

Urban Farm – Meeting Notes!

Date: November 1, 2007

Time: 2PM – Botany Greenhouse

Attendees – 22! (please let me know if I spelled your name incorrectly): Arwen, Hannah, Alan, Ro, Selina, Teresa, Ann, Jonah, Maria, Brett, Beth, Bradley, Joel, Tracy, James, Kat, Tim, Haldre, Kieth, Josh (Jennifer, Katie for a brief period), Rachel.

People introduced themselves and shared their reasons for participating in the farm as well as the departments they come from. The departments represented included Biology, College of Forest Resources, Landscape Architecture, Anthropology, and Fisheries.

The notes that follow are a summary of the meeting re-organized to lend coherency to the overall meeting experience.

History of the Farm – why did it get started? Alan explained that the farm was started in part to respond to the need for students at the university to connect with their food. Many students in ecology classes through the Biology department don't know where food comes from or "what a carrot top looks like." Through conversations with Doug Ewing (the greenhouse Manager) and Kieth Possee (the caretaker of the Medicinal Herb garden) the first vegetable plantings took place. The farm had its first season in 2005. One of the great benefits of the U.W. farm is that it teaches a practical biological skill. In terms of teaching about urban agriculture our university is "30 years behind". The farm is a way to move forward addressing the growing need for productive urban landscapes (not to mention educating biologists to know things about organisms on a more than cellular level).

Institutional perspective on the farm: The farm is currently 'under the radar' of the U.W. administration. We are farming the property around the greenhouse courtesy of Doug Ewing and most of the farming occurs in "unmaintained areas." It is important to remember that the water bill for the farm is being paid by U.W. Biology.

Becoming a Registered Student Organization (RSO): Arwen and Hannah talk about becoming an RSO – why do it?

- campus recognition

- access to resources for recruitment

- funding opportunities

We need a mission statement: Something broadly encompassing: this next part happened fast... Arwen said something like:

Our mission is to support sustainable urban agriculture at UW!??¹

There was general agreement about this statement. A group of people² volunteered to form an RSO committee and formalize this statement, create a constitution and serve as the first official officers for the RSO – WAY TO GO UW FARMERS!!!!

Ann Anagnost has volunteered to be our Faculty Advisor.

¹ At this point I got really excited and forgot to write - I think this was the gist.

² See the end for list of committees

Brainstorming/updating about farm projects:

1. Student Family Housing Garden: A report from Rachel that she is working on getting permission to have a garden. There is some concern from the building and grounds folks about the longevity of a garden plot and also some concerns about water access. Rachel is moving forward by writing a proposal and will keep us informed. At this point she does not need more help, but will let us know when help is needed.
2. McMann Hall: Ann talked about future plans to develop a working garden at McMann Hall (a residence hall on north campus). There was a garden there that has not been actively maintained for many years, but there is a good chance that with help and support from the U.W. farm the garden could take off again! Ann will incorporate it into her early fall discovery seminar.
3. Roof Structure: We need a roof for the cob oven! We also want to lay some concrete to move the dumpster from near the oven to over by the greenhouse.
4. Outreach: The farm needs to grow. Several people volunteered to be on an outreach committee. This committee is responsible for the development of a web page!
5. Worm Bins: The bins are in sad shape. They likely need more worms and a group of volunteers to take over the care and maintenance of the bins. **GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR WILLING VOLUNTEERS! For more info write to Haldre Rogers: haldre@u.washington.edu**
6. Composting Toilet: Lots of folks are interested in getting a demonstration composting toilet built at the farmstead!
7. Tables/Benches: We want to have some more benches for folks to sit on and work at near the garden.
8. COB OVEN SUPPLIES: In capitals because the need is urgent. We need to acquire a broom for sweeping out the oven, another peel for getting pizzas in and out, a pizza cutter, a knife, a cutting board, mattresses for the sterilizer ☺. Please let Keith know if you can donate one or more of these items!
9. Chickens: There was an update on chickens by Tracy. The group decided due to concerns about liability and the time investment needed to care for animals that we would table the chicken project for now. Heck, if we can't water the garden in the summer how could we care for chickens???? Plus they are vertebrates so we'd need to be very careful about our record keeping in regards to their care.
10. Educational Tie Ins: What about developing a 1 credit farm internship during the summer to help with watering and maintenance? Also, can we connect with the Pipeline project and the Carlson Center for Service Learning? Two upcoming

courses will be doing lots of work on the farm: 1. The Anthropology of Food taught by Ann and 2. The Urban Farm Course that Beth will head up in spring.

11. Flowers: What about planting flowers near building and also at the farm? Joel spoke about how at the dorms there is lots of space that could be used to grow flowers and other plants. The struggles of farming these spaces is water and continued care (ie: beyond the tenure of an interested student).
12. Newsletter: Most people missed this, but there was talk at the end of creating a monthly? newsletter.
13. Funding Sources: as an RSO we can be affiliated with one department or another. There was a suggestion by Alan that we affiliate with as many departments as possible. After all – who, from among the list of departments, doesn't eat? Other funding sources include: RHSA – residential hall student associations, and funding directly from departments ie: Forestry gives \$1000 to some of its clubs.

We concluded by reminding folks to invite people to visit and tour the farm. Arwen has volunteered to schedule the next farm meeting at the end of November.

We also prioritized the list of farm projects and divided up into committees. The list of volunteers by committee and committee responsibilities follows!

1. If your name appears in **Bold**, then you are the person responsible for setting the date/time of the first meeting.
2. If your name is **not in bold** you are responsible for e-mailing the person whose name is in bold (so that they have your e-mail address to set the meeting!)
3. If your name is not below, but you'd like to be part of a committee e-mail the person whose name is in bold!

RSO Committee – **Hannah** - <hcdewey@u.washington.edu> Joel, Tim, Kat,
Tracy, Teresa, Arwen, Ariana, Josh, Beth

Constitution, Formalize Mission Statement, Fill out Paperwork – CELEBRATE.

Roof Committee – **Alan** <trimble@u.washington.edu> Kat, Josh, Hannah, Maria, ,Arwen
Design, Communicate with Doug, get materials, set a date for building (and we will all show up to build!)

Outreach Committee – **Beth** <elizaw@u.washington.edu>, Joel, Haldre, Arwen,
(RACHEL???)

Build web page, create a plan to increase involvement, implement plan!