

Biogaians  
5/26/2020

Present: Laura (convener), Helen (scribe), Laura, Anita, Sylvan, Douglas R, Elizabeth, Brent, Mary, Joey

Check-in question: what is your self-care when feeling overwhelmed?

Two rabbits were chased out of the garden today!

UW Forest Plan (Anita)

UW group had to cancel due to pandemic. Students are still trying to complete the class and give us a plan that we could potentially implement. Wednesday evening 5/27 they will present where we are now and a plan that we could use to go forward in the fall if we want. Document went out in email today, look for zoom link to "partner training."

Friday there will be presentations by various groups in the class. Zoom poster session about plans for different sites.

To clarify, there will be no more student work parties. We haven't spent any of the matching funds for plants and materials. We will probably use the wood chips elsewhere in our orchard. Anita thinks there are some plants in a student-run nursery at CUH that might be available to us through this program.

John Medaille (Anita)

John applied and interviewed early. Anita sent out his bio today, which is impressive. When he applied he had just finished teaching ESL in China. Originally he wanted to come July-Oct, but contacted us a couple of weeks ago, saying he could come at the end of May. Maybe having one "intern" who doesn't expect a curriculum would be feasible. He would be interested in other community work, not just the garden, as community was his major focus. He is willing to quarantine for two weeks and Patricia has offered her apartment for that purpose. He would live in the microshelter after that. The earliest kitchen shutdown wouldn't happen until fall or winter.

Does he have a clear plan about what he will do in October and where he will go? Would it be safe for him to do his meals in the common house? Showers and laundry in the CH? Usually intern program has structure, with participation in other projects, but how will this work if we don't have a structure? There is lots of potential work with other community members on projects like the kitchen or patio. But he would still need supervision and can we actually do that? Is he interested in being a resident volunteer rather than an intern? Will people be apprehensive if he is going to use the common house?

There will be a bigger conversation about what our interactions will be with one another in the coming months. Would adding one more person increase our risk? We have strong general understandings about social distancing in the community. How much would he be going out of the community? We will probably still be on the conservative end.

Laura suggests getting info to and from him, and then re-discussing. We can call a special meeting for that one topic, and invite community to bring concerns. What has been announced to the community is that the intern program is on hold.

Anita reports 12 inquiries since 5/1 on WOOF site. This reflects our previous experience during the 2008 recession.

#### Veggie Heaven (Elizabeth)

Greenhouse is winding down, getting cleaned up. Time to stake the beans. Salads from the garden coming in. Planted 150 tomatoes, extras given away to community members.

Elizabeth and Anita were in despair about not enough help, but help came forward. Brent and Mary in particular are consistent. Laura is back. Jack will be a piglet. Work parties brought a few other people. Laura is trying to organize some ex interns. We might want to schedule regular garden work times.

Also lots to be done, especially in keyhole. Fine weeding is also now needed. We are spreading burlap bags in the aisles and keyhole to suppress biomass, and applying Sluggo. Willow hut is in need of being rewoven.

Starting to feel on top of rodents. Peanut butter balls and castor oil seem to be reducing numbers. Chased two more rabbits out today.

#### Biogaian area in the Barn (Elizabeth)

Elizabeth proposes we get everything out, putting it all in center of barn in a chalk circle for a week. Then sort and throw-away in 1-2 hour blocks. Will need many hands to get it all done. Nartano has suggested storing things outside if possible. Tarps and hoses could be outside. We have lots of unused irrigation stuff. "Chicken box" is from previous set of chickens but might fit under the new overhang of the coop. Brent has a waterproof container, or a garbage can.

Organizational pre-thinking might help. Maybe rethinking the "goat shed" to be used more effectively. Working on anything produces a domino effect. "Using" versus "hoarding". A longer term plan might be a loft area in the barn for plastic and remay etc. Original idea was to focus on barn on rainy day.

#### Walnut trees (Sylvan)

Sylvan recently bought two English walnut trees. Brian and Sylvan picked out some sites. Let them know of concerns. One possible site would be to replace the dying birch trees. Patricia has a mulberry planted in that area already, which could get very big, 40-50 foot spread, but which may not be doing well. Brian located the site during the meeting with a cell phone. Patricia still has hopes for the mulberry but it has only one sprout. Second good site is on south border of area west and south of Journeys. Patricia, Brian and Sylvan will discuss off-line.

#### Water retention system clearing (Douglas R)

Winding swales got mowed last week, will need a little more brush removal. Jacob and brush mower were effective. There is room to work the area under the willow tree. There is a

large manhole cover at end of Lost Lake Rd. Both the access and the cover need to be cleared. Currently has a pile of branches in the way.

#### Orchards (Mary)

Crop thinning is happening now, sooner is better. Mary is hoping to interrupt the uneven cycle of intermittent fruit production. Next two weeks is most helpful, even just the lower branches. Even 10-15 minutes helps.

Netting. What to tie at the bottom of the netting? Bike inner tubes cut in long strips were used in Sylvan's class because of being stretchy. We would have to obtain inner tubes, maybe from local bike shop, maybe there are some tubes in the barn. Need rubber to be very tight but is still stretchy. Sylvan willing to do the cuts. Mary will try to find inner tubes. We have 150 x 17 feet of netting. Netting will need to go up as soon as we figure out the ties. Small work parties of 4 people, one on each corner: Joey, Eliz, Mary, Sylvan

#### Bees (Brent)

Best year ever for mason bees. Boxes mostly muddled, pretty much done. Brent will take his boxes and Patricia's to Crown Bees in June. Two bustling honeybee hives. Bees love the raspberries. Top bar hive has many caps and new bees. Leaf cutter houses can go out now.

Next meeting:

4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday (June 23).

Start 7:15

Joey is convener

Mary is scribe

Thank you everyone for coming!