

12/12/16

To: Members of the Care For Our Common Home Ministry
From: Kim Scudera for Audubon at Home
Re: Audubon at Home Consultation 10/31/2016

Property Owner: St. John Neumann
Property Address: 11900 Lawyers Road, Reston, VA 20191
Approximate Property Size: 7 acres
Property Type: Church
Point of Contact: Ed Sabo
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Email: SaboEdward@aol.com
AAH Ambassador: Kim Scudera
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Email: fearlessk@cox.net

Wildlife Sanctuary Certification Status:
Pledge taken
Site Visit (10/31/2016)

In attendance:

Facilities manager Mark Gosselin
Members of the Care For Our Common Home ministry:
Ed (specialist on air pollution and climate change)
Janet (stormwater expert)
Kelly (environmental chemistry & public policy)

This is a followup from a previous meeting with (presentation by?)
Reba Elliott (Executive Director of FACS) and Barbara Tuset of
Audubon at Home and Plant NOVA Natives.

Client's goals:

- get congregants outside, with nature, rather than dominating it
- live the principles expressed in Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment, as well as Catholic social teaching
- increase accessibility to the campus
- develop outdoor spaces for contemplation
- obtain certification to promote the environmental mission of the church
- increase sustainability, including energy efficiency, recycling
- reduce the carbon footprint of the church
- advocacy and invitation to change
- identify and remove invasive plants
- landscape along the stormwater basin
- convert grassy areas to native plant gardens

Challenges:

- drainage issues at western edge of property
- nine acres across Lawyers Road drain to stormwater pond on their property
- invasive management
 - Japanese honeysuckle, bush and vine
 - mile-a-minute
 - Japanese stilt grass
 - garlic mustard
 - winged euonymus
 - Nandina
 - wineberry
- deer
- beds in parking lot

This was a long and productive meeting. Under your new pastor, Father Joe, the staff and congregation of St. John Neumann have reaffirmed their commitment to sustainable practices on this campus and back at home. Here are highlights of the meeting:

Create new beds out of grassy area at eastern edge of campus:

There are already several redbuds in place — I recommended adding **serviceberries** for early food source and spring flowers, backed by **Ilex opaca** to screen neighbors and provide year-round cover and winter weather protection. Use **Viburnum nudum** between serviceberries for shelter, flowers, berries and fall color.

Create new beds out of the grassy area along Lawyers Road, and substitute native plants for non-natives:

I will share the plan that Jill Spohn and I created for Lake Anne Elementary School, to illustrate how much can be done with a narrow strip of land. I recommended removing the nandina and replacing it with a native shrub with similar landscape characteristics: **Itea virginica**, **Vaccinium corymbosum**, **Viburnum nudum** and/or **V. acerifolium**. Adding native groundcovers is also desirable; **Phlox subulata**, **Packera aurea** and **Viola spp.** would do well in this sunny area. A sun-loving, deer-resistant perennial like **Coreopsis verticillata** or **Penstemon digitalis** (or both!) would be a good addition to the existing beds.

Beds in parking lot:

Heavy foot traffic and modest mulch volcanos are potential threats to trees planted in beds throughout the parking lot. There are no shrubs, and there is minimal ground cover. We talked about mulch volcanos and I demonstrated correct mulching technique on one tree. Recommendations included mulching entire bed to protect trees from string trimmer damage and to conserve water and protect root system. Adding shrubs in beds along exit lane, where foot crossings would be minimal, was

suggested.

There is a bed near the top of the parking lot where staff have benches which are used frequently for lunch breaks, etc. This would be a good place to add smaller shrubs for birds (shelter, food source) and for humans (enclosure, beauty). Good shrubs include:

- **Ceanothus americanus (New Jersey tea)**
- **Viburnum nudum “Brandywine”**
- **Physocarpus opulifolius (Ninebark), smaller cultivars like “Summer Wine” or “Diablo”**
- **Itea virginica “Little Henry”**
- **Vaccinium pallidum (low-bush blueberry)**
- **Hypericum prolificum (Shrubby St. John’s wort)**

Rework bed in front of St. John Neumann statue:

Make more welcoming by reducing volume of plants in the bed, adding a path of pavers or wood chips or gravel to allow parishioners to walk through the bed. Remove invasive Miscanthus which is overtaking other planting and particularly overwhelming the central Japanese maple, and replace where a grass is desired with **Schizachyrium scoparium** (little bluestem). We’ll work together on a new plan for this bed.

Western beds near exit lane:

The entire length of the shallow bed along the exit lane is planted with Bignonia capreolata “Tangerine Beauty” (cross-vine). Area gets morning sun and is in full shade from early afternoon on. Adding a shrub layer would create a valuable protected wildlife corridor. **Rosa carolina**, which can become a management problem in a less restricted space, would be ideal here.

There are five or six non-native winged Euonymus planted near the sign at the top of the slope near the exit lane; I recommend removing them and replacing with **Ninebark** to the side, **Hamamelis virginiana** (witch hazel) behind the sign, and **Rhus aromatica “Gro Low”** (sumac) around the sign and down the slope (good cover, good erosion control, and won't obscure the sign).

Landscape beds around the meditation spot behind the classrooms:

We talked about creating beds flanking the benches, in order to protect the woods from runoff from this part of the campus (now mostly grass and buildings), create a sense of privacy and enclosure, and to add more beauty to this woodland edge. We will work together to create a plan; plants to consider include:

- **Carpinus caroliniana (Ironwood)**
- **Cornus florida (dogwood)**
- **Viburnum acerifolium (maple-leaved viburnum)**
- **Hypericum prolificum (shrubby St. John's wort)**
- **Dryopteris marginalis**
- **Solidago caesia (blue-stemmed goldenrod)**
- **Solidago flexicaulis (zigzag goldenrod)**
- **Virginia bluebells and spring beauties**
- **Phlox stolonifera**

Followup:

- Send information on management of identified **invasives**: Kim
- Share planting plan for Lake Anne Elementary School, for possible use along Lawyers Road: Kim
- Get Ron Tuttle from stormwater division involved in landscaping conversation around stormwater pond, and western swale:

Kim

- Develop a plan for SJN bed: entire team
- Develop a plan for meditation area beds: entire team
- Identify 10 Sanctuary Species for certification: entire team

It was a real pleasure to work with this team, and I'm enthusiastic about returning. We have a followup meeting scheduled for December 12th at 3 pm.

All the best,
Kim

Trees are the earth's endless effort to speak to the listening heaven.

-- Rabindranath Tagore