

Biogaian Meeting
8/31/2021
Facilitator: Laura
Notetaker: Helen

Present: Laura, Helen, Patricia, Reuben, Mary, Jacob, Eileen, Ka, Anita, Matt, West, Brian, Elizabeth

Garden report (Anita)

Good production. Lots of parsnips and fruit, especially plums and grapes. Rabbit fence repair needs completion but all parts are purchased. Work party next weekend. Prepping beds for fall plantings.

Orchard report (Mary)

Plant Amnesty workshop thoroughly pruned several trees. Some were pruned with the idea of netting them next year. Matt and Mary learned a lot. Biogaian donation was deeply appreciated. 20 students plus Mary and Matt attended.

Wood chips are coming soon. Team discovered a new green gauge plum in LSC that had been buried in cherry and blackberry. Pears are being picked and put in barn fridges for chilling before ripening at room temp. Summer pruning goes until equinox, then mulching until solstice.

Forest Report (Brian)

Stacy, a forester from SnoCo Conservation District (via NRCS connection) made a visit to our forest. We will need a forest management plan. Anita began one when she was taking a UW course; Stacy offered to review it after a few items are added. We don't qualify for any current funding sources, since we are too small or aren't commercial. We might eventually qualify for new funding from WA State for fire prevention, but no guidelines have yet been issued. Stacy's visit deepened our connection with the Conservation District.

Microshelter funding proposal (Eileen, Anita and Matt)

A draft was sent out earlier today. Goal is to finish phase one by end September. The draft was approved with addition of 10% contingency to both phases, with hopes that the final proposal will be posted in the next day or two.

NES grapes (Helen)

The two old vines at NES might have Pierce's Disease. Helen has been researching on the web and talked to Plant Amnesty folk. Plan is to prune heavily this winter, in the hopes that the disease hasn't spread to the main trunks. It is transmitted by insects which historically haven't survived Western Washington winters, but this may be changing.

Herbal Apothecary (Matt)

Herbal Gerbils hope to store bulk herbs in the old basement piano if it can be transformed. Shelves and jars would be added. How much mess will be generated? Can it be well organized and available to the community in general? Perhaps Herbal Gerbils, in consultation with the pantry manager, could propose a time-limited trial with review, as an extension of the pantry program.

Freezer (Mary)

Mary seeks authorization for Nartano and herself to look into purchasing another freezer. After research she will come back with a request/proposal. General support was expressed. We may decide by email if a decision is needed urgently.

NRCS grant next steps (Patricia)

Patricia and Anita are making plans for the cultural planting, but nothing specific is decided yet. The area probably won't be planted until spring, but must be planted by 8/31/2022 per our contract. We could transplant salmonberry, Oregon grape, ferns and vine maple from other places on the property.

Heavy pruning on Lost Lake Road (Mary)

In order to get wood chips on Lost Lake, trees along the roadway will need to be pruned higher than we can safely reach. Some other possible arborist projects would be two trees at Unit 2, a tree behind Unit 13, a dead snag in the forest threatening neighbors, an inspection of cables on a Doug fir at NES and the cherry near arbor, and potential cable placement on the Deodora spruce. Brian will contact Arborwell for an estimate.

Recompose Topsoil (Ka)

Ka spoke about her recently deceased husband, Jim, and his love of growing food. His body is being composted at Recompose, which will generate a yard of topsoil in about 5-7 weeks. It can be donated to a land trust which is doing a forest recovery. Would we at Songaia want some of the soil, and where would it best be spread? Forest and south orchard would appeal to Ka. Brian will help Ka write a proposal, sponsored by Biogaiaans.

Budget reminder (Mary)

Although there are many extra meetings in Sept/Oct, we will eventually need to compose a Biogaian budget. Sometimes a subcommittee has met, then brought a draft to the full committee.

Evaluation

What went well? Snacks, celebration of harvest, laughter. Four proposals were moved forward; great facilitation, scribing and zoom tending. Sunset was gorgeous.

What could we improve? Outdoor heating element and lights after dark

Next meeting: 9/28 at 7:15. Helen will facilitate, Mary will scribe.