**National Initiative for Consumer Horticulture (NICH)**

**Executive Committee**

<https://ucanr.zoom.us/j/772646634>

**Tuesday, Mar. 2, 2021**

**10am ET / 9am CT / 8am MT / 7am PT**

**Minutes**

Attendees: Missy, Ellen, Rick, Sylvia, Helen, Cara, Heather, Mason, Lauren, Casey, Sheri

Old Business:

* Approve February Meeting minutes – approved
* Reorganization Meeting Report – identification of challenges  
  Ad Hoc reorg team has met to discuss current structure and concerns about similar/parallel efforts. Concerns include excessive meetings for those NICH members who are part of multiple Committees and potential burn out. Committee will suggest changes to structure for consideration at a future Executive Committee meeting.
* Video assets  
  Mar Comm will promote existing video assets
* Advisory Committee on Urban Ag.   
  Mason and Missy will be nominated for the Advisory Committee. Ellen will create a nomination letter and sign on behalf of the NICH Executive Committee. Motion moved, seconded, approved.
* Review Action Items – complete

New Business:

* Rick Durham is new Chair of the Academic Council.
* Monthly Marketing Topics   
  Lauren will create a write up of her scavenger hunt activity for the e-blast and we’ll re-visit the effort on our social media channels again this year. Helen will reach out to NICH members who are involved in youth/children’s gardening as well. Please direct your attention to the Mar Comm Notion, eBlast folder, Tasks. Please sign up to contribute if you see a topic that you or a guest contributor could help with.
* Potential Infographic topics  
  Could we find a graphic artist to create a template? Currently seeking support for the design/graphic development of infographics. Potential new topics include plants do that for kids, plants do that in the kitchen, plants do that for tourism, plants do that for wildlife. Rick will engage the Academic Council about new e-blasts.
* Branding
  + Logo: NICH branding is a stumbling block for others to use our materials. Is our goal to get our message our or to promote the NICH brand with consumers (who aren’t likely to join NICH)? What is a workaround? Helen suggests using acronym with website – e.g., NICH (consumerhort.org) instead of large logo.
  + Metadata: Is there metadata associated with the graphics that go out? (author, ownership of graphics, key words). Helen will look into this. Lauren unsure that this is possible with social media posts. Not every social media post we make has ‘alt text’. Sheri suggests we include hashtag protocol in brand standards.
  + Policy/Brand Style Guide: Helen will revamp logo policy by end of May.
* Tracking NICH hours  
  Consider starting to track NICH hours to have an accounting of ‘volunteer contribution’. Data can be used down the road as we recruit new members, seek funding (can use as a match/offset).

Committee/Council Reports:

* Health and Community Benefits (Sheri)  
  Working through a needs assessment. Met with Diane Relf and connected with International People Plant Council to look for ways to collaborate and work together. Committee has submitted numerous abstracts for the organization’s fall symposium. Diane will be joining NICH as a partner. Sheri will get Heather in contact with hort therapy folks to promote on social channels. Helen will create new ‘buckets’ in the e-blast for videos, article submission opportunities, etc. Heather will submit abstract for poster for APGA conference. Lauren will make the poster. Abstract submission due on or around March 13th.
* Environmental (Lauren) – tabled for next meeting
* Farm Bill Report (Cammie) – tabled for next meeting

**Next Meeting:** April 6, 2021

**Box folder:** <https://app.box.com/s/rdb4wihilpi0j4fousyj97r11u4yllyk>

**March ACTION ITEMS:**

* Committee/Council Chairs will start to populate their Committee/Council Homepage in Notion (ALL)
* New Infographic on gardening /exercise
* Proposal for re-organization (Ellen, Rick, Casey, Helen, Missy, Heather)
* Request a short video from Mary Kay and Gail about their experiences with SCRI focusing on impact and value of participation (Missy)
* Mar Comm will promote video assets (Helen)
* Scavenger hunt and children’s gardening highlights in e-blast and social media (Lauren and Helen)
* Seeking graphic design support (ALL – contact Helen)
* Potential new infographics (Rick)
* Metadata and updated logo policy (Helen)
* Connect Heather with hort therapy contacts (Sheri)
* Create ‘buckets’ in e-blast for videos, article submission opportunities, etc. (Helen)
* Submit abstract for poster for APGA conference before March 13 (Heather)

Active NICH Committees:

1) Health and Community – Sheri

2) Environmental – Lauren

3) Marketing – Helen

4) Webinar – Mason

5) Outreach – Sylvia

6) Farm Bill – Cammie

7) Industry Relations and Social Media Development Committee – Heather

NICH Councils:

8) Academic Council (AKA SCC85) – Rick

Ad Hoc

10) Restructure Committee

**USDA Seeks Members for Advisory Committee on Urban Agriculture**  
  
**GAINESVILLE, Fla., Jan. 6, 2021 —** The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is seeking members for a new advisory committee on urban agriculture, part of a broader effort to focus on the needs of urban farmers. The 12-person committee will advise the Secretary of Agriculture on the development of policies and outreach relating to urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural production practices as well as identify any barriers to urban agriculture.  
  
“We are looking forward to a robust group of nominees to serve on this important new advisory committee,” said Juan Hernandez, State Conservationist for USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Florida.  
  
“This group will underscore USDA’s commitment to all segments of agriculture and has the potential to support innovative ways to increase local food production in urban environments,” added Sherry McCorkle, State Executive Director for USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Florida.  
  
USDA is seeking nominations for individuals representing a broad spectrum of expertise, including:

* Four agricultural producers (two agricultural producers in an urban area or urban cluster and two agricultural producers who use innovative technology).
* Two representatives from an institution of higher education or extension program.
* One representative of a nonprofit organization, which may include a public health, environmental or community organization.
* One representative of business and economic development, which may include a business development entity, a chamber of commerce, a city government or a planning organization.
* One individual with supply chain experience, which may include a food aggregator, wholesale food distributor, food hub or an individual who has direct-to-consumer market experience.
* One individual from a financing entity.
* Two individuals with related experience or expertise in urban, indoor and other emerging agriculture production practices, as determined by the Secretary.

Any interested person or organization may nominate qualified individuals for membership. Self-nominations are also welcome.  
  
Nominations should include a cover letter, resume and a [background form](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ocio.usda.gov%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fdocs%2F2012%2FAD-755-Approved_Master-exp-3.31.22_508.pdf&data=04%7C01%7C%7C0fe57eeaa74c40a517e108d8b19c1986%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C637454631294584530%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=KqCeICe%2BRdeZdhTmDcrSvexsydyOaVK%2F9JM46B%2FsjMY%3D&reserved=0). Nomination packages must be submitted by mail or email by March 5, 2021. They should be addressed to Ronald Harris, Designated Federal Officer, Director of Outreach and Partnerships, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 6006-S, Washington, D.C. 20250, or emailed to [Ronald.Harris@usda.gov](mailto:Ronald.Harris@usda.gov).  
  
The 2018 Farm Bill established the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production and directed USDA to form this advisory committee as well as make other advancements related to urban agriculture. It is led by the NRCS and works in partnership with numerous USDA agencies that support urban agriculture. Its mission is to encourage and promote urban, indoor and other emerging agricultural practices, including community composting and food waste reduction. More information is available in [this notice on the Federal Register](https://public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2020-29077.pdf) or at [farmers.gov/urban](https://www.farmers.gov/manage/urban/opportunities). Additional assistance is available [Ask.USDA.Gov](https://ask.usda.gov/s/) or by calling (202) 720-2791.  
  
Cammie Donaldson, Executive Director  
Native Plant Horticulture Foundation  
[www.NativePlantHort.org](http://www.NativePlantHort.org)

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