Minutes

Attendance: Pat Kosmach, DuPage; Lucille Poroli, Will; Ana Espinoza, Kane; Wayne Mundsinger, Kendall; Tom Dahlfors, McHenry; Tanesha Pittman, Cook and Extension staff members Jim Oliver, Margaret DeNard, Cathie Condon, Susan Grupp.
Absent: Larry Williams, Kankakee; and Laurel Dahl, Lake.

Annual Reports: The counties’ annual reports have a new format which is a result of an informal focus group that met and discussed their design.

Introductions: Tom Dahlfors, McHenry County, is a new member to this Advisory Council. Everyone introduced themselves and their county and/or position.

Pittman, Espinoza, and Dahlfors are all on the State Advisory Council as well, and they will be going to Washington this month to meet with elected officials. They were asked to report about their meetings and discussions at the next meeting in the fall.

Susan Grupp, Extension Educator, Environmental Science introduced herself and her role in a newly created field of Environmental Science. She talked with the group about various methods she employs with different audiences to teach and raise awareness about issues such as water quality, water quantity, and management of water resources.

Discussion followed regarding Extension’s role on local environmental committees and participation in summits. Incorporation of green principles and methods can be an added component of Master Gardener training.

Council members shared experiences within their communities the issue of waterways and their use and misuse.

Simple, quantifiable measures should be employed to deliver a message to which people can relate and identify. Start with basic facts, and follow the process with updates that correlate to change in behavior.

Grupp is also working on SmartHome: Green + Wired, a Museum of Science and Industry exhibit that will open in May. She is leading a team to provide expertise on landscaping for the roof and demo garden. Over 115 Master Gardeners from various counties have signed up to serve as docents and to maintain the garden. The exhibit is a 2500 square foot home conceived by Michelle Kaufman. One focus of the home will be getting families and children outdoors to experience nature. The philosophy behind this is that for the children to become good stewards, they need to develop an appreciation for the outdoors. In his book, Last Child in the Woods, Richard Louv, introduces the term of nature deficit disorder to describe children cooped up
indoors. Studies indicate scholastic improvement when taught outdoors. It also instills a sense of well-being. Grupp suggested that these concepts can be incorporated into Youth Development programs.

Carbon footprint is used to illustrate the impact our lifestyles have on the planet. For a carbon footprint calculator, go to the U.S. EPA website http://www.epa.gov/.

Discussion continued on ways to go green.

Review/approval of minutes from previous meeting. It was moved (Porolli) and seconded (Kosmach) to approve the minutes as presented.

Sharing
County reports were shared during lunch. Those people present at today’s meeting shared reports about their respective counties. All reports are saved in a separate document: “sharing” minutes.

Old Business
None

Marketing Update: Margaret DeNard (Public Information Specialist) thanked Dr. Oliver for his vision and added that his office, the regional office, picked up 60% of the cost of the annual reports. They have all been distributed to the county offices. She is also working on creating an online version of the annual report. Chicago Imprint, an online database of University of Illinois programming in the Chicago area, is another project she had been working on. It includes programming in the counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, and Will.

New Business:
• Admin Update
  o Personnel Update: Jeff Rugg is the new Horticulture/IPM educator in Kendall County. He started in mid-December.
  o Recently advertised positions include seven educator positions in Cook County and County Director positions for Lake and McHenry Counties.
    ▪ Resignations/Retirements:
      • Kay Doll, Lake County Director and Don Schellhaass, McHenry County Director are both retiring effective April 30, 2008.
• Fiscal/State Budget FY08—We are in the midst of a state budget crisis resulting in a huge deficit. Each county in the state will be affected inasmuch as they have not received any county board matching dollars. Cook County has not received payment for the Initiative. Dr. Oliver will be meeting with the county directors immediately following this meeting, at 2:00 p.m., to talk about the situation. Directors will be asked to prepare a contingency plan to submit by May 1. They may be contacting you for help. There is also a 3:00 p.m. telenet with Dr. Campion today to share with all staff the ramifications of the crisis.
• Civil Service update: Secretary titles have been changed effective April 15. A Secretary II will become an Office Support Assistant, Secretary III, Office Support Associate, and Secretary IV, Office Support Specialist.

• Staff Training
  ▪ Professional Staff meeting in February included an afternoon of grant writing training
  ▪ Evaluation training, Course III, scheduled for May 28 & 29, will focus on data analysis
  ▪ Secretary In-Service—scheduled for May 2. Karen Chan will be teaching De-Cluttering and also will talk about retirement options offered by the state and university
  ▪ Paraprofessional staff will have their own “retreat” on April 17 in Chinatown, and they will be exploring the Asian culture.
  ▪ Spanish Training—20 staff members are signed up to improve their Spanish language with an Intermediate level of training. Classes are being held at two locations—Countryside and Matteson.
  ▪ The May Regional meeting will be on cost recovery.

State Advisory Council Report—Tanesha Pittman--

The meeting took place on February 18 – 19 in Champaign, IL. The agenda topics included legislative briefing concerning the status of programs and budgetary matters. There was a panel discussion comprised of four ESAC members, Art King, John Sutton, and Tanesha Pittman that experienced the PILD conference(s) previously. These individuals shared their experiences about their visits based on questions that were posed by staff members. Also, there was a guest speaker, who is a staff member for a congressional leader. He discussed what staff members/congressional leaders look for when representatives visit the Hill, even before and after the visits. Dr. Campion covered the administrative updates to include:

- Enhancing legislative contacts
- Alignment of organizational responsibilities
- Federal funding

John Horton, a guest speaker, covered the topic of financial strategies which focused on how extension may use strategic funding resources and mechanisms to sustain the organization. Also, Dr. Oliver gave a presentation on the overall initiatives of Cook County.

Extension is considering more innovative ways of gaining exposure through use of technology. Andrew Neitlich gave a presentation regarding CED product/marketing. There was discussion following this presentation concerning whether or not Extension is portraying the image it desires to portray and how the portrayal should be relevant/current edge and driven by the mission of the organization.

State council members will be attending the Public Issues Leadership Development Conference in Washington, DC April 27 to May 1st. The purpose of this conference is to prepare the
extension leaders for the Capitol Hill visit. Many appointments have been made to meet with congressional leader/their staff in Washington, DC. The learning outcomes from this conference will be:

- How to connect the Capitol and the community
- Public issues partnerships with USDA-CREES, federal agencies, and non-profits
- How to communicate with public decision makers

There will also be various breakout sessions where extension leaders will have the opportunity to network and share best practices.

*Next Meeting:* October 3, 2008, at the DuPage County office in Naperville.