

## **ECIMN Alumni Meeting Minutes, Jan. 11, 2024 at 6:30pm**

**Lou Anne Hostetler** welcomed everyone and reminded people to sign in and pay dues.

### **Open Board Positions/Elections**

Judy Preheim announced that board positions are open for secretary and volunteer coordinator and went over the duties of each position. Lou Anne named the current board members and announced we'll have elections at the April meeting.

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

Krista Daniels talked about the many volunteer activities available and directed people to the sign-in table where they could take pictures of a list of those activities.

### **Upcoming Events**

Carole Mitchell highlighted upcoming events where there will be an IMN table:

- Seed Swap - Jan 20, 9:30am-2:30pm, at Goshen College
- Michiana Master Gardeners' Association (MMGA) expo - Feb 24, 9am-3pm at Faith United Methodist Church, corner of CR 17 and CR 18
- Arbor Day celebration - May 3 in the evening in downtown Goshen
- Middlebury Riverfest - Aug 24
- MMGA Garden Tour - June 29, in the New Paris area

### **3D Nature Connect**

Tammy Shidler spoke about the 3D Nature Connect program for recording volunteer and education hours. She is the administrator for Elkhart County.

- Using 3D Nature Connect makes it much easier for Jody Heaston, state IMN coordinator to keep track of hours.
- Possibly there will be an in-person training for 3D Connect, but no date has been set yet.
- Tammy would like to create one project for each agency. For example, under "Elkhart County Parks," people could record any volunteer activity they did at any of the county parks. Currently, there are projects set up for the following agencies: Woodlawn Nature Center, Middlebury Parks, Gene Stratton-Porter Site, Merry Lea, Lagrange County Parks, and there will soon be one for St. Joseph County Parks.
- Hours for 2023 can still be added.
- If you're doing a volunteer activity multiple days of the week, it's best to record them one week at a time rather than every day.
- For ongoing projects that will extend into another year, put the project end date in 2025.
- Email Tammy at [teshidler@gmail.com](mailto:teshidler@gmail.com) with any questions and she'll get back to you.

### **Survey**

Jenna Wait will send a survey asking for input on changing the date and time of the annual potluck (possibly to a Saturday in February during the day) as well as asking about communication preferences.

### **State Gathering/News**

Elma Chapman shared that the IMN State Gathering will be Sept. 27-29 in the Ft. Wayne area. The first day will be at Fox Island Park in Ft. Wayne and the second day at LC Nature Park in Roanoke. Registration and more details will be available in June or July. She also mentioned that statewide, 376 people have used 3D Nature Connect so far to record over 6000 volunteer hours, which comes to a monetary value of approximately \$185,020. These figures are very helpful when agencies apply for grants.

### **Upcoming Meetings & Events**

**April 11, 6:30pm**, Schrock Pavilion, Jan McGowan on backyard pollinator habitats

**Jul 11, 6:30pm**, Abshire Cabin, Luke Gascho and Acadia Imhoff on food/forest public orchard

**Sept 27-29**, IMN State gathering

**Oct 10, 6:30pm**, Schrock Pavilion, Ryan Sensenig on prairie burns

**Oct ?** - Fall volunteer seed collection, Boot Lake

**Melanie Helmuth** introduced our guest speaker, Amanda Wanless, who is a certified leader of Indiana Phenology and holds a master's degree in Environmental Science. She gave a lively and interesting presentation on phenology.

Total of 30 in attendance.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Zook