Western New York Environmental Alliance
GROWING WORKING GROUP

MEETING MINUTES
May 1st, 2013

Roll call
Rebekah Williams (RW)-Massachusetts Avenue Project
Cheryl Thayer (CT)-Cornell Cooperative Extension Erie
Natalie Cook (NC)-Cornell Cooperative Extension Niagara
Sarah Stimpson (SS)-Food Bank of WNY
Kristen Armstrong (KA)-Urban Roots/Grassroots Gardens
Kristen Kaszubowski (KK)-Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo

April meeting minutes approved

Updates from member groups
(To access links, hold down “Ctrl” and click on hyperlink)
- KA: Grassroots Gardens received a grant to support the addition of a full time Program Manager to their staff. Click HERE for full press release.
- RW: MAP is having an organic seedling sale May 4th, 11th, and 18th. For more details, click HERE
- CT: Field and Fork Network, in collaboration with CCE Harvest NY team, were awarded a Farm Credit Northeast Agricultural Enhancement grant to commence the Food Hub market analysis, feasibility study and business plan. Additional funds are being sought to complement the grant.
- SS: Shared the following event with group: “Know Your Food System” presented by Dr. Samina Raja. June 3rd, from 2-4:30. RSVP to Sara Jablonski 716.882.7705/sarajablonski0702@yahoo.com
- Letter’s of support for the FPC of Buffalo and Erie have been submitted by: CCE Erie County, Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, Food Bank of WNY, Grassroots Gardens

WNY Environmental Alliance update
- Board is encouraging working groups to think about budget items for the upcoming year and submit for review and approval
- Next quarterly meeting is June 9th. Topic will be on fracking. Immediately prior to the quarterly meeting, advocacy training will be provided to those interested

Working Group Business-Finish 2014 advocacy goals
#2 Advocacy Goal: Informing and mobilizing the public, the WYNEA and policy-makers on growing-related policy items. Suggestions of how to achieve this goal and examples of work going on in 2013:
- A digital resource -similar to what other working groups are doing on the GrowWNY site.
- Food Hub Symposium hosted by Cornell Cooperative Extension to share best practices and educate economic development agencies and elected officials. June 17th @ Empire State Brewery in Syracuse, NY
• Farmers Market to increase awareness about chronic disease. Scheduled for June at Community Health Center, Niagara County.
• NYS bill pending intended to facilitate getting access to vacant public land as a state policy by expanding the authority of the State Office of Community Gardens. **596 Acres** out of NYC is looking to form a loose coalition of like agencies doing work in this area
• Impact of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) on habitat - Larry Beehan of WNYEA Habitat & Natural Resources Working Group
• Encourage the implementation of the Buffalo Public School District Wellness Policy
• Support the Local Farms, Food and Jobs Act before Congress. For more information or how to support, click **HERE**

#3 Advocacy Goal: Sharing resources, educational and marketing opportunities for local food, gardening and farming efforts. Suggestions of how to achieve this goal and examples of work going on in 2013:
• Community garden workshops by Grassroots Gardens & Urban Roots
• Urban agricultural training by MAP
• Encourage the continued sharing of events, through the Growing Group listserv, a shared calendar, possible texting campaign
• Educational event on food hubs for the public

**New Business**

The Growing Working Group has been asked to submit a blog article to the [www.growwny.org](http://www.growwny.org) website in June.

To help disseminate the work of writing an article, RW requested the group watch a TEDTalk video about a community “guerilla gardener” in South Central LA and answer a few questions. The link to the video is [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EzZzZ_qpZ4w](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EzZzZ_qpZ4w)

The answers to these questions will be re-formatted into a blog post:

• How do the issues Ron Finley brings up about food deserts, gardening, land use/access, or health relate to the work you or your organization does?

• Finley is very passionate about guerilla gardening. What are you passionate about regarding these issues? Why is this work important to WNY?

Screening of the YouTube video will take place on the next Growing Group meeting, scheduled for June 5th.