

**EXTENSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
DECEMBER 16, 2021**

IN ATTENDANCE:

Commissioner Saine-virtual	ShaleyDehner
Josh Docheff	Olga Gonzalez
Pat Kindvall	Ron Marshall
Erin Mathews	Daryl Wiest
Gary Schaneman	Hannah Swanbom
Jenette Masarie – WC Fair program update	Cindy Nosko - Minutes

ABSENT:

Amy Cooksey	Will Nelson
Will Owsley	Sean Short
Lori Stevens	

Daryl Wiest welcomed the group and called the meeting of the Weld County Extension Advisory Council to order at 12:10 pm. The minutes were approved by Gary and seconded by Olga.

Amy Lentz-Horticulture and Sunshine Gearhart-Master Gardener Coordinator gave an update on the Master Gardener Program.

Amy began the program stating that she does site visits that include small acreage, lawn consultations, community garden consultations and orchard sites. It also includes Tree Team visits with Master Gardener Volunteers which they are up from 4 last year. She taught 17 classes in the areas of Agriculture and Food systems or food production and those were up 8 from last year. These included pruning workshops, nationally accredited produce safety alliance trainings, grow and give presentations and weed identification classes for small acreage owners.

Amy taught 31 horticulture classes to the public and master gardener volunteers covering topics such as waterwise landscaping, tree identification for tree team volunteers across the region, in-person classes such as tree walks with members of community tree boards in Severance and Platteville. She also helped facilitate, host, and organize an additional 35 classes covering a wide range of topics in addition to those she taught herself.

Amy attended 22 professional development opportunities in 2021, mostly through virtual conferences like the Native Plant Conference, High Plains Landscape workshop, the Fall Land Stewardship Series, Weld County Workplace Respect Training, and the Colorado Water Conservation Symposium in Denver.

Sunshine introduced herself, she is the Master Gardener Coordinator for Weld County. It is her role to help the volunteers stay connected to the community and to each other by organizing volunteer events, communicate regularly and clearly about what the program offers, plug volunteers into areas that utilize their strengths to benefit the program and the two of them make sure continued training is available year-round for their growth.

For 2021 they welcomed 8 apprentices into the Master Gardener Program. By the end of the season the program consisted of 51 total Master Gardeners.

They are required to participate yearly in continuing education opportunities and this year they completed over 750 hours of continuing education. It doesn't include the countless hours spent by the apprentice trainees, with each trainee completing a semester-long rigorous training course to prepare

them to become a Colorado Master Gardener. Their volunteer force is strong and in 2021 the increased the number of volunteer hours completed in communities across Weld County by 300 additional hours of service from last year, making this year's total of 2299 volunteer hours completed. The Master Gardeners had 2,337 direct contacts with residents in Weld County that included talking with people at the Farmers Markets, teaching kids in local schools and working with clients who contacted the Garden Desk. This year, the Garden Desk was very busy as they assisted 393 residents of Weld County with their horticulture-related questions which is up from last year. They staff the help desk at the office 3 days a week during the growing season and one day a week in the off-season. The Master Gardeners currently host informational booths at the Farmers Markets in Greeley, Windsor, and Frederick. They also served at the Lowe's Garden Center in Greeley on busy Saturday mornings. They have also show up to community events such as Frederick DIY day and Ft. Lupton's Trapper Days.

The Master Gardeners consider the Fair as a favorite event. They beautify the bunkhouse each year when the volunteers donate their containers for the week, and they help with check-in and assisting judges during the event. They've also helped make the vegetable show a success each year. They run the check-in process, assist with judging, and make the low look attractive and inviting.

The Master Gardeners had a great year of teaching opportunities with many classes outside like the Pinecone Social near Firestone, and a series of gardening classes were taught by volunteers at the Johnstown Milliken libraries through the growing season.

We also do weekly maintenance and pruning on the demo garden which is located in front of the building. This garden is used as an outreach tool to the community.

Hannah gave the director's report. She passed out a new publication called Extension Elevated. It's going to be an annual publication that is going to be put out and everyone in the office highlighted something that they did this last year that they were proud of. As you read through it, there is a story from each individual in the office. It's posted on the website and has also been sent out to donors and sponsors.

We are in the process of hiring an Ag Agent specializing in Agronomy/crop production and farming, taking some of the calls that Amy has been handling and getting them off her plate. Working with CSU right now finishing up the job description. It is a formula funded position with CSU paying 85% of the salary and Weld paying a portion. We're splitting this position with Washington County meaning they'll spend part of their time here and part there. They will be housed here in Greeley with Hannah being their supervisor. It's exciting to be able to expand our area of getting extension out to the community. CSU is working on the position right now and it has been approved by the Commissioners.

We will also be hiring a new Admin/Fair Secretary that will open up in January and close the first of February as unfortunately Marlaina Ensdorff is unable to remain in the position.

Other than that, things are winding up for the holidays and winding down for the year, just working to finish up the end of the year in the office. As for 4-H, getting ready for the new year, enrollment is open now. Fair is busy getting stuff ready to go for next year.

Commissioner Lori Saine gave an update on the Commissioners. Received the publication from Extension on what the departments were doing which is good for the Commissioners to see what Extension has been doing and all the accomplishments that they have had from 4-H to the Fair. It was good to see what the 4-H has been doing for community service for the homeless and the women's shelters. It's good to get that information out to the public to give them a better idea of what Extension is all about. Congratulations to you all on your accomplishments.

The budget is ready for next year is \$374,000,000, we anticipate a \$400,000,000 balance by the end of 2022. \$100,000,00 being a contingency because we're fiscally responsible and we have a contingency fund, and we'll continue our Southern Bell rebates back to the citizens and we've returned almost a billion back to taxpayers. The upshot is that Weld County will continue to be fiscally responsible and lead the way in that area.

We're also pushing back on some of the obnoxious emissions rules that are going after our farmers, oil and gas companies, and sand and gravel companies. Really just about all industries. We have been very active in that space and providing testimony and currently suing the EPA over the non-attainment zone they extended, without any science behind it and are confident that we're going to win that. We continue to be advocates not only for the taxpayers, but the people that will ultimately be harmed by these policies.

With no further business or new business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:55 p.m. The next Council meeting will be on February 17th at noon at the Extension, with Need's assessment report and election of officers.