



SWCS–NCC Meeting Notes @ EPA East–March 6, 2008

Participants: Ross Braun, Maxine Levin, George Utting, Bill Boyer, Michele Laur, Larry Holmes, and Suzy Friedman.

Minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and approved.

Maxine Levin is the NRCS Soil Scientist working with the Smithsonian Soils Exhibit and she is a member of the Soil Science Society of America (SSSA) and the Association of Women Soil Scientists (AWSS). Ross invited Maxine to join our meeting and lead a discussion on activities to support the Smithsonian Exhibit. Caitlin Kovzelove, EPA Intern, volunteered to assist with activities but George announced that she has been detailed to the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office and her involvement is uncertain. George will send Caitlin's new contact information to Ross.

Prior to the NCC meeting, Allison emailed a template format that could be used to develop a 2008 SWCS-NCC work plan. Bill will insert the activities supporting the Soils Exhibit in the template and Ross will lead a discussion during the April meeting to establish the plan as our 2008 strategic plan.

Maxine read through and explained the activities discussed in email correspondence between Doug McKalip, NRCS, and Barbara Stauffer, Smithsonian Soils Exhibit.

The U.S. Botanical Gardens is hosting weekend events from May 23 through October 3. They need docents for family events on Saturday's. Maxine will send information to Ross that we can send to Chapter members to solicit their help. Larry Holmes will look into developing seed packets with the Society logo and Chapter name. Suzy Friedman's husband and a science teacher friend are interested in helping with this. Suzy will ask her husband to research the best materials and websites for a bibliography to develop a one page handout of resources on the Botanic garden website.

1. Exhibit Opening: For the events on July 17th–Morning Media Walk through/Preview and Evening Gala–NRCS will be briefing Secretary Schafer and working on getting both events on his calendar. (This may be an opportunity for the SWCS-NCC to contribute cash for the traveling exhibits. The museum exhibit will last about 18 months and then there will be one or two traveling exhibits for other museums.)
2. For July 19th, we are very interested in assisting (per your request) to provide soil monolith making for families and offer whatever NRCS staffing and expertise might be needed. (This is an opportunity for SWCS-NCC members to serve as docents and assist at the museum. Barbara Stauffer will send Ross the docent application forms when they are developed.)
3. For the Botanical Garden sustainability activities, we are definitely on board. Currently, USDA is coordinating at least four agencies to develop a single exhibit with a theme of sustainability. This exhibit will be placed outdoors and paired up with some plans from our NRCS Plant Materials Program. Bob Snieckus with NRCS is one of our leads in developing this concept. Also, if there is a need for a short term, indoor exhibit to be staffed by NRCS, we can provide that as well, and Maxine Levin with NRCS will be the technical contact for this portion.

Beyond those items, we are also willing and interested to advertise the Dig It! exhibit here at USDA. Our Department's visitor's center is located on The Mall, and gets lots of summer tourist foot traffic. Also we have a weekly farmer's market at 12th and Independence, and we have office space directly

above the Smithsonian Metro escalator that receives HUGE amounts of volume in the summer and throughout the year.

Soils Exhibit Support Materials & Museum Store Items

Suzy Friedman's husband and a science teacher friend are interested in helping with this. Suzy will ask her husband to research the best materials and websites for a bibliography to develop a one page handout of resources on the Botanic garden website. Additional materials include the National Science Teachers' Association publication, "Dig In" and EPA's Sammy Soil web site and coloring book, <http://www.epa.gov/gmpo/pdf/sammy-soil-book.pdf>.

USDA will host an event, July 18, 10:00–3:00 in the Jamie Whitten Patio. They want people to help make a monolith cake develop by Henry Ferguson, Soil Scientist in Greensboro, NC. This is part of a soil learning center for adults and children. Ross will look into ways NCC members could participate.

Strategic Plan:

Bill volunteered to add NCC activities and Soils Exhibit related activities to the template that Allison developed and Allison will lead a discussion to establish a Strategic Plan at our April meeting.

2008 Awards:

Bill Boyer plans to order the plaques.

Brown-bag Forum activity: We will discuss hosting a brown-bag lunch with a forum on a hot topic such as the "Renewable Fuel Standard." Michele will research potential speakers. Also, we will consider a spring tour at the Arboretum on Biofuels. Ross will contact ARS about a biofuels exhibit they may have at the Arboretum that could be the center point for an NCC tour.

Meeting adjourned at 12:50 pm.

Next Meeting: Thursday, April 22 2008, 11:45 am-12:45 pm at Environmental Defense, Center for Conservation Incentives, 1875 Connecticut Ave, NW, #600, Washington, DC 20009, c/o Suzy Friedman, 202-572-3344 (o) 202-492-1023 (c).

TO DO Items:

Strategic Plan: Enter potential chapter activities – Bill

Brown-bag Lunch: Identify potential "Renewable Fuel Standard" presenters – Michele

Botanical Gardens activities: Determine feasibility for NCC to distribute seed packets – Larry

Arboretum Tour: Contact ARS about existing exhibit – Ross

Museum Soils Exhibit: NCC docents – Ross

Soils Exhibit support bibliography: Suzy and family and friends