

ERA Committee Minutes – 11/3/22

IN attendance: Sabrina C, John A, Anne L, Norma P, Leslie W, Paul C, Edmond M, Carol Z, Susanne (NO)

Chair Sabrina's comments: River is low, and temperatures are unusually high. It offers unique perspectives. Reviewed minutes, which are located online. Agritourism – Increase in industry. River cruise offering shore excursion to a dairy farm. MN-MRPC – Drive the GRR theme was agriculture. The committee held a productive conversation in Memphis. Talked about pollinators and the benefits to habitat, environment, and tourism. Seed bomb activities were also discussed, as well as following Monarch migration along the GRR and how we can tie to it. Overall, lots of brainstorming in Memphis. We decided as a committee to come together at meetings and share ideas, successes and lessons learned.

Paul shared a file and spoke about a foundation, Pomeroy Foundation that wants to highlight specialty food and provides grants for historical signage. He spoke of a pollinator opportunity to install native plantings to reduce mowing needs at a Fish Hatchery in IA and although DNR has no money, local group wants to do it. Could use some resources.

John spoke about tour options on his cruise, such as IA's Lee County agritourism tour excursion.

Norma asked if we could add these Agri- businesses to a membership option.

Carol provided more information on the MN Agritourism and MN Grown, a membership association, for Drive the GRR Month that included a map and kickoff event.

Things we are working on:

Pollinators – species and opportunities. Erin works with many pollinator groups, and we want to get involved with 2023 National Pollinator Week, June 19-25. We are working on a toolkit with fact sheet and maybe proclamations at the state or local level.

John shared that in 2021 MN did do a proclamation for National Pollinator Week.

https://mn.gov/governor/assets/06.21.21%20Pollinator%20Week_tcm1055-484338.pdf

Bike ride that follows Monarch migration – we'll be checking interest levels for the future and looking for folks who may be interested in championing/organizing this type of activity. Leslie thought it was a great idea but huge undertaking. She does have a contact from RAGBRAI (Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa) bike race.

Chair Sabrina emphasized that we want to focus on our ability to share how and what we do as a state so others can learn how to do it.

Edmond from TN worked in the past on pollinator projects including directly working with state parks during pollinator week the past 2 years. He will put something together to share with the group. Same for the seed campaign. He is thinking about the Welcome Centers and using that connection to pass out the pollinator seed or info to visitors. One of the easiest things we can do is share and leveraging/replicating our ideas and work for others.

Last item of discussion is planning for 2023 committee calls. Decision was to keep it the first Thursday of month quarterly at 10am. Feb, May, Sept, Nov. (Susanne could you go ahead and populate those dates for me?)