

Saint John's Arboretum Advisory Council Meeting  
Monday, October 3, 2011  
Natural History Museum, Saint John's Abbey and University

**Council Present:** Bob Russell, Glenn Miller, Troy Knight, John Geissler, Scott Daninger, Mike Connolly, Emily Franklin, Terri Barreiro, Lew Grobe, John Benschoter, Greg Miller, Steve Saupe

**Staff Present:** Tom Kroll, Jenny Kutter, John O'Reilly, Sarah Gainey, Tiffany Miley, James Juip

**Guests:** Todd Holman, The Nature Conservancy

**The Nature Conservancy on campus - Todd Holman**

- Todd is the program director for the prairie/forest eco-region for TNC in MN, has worked with Tom Kroll over the years, involved in Avon Hills Initiative, helped with burns, etc.
- TNC had a need to consolidate offices in Little Falls and Paynesville, an office along the I-94 corridor was ideal for managing their projects in this region of MN and into the Dakotas, Tom Kroll recommended Saint John's as a good location
- The Central MN office of TNC is now located in the Tholl house at Saint John's (the yellow house near Flynttown)
- Looking forward to developing/enhancing partnerships on campus; engaging in campus life will be an exciting change
  - o On Abbey land
  - o In academics
  - o Arboretum and other programs
  - o International connections
- TNC has been working with student employment, and is looking forward to opportunities to connect with professors as well
- Tom Kroll is looking forward to two main benefits:
  - o Technical expertise - prairie burns, other ecological experience
  - o Student involvement - employment, volunteering, internships - a natural fit
- Council would like to hear an update next year - how partnerships are developing, how we can help, continue to assess partnerships

**Introduce new employees**

- Tiffany Miley: hired as a temporary contractual employee to help with Sarah and Jenny's work while they are both out on leave in the spring
  - o Prep alum, St. Kate's English/Biol degree, UMN grad school and research, last 10 years in Mexico City working on science/English curriculum, pursuing graduate certificate in technology at St. Cloud State
- James Juip: hired to fill a hybrid Fellowship position
  - o Grew up in St. Cloud, Michigan Tech Univ. geology/earth science degree, pursuing teaching licensure for state of MI, excited to have the opportunity to educate/hangout with kids in the woods

## Annual Report Review

- Education: numbers continue to increase, nice to see the integration of Adventure Programming in all areas of our education programming
- Funding: change/update to report format to make more thorough and accurate, see the good rollover of funds from last fiscal year to now.
- Membership: HUGE jump in numbers from 483 to 636 last year!
  - o How do the numbers of members compare to membership dollars from last year to this?
  - o Need to do a more thorough analysis of numbers.

## Abbey/University Update

- The Abbey voted and approved on the official split of Abbey and University into two separate corporations, to be completed by July 1, 2012.
- More of a legal definition rather than effect on daily Arboretum activities
  - o Hopefully no name/logo change will be necessary
- More details regarding Arboretum will be provided to council as we hear more
  - o Arboretum does not lease the lands from the Abbey for program use as has been set up in other cases.
- More to discuss, hopefully at December meeting

## Staffing Update

- John/Jessy O'Reilly's baby born in August; Jenny/Ryan Kutter's baby due in January; Sarah Gainey/Patrick Ross's baby due in March
- How do we continue to do what we do with half our staff? How do we help staff balance busy work schedules and new family priorities?
- Need to be realistic about what can/can't be done - make priorities
- Met Tiffany - learning parts of SG/JK's positions this fall, will work full-time beginning January to fill in gaps
  - o One person cannot be expected to fully fill in for 2 positions
  - o Have to balance/prioritize
- AmeriCorps partnership
  - o Arboretum was originally awarded 2 positions to share with the Center for Youth Development in St. Cloud
  - o Hired James for one of the positions, also hired him on a 3-week contract to start work with Arboretum prior to AmeriCorps start date of Oct 3.
  - o Found out Sept. 26 that only 37 of the 120 Promise Fellow positions were funded; both of ours were cut
  - o Want to keep James on staff this year in a hybrid Fellowship role to help with education priorities this year
- Long-term goals:
  - o Sustainability of staff and programs
  - o Maintaining good, reliable staff
  - o Funding (Fellowship in particular)
    - Grants not funding operating costs in general
    - Staff time can be built into grants for new projects, but staff time needs to be available to develop/pursue new projects
    - LCCMR grant reimbursed for staff time working on Avon Hills-related activities

- Helped significantly with budget rollover for this year, but need a longer-term solution
- When might the Education Endowment be large enough to earmark money for Fellows?
  - Abbey endowment – used mostly for land related expenses, but can be used for education
    - Do we want/need to re-prioritize how we draw on that to fill current educational needs?
  - Fr. Paul Education endowment – did not draw on last year, trying to grow
  - Arboretum will have future endowment money will be available, but it is not available to us yet
  - Renew fundraising campaign effort, highlighting growing the Fr. Paul endowment to try to build it up more?
  - Work more closely with Institutional Advancement in their capital campaign
    - Try to raise \$500,000 to create a stable source of funding for the Fellowship and bussing
- Ideas for other funding options are encouraged and welcome!!
- Salzburg Semester
  - Tom Kroll was selected to lead the Salzburg Semester study abroad program for CSB/SJU students from August – December 2012
    - Will take a group of college students abroad
    - Will teach a class
  - Last council meeting, Tom Haeg promoted the idea of a sabbatical for Tom Kroll to pursue professional development.
    - Tom Haeg pursued the idea, reviewed the Abbey’s employment policies, and contacted the Abbey regarding the Council’s motion that Tom Kroll be considered a candidate for sabbatical.
    - They began discussing the options with Tom Kroll.
    - Tom Kroll is taking this study abroad opportunity in lieu of a formal sabbatical
  - Tom Haeg wrote his thoughts in absence of the council meeting: “I think it is important that other board members be apprised of this because his managerial skills are crucial to the Arboretum and anything we can do to enhance Tom K’s career on behalf of the Arboretum should be pursued. Again – for the record, I regard Tom K. as an Arboretum natural resource: a resource subject to our stewardship to promote its growth.”
- Arboretum will essentially be a full staff for the month of July 2012, and not again until January 2013.
- Might call on more volunteer work
  - Master Naturalists
    - Retired educators?
    - Haven’t had many express interest in teaching K12 for us, often volunteer for community events
  - Write a volunteer job description for K12 help – give specific dates, duties for needed volunteer work and advertise the need for volunteer help
    - Terri Barreiro can help with this
  - Rely on new resource in The Nature Conservancy on campus for lands issues
- Job Sharing:
  - Exploring the option to turn 2 positions into 3:
    - Reduce Sarah’s position from 1 FTE to 0.75 FTE

- Reduce Jenny's position from 0.92 FTE to 0.75 FTE
- Ask Academic Affairs for an additional 0.33 FTE to be able to hire a 3<sup>rd</sup> 0.75 FTE position
- (0.75 FTE still receives full-time status/benefits on campus)
- Help balance family/work life
- Bring an additional person on staff to help maintain stability of programs
- Recognize that approx. 40% of Jenny's position is with the Environmental Studies department and we need to coordinate.
  - Both Arb and ES workloads are growing
  - Arb is committed to helping ES during Jenny's leave; part of Tiffany's position will help maintain the partnership in the departments

### **Long-Term Planning: Review Directional Priorities for 2010-2013**

See the Key Directional Priorities handout (from October 2010 council minutes), attached at the end of these minutes

- Note that last year we removed #2. Office/meeting space issues and #3. Add staff to support growth
  - Moved to Admin committee to monitor progress
- We added #8. Membership and #9. Wilderness/Outdoor exploration

#### 1. Expand Curriculum - Sarah

##### a. Update

- i. Goal was set to have 20% of our K12 students in grades 6-8.
  1. Last year we reached that goal
  2. Challenge is in scheduling – middle and high school days run on a more difficult schedule for field trips
  3. Worked with Challenge Course to improve scheduling – dividing a larger group of students between an Arb field trip and a Challenge Course, then swapping groups
- ii. High School students
  1. Our experience is that high school teachers generally need the space/equipment more than they need Arboretum expertise to teach a particular subject area
- iii. Solar Farm/Energy Curriculum
  1. The curriculum is more developed, participation is growing
  2. Challenging to make solar panels interesting to 6<sup>th</sup> graders
  3. Could connect more with Saint John's power plant as another method of power generation

##### b. Ideas

- i. John Geissler will travel more to high schools (bringing experts into the classroom) at Boulder Lake. Helps with scheduling.
- ii. CSB/SJU professors would likely go to local classrooms – if asked
  1. Could incorporate college students, although that may require more time/training than faculty have time for
  2. Karen Bengston – EE Pedagogy class – could use those students more to develop/adapt programs
  3. Would the Arboretum want to pursue a “facilitator” role, connecting campus “experts” with teachers?

- iii. May be grants available to fund classroom/field trip fees
      - 1. STEM (science, tech, engineering, math) programming
      - 2. GK12 Program – NSF grant program
- 2. Big Grant Fundraising – Jenny
  - a. Update
    - i. Recently applied for a grant from the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council for \$1.3 million, to continue conservation work with the Avon Hills (part of MN sales tax funding)
      - 1. Grant funding reimbursement for staff time is helpful for operating budget
      - 2. Did not receive funding, but will likely apply again next year
    - ii. Have not otherwise found a good foundation fit for our current needs and have not applied for many other grants this year.
    - iii. Challenges
      - 1. Most of our current funding needs fall under general operating/capacity, which most grants don't fund (or don't fund without a new/innovative program proposal as part of the deal).
      - 2. At the February council meeting, it was decided to spend more time this year focusing on the development of a sponsorship structure rather than grant-writing
  - b. Ideas
    - i. What is the gap/need annually?
      - 1. \$40,000 annually would cover: Fellowship, bussing, some gear/equipment replacement
        - a. John O'Reilly has pursued some internal funding avenues for some Adventure Programming equipment, so the need there is less than originally expected
    - ii. Explore resources at Univ. of MN to learn from – grants/funding/internship
    - iii. Catherine Stock at CSB – experience with NSF and other big government grants
    - iv. All-taxa project
      - 1. Revisit the project again, could be big, collaborative project that could provide several years of funding if awarded
    - v. Approach more smaller funders again: Wal-Mart, etc.
    - vi. Meet with Institutional Advancement again – RE: Capital Campaign
      - 1. Raise \$500,000 to be able to draw enough each year to support Fellowship/bussing
- 3. Protect Arboretum/Land status long-term – Tom K
  - a. Update
    - i. New 70+ acres purchased by Abbey, west of solar field
    - ii. Separate incorporation of Abbey/University
      - 1. Will hopefully be able to update the council more thoroughly at December meeting
      - 2. Change should hopefully mean “business as usual,” the change being more internal/legal than anything
    - iii. Working on building an online permissions process to help coordinate land-use, with reminders to users that they are guests on Abbey land
    - iv. LCCMR and Lessard-Sams work with Avon Hills – working on protection of local landscape, not just Saint John's boundaries

4. Assessment/Accountability – Sarah/John
  - a. Update
    - i. Improving the way we count participants in programs to ensure the numbers are meaningful
    - ii. How do we assess programming to know if we’re meeting our long-term goals? Need a longitudinal study
  - b. Ideas
    - i. Fundraising!
      1. Get somebody to help perform the study
        - a. Phil Kremer, CSB/SJU Assessment office, and Jon McGee, Institutional Planning could help answer initial planning questions
        - b. Get more Arb-related questions in the student/alum survey Jon McGee does every year.
      2. Pursue grant to begin study
        - a. What foundations?
        - b. Ask for a smaller planning grant first?
    - ii. Admin committee should meet with Phil/Jon and others to move forward with this.
5. Strategic Partnerships on campus – John
  - a. Update
    - i. Small partnerships growing (Jay Phillips Foundation, first year seminar, Institute for Women’s Leadership, OLC, PRP, climbing wall, campus ministry, etc)
    - ii. John O’Reilly has been able to build relationships with more student groups as he has been involved in Student Affairs and Student Development, of which the Arboretum has not been a part of in the past.
      1. The Arboretum is now heavily represented in residential curriculum on campus
  - b. Ideas
    - i. CSB partnerships – how has that been working?
      1. A lot through student groups like the Institute for Women’s Leadership.
      2. Try to host some OLC/PRP events at CSB more often
6. Membership Goals – Jenny
  - a. Update
    - i. Long-term goal has been to achieve 500 members, in FY2011 we reached 630 members (increase of nearly 150 from FY2010!)
    - ii. Admin committee will begin review of membership strategies and set new goals
      1. Committee asked Jenny to review membership numbers and provide some statistics for committee/council in Dec
        - a. How did we reach 630? What are demographics? What events are they attending? Are we retaining current members or getting new members? What are we doing differently?
  - b. Ideas
    - i. How do we set goals for membership?
      1. Outside the long-term 500 number, and generally trying to encourage renewals, we haven’t been particularly strategic in setting membership goals.
      2. Do we need/want goals for:
        - a. New members

- b. Renewing members
      - c. Total dollars raised
    - 3. Emily Franklin uses a set goal, as well as a “stretch” goal to try to reach and surpass fundraising numbers at her organization each year
  - ii. More details available in the Oct 3, 2011 Admin Committee minutes.
  - iii. Promote Arboretum more?
    - 1. Billboard ad on I-94: “Take a Hike”
      - a. Need Abbey discussion and approval
7. Wilderness Trips – John
  - a. Update
    - i. Collegebound – trips for incoming first-year students in the week before classes start.
      - 1. Trips were filled, limiting factor was number of facilitators available to lead trips, and available transportation for trips
    - ii. Yellowstone – trip for older CSB/SJU students, led by Ron Wienhold (former Arb council member) and Ryan Kutter.
      - 1. Didn’t fill as much as we would have hoped, but we started advertising late.
      - 2. Students got a lot out of the experience.
      - 3. Ron W. already hoping to lead another trip for students next year.
    - iii. Jay Phillips Foundation – an interfaith group, Univ. of St. Thomas/SJU partnership
      - 1. Helping to coordinate Long weekend trip for them
    - iv. PRP Long Weekend trips – to Itasca, and a climbing trip all filling
    - v. Campus Ministry, others looking to us for help in facilitating/planning/supplying gear for more trips
  - b. Ideas
    - i. Would be nice to eventually get all groups on campus to coordinate creating a catalog of available trips for each year
      - 1. Lewis and Clark College as an example
      - 2. Include trips in Academic Catalog (along the lines of study abroad)
    - ii. Use recent alums of programs like the PRP and OLC to come back and lead trips

### Other Discussion

- Is this doable with limited Arboretum staff until 2013?
  - o Want to avoid bad experiences by pushing too hard
  - o OK to focus on sustaining/maintaining for 2 years to get through changes
  - o Ask council to help
    - Council members would be extremely helpful at big events
    - Council requests specific dates of events and other specific roles/needs to fill be sent with minutes (attached separately)

Discussion Reference: Key Directional Priorities 2009-2013 (from October 2010 council minutes)

1. Expand curriculum
  - a. Goal to reach more middle/high school students
  - b. Offer more campus options
  - c. Solar farm/energy curriculum

**CONTINUE to work on through 2013**

2. Office/meeting space issues
  - a. Addition of John's position, moving Fellow's office to the Annex building
  - b. New academic building planned at CSB that will open more space in SJU science buildings (2013?)
  - c. Identity committee work: add new building to master plan, new building is priority for next University fundraising campaign
  - d. Move Arboretum out to Annex?
    - i. Identifiable building, recognizable (temporary identity?)
    - ii. Vs. logical access/flow of student traffic

**WORK COMPLETED. Move to "monitor progress" developments.**

3. Add staff to support growth
  - a. New full-time EE coordinator - John O'Reilly
  - b. Volunteer coordination - Sarah Gainey
  - c. School of Theology intern - to expand spirituality related programming

**WORK COMPLETED. Move to "monitor progress" developments.**

4. Add big grant fundraising
  - a. Limiting factor: staff TIME - to research and write
    - i. Caroline Foundation (Crosby Family) - look into
  - b. Ongoing needs for fellowship and K12 bussing
  - c. Arb has reserves - avoid using until needed

**CONTINUE to work on through 2013**

5. Protect land/ Arb status long-term
  - a. Lands around Abbey currently being worked on
    - i. Potential paid easements through 2008 sales tax funding
    - ii. Need to discuss option more/educate Abbey about options
    - iii. Invite David Hartwell

**CONTINUE to work on through 2013**

6. Assessment/accountability
  - a. We're good at saying "how many"
  - b. Need to work on assessing how our programs "make a difference" long-term

**CONTINUE to work on through 2013**

7. Strategic partnerships with more groups
  - a. Took in OLC/PRP
  - b. Improve dialog of sustainability values among CSB/SJU /OSB community (i.e. wind turbine)
  - c. Arb should make a statement to University about educational value of a wind turbine on campus (with reasonable economics)

Additional priorities to add:

8. Membership
  - a. Develop strategies to increase
  - b. Previous goal set to 500, should meet that in the next 1-2 years



- c. Arboretum materials to new faculty/staff every year
  - d. Get CSB rep from student development on council?
  - e. Strategies for Arb membership to OLC/PRP programming
9. Wilderness trips/Outdoor exploration
- a. Creating a big CSB/SJU program
  - b. Tie to leadership, culture, environment, spirituality
  - c. Engage students, members, alums, and general community