



Setting Strategies for the Future of the WAA

Well, by the time this reaches your mailbox, I hope that Mother Nature has made up her mind that winter is finally over and that April showers should bring May flowers and not more of the same cold wet weather we have grown to despise. But alas, the gypsy moth caterpillars are hatching and soon the sound of caterpillars munching and dropping “you know what” into our drinks will fill the air across our great state!

Over the course of the past year-and-a-half, the WAA Board of Directors and the Strategic Planning Committee have been hard at work updating and reviewing the strategic plan for the next five years of the WAA. In October of 2009, the planning committee first met for a two-day planning retreat. What an eye opening experience that was! Over the course of those two days, many discussions about the successes and concerns of the WAA were undertaken. (I never knew so many people felt that strongly about Dick Rideout’s biking attire!)

After much discussion, the committee identified four main issues/areas that should be focused on in the next five years. Although the strategic plan requires final approval by you, our members, at the upcoming business meeting at the annual conference, the board has started to implement and complete many of the goals and milestones in the plan. The four priorities identified by the planning committee for the next five years are to:

1. **Improve the WAA’s organizational structure**
2. **Promote the value of membership**
3. **Sustain education**
4. **Increase public awareness of the WAA**

The planning committee also reviewed the mission statement and added a vision statement to guide the WAA in the five years. Our vision statement, “**A primary resource for the WAA members to promote the profession of urban forestry and arboriculture in Wisconsin,**” is a new addition to the plan. The purpose of adding the vision statement is to allow the

board and you, our members, to gauge the activities of the WAA and determine if we are heading in the right direction. The WAA is a strong voice for arboriculture in Wisconsin but



we can be more for our members and the profession. It always amazes me—the quality of volunteers we have and their dedication to the association. The new and innovative ideas that come out of our committees have that same vision—to make the WAA the best it can be and make it the primary resource for our members and the public. For example, the popularity of our website has been truly exponential for both our members and the general public looking for tree care tips, certified arborists and even students doing research for class projects.

Our mission, “Improving the understanding and appreciation of trees and the practice of arboriculture,” has not changed. This is the heart and soul of what we do and who we are as professionals.

In the coming issues of the newsletter, I will write in more detail the goals outlined for the next five years. Obviously, there are more than these four areas that are important to our organization but these four were identified as key and timely to address. Once these core areas are improved upon, we can take the next steps. In three short years, the WAA will be 50 years old! Look back at what we have become! This plan will help set the stage for making the next 50 years of the WAA just as impressive.

If you have questions or comments about anything WAA, feel free to contact me. I hope everyone has a productive, safe summer and makes plans to attend the summer workshop and TCC August 19th in Ashwaubenon. Hope to see you there!

Brian Pelot, *WAA President*