

**Linnaeus Arboretum National Advisory Board
2016 Crown Council Report**

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In 2014, the National Advisory Board worked with the Arboretum Director to create overall goals and objectives for the next five years. This report is an update on the goals and objectives that have been worked on during the past year.

Physical Arboretum Goals

Formal Plant Collections

Overall goal: To develop and implement an educational philosophy, design concept, maintenance plan, as well as species identification tracking and labels. The intention is to allow all formal gardens to provide educational value and aesthetic appeal.

- This was largely completed in 2014. The project will be reviewed later this year in light of potential staff reductions and a few key volunteers are less or no longer active
- Work will continue on internal plant ID signage and general informational signage
- New Shrub garden was added
- White Garden resurrected
- Formal Garden to be revamped with fewer annuals and improved irrigation to reduce workload

Ecosystems

Overall goal 1: To develop and implement an educational philosophy, maintenance plan, as well as species identification tracking and labels to allow all ecosystems to provide educational value.

- The gravel road to the west of the Coneflower Prairie is being paved as part of preparations for the new high school to be built in 2017 north of the Arboretum. There will be a paved path next to the road, which will remove much of the brome currently growing by the Prairie
- The plan for prairie maintenance is being funded by a gift received from the Schmidt Foundation. This gift was secured last spring due to a connection of a NAB member
- Solar array - A group of Gustavus faculty/administrators has been working on a grant to fund additional solar panels on campus. One location for these panels is on the west edge of the Coneflower Prairie. The NAB members sent a letter of strongly opposing the solar array, as they would destroy more than 10% of the prairie
- An oak wilt breakout in President's Oak Grove was successfully stopped and controlled

MAKE YOUR LIFE COUNT

- The ash tree collection was assessed.
 - It is inevitable that Emerald Ash Borer will reach the Arboretum and kill the 23 ash trees
 - The recommended course of action is to pay to preserve one tree of each species

Overall goal 2: Develop and implement a plan to identify, map, and track current species and diversify and develop an understory as needed in the deciduous and coniferous woods.

- Deciduous woodlands inventory and invasive species control undertaken
- Deciduous woodlands native wildflower introduction plans underway
- Deciduous edge project restoration is underway
- Coniferous Woodlands inventory and invasive species control undertaken

Structural Areas

Overall goal: To provide appropriate permanent structures and interpretive displays that enhance the education, access, and usage of the Arboretum for all constituents.

- Created two new education/welcome kiosks at the new Annexstad Mall entrance and by the Coneflower Prairie
- Conduct a needs assessment of the Interpretive Center
 - The group discussed the Interpretive Center as it relates to the needs for Arboretum programs and the reality that the College expects the Arboretum to generate substantial rental income. A working group of the NAB will meet this year to develop recommendations.
- Develop an interpretive display for the Borgeson Cabin
 - The cabin is in need of maintenance restoration. To date \$14,000 has been raised towards a \$20,000 goal. An interpretive display can be developed in conjunction with the restoration work.

Use of the Arboretum Goals

Education

Overall goal: To provide well-attended programs for Gustavus students, employees, alumni, and St. Peter community members of all ages to learn about and experience nature.

- New this year was *NATURE* a walking play performed over Homecoming, attended by over 300 people, many of whom were new to Gustavus
- In 2015, the Arboretum actively facilitated about 80 different programs, events, or classes, making over 3,000 contacts with Gusties, visitors and other students
- 2015 Fall Fest was held in conjunction with Family Weekend and drew approximately 900 people
- Regular monthly programming specifically targeting Gustavus students has been established
- Regular events like Fall Fest, Arb Scare, Halloween Hike, an Easter event, and an Arbor Day event are starting to be expected by the community and students
- Created a small Gustavus Student Naturalist Corps, which is working well to assist with programs and events

- NAB members are coordinating a revival of the Linnaeus Symposium: *Shining Light on Minnesota's Changing Landscapes*. It will be on Monday, June 20, 2016 with presentations starting at 1 p.m. and ending with a guided solstice walk at 7 p.m.
- In 2014, the annual Summer Nature Camp for area youth was successfully stated, it continued in 2015, and plans are underway for 2016

Support and Promotion Goals

Finances

Overall goal: To improve the financial stability of the Arboretum.

- The group discussed membership rates and benefits and made revisions
 - Member rates will be simplified and increased in 2016
 - A new membership brochure will be released in 2016
- The group discussed challenges and opportunities to generate rental income
 - Rental rates were increased by about 50% in 2015
 - Rental opportunity advertising was begun for the first time in 2015

Staffing

Overall goal: To create a staffing structure that enables the physical arboretum to be maintained to maximize education and to implement multidimensional educational opportunities for Gustavus students, employees, area youth, and the general public

- The NAB met with Adam Ellefson, new Gustavus landscape specialist. Adam has a background in prairie and ecology management and is excited that the Arboretum is a part of his work responsibilities. The previous campus gardener was not strongly connected to the Arboretum, so this is an opportunity for improvement
- The part-time volunteer coordinator has done an amazing job the last two years in redesigning and maintaining the formal gardens. Previously these spaces have not been looking good due to lack of maintenance
- For the 2016-2017 budget the Arboretum has been given 20% reduction in budget allocated for staffing
 - Decisions will need to be made about what programs and activities will need to stop
 - These are difficult decisions because the need continues to grow for three full-time staff positions in the Arboretum: Director, Education Coordinator, Office Manager to manage the work that has been expected by the community from the Arboretum

Awareness Building

Overall goal: To increase awareness of the Arboretum among Gustavus students, employees, and St. Peter/Mankato community members of all ages that will lead to an increase in usage.

- The Arboretum was recognized as a “Top 50 Most Amazing College Botanical Spaces” by bestcollegesonline.org
- External signage to designate the Arboretum and Interpretive Center location, especially for visitors continues to be a great need. Donor funding has been secured. The project is currently delayed due to decisions on how this signage fits with other way-finding signs and campus banners