Urban and Small Farm Grant Steering Committee Meeting – 11/16/20 – 11am – 12:30pm

Participants: Joelle Neff, Andrea Bearman, Chad Shaw, Jain Young, Chad Shaw, Scott Thompson, Mike Werling, Art Franke, Lindsey Bluhm, Brooke Rudicel, Janel Meyer, Tara Lee, Jessica Merkling, John Mischer, Julie Knudson, Derek Thompson, Kate Sanders, Terri Theisen, Tom Miller, Sandy Vogleweed, Kylee Bennett, Courtney Taylor

Goal -  to hear others input

Andrea discussed who we’ve spoken to in preparation

Greg gave a background for the grant – approached by NRCS, new program by iaswcd

John Mischler – any announcement we can send out on the larger state project?

* Greg to send that to John

Andrea – our ideas

* Trailer – several in place – NRCS already has one, and making one available to the north. Ginger Davis in the south since 2016
* Bus – came from urban growers colab in Chicago – gutted inside and turned into mobile grocery store. Our idea – gut, half living garden, half edu or stuff for sale
* Dan Wire – need someone to drive around – available funding for staff?
* Greg – 3 yr, $300,000 project – 92,000 for staff, there are funds to hire a bus driver or pay for someone’s training
* Sharon – grant for three years, but the bus or trailer will continue
* John Mischler – for a bus – is it capable
* Andrea – projects already in Canada that are doing this, so we should be able to do it to
* Greg – it would be a demonstration place only, or partly a grocery store, showing the benefits of good soil health program
* Andrea to share the link to what the group in Canada is doing
* Kate Sanders – What type of education and outreach are we looking to provide to urban and small farms?
* Andrea – there is a need and want on soil health, pest control, cover crops. Hoping the steering committee to guide us on what to focus on. Talking with educators we may even need to go as far as how to plant a plant. Nothing off limits yet
* Greg – main focus is soil health – but we want to add assistance to groups already in. Education trailer to have modules that can be removable and placed at something like a farmers maret
* Chad Shaw – have any other local groups come to meeting today? Talk to places like the farmers market for what they need. Any holes that need filled?
* Greg – Jannette Kratz
* Sharon – talked to Jain Young, Terri Theisen and James Wolfe – the educational piece – bringing in speakers to existing programs – generating new workshops. Intent is to supplement and enhance. Go to field days and farmers markets to offer educational piece. Primarily a program for adults.
* Joelle – Andrea creating material for kids

Unique Ideas – Redefine mobile education. Creation of an app (American Red Cross as example) (Cornel University has a game). Educational Kits for schools (like an in-class field trip). Junior Farmer and Adult Education. The students would complete booklets where they receive a badge. It’s aligned to Indiana State Science Standards. Adult education to compliment or work with Purdue Extension.

* Chad – all those are great ideas. Would we want to hone in on a few or all of them.
* Andrea – start off with one or two and then get bigger as we go on
* Greg – we want to work with other groups on their ideas. At some point put together ideas from everyone for educational needs
* Nicole Nelson – used to teach middle school – educational kits are very helpful to teachers – align to state standards to help them fit into teaching
* Andrea – meet with curriculum coordinators to offer help
* John Mischler – any one of the ideas could take all of the funding. Are we prioritizing any age group or focal point?
* Andrea – we’re wide open at this point. Some people on call may have better ideas than we do. We want your input. Hopefully have another call in the next month or two.
* John Mischler – any studies on the needs in our communities on education and outreach?
* Chad Shaw – talk to Solomon farm – they may know – or partner with them. Chad to share information with them
* Greg – work with Solomon Farms as our demonstration farm
* Tom Miller – is there anything about promoting education on livestock?
* Andrea – junior farmer booklets talk about livestock. We haven’t talked specifically but they need to be part of program cause livestock are important in soil health
* Tom Miller – what defines a small farm?
* Andrea - $250,000 or less
* Greg – can’t be for their own consumption. There’s a need to work with the Amish community and that could be the livestock
* Scott Thompson – works under a contribution agreement that samples for small farmers that don’t attract attention of agronomists or retailers. Works with a lot of small Amish farms to educate on importance of soil testing and fertilizing to soil tests. Educates on soil health and P to lake Erie. His grant is over in the spring and he wants an extension or roll into the Urban grant. $250,000 can be up to a 300-400 acre farm.
* Greg – Scott’s work definitely is an area of education needs
* Sharon – there is money in grant to do soil testing for normal testing or heavy metals (relevant for urban testing)
* Tom - $91,000 for staff. Is that for all three years
* Greg - $120,000 for contract services – the rest for education and soil testing
* Contract services – CCA to be brought on a per hour basis. He’s already in the Amish community. We want to connect Amish to the urban community

Open Discussion

* Jain Young – deliverables – there’s a lot of stuff on there already. Wondering about tours…her folk could use workshops, field days, and existing urban farmers. We should really hone in on target audience. Existing small farms, those wanting to be small farms, children?
* Greg – college and above is target group. Pointing out deliverables. We already have the avenue
* Sandy Voglewede – time frame
* Greg – May 2020 to May 2023
* Kate Sanders – she thinks about intercity who farm
* Greg – they would be targeted
* Kate – Terri has a fantastic program. Does she know farmers. Internet resources aren’t available to groups in the intercity
* Greg – we need your help to connect
* Jain Young – works with Bermese Refugees – zoom doesn’t work for them because they don’t have access to computers. Educational classes on her farm outdoors. It’s difficult to reach her group online
* Terri Theisen – traditional advertising doesn’t work – inconsistencies in grant – small farms in country are very different than urban farms – would be very difficult to do justice to do these together
* Urban – lots of restrictions and limitations. Small farms is a lot easier than urban farms. Doing small farms would get some urban but not all
* Chad – small farms rural are landowners. Urban they often don’t own land – either public or rented
* Not difficult for implementation of soil health because they can promote to their landowner
* John Mischler – soil food web is the same whether farming three acres or a thousand acres. Understanding the roles of fungi and building organic matter is fundamental. The agro-ecological approach is all targeting the same thing regardless of scale. What you focus on will be different depending on where you live.
* Are you highlighting lots of soil health?
* Chad – info is the same but it depends on delivery
* John – lots of different ways to approach and not all of them need to be segmented by the type of agriculture
* Kate – urban may be a great place for implementing change. For kids – give information, imitation, and innovation. If we get a focus on urban parents, they can have impact on kids
* Sharon – have a survey
* Jain Young – small grant with the EPA to purchase lots to teach about contaminants in the soil. She wants to partner on that project

Send a doodle pole for the first couple weeks in December.