

Saint John's Environmental Education Advisory Council Meeting
Monday, April 8, 2013 – rescheduled from February 11
Natural History Museum, Saint John's University

The focus of the spring meeting is to develop a work plan for next fiscal year. All council members are invited to attend any or all of the individual planning meetings as they are interested and able.

11:30 – 1:00 p.m.

Lunch at the Refectory

1:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Full Advisory Council Meeting:

- Arboretum Name/Logo Change -
 - In the past our name represented both the Abbey's land (place) and the University's programming.
 - Saint John's Abbey Arboretum is now the name of the land per the agreement signed by both Abbey and SJU in July 2012.
 - We need to create a name for the programming we do. In particular, our first task is create the sideboards for a name/ logo. We will eventually make a recommendation for approval by SJU President.
 - One of the staff's goals is to find a logo / name that still can blend like a puzzle piece to Abbey Arboretum.
 - We also need to change the name of our Council as per the legal agreements.

- FY14 Work Plan
- Other business

Mark your calendars for the 2013 Council Meetings!

Please hold these dates for upcoming meetings:

Friday, June 7: FY2013 year-end evaluation

Monday, October 7: Long-range planning, 2-3 years out

Friday, December 6: Short meeting, committee updates, unfinished business, set up for Open House celebration

Abbey Lands Committee Meeting – held prior to our council meeting

9:45 – 10:00 a.m.

Coffee and rolls for Abbey lands committee

10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Abbey lands committee meeting: All members have been notified separately.

Issues concerning Grounds

Issues concerning both Grounds and Forest & Lands

Issues concerning Forest and Lands: (Grounds only staff may leave if they want)

Committee Updates – for February 11, 2013

PreK-12 Education

- 14 sections of preschool from the Saint Cloud School district are coming out for a new winter field trip called 'Winter Exploration.' Besides a doing a scavenger hunt using their senses and scientific tools, the students also get to build 'snow buddies' which include bird seed and carrots for the animals. For many students this is their first field trip and we are so excited they get to experience it with us!
- Fifth grade students will be participating in the 'Science of Sledding' field trips this February. Investigating how force influences motion, the students sled down the hill using different starting forces to see what affect the force has on the speed of the sled. Some schools are also participating in an indoor session the same day and will be experimenting with match box cars and how the distance they travel can be influenced by the surface it rolls over.

CSB/SJU Education

- PRP Winter trip to Joshua Tree National park and the California coast was a great success and an Appalachian Trail trip is scheduled for spring break and already has a lot of interest.
- We will be hosting a screening of "American Meat" March 14th from 7- 9:30 with a panel discussion featuring the director Graham Meriwether and CSB/SJU professor Diane Veale-Jones.
- We are currently exploring the expansion of the challenge course to include "high ropes" elements...any connections, thoughts or suggestions are welcome!

Community Education

- A new winter library program entitled 'Hibernation' is being offered at 6 area libraries this year. Put together by our EE Fellow Anna Schoeneberger , this program is a great combination of information, education, fun, and games!
- We have a "Ski with Stars" illuminated evening ski event planned for February 24th with horse-drawn carriage rides, hot cocoa, treats and of course skiing under the stars!
- The annual 'Living in the Avon Hills 'conference was held February 2nd and was well attended with about 300 people participating in the event!
- Our maple syrup festivals are scheduled for March 16th and April 6th.

Public Relations and Membership Benefits

- We've had 12 new community members, 5 new CSB/SJU student members, and 158 renewing members sign up since July 1. New memberships are down from previous years at this time, but renewing members are up slightly. Membership donation totals are still ahead of last year at this time by about \$3500. Total membership donations (including bussing, endowment, land legacy, etc) are \$24,856.
- We launched our "Sustaining Membership" campaign in December, with matching funds of \$5000 from CenterPoint Energy. The matching funds were available for any new/renewing memberships in the month of December, and any sustaining memberships until June 30. We received more than \$8000 in memberships in the month of December! Only \$560 in sustaining memberships so far, a slow start, but we'll continue to encourage people to sign up.

Fundraising

- Marco Restani began work as our part-time grant writer in December.
- Top priority for fundraising continues to be bussing and the fellowship. Marco has begun researching and drafting grant applications to help cover these costs.
- Marco also hopes to spend the spring finding ways to more permanently fund either bussing or the fellowship to relieve some of the fundraising burden in the future.

Program Administration and Volunteer Management

- Arboretum staff continue to work on the potential name change of Saint John's Arboretum (which will be a focus of our conversation at the February meeting).
- New online sign up forms for volunteers are helping to organize the logistics of scheduling volunteers for events. It is incredible helpful for events such as the Avon Hills conference, when we have over 60 people helping with over 15 different jobs over the course of the day.

Abbey Arboretum Lands Committee - This is not an environmental education committee, but the report is included as it is of keen interest to many council members.

- 2013 Deer Hunt. We plan to move to a bow hunt. There has been some support for some hunters being closer to inner campus than in the past to reduce "campus" deer. The timing would likely be mid-November through December. A sub-committee is working on the topic. Suggestions are welcome.
- Ski trails are in fair condition due to lack of snow, but still quite well -used.
- Two new maple sap evaporators are in the process of being installed in the sugar shack. Both are stainless steel and fully working models. The larger machine will be for production and the smaller machine, called "Little Larry," will be used for educational purposes as it can be fired up with only a small amount of sap in reserve.
- We have a 20 year old "like-new" 4-wheel drive compact John Deere tractor. It is perfect and we thank Br. Kevin Ludowese and his family.
- New and ready for use -- The 22' x 32' skidder storage shed built by Br. Walter and his volunteer crew from recycled shade structure being removed from the tennis courts.
- Logging of 2011 blowdown continues. - Will need about 60,000 board feet of Red oak (15 semi loads) to get enough wood for Abbey woodshop this year.
- Drought effects from 2012 are severe and most visible in the younger conifers. But the effect will certainly be felt in the forest for at least a couple of years, even if we get some rain.