Elkhart County IMN Alumni Quarterly Meeting

Thursday, October 13, 2022

Westside Park, Nappanee, IN

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m. by Chairperson Mary Kauffmann-Kennel.

Melanie Helmuth gave a report on volunteer activities. About ten IMN volunteers worked on Saturday, October 1, at Bonneyville Mill to clean up the perennial garden, pull down vines, uncover hidden signage, and remove invasives. It was done concurrently with the pancake breakfast at Bonneyville, which led to many people stopping by to ask what we were doing and an opportunity to talk about the IMN program.

More details will be in emails soon for the following volunteer activities:

* Elkhart Environmental Center: Oct. 21, need trail actors.
* Elkhart Environmental Center: anytime, invasives removal
* Trees for Goshen: October 31 – Nov. 4, labelling trees
* South Bend Parks: Howard Park, weeding

Carole Mitchell, our Program Coordinator, represented the IMNs at Riverfest in Middlebury on August 27 and reported a good turnout. She also represented us at Envirofest in Elkhart at Island Park, also in August. The next opportunities for a booth to promote the IMN program will be at the Goshen College Seed Swap (in January?) and the Master Gardener Expo in February. Carole said it would be helpful to have Spanish-speakers available to help explain our program.

Elma Chapman requested articles for the *Trailblazer* be sent to her (chapman\_ej@yahoo.com) by Sunday evening, October 16, so that the *Trailblazer* would be available to those who missed the meeting to see what they missed. Volunteer hours can be earned by writing an article. (One or two hours, at the discretion of the editor.) Write about a favorite class, a favorite volunteer activity, or some time spent in nature that you’d like to share with other IMNs.

Lou Ann Hostetler spoke about the two remaining IMN 20th anniversary programs. One will be Saturday, October 15, at Pokagon, from 8:30 a.m. to noon about “Ways that Nature Prepares for Winter.” It’s free but requires registration. The second program will be November 5 at the Indiana Dunes Visitor Center at 6 p.m. (CDT) for a pizza buffet, campfire, and owl-banding (if the weather allows).

Jenna Wait needs your volunteer and education hours by November 7. Because this is an earlier cut-off than the State asks for, feel free to count any hours after November 7 in your 2023 count.

Mary reminded everyone that the potluck will be held on November 10 at the Schrock Pavilion in Shanklin Park in Goshen. A sign-up sheet was sent around to indicate what each person intended to bring. This will also be the “graduation” for the 2021 and 2022 IMN classes to welcome them into our group. Be aware that if you are approaching from the west on 119 there will most likely still be a detour at the bridge. There will be awards for the three people with the most volunteer hours.

The speaker for the evening was Vicky Rydzynski who spoke about native carnivorous plants. Worldwide, there are 720 carnivorous plants. In the United States we have 66 varieties. Carnivorous plants are adapted to low nutrient, acidic or alkaline soil, and a high water table habitat. We have five types of insectivorous plants: Venus Flytrap, Bladderworts, American Pitcher Plant, Sundews, and Butterworts (also known as “pings”).

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40.

Submitted by

Elma Chapman, sitting in for Susan Zook, Secretary.