**Urban/Small Farms CA Steering Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, March 1, 2021**

Present: Joelle Neff, Scott Thompson, Mike Werling, Greg Lake, Don Rekeweg, Tom Miller, Jessica Merkling, Chad Shaw, Courtney Taylor, Sandy Voglewede, Sharon Partridge, John Mischler, Art Franke, Kenn Zimmerman, Lindsey Bluhm, Jain Young, Nellie Peffley

**Old Business**

Coffee and Soil Testing, Jan. 19, 2021. Attendees: 27

Coffee and Erosion. Feb. 16, 2021. Attendees: 12

Both programs are available on the SWCD website and YouTube.

Subcommittee Meetings

Education committee met to discuss the trailer. They determined the topics to focus on. They are: heavy metals, 4-Rs, pollinators, soil testing, and water.

Technical Assistance committee met. Discussed topics to focus on. Considering mentor program and nutrient management program.

Distribution of Soil Testing Flyers. Andrea and Joelle distributed flyers widely. Joelle will send the flyer to the Steering Committee so that they can help distribute it.

Educational Trailer. Spoke with an exhibit company in Michigan that makes farm education trailers. Partners are being sought to help share the cost of the trailer and exhibits. Exhibits will be modular so they aren’t just tied to the trailer. Trailer will cost $30,000. We have $20,000 available for displays. This won’t cover all 7 display areas. Create a usage calendar among partners.

Partnership with Washington Elementary. Underserved community. Soil testing on the school property and teaching about results. Help with nutrient management plan for gardens.

Sharon did a presentation on lead in soil at Indiana Tech. She also created a Quality Assurance Plan for Jain Young’s lead soil testing project.

**Upcoming Events**

* March 4-6: Indiana Small Farms Conference. We are a vendor at this conference. Making plans for topics to discuss.
* March 8: Soil Health talk at the Farm Show educational sessions
* March 11: Urban Small Farms talk at the Farm Show educational sessions
* March 16: Coffee and Nutrient Management. Ben Wicker will speak on the 4Rs and John Mischler from Goshen College will present.
* April 13: Live from Avilla. Derick Thompson from DeKalb Co. NRCS will present.
* April 20: Coffee and Plant Science. Heath Hurst and Art Franke will be the speakers.
* March – May: Soil Testing

**New Business**

**City Nature Challenge**, April 30 – May 3, 2021. Jessica Merkling from DNR spoke on the details of the program. Little River Wetlands Project is one of the sponsors. Target audience is the urban sector. Four-day challenge. Participants get out in nature, take pictures and submit them. Upload through I-Naturalist. Eligible for prizes. We discussed doing an event at Salomon Farm on May 1, 1:00 – 3:00. Fort Wayne Farmers Market might be able to furnish a presenter. Kenn Zimmerman will check. Promote through LRWP. Have information to them by March 15. I-Naturalist and City Naturalist training available through LRWP. Jessica will contact LRWP to let them know about the May 1 event so that it gets included in the marketing materials.

**Soil testing providers**

Grant requires 70 soil tests with at least 20 participants.

Scott Thompson discussed his involvement with small farms soil testing. He pulls soil tests and explains the results in relation to nutrient management.

We want to make sure that urban farmers have opportunities too.

Joelle talked to James Wolff to see if Purdue Extension (in each county) can be involved since they already have resources.

**We have a contract with Mike Polling**, CCA, from Van Wert county Ohio to help with nutrient management plans. Mike does a lot of work in the Allen County Amish community.

**Adams Co. SWCD** has several education (virtual) meetings coming up. See their website for details.