

Saint John's Arboretum Advisory Council Meeting
Friday, August 10, 2012
Natural History Museum, Saint John's University

Council Present: Terri Barreiro, Emily Franklin, John Geissler, Tom Haeg, Troy Knight, Glenn Miller, Greg Miller, Bob Russell, Steve Saupe, Lew Grobe

Staff Present: Tom Kroll, Jenny Kutter, John O'Reilly, Sarah Gainey

Guests: Anna Schoeneberger, Jim Dwyer (fundraising discussion)

Opening Prayer

Br. Lew Grobe

Introductions

Introductions of council members and staff; Welcome to Anna Schoeneberger, 2009 CSB graduate. Anna will begin her work as this year's environmental education fellow in September.

Agenda

Steve Saupe welcomes input for future agenda items from all council members. Contact him or Arboretum staff with topics to add to agendas for the council to discuss and act on.

Evaluation and Discussion of FY2012 Work, by committee

Membership

Success & Progress:

- 570 members in FY2012
- \$40,189 in membership, EE Endowment, Land Legacy Fund, Bus Fund, and other donations (*total donation fundraising - including sponsorship is up from previous years*)
- 62 new members
- Improving outreach to members via Facebook

Challenges & Improvements:

- Membership numbers dropped from FY11 big year, but are still up from FY10 and before
- Need to do more to retain new members year to year
 - o Data from FY10, FY11, and FY12 shows that new memberships only renew at a 30-40% rate the first year, 15-20% the second year.
 - o Renewing members renew at 77% the first year 85% the second year

Priorities:

- "sustaining" memberships campaign
 - o Work on making it possible for memberships to automatically renew by credit/debit card each year
 - o Working on logistics with Institutional Advancement and business office
 - o \$5000 match available from CenterPoint Energy gift to encourage people to become "sustaining" members
- Member benefits update: new ways to thank members

Discussion:

- What can we do to better retain our members?
 - o Survey to both current and dropped members
 - Why they joined, why they quit, how current benefits are resonating, what else can we offer members?
 - o Include "Member Since..." on renewal letters
 - Make sure letters ask what we can do for them, make economic benefit argument for support

- Longevity gifts (Saint John's Pottery, for example): 5 yr, 10 yr, etc.
- Phone calling (for larger gifts...\$100 or more)
 - Thank; Reminder to give; How we can engage them
 - Assign a council member to do thank you calls each month

Nature of Saint John's Book

Larry Haeg was unable to join the meeting to discuss. Larry has volunteered to lead the effort to publish a field guide and prayer book specific to Saint John's, to be published by the Saint John's University Press. An anonymous donor has provided at least \$10,000 in support of the project.

- Will be pocket-sized (standard field guide size), with species/landscape ID and information, cultural history of the place, meditations and prayers from scripture and literature.
- Jenny Kutter is co-chair with Larry on the editorial committee
- Publication goal is August 2014

Administration

Success & Progress:

- Survived (ing) year of staff leaves...better than surviving
- Master Naturalist class, summer 2011,
- Potential partnership with Americorps Promise Fellow

Challenges & Improvements:

- Volunteer Management - continues to be a challenge
- Getting back to full-year fellow (vs. 9 month we've had recently)
- Maintain programming during institutional changes (enrollment at CSB/SJU, and other colleges, is declining with changing population demographics)

Discussion:

- New SJU President Michael Hemesath toured lands with Tom Kroll
 - Connects with Arb program - recruitment, community engagement, etc.
 - Aware of "connect the campuses" vision, building proposal for EE programs
 - Supporter of what we do
- Hiring temporary p/t grant-writer position this year
 - Approx. 20% FTE to make up for difference from Jenny Kutter's decreased work schedule this FY.
- Provost support of program - high service, high production
 - Even as enrollment shrinks

CSB/SJU Educ.

Success & Progress:

- Over 4304 recorded student participants, over 800 CSB/SJU students on challenge course, 77 Collegebound participants, variety of successful events in Adventure Programming in FY12
- Worked with Jay Phillips Foundation to co-sponsor an interfaith wilderness retreat
- CSB/SJU senates funded Outdoor Leadership Center for new gear

Challenges & Improvements:

- Assessment and accountability
 - How to record informal contacts with students
 - Answer the big question: are we making a difference?
- Improve leadership development training for OLC and PRPs
 - Better skill development for them, better services for our customers
 - Start doing background checks on all PRPs like we do for naturalist staff since they facilitate school groups on challenge course
- More cross training of OLC and naturalist staff to help with challenge course

Priorities:

- Work with campus resources to study effectiveness of EE and leadership development
- More collaboration with Institute for Women's Leadership and Campus Recreation at CSB
- Research feasibility of high ropes course - potential good resource; not a full course, but a few high elements to potentially add
 - o Young men = adventure = recruitment
 - o Near existing challenge course
 - o Membership benefit?
 - o Fundraising event?
 - o "Warrior Dash" type of event
- Work towards more efficiency for wilderness trips (canoe transport, food buying, subsidizing, "greening")

preK-12 Educ.

Success & Progress:

- 8092 student visits (4891 ISD 742, 8232 total in FY11)
 - o Could have had 1000 more students - scheduling, weather, etc prevented visits
- ISD 742 partnership: increased contract with district, will pay up front for 4500 students, plus up to an additional 500 students at end of year
- Classroom visits completed by CSB/SJU EE Pedagogy class
 - o Good experience for students, logistically challenging to coordinate
- Teacher Workshop Offerings this year - MN Dept of Educ., Avon Hills conference, digital bridge photography, Projects Wet/Wild, etc.

Challenges & Improvements:

- Weather and requests for indoor programming
 - o Look into using McKeown Center for indoor programming?
- Staffing for spring - double and triple booking classes in May
- Bussing money
- School/grade retention & advertising
 - o Reaching out to teachers who came once, but didn't return
 - o What is the capacity?
 - We could handle more, just NOT in May
 - How to encourage scheduling during non-peak times

Priorities:

- New 3rd, 4th, 6th grade trunks for ISD 742 to meet new state standards
- Encourage use of Arb trunks for other schools
- Staff handbook - training
 - o Risk management - training student staff - talk about potential safety scenarios
 - Fire safety example from TK...every day "6 minutes for safety"
 - Could go over information while waiting for buses to arrive

Discussion:

- How to codify the level of intensity of engagement
 - o Count participation differently (vs number of students) to better assess programming
 - o 8000 students = 16000 hours = ...#FTE
 - o Example from Terri Barreiro
 - Level 1...short/informal engagement
 - Level 2...more in depth
 - Level 3...in depth, longer term?
- "what gets measured gets done"

- Still need to show some kind of numbers as we report our activities each year

Community Educ.

Success & Progress:

- 4799 community participants, 446 participants in challenge course, 297 at Avon Hills conference
 - Record breaking Maple Syrup Festival and season
 - Lowest production on record
 - Lower turnout by about half, but still a good time for all
- Sponsorship for Avon Hills conference brought in \$6000
 - \$7000 confirmed for 2013 conference

Challenges & Improvements:

- Improve challenge course - make it a better experience as we get more "paying" groups (vs. CSB/SJU student groups)
- Promoting, marketing, & weather-dependent attendance at events

Priorities:

- Bring back library programs (staffing made this difficult to do this year)
- More collaborations with girl and boy scout groups
- Continued sponsorship of events

Discussion:

- Should we not focus more on adult community education rather than youth?
 - Get more memberships
 - Whole population of active retirees
 - Connect with Benedictines in parishes around the state
 - Collaborate with Bible, Guesthouse, Abbey tours
 - "Senior" day...coordinate monthly? \$75/person
- Disc golf tournament
 - Alums
 - St. Cloud Disc Golf club
- Work with Institutional Advancement - Young Alums Committees
 - Partnerships on events
 - Could be membership/revenue producing for Arb
- Ski Race with stations?
 - Educational questions along the way
 - Not just about skiing ability, but engaging in EE/place as well?

Lands

Success & Progress:

- Purchase of land next to solar farm
- Deer Hunt - changing to archery hunt next year (no hunt while Tom is in Austria)
- Ski-trail grooming partnership with Athletics (next year we need snow!)
- Deer fences built with summer crews to improve oak regeneration
- August blow down - still salvaging logs from the hundreds of trees down
- New tractor

Challenges & Improvements:

- August blow down - still salvaging logs from the hundreds of trees down
- Invasive species are slowly gaining on us
- Deer depredation - fencing is proving to be the only cure - \$\$\$\$
- Skilled summer student shortage
- Eroding trails
- Floating boardwalk deterioration

Priorities:

- Oak regeneration
 - 4000 trees to plant

- Need tree planters
 - Maybe a power auger?
 - Maybe coordinate with MN DNR crews?
 - Fencing deer – funding and labor needs
 - Invasive species control – need to stay on top
 - Trail maintenance
- Discussion:
- Abbey/University split: official as of July 1
 - Abbey always owned the land
 - Our programs/operations remain unchanged
 - NEED TO give Abbey credit as much as possible
 - Our job to correct misinformation, help with Abbey PR for stewardship of lands
 - Critters!
 - Trumpeter swans with 3 cygnets (baby swans) – first time to have a nesting pair on lands
 - Black bear in woods – has been seen around campus a lot, so far not a nuisance
 - Patrick Dougherty Sculpture – Stickworks sculpture to be built in prairie in September; artist in residence with art department
 - Maple syrup evaporators
 - Abbey and University are funding a new large evaporator
 - Schwietz donation to fund smaller evaporator
 - Will help be able to fire sap more often, be actually cooking sap for education more often
 - Lakes – what is the status?
 - Waters not discussed in committee much
 - Are there invasives?
 - Are we monitoring?
 - The Nature Conservancy – how are they doing on campus?
 - Don't have all their offices closed to be fully moved to Saint John's
 - Still NEED heated shop for equipment

Fundraising

Success & Progress:

- Sponsorship program for Avon Hills Conference: \$6000 in FY12, \$7000 in FY13 so far
 - Goal is \$30-35,000
- Applied for \$56,910 in EE grants and \$2 million in Avon Hills grants
 - Received: \$14,250 from Morgan Family, \$750,000 from LCCMR (recommended)
 - Denied: \$36,960 EE, and \$1.3 million (Avon Hills)
 - Pending: \$5,700
- Received \$13,300 in other (non-membership) donations: CenterPoint, Arb friends, etc.

Challenges & Improvements:

- Long-term solution for \$40,000 annual need for fellowship and bussing
- Finding staff time to research/write grants
 - Hopefully hiring part-time grant-writer will help (see Admin notes)
- Develop new fundraising campaign
 - Retire bus campaign before it gets old?

Discussion:

- Abbey/University split – fundraising questions:
 - Provide Jim Dwyer with statement on how Arb is affected

- Abbey = place; University = program
 - Generally – lands related donations routed through Abbey, education related donations routed through University
 - Some flexibility as the Arboretum has University lands-related accounts and Abbey education-related accounts
 - Can do as donors request
 - Main point: donors get recognized and thanked
- Endowing a Fellow?
 - Need \$500,000 endowment to be able to draw \$25,000 annually
 - Career-building for recent graduates
- Big fundraising
 - Arboretum concept is so new to people who are current big donors (Arb as a program did not exist for many of these people)
 - Work on message, connecting with big donors
- Bussing - \$16,000 needed annually – get a 3 year commitment
 - Jim Dwyer will keep eye out for potential interested donors in this area

General

- Kateri Techawitha – being made a saint soon
 - Not many statues of her exist (her statue is on Chap Trail)
 - Br. Lew suggested an event to honor her?
- Study/Interesting fact:
 - No known archeological sites exist on Abbey lands

Next meeting: Monday, October 1