

Saint John's Arboretum  
Strategic Plan: Fiscal Years 2005-2010

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## Introduction

The land at Saint John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota, was chosen and developed by Benedictine monks over 140 years ago. The monks have fostered the Benedictine tradition of land stewardship, education and respect for our environment.

The land was dedicated as a natural arboretum in 1997. Over 2500 acres include forest, prairie, wetland, lakes, and campus landscape. As a state game refuge, the land supports a wide variety of wildlife. Saint John's Arboretum focuses on the native flora and fauna of Central Minnesota through restoration, sustainable use, and preservation. The arboretum illustrates the simple beauty found in native plants, and highlights inter-relationships between plant communities and fauna. Trails through these diverse native habitats provide quiet, natural areas for visitors of all ages.

This document is the second long-range plan developed by Saint John's Arboretum. The first strategic plan was created for 2000-2005 and adopted on August 2, 2000. Recommendations regarding this second plan are results of planning by Arboretum staff, Arboretum Advisory Council members, and consultants from Saint John's University and Abbey.

Work on this strategic plan began during a planning retreat August 27 and 28, 2004 and continued during subsequent council and committee meetings through the fall and winter. The plan was officially adopted in October 2005 by the Arboretum Advisory Council. Seven areas of focus over the next five years were identified for the Arboretum with specific targets, strategies, and action steps within each focus area. Each component of the plan was created with the idea that it would enable us to continue carrying out the vision and mission of Saint John's Arboretum and continue the Benedictine tradition of respect for our environment.

## Vision and Mission

### **Vision**

Saint John's Arboretum celebrates and preserves the unique beauty and richness of God's creation in Central Minnesota, fostering the Benedictine tradition of land stewardship, education, and environmental respect.

### **Mission**

- Preserve the native plant and wildlife communities of the Arboretum lands
- Provide opportunities for education and research
- Model practices of sustainable land use
- Make accessible a natural environment which invites spiritual renewal

Outline of **Areas of Focus** in 2005-2010 Strategic Plan

1. **Relationships:** Continue strong relationships with Abbey, staff/faculty/students of CSB/SJU, Saint John's Prep School, alumnae/i, businesses, educators, and neighbors that support our mission
2. **Resources:** Maintain adequate staff, volunteers, and physical resources for effective implementation of mission
3. **Finances:** Assure adequate funding to fund Arboretum goals
4. **Education:** Double the volume of high quality, hands-on education for preK-12, CSB/SJU, and community/informal groups, in relation to staff and funding available
5. **Stewardship:** Assure land stewardship and Arboretum access in coordination with Saint John's Abbey and University
6. **Visibility:** Be known as a valuable and integrated educational center of CSB/SJU
7. **Membership:** Achieve active membership of 500 people

**Example of format for Strategic Plan:**

**7 Areas of Focus in 2005 - 2010:**

**Priority Targets within areas of focus**

- Strategies to achieve target  
*Action Steps within strategy: Responsible Person, Time frame*

**1. Relationships:**

**Continue strong relationships with Abbey, staff/faculty/students of CSB/SJU, Saint John's Prep School, alumnae/i, businesses, educators, and neighbors that support our mission**

- Create continuous communication tools (see Visibility)  
*Maintain quality newsletter*  
*Publish annual report*  
*Develop appreciation strategies*  
*Expand content to cover all (research)*  
*Maintain cutting-edge website*
- Encourage volunteering from key constituents  
*Create volunteer recruitment strategies (see Resources)*  
*Ensure strong volunteer coordinator position (see Resources)*
- Encourage membership from key constituents  
*Create focused annual membership drives (see Membership)*
- Assure balanced representation on council  
*Add a student (non-employee) representative from CSB and from SJU:*  
Sarah, winter '05  
*Review council members: Tom and Advisory Council annually*
- Increase participation of CSB/SJU students, faculty, and staff (see Education)  
*Teach in classrooms*  
*Assist with research projects*  
*Connect to dorm Residential Advistors (RA's)*
- Maintain and foster partnership with Abbey and University  
*Explore options to involve more OSB members*

## 2. Physical and human resources:

### Maintain adequate staff, volunteers, and physical resources for effective implementation of mission

- Expand office manager/fundraiser to full time by 7/01/05      DONE  
*Explore alternative staffing (Americorps, interns, etc...)*  
*Explore dedicated funding: Tom, 6/07*
- Add additional full time educator by 7/01/06  
*Explore alternative staffing (Americorps, interns, etc...)*  
*Explore dedicated funding: Tom, 6/07*
- Reassess staff workload and supervision responsibilities  
*Recruit HR volunteer as advisor: Tom and Arboretum Advisory Council (AAC), 12/05*  
*Monitor land manager/director role: every 2 years*  
*Monitor educator work load: every 2 years*  
*Develop training program for fellowships: Sarah summer, '05*
- Ensure strong Volunteer Coordinator (VC) role  
*Write job description for VC: Sarah and Linda, 3/05*  
*Recruit and train new VC: Sarah and Linda, 6/05*  
*Monitor VC workload: Sarah annually*
- Expand number and hours of volunteers each year to meet Arboretum needs  
*Develop volunteer tracking system: Sarah and VC, 6/05*  
*Participate in Volunteer Resource Center training: Sarah and VC*  
*Expand and reassess volunteer duties: Sarah and VC, annually*  
*Encourage council members to volunteer for tasks: Tom and AAC, annually*
- Add office space and inside classroom space  
*Find inside classroom space: Sarah, 9/05*  
*Explore office alternatives with Environmental Studies Department or other interested parties: Tom, annually*  
*Explore long term classroom and interpretive setting: Sarah, annually*
- Expand class supplies, equipment and add winter equipment  
*Create wish list and promote for donations: Office Fellow, Sarah, Tom, annually*  
*Apply for grants for supplies and equipment: Office Fellow, annually*
- Ensure adequate support from Advisory council  
*Determine individual roles of active versus consultant: AAC, winter '06*  
*Strengthen 'representation' roles of council members: AAC, winter '06*

### 3. Finances:

#### Assure adequate funding to fund Arboretum goals

- Operate as an integral part of university budget by providing invaluable services
  - Shift staff salaries to cover Assistant Director: Tom, fiscal year '07*
- Seek out grants to fund special projects
  - Apply for at least 10 grants per year: Office Fellow, annually*
- Create development fundraising plan that includes endowments and planned giving
  - Staff expertise expanded: (see Resources)*
  - Partner with IA for identification of potential donors: Tom, annually*
  - Develop brochures about planned giving to arboretum: Tom and Institutional Advancement (IA), fiscal year '07*
- Develop service fees, product sales, and other income strategies
  - Create more products for sale: Office Fellow, annually*
  - Regularly assess fee structures, compare to other organizations: Sarah and Tom, annually*
- Ensure memberships covers a portion of the budget (see Memberships)
  - Set membership process competitively*
  - Establish levels for higher income*
  - Expand membership perks*
- Balance and reassess budget
  - Increase Council knowledge of budget and fundraising through training: Tom, annually*
- Launch new Environmental Education Endowment Fund
  - Solicit members and friends for donations: Tom and IA, spring '05*

#### 4. Education:

**Double the volume of high quality, hands-on education for preK-12, CSB/SJU, and community/ informal groups, in relation to the staff and funding available**

##### **preK-12**

- Add curriculum and pre/post curriculum for 6<sup>th</sup>, K/1<sup>st</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> and beyond
  - Develop K/1 'mini trunks' and separate curriculums:* Sarah, fall '05
  - Develop 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> curriculum and pre/post curriculum:* Sarah, fall '06
  - Develop 6<sup>th</sup> curriculum and pre/post curriculum:* Sarah, fall '07
- Reexamine existing curriculum every two years after initial development
  - 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum update:* Sarah, fall '05
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade curriculum update:* Sarah, fall '06
- Expand programs into winter and summer
  - Partner with existing programs to assist with summer programming:* Sarah, summer '05
  - Examine possibilities to continue expansion or develop own summer program:* Sarah, annually
  - Develop winter curriculum and hold 'preview week' for teachers and students:* Sarah, winter '06
  - Add regular winter classes to schedule:* Sarah, winter '07
- Obtain contracts with other schools and add or restructure staffing to respond
  - Implement outreach to new schools, first within 30 mile radius, using student marketing survey:* Sarah, winter '05
  - Conduct continuing education classes for teachers as outreach:* Sarah and Arboretum Advisory Council (AAC), winter '06
  - Actively pursue one ISD per year for potential contract:* Sarah, annually
  - Actively outreach to private and home school organizations:* Sarah, annually
- Reassess program fees in relation to other comparable organizations: Sarah, annually

##### **CSB/SJU**

- 70 % students have positive outdoor experience (University goal)
  - Remain up-to-date with CSB/SJU goals for students' experiences:* Sarah, annually
- Seek out ways to involve students as volunteer and members
  - Add monthly activity geared towards CSB/SJU students:* EE Fellow, fall '06
  - Recruit students as members and volunteers (see membership objective)*
  - Add Arboretum information to admissions prospective student tour:* Sarah, fall '05
  - Offer session during freshman orientations:* Sarah and EE Fellow, fall '05
- Continue training Residential Assistants (RA"s) to use Arboretum
  - Offer introductory bonfire and program to RA's in fall:* all staff, annually
- Recruit students as Arboretum Ambassadors

## **5. Education: continued**

### **CSB/SJU**

- Promote and facilitate Arboretum as research base and resource for classes  
*Develop and maintain relationships with professors who utilize Arboretum: all staff, annually*  
*Offer services to First Year Symposium and Senior Seminar instructors: all staff, annually*  
*Explore possibility of Environmental Education class for CSB/SJU students through Environmental Studies and/or Education department: Sarah, fall '06*  
*Develop on-line research database of student/professor research: Sarah, fall '07*

### **Community**

- Seek ways to sponsor or co-sponsor summer events and programs  
*Develop list of available activities and prices for summer events: Tom and Sarah, summer '05*
- Expand education opportunities to year round with more offerings  
*Partner with area community education departments to offer classes to the general public: Sarah, summer '06*  
*Outreach to local people to assist with offering a wide variety of classes: Sarah, annually*  
*Offer two new community/member classes or events per year: Sarah, annually*
- Offer community education on stewardship, preservation, and conservation  
*Offer Avon Hill Initiative education events that further neighbors' understanding of common goals and roles: Sarah and Office Fellow, annually*  
*Expand materials on website in an easy to learn format: Office Fellow, annually*

## 6. Stewardship:

### **Assure stewardship and Arboretum access in coordination with Saint John's Abbey and University**

- Review and update policies for Arboretum activities that maintain stewardship  
*Work with Abbey and University to define a develop/no develop zone and regulate the development uses of the land: Tom, fall '05*  
*Coordinate with CSB/SJU departments to define areas within the natural campus to be used as long term scientific research areas: Tom, fall '06*  
*Explore possibilities for trails signs for walkers and skiers: Tom, annually*
- Assure sustainable management of the land and water  
*Continue aggressive management of non-native species: Tom, annually*  
*Maintain SmartWood certification of sustainability practices: Tom, annually*  
*Conduct and participate in water quality studies: Tom, annually*  
*Maintain wildlife management practices (loon platform, bluebird boxes, etc): Tom, annually*  
*Explore potential wind power options: Tom, '05-06*
- Continually revisit the land access issue with the Abbey and University  
*Distinguish between the actor and the activity: Tom, fall '05*  
*Provide numerous ways to inform guests on policies and stewardship practices: Tom, annually*  
*Update studies and counts of numbers of users on trails: Tom, annually*
- Preserve the rural nature of the landscape surrounding the Arboretum  
*Partner effectively with Avon Hills Initiative to promote preservation strategies in region: Tom, annually*  
*Pursue conservation easements with neighbors by increasing funds to the Land Legacy Fund: Tom, annually*
- Offer community education on stewardship, preservation, and conservation (see Education)

## 7. Visibility:

### **Be known as an integrated educational center of CSB/SJU**

- Establish guidelines for what type of advertising and promotion we can do  
*Meet with the proper personnel from the Abbey and University to determine guidelines: Sarah and Tom, fall '05*
- Partner with CSB/SJU to promote Arboretum during their events on campus  
*Develop easy walkers guide for event distribution with membership offer: Office Fellow, fall '05*  
*Ensure our information is included during the following events/at these areas: Sarah, fall '05*
  - CSB/SJU freshman orientation; School of Theology orientation*
  - Admissions tour for prospective students*
  - Homecoming*
  - Family weekends*
  - Human Resources for all new hires*
  - Information desks at Great Hall and Sexton*
  - Saint John's Bible Project*
  - Guestmaster, House of Prayer, Ecumenical Center, Abbey guest house*
- Maintain a quality newsletter as the main communication medium with our members  
*Explore possibility of selling ads in the newsletter: Office Fellow, summer '05*  
*Expand mailing list to similar organizations in surrounding area: Sarah and Office Fellow, summer '05*
- Identify other publications that will accomplish outreach, build relationships, etc...  
*Complete under guidelines set by Abbey and University*
- Develop media coverage of events  
*Build partnership with CSB/SJU media and communications department for assistance with media relations: Sarah and Office Fellow, annually*  
*Identify a contact at the St Cloud Times for event coverage: Office Fellow, summer '05*  
*Identify a contact at MPR for radio connection: Office Fellow, winter '06*
- Expand use of student and faculty resources  
*Connect to marketing class projects, video, market resource, etc...: Sarah and EE Fellow, annually*  
*Connect to student clubs and ROTC for projects: EE Fellow, annually*
- Maintain other communication tools  
*Publish annual report: Office Fellow, annually*  
*Maintain quality website: Office Fellow, annually*  
*Develop comprehensive guide to the land: Office Fellow, summer '06*

## 8. Membership:

### **Achieve 500 paid memberships**

- Develop focused membership drives to key constituents: students, alumnae/i, CSB/SJU/SJP, and businesses
  - Employees-advertise events and hold membership drive once a year: Office Fellow, annually*
  - Students-hold occasional membership drives in areas of high student traffic: Office Fellow, annually*
  - Alums-explore getting list of 'stopped' donors from IA and call to discuss membership: Office Fellow, annually*
  - Businesses-develop project-based donation/membership opportunities: Office Fellow, annually*
- Focus work on membership renewals to keep sustaining members
  - Assess current Institutional Advancement practices: Office fellow, annually*
  - Maintain membership renewal procedures: Office Fellow, monthly*
- Expand membership perks and raise high end cost of special membership
  - Assess other organization practices: Office Fellow, 1/06*
  - Set membership prices competitively: Office Fellow, 1/06*
  - Create new membership appreciation strategies-possibly special gifts for those who donate a certain amount: Sarah and Office Fellow, 9/05*
  - Expand and refine appreciation open house: Office Fellow, annually*
- Develop more ways for members to be involved in arboretum
  - Continue holding monthly events and advertise for them: Sarah and Office Fellow, monthly*
  - Further develop volunteer program (see Resources)*