

2003 Annual Report

July 1, 2002 - June 30, 2003



Photo by Mani Campos

The Mission of Saint John's Arboretum:

- Preserve the native plant and wildlife communities of the Arboretum lands and waters
- Sustain the evolving non-native environment of the inner campus
- Provide opportunities for education and research
- Model practices of sustainable land use
- Make accessible a natural environment that invites spiritual renewal

Environmental Education and Community Outreach

Saint John's Arboretum welcomes students of all ages to experience our living library for environmental education. Grants from Xcel Energy and the Gannett Foundation provide free bussing for elementary school children. This summer, we completed teaching trunks for grades 2 and 3, which complement previously completed trunks for grades 4 and 5. We plan to continue expanding our curriculum next summer. Students grades K-12 learn about topics ranging from insects to seeds and the status of the environment today as they tour the Boardwalk Loop Trail. Resources for teachers are available to connect what students learn at the Arboretum to classroom activities.

Learning

Undergraduate students regularly use Saint John's Arboretum for research and learning in their courses. Fieldwork is an important component of education, and various surveys of plants and animals have been conducted on the grounds. Service learning volunteer projects offer increasing opportunities to get undergraduates involved in activities such as prescribed burns and tours.

Usage

Saint John's Arboretum models **sustainable forest use and wildlife protection**. Landowners and community members have the opportunity to observe sustainable land management practices. Some community education events in the past year have included an owl hoot, maple syrup festival, and wildflower tours. The Arboretum, as always, welcomes visitors and residents to explore the trails and grounds.



John Geissler teaching at the wetlands.
(Photo by Tom Hein)

Student Participation at Saint John's Arboretum

Grades K-8

Fiscal Year 2003: 4,135 participants
Fiscal Year 2002: 2,167 participants

Grades 9-12

Fiscal Year 2003: 280 participants
Fiscal Year 2002: 296 participants

CSB/SJU (classes, special projects)

Fiscal Year 2003: 196 participants
Fiscal Year 2002: 80 participants

Community (workshops, seminars)

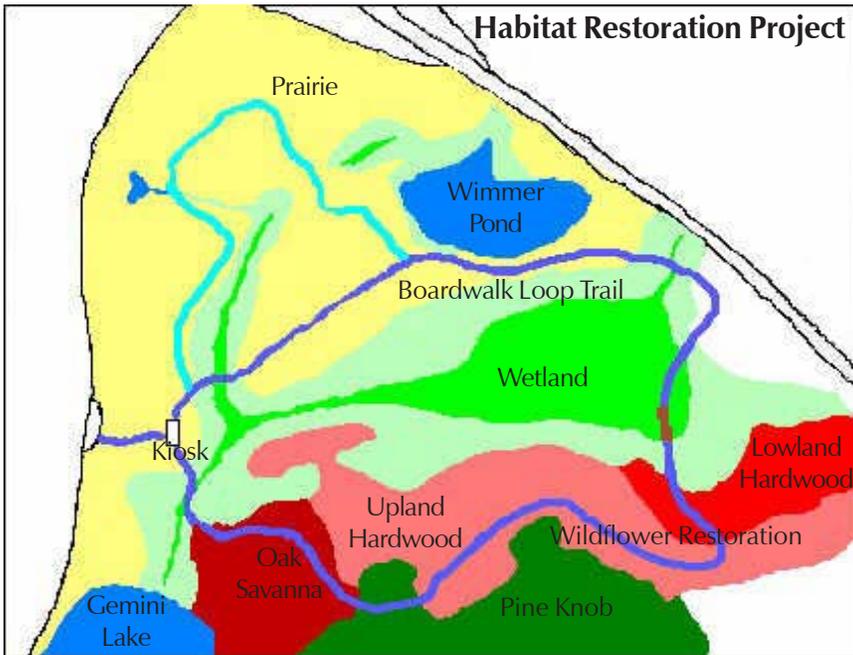
Fiscal Year 2003: 1,013 participants
Fiscal Year 2002: 727 participants



Eli Becker teaches about tree growth.
(Photo by John Geissler)

Special Funding Received FY03

	Organization	Purpose
\$13,890	Individual Memberships	Arboretum
\$12,500	Saint John's Abbey & University	Watershed Characterization
\$7,535	Schweitz Land Endowment	Arboretum
\$8,900	Laird Norton Endowment Fndn.	Geographic Information System (GIS)
\$3,000	Laird Norton Endowment Fndn.	FSC/Smartwood Certification of Woodshop
\$2,000	Laird Norton Endowment Fndn.	Earth Day/Arbor Day Speakers
\$1,500	Laird Norton Endowment Fndn.	Regional Forest Stewardship Workshop
\$1,000	Laird Norton Endowment Fndn.	Forest Stewardship Internships
\$800	Laird Norton Endowment Fndn.	K-12 Forest Stewardship Teaching Kits
\$2,500	Xcel Energy Foundation	K-12 Bussing Money
\$1,000	Gannett Foundation	4th and 5th Grade Teaching Kits
\$2,000	Gannett Foundation	K-12 Bussing Money
\$1,000	Central MN Community Fndn.	Arboretum
Total	\$57,625	



Saint John's Arboretum is a **natural arboretum**, dedicated to the preservation and restoration of Central Minnesota's native and increasingly rare habitats. Uniquely located on the terminal moraines of the last glacial age, Saint John's 2,500 acres abounds with a diversity of ecosystems. These include prairie, oak savanna, wetlands, and hardwood forest. In 1988, the Arboretum began the extensive Habitat Restoration Project (HRP), working to restore 60 acres of wetlands, 50 acres of prairie, and 40 acres of oak savanna. These last two are particularly important, as only 1% of the state's original prairies and .01% of the oak savannas remain today.

Benedictine Stewardship and Conservation

2003 is only the most recent year in a history of land management at Saint John's lasting more than 140 years, started by the first Benedictine monks to settle at the Indianbush. We're pleased to report continued planned harvests and reforestation in the woods. We also completed prescribed burns totaling 40 acres to improve natural regeneration of oak in the shelterwood and grasses in the prairie. Our floating boardwalk across the wetlands receives extensive use by humans and animals alike since being added to our trail system in 2000. The Arboretum was certified in June 2002 as a well-managed forest by Smartwood due to the health of the woods and the sustainability of our logging practices (www.smartwood.org).



Pine plantation.
(Photo by Grace Brogan)



Photo by John Geissler

Planting, Spring 2003	
Tamarack	700
White Spruce	100
Wildlife Shrub	250
Red Oak	2000
Red Pine	500
White Pine	1500
Wildflower	950

Vision of Saint John's Arboretum

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



Working Toward our Vision: FY2003 Accomplishments

Many goals were met by Saint John's Arboretum this past year to cover all aspects of our vision. Our efforts focus on achieving high, yet sustainable levels of usage and management, and rely heavily on the cooperative work of our friends, members, and neighbors.

Education: Serving 4,415 K-12 students was accomplished with the help of Arboretum staff and student workers. Many other groups were welcomed onto campus, including the Minnesota Arborists Annual meeting. We continue to expand our educational curriculum and focus to reach out to more age groups, including the undergraduate students that already share our Arboretum every day.

Membership: Arboretum Memberships numbered 328 at the end of the fiscal year. Our quarterly newsletter, *Sagatagan Seasons*, was enjoyed by members. Our website (www.csbsju.edu/arboretum) continues to expand and improve in our attempts to celebrate the Arboretum and allow those far from us to stay connected.

Land Preservation: The Arboretum worked on the land contract to transfer purchase rights on 100 acres to the Order of Saint Benedict. On July 3, 2003, 100 acres of the Phillipi Farm, visible from the entrance road, was added to the Arboretum.

Conservation: Saint John's Life Safety and the Arboretum teamed up to support a deer hunt to control the ever-growing population in November 2002. 34 hunters shared their time and skills, harvesting 28 deer. Four acres of oak acorns were planted, in addition to thousands of seedlings and flowers. Two prescribed burns were held: 15 acres on the prairie; 25 acres of the oak savanna. Both burns successfully created a healthier environment.

Harvesting: Logging sales included 201 cords of pulp and bolts, 144 cords of fuelwood, and 6,470 board feet of saw logs for a total of \$21,144.28. Markets were down this year, so the Arboretum focused on thinning, and on stands which were past their prime in value, but needed work to regenerate.

[Environmental knowledge] will draw us to learn something about the forest that was originally in a place, to review topography and soil and climate conditions, and reforest if necessary. It is an argument for "wildness," for resisting the temptation to create places where there is not tall grass, fallen trees, and piles of leaves for animals to dwell. This knowledge will change us and the kind of education we give to our students. . . We will come to know ourselves as part of the created world, and not in opposition to it.

Abbot John Klassen, O.S.B. "The Rule of Benedict and Environmental Stewardship"

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