**ALUFS SWATeam First Meeting Minutes, 3 p.m. 9/8/2017 ACES Library 301**

Present: Bruce Branham, Reid Christianson, Brent Lewis, Adriana Noboa, Colleen Williams

Absent: Joseph Edwards, Thurman Etchison

I. General information and ideas, including historic experience with the team

1. Points to bring into consideration
   1. This group easily spreads itself thin due to wide range of topics. All were in agreement we need to narrow project ideas down to a prioritized few.
   2. Recommendations must be submitted and approved -> longer project time
   3. The team should focus on making recommendations that will be easy to implement by others rather than volunteering to do all of the work.
2. South Farm
   1. The South Farm is working on projects to include perennials, ex. to grow trees and currants in the understory. Problems include length of time to conduct an experiment relating to trees, which do not grow quickly. That said, this 30 acres was converted from rowcrop agriculture and is providing a carbon sequestration service
   2. It’s unlikely this system would have to be irrigated, so drainage water recycling from rowcrop areas is likely not a feasible option
   3. The Sustainable Student Farm will hold an Open House on Friday, September 15th (<https://www.thefarm.illinois.edu/>)
3. Landscaping
   1. Projects include fencing, seeding, and aesthetics of the university. There is an overarching effort to work with grounds maintenance to reduce maintenance requirements including “low mow” areas.
   2. Points to consider
      1. Overall number of workers in grounds department has gone down in the past 20 years.
      2. Biodiversity isn’t everything in landscaping because it should also be visually appealing and not mistaken for weeds (especially should consider this point for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) projects).
      3. Sequestration measurements of all plants on campus would be limited for now to paved v. nonpaved surface.
   3. A Tree Survey was conducted in the past for data on carbon sequestration. An updated survey will begin this fall.

II. Review of charge

1. The team will make recommendations and create a poster in October. The team discusses the content together. The Clerk will put a template together and get approval from the rest of the team.
2. Process of recommendation: team members would comment on a form with the Recommendations

III. Present Potential Topics

1. University Dining
   1. In 2016/17, ALUFS could not do projects with University Dining because of research on food waste in the halls. That research may be done in 2017/18.
   2. University Dining does not have a composter because it does not pay back enough, despite potential for fertilizer.
   3. University Dining currently uses EnviroPure food processors for aerobic digestion of food waste ([www.enviropuresystems.com/files/EnviroPure\_Effective-Approach-to-Food-Waste.pdf](http://www.enviropuresystems.com/files/EnviroPure_Effective-Approach-to-Food-Waste.pdf)). An anaerobic digester would allow the university to use food waste to produce methane and use the methane as a fuel source. Funding is available but it is unknown when it would be built.
   4. It is unknown to the team what happens to food waste at the water treatment level.
   5. It is difficult to reduce food waste if current levels are unknown.
2. Agriculture
   1. Points of Consideration
      1. The University’s farmland is decentralized, makes it difficult to inquire about practices on plots
      2. University run farms should be championing conservation efforts and use generally accepted conservation practices to mitigate environmental impacts
   2. Suggestion to have Dr. Richard Cooke in ABE, Dr. Laura Christianson in Crop Sciences, or other faculty have a student to take water samples where the Embarras River crosses Airport Road/County Road 1100 N near South Race Street/County Road 1350E to measure nitrate concentrations.
      1. The intent would be to estimate annual nitrate loads leaving the watershed at this point, which is heavily dominated by University operated farms [icap.sustainability.illinois.edu/files/project/3110/Southfarm%20Watershed.pdf](https://icap.sustainability.illinois.edu/files/project/3110/Southfarm%20Watershed.pdf) .
      2. Ultimately, this could result in mitigation recommendations by providing a benchmark annual load.
   3. Suggestion to recommend minimum standards for campus farmland
   4. Suggestion to keep an overall agricultural focus for purposes of simplicity

**Next meeting: beginning of October**