

## ECIMN Alumni Meeting Minutes

April 24, 2025, 6:30 PM

### Schrock Pavilion, Shanklin Park, Goshen

At least 22 persons (signatures on the sign-in sheet) attended the April 24, 2025 ECIMN Alumni meeting. ECIMN Chair Lou Anne Hostetler welcomed everyone and invited them to help themselves to snacks during the business meeting. She noted that an upcoming workday and dates of future meetings and speakers were listed on the white board near the snacks. We were reminded to sign in and pay dues (\$10) if we hadn't already done so. Our dues for each year are \$10 and they go towards food for the volunteer outings that we have twice a year, scholarships for IMN class participants, to pay our speakers, and paying dues gives you voting rights when we have our annual April elections. Dues can be paid by a check made out to IMN or by cash.

Judy Preheim announced the election of officers on the ballot you received as you came in.: Chairperson- Lou Anne Hostetler, Vice Chairperson- Judy Preheim, Secretary-Jim Bare, and Treasurer- Steve Shantz. Our appointed members which aren't on the ballot are our Volunteer Coordinator- Lois Oyer, Outreach- Elma Chapman, and Education-Melanie Helmuth. Also our steering committee is Jenna Wait and Krista Daniels. All candidates were confirmed.

Elma Chapman reviewed upcoming events where ECIMN is represented to promote our organization. This included the Four Winds Garden Club Plant sale Saturday May 18, 9 AM to 1 PM at the Wellfield Botanic Gardens in Elkhart, and the MMGA Garden Tour June 28, based at Jamestown United Methodist Church, 9 AM to 3 PM. Elma also noted the importance of reporting volunteer hours – it helps with Grant requests, it validates the IMN program, and it helps county agencies, e.g. the County Parks Department, know how much volunteer time is spent in their agency. Indiana reported 17, 270 volunteer hours, at \$30 per hour that is over ½ million dollars saved by these agencies. We need to keep turning in hours to Nature Connect even after you've met our yearly volunteer hours and education hours. Students need to complete 24 volunteer hours after they've completed the class. Advanced IMN's need to complete 30 volunteer hours and complete 8 hours of continuing education between January and December of each year.

Lou Anne – 3D Nature Connect is now **Nature Connect**. A new password is needed. Training videos are available. If there is enough interest, a training session will be scheduled.

Lois Oyer noted that a list of volunteer opportunities and Education opportunities is on the table.

Melanie Helmuth noted that help is needed for set-up and tear-down on 1<sup>st</sup> Friday in May to give away trees .This will be on the courthouse lawn in Goshen. Also help can be used every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 8 AM until noon to bag trees at Rieth Interpretive Center. **Education Opportunities** at Rieth Interpretive Center include Healthy Chicken Flocks (May 20, 12 noon to 1 PM), Springtime Tea, May 23, 5:30-6:00 PM, Backyard Habitat, May 24, 10 AM to 11 AM, and Deer in Urban Areas May 27, noon to 1 PM.

Three members attended the 2025 IMN State Convention in Brown County. It rained most of the time and there was flooding so schedules were changed. A talk on Milkweeds by Jody Easton was interesting. The next IMN Gathering is May 1-3, 2026 at Harmonie State Park near Evansville, IN.

Melanie Helmuth introduced our speaker for the evening – Chad Rigsby, of Bartlett Tree Experts. Bartlett Tree Experts is an International Company with nearby offices in Indianapolis and Holland, MI. Rigsby spoke on the culture of trees, that is, the growing environment of the tree. He shared the pros and cons of transplanting bagged and burlapped, trees, bare rooted trees, and container grown trees. Optimum temperature for tree roots 6 inches below ground surface is 50° to 80° F - mulch reduces soil temperature. Another statement of interest Rigsby made is “Pesticides are not evil, irresponsible use of pesticides is”. After questions from the attendees, the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes recorded by Jim Bare, ECIMN Secretary.