



State Master Gardener Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 11, 2005, 10:00 a.m.
Howlett Hall, Room 139, OSU Campus, Columbus, Ohio



In attendance: Pam Bennett, Joe Boggs, Tim Rhodus, Mary Ellen Beardmore, Sarah Baehr, Tammi Rogers, Fred Rufener, Bill Jones, Dr. Stephen Myers, Jim Chatfield, Maurus Brown, Steve Hudkins and David Shetlar

I. Introductions

The first meeting of the State Master Gardener Coordinating Committee began with everyone sharing their name and county/ location. All were instructed to read through the minutes of MG Advisory Committee meetings dated August 16, 2004 and December 14, 2004 in order to refresh us on what has led up to this meeting.

Steve Hudkins updated on "The Meeting of the Five" as discussed in December 14, 2004 meeting minutes. Pam Bennett, Joe Boggs, Jim Chatfield, Steve Hudkins and Mary Maloney met with Keith Smith, Nikki Conklin, Steve Baertsche and Stephen Myers to discuss interim leadership of the Master Gardener Program and how the consumer horticulture team will evolve. The bottom line is that, although there is no monetary support of a State MG Coordinator, the Master Gardener program is a valuable part of OSU Extension. There may be the possibility of matching funds, although, no amount has been set.

II. Elections of Officers

Pam Bennett was immediately nominated and selected as the Chair of this committee. Vice Chair/ Chief Financial Officer (CFO) will be Steve Hudkins. As vice-chairs historically have few responsibilities, it was decided that the Vice-Chair position will also field questions about the State MG Endowment Fund and other MG fund questions (i.e. State Conference) and duties. Tammi Rogers will serve as Secretary.

III. Additional Members

We are still in need of members. Not all of the spaces have been filled, but the final roster should be solidified soon. We hope to have a final count of approximately 25 members. In previous MG State Advisory groups there has been 2:1 volunteer to educator ratio. This won't necessarily be so. The formula is two educators, two MG Coordinators and two MG Volunteers with one alternate, per region with additional representation from the Centers at Wooster and Piketon, Dept. of Hort. and Crop Sciences, Dept. of Plant Pathology, Dept. of Natural Resources and Urban Landscape Entomology.

Discussing representation, Troy Cooper (Knox Co.) is in the North Center Region, not South East Region. Steve Hudkins clarified that Regional representatives were originally thought to be the disseminators of information to their respective regions. Joe Boggs suggested that the state be divided into North, South, East and West, to make distribution more uniform. Steve H. and Jim Chatfield believe in keeping with the state designated Regions. Pam B. suggested simply leaving the representation into Regions with the understanding that it could be changed later.

Bill Jones has questions about volunteer representation. He thinks there may need to be more volunteer representation. Pam noted that the committee will always have the opportunity to bring in volunteers to help with specialty projects and asked the group if we needed more volunteer representatives on the roster. The Committee is in agreement that too many members can be counter productive. We now have included Department representation. We need to have volunteer alternates, with the understanding that alternates will not need to attend meetings, but will receive minutes. They will be added as members if a MG Volunteer rep. is no longer able to serve on the Committee. Pam also suggested having representation from Chadwick (Mary Maloney) and Secrest (Joe or Ken Cochran) Arboretums.

Maurus Brown asked if the three Regions should be holding update meetings. Pam and Steve H. agreed that this was the original intent. The West Region has had meeting in the past. It will be up to the individual Regions to decide if they're meeting and to keep other Educators/ Coordinators informed of the Coordinating Committee's meetings. It was agreed by the group that this committee is starting from scratch.

IV. Consumer Hort. Update

As noted under "Introductions," Steve Hudkins updated us on "The Meeting of the Five" (See December 14, 2004 meeting minutes). Pam Bennett, Joe Boggs, Jim Chatfield, Steve Hudkins and Mary Maloney met with Keith Smith, Nikki Conklin, Steve Baertsche and Stephen Myers to discuss interim leadership of the Master Gardener Program and how the consumer horticulture team will evolve. The bottom line is that although there is currently no monetary support available for the State MG Coordinator, Master Gardeners are a part of OSU Extension and valued. There may be the possibility of matching funds, although, no amount has been set.

Jim Chatfield asked about travel funding- travel and parking reimbursement- does money come out of county funds or do we need to have a budget. Joe B. agreed that we will probably need to have operating money. Some people have budgets to allow for travel, etc. and some do not. Pam would like to table this discussion until the afternoon. When we show our progress to the counties, then matching dollar may come into play. Until then, the committee members will have to find their own means of reimbursement. The previous Master Gardener State Advisory Committee had an Organizational fund and the Endowment Fund that are already set up and can be charged from. Steve H. will investigate that and report back at the next meeting.

V. State Conference Update

a) Conference: Allen County is working on the 2005 State Master Gardener Conference on October 8, 2005. This year will be a one-day only conference, as time is a factor with this year's planning. After this conference we can decide whether to have a one-day or two-day conference.

b) Awards Process: There is a need to set up an Awards Committee and set guidelines for the 2005 conference awards. In 2004, the awards were set up a bit different- the same guidelines were used, but "Gold", "Silver" and "Bronze" places were awarded for all submitted Project of the Year and one project was awarded State Project of the Year. In 2003, there were five District winners in each category and then one became the state winner.

Pam suggested forming a sub-committee to decide. Steve H. suggested we, as a group, need to set precedence. The forms will be due in August, so there will be enough time to set up the award selection procedure. Steve noted that the conference is self-supporting at this time and that the 2004 awards were paid out of conference funds.

The question was posed as to if some of the conference fees could be directed back to help with the funding of this Committee, or would that cause ill-will. Jim C. remarked that since the precedence has been set (the conference is self-supporting), we should continue. Steve also noted that hosting a conference is very lucrative for counties involved. Steve H. started the \$2,000 seed money out of the state conference income. It needs to be clear that our Committee will not run the conference, only ensure that there *is* an annual conference, that there are state awards presented and provide a State Master Gardener Coordinating Committee update at the conference. If no county steps forward to volunteer hosting the next conference, this committee may need to decide. In the past, every other year the conference was held in Columbus. Jim C. mentioned that holding the conference in Columbus could be a "default."

Dave Shetlar suggested making a 3-4 year calendar so that Regions can look at the long-term conference locations, recruit counties, mentor new hosts, etc.

2005- West Region/ Lima

2006- South Region

2007- Columbus

Pam recommended we have an Awards Sub-committee to discuss, and report to the group, recommendations. Dave S. asked if there is a need to ask why the awards are being done and what are the benefits. Pam believes that these answers are in place it is just the nuances that need to be worked out. Fred Rufener stated that we simply need to decide how the awards will be presented this year. The award nominations will be due August 1, 2005 and the same forms will be used as last year.

State Conference Award Sub-committee: Pam Bennett, Dave Shetlar, Nancy Kronberg, Jack Kerrigan and Steve Hudkins. This group will be by conference call to iron out the remaining details.

VI. Master Gardener Web site

a) Data Collection: Tim Rhodus has updated maps, County Coordinator info. and program status. There are two facets to the MG site, Intranet (for our own use, i.e. recording hours, state forms, project information) and Internet (our outreach to the world).

The site is valuable for program accountability (shows what we're doing, tracks volunteer and education hours), program management (sign up volunteers, shows how many volunteers are needed) and project descriptions. The "News" function was not well utilized.

It is a challenge getting updated Coordinator information. Pam's assistant, Jo, is in the process of collecting Coordinator data.

MG-Share, the email list-serve, had a problem with people sending viruses. Some people have stopped using this list-serve for this reason. Joe B. mentioned that Barracuda has been working well to weed out viruses. The consensus is that MG-Share is a good way to keep MGs up-to-date and can be "tweaked." Cheryl Fischnich works on adding/ deleting email addresses and basic management. It may be advantageous to break the MG-Share into 3 different list-serves: Master Gardeners, MG Coordinators and MG State Coordinating Committee. These list-serves could be set up so that one would not be able to send attachments. More parameters need to be set.

Steve H. asked if there is a way to use part of the Coordinator's section on the web site for communication. It is really not the best way to communicate. Tim Rhodus suggests working with him and his group in order to keep the web site "clean." Dave S. suggested maybe forming a weekly news/events report announcement with a web site link for people to visit if they want more info. This would be similar to the weekly Sports Turf email announcements.

A sub-committee of Joe Boggs, Maurus Brown, Steve Hudkins and Mary Ellen Beardmore will work with Tim Rhodus on the web site. Joe will report at the next meeting.

Our immediate need is to set up a list-serve for our committee and MG Coordinators/Educators. There may be a need to have a sub-committee for the MG-Share list-serve in the future. Pam will take care of setting up the Committee and MG Coordinator/Educator list-serves.

b) Updating Site: Tim R. has updated the MG site with county links and maps from Google®. Pam would like to see a place for county newsletters to be available, updates and events. Tim discussed the differences between newsletters and news stories.

Discussion progressed to counties updating their own county web sites and why more are not kept up-to-date. Our committee needs to nurture this process. It is imperative to make sure that our county info. Is up-to-date!

The next step is for all of us to look at the MG web site, use it and think about how you want to use it and what would make it more user-friendly. Pam assigned this task to all Committee members. After viewing the MG site (http://mastergardener.osu.edu:16080/index_flash.lasso), send your ideas or "wish-list" to rhodus.1@osu.edu

VII. Program Management Issues

There have been questions about where Coordinators are to order state pins and name badges. Michelle Hobbs has an inventory and will continue to order them as needed. We will find out from her where the inventory stands. MG Apparel is now ordered through Goodman's and information is available on the MG site: http://mastergardener.osu.edu:16080/coordinators/mg_apparel/index.html

The MG Manual has not been updated in a few years. Members of the Manual Update Committee are Joe Boggs, Jim Chatfield, Tim Rhodus and Maurus Brown. They will seek additional help from Jack Kerrigan and also solicit help from MG Volunteers. The original document is housed in Comm/Tech.

Dave S. brought up the matter of cost-recovery for Michelle Hobbs' time. Dr. Stephen Myers stated that at this time Michelle can continue to help with ordering name tags, etc. but that we need to continue to think about cost-recovery. Dave wants the Committee to look at these issues as long-term. Dr. Myers has offered to help with what he can such as getting meeting rooms, providing lunches, but would also like to see other Departments help, too. Steve H. will investigate current allocated funds to the State MG Coordinating Committee.

Jim C. and Pam will work on contacting Mary McClellan, Michigan State University, to see if she would be able to meeting with us via teleconference and discuss the MG Program model at Michigan State.

Questions concerning liability/insurance issues can be fielded by Ryan Schmiesing (schmiesing.1@osu.edu). It would be nice to have a Volunteer FactSheet to summarize insurance/liability issues and technicalities. 4-H has done all of this, but it should be put together for Master Gardeners. Other counties need to be asked if there are any additional administrative questions. As committee members have questions or hear of questions, please get them to Pam.

Dave S. posed two program issues: What is the minimum standard to become a Master Gardener volunteer (core competency) and in what ways can those standards be delivered? It would be helpful to put another speaker's list together. Pam and Tim R will work together to develop a web site where potential speakers could fill in their availability on teaching as well as topics, willingness to travel etc. Steve H. believes that eventually a sub-committee will need to be formed to look at additional MG Specializations, such as Insect or Weeds. This is a long-term goal.

Tim Rhodus has offered to chair this sub-committee, members include: Joe B., Steve H., Dave S., Jim C., and Bill Jones.

Bill Jones is in favor of set standards. We don't just want to push people through the certification training. Becoming a MG volunteer should mean something. The problem lies within the different capabilities of people. The testing can't all be done by standardized tests. The sub-committee will continue to pursue these issues.

VIII. Letter to Update MG Advisors

Jim Chatfield and Pam Bennett will compose a letter and have it out asap.

Master Gardener Endowment information will be tabled until the next meeting.

We will include other Department heads in the distribution of the meeting minutes. We may want to invite them to meetings, as well. An Administrative representative and Comm./Tech. Rep will also be looked into.

IX. Next Meeting Date

Wednesday, June 8, 2005 from 10:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. Location to be announced.

Respectfully submitted by Tammi Rogers