St Cloud to split 2 AmeriCorps Promise Fellows. They will work part time for the Arboretum helping to teach and part time for Anita running afterschool programs in St Cloud. These positions are scheduled to start in August.
- We welcome three summer student naturalists to our staff – Hannah Froehling, Courtney Schirmers and Stephanie Theobald. We also welcome our land stewardship laborers – Christian Forster, Adam Liske, August Tournay. Josh Meuwissen is holding a split position of part time naturalist and part time land laborer. Working for the OLC this summer is Carlos Dabu and Joe Muggli and the PRP staff this summer is Kate Lutz.