

Pollinator Action Toolkit Lunch and Learn

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SPEAKERS

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Hello. Hello. How is everybody today? Yeah, well wait, like a minute or two, see if there's anybody else who pops in if they had another meeting before this, but since we tried to schedule this on a central time's lunch hour, if you are eating and you want to have your camera off, feel free to have your camera off. I'm going to do a quick introduction to the network and this event. And then turn it over to Erica and Kelsey to kind of talk more about the pollinator action toolkit that their committee has created. And then we can open it up for just a larger conversation with y'all about the pollinator initiatives that you're working on at your Zoo, and the challenges that you might have resources you want to share, and things like that. But while I'm introducing the network, if you want to drop in the chat, your name and the order that you're joining from, we have a sense of kind of booths all in the room today. That would be fantastic. And this is going to be recorded. So if there are folks at your organization who wanted to come today, but couldn't come today, we'll be sharing the link out with everybody who registered sometime within the week. But I'm Emily Barnhart, I am the empathy network specialist over at Woodland Park Zoo, and I use she her pronouns. And one of my roles within the network is to kind of facilitate the committees one of them being the conservation action committee that both Kelsey and Erica are the co chairs of. And these committees are responsible for kind of shaping the scope and the direction of the network related to whatever topic of focus they are as a committee, anybody who serves on a committee is either a network member or a network affiliate. And that just means that they have joined the network in some way, shape, or form just like everybody else in this room here. So if you are unfamiliar with what the ACE for Wildlife network is, as a whole, or just want a little refresher, we are the advancing conservation through empathy for wildlife network. And we are a learning network that creates and shares effective practices to foster empathy for animals and people leading to conservation actions. And as a network, we define empathy as a stimulated emotional state that relies on the ability to understand perceive and care about the perspectives of another person or animal. So yeah, this network has six committees made up of folks within the network, these members and affiliates, one of them being the conservation action committee. And this committee supports the advancing conservation part of our network name. So over the past, I think two years that the committee has been in existence, they've been working on these things called joint initiatives, which are basically ways that they as a committee are finding all this stuff going on within our network that everybody is doing, and kind of putting it all in one space, so that we can all learn from each other and not have to reinvent the wheel 27 or 28 times and just kind of facilitate better resource sharing, and conversations amongst the folks within this network. So if you are interested in serving on any of the committees, you can actually let me know we have six total committees at the time, and I'll pop the email in the chat that you can let me know

if you're interested. But that's basically a summary of kind of the network and the conservation action committee as a whole. So I'm gonna go ahead and turn it over to Erica to talk about the policy interaction toolkit

itself.

What that is, and some blank park zoos, pollinator conservation initiatives.

Perfect thank you, Emily. Well, like Emily said, my name is Erica. I use she her pronouns. And I am the volunteer and conservation Engagement Manager at the blank Park Zoo. We are located in Des Moines, Iowa, and it's not summer yet but it has definitely been a summer level morning already. So I wish everyone luck if you are experiencing the same. I have been here for just over six years ish. And during that time, my main focus has been on our teen volunteer programs zoo crew and then more recently I have expanded to started working on conservation program development, and then I'm also the co chair for the conservation action committee. I just want to take a moment to welcome everyone and thank you for being here. We, like Emily said, we have recently updated and re released our pollinator action toolkit. And then the purpose of this toolkit is to just make it easier for everyone to participate in pollinator conservation and a programs at your own facilities. Within the toolkit, you are going to find a ton of resources and suggestions for incorporating empathy practices into your own conservation action work. And some of those suggestions include using the word our when we're discussing yards and habitat and neighborhoods. So really helping guests feel more connected and invested in the conservation action elements of saving pollinators. So really helping them to develop their role in our work. And then also suggested to point out the individual pollinators that we are working to save and support. And then at bLake Park Zoo, we've started something called pollinator superstars where we highlight a pollinator help people see what they look like and what they know all about them. So really helping to develop those connections. And then also, in the toolkit, I just wanted to point out other suggestions like modeling actions, so you can have a pollinator garden on site with native plants and signage that explain to people kind of what's going on in that location and why it's important the value, you can make recommendations for to avoid pesticide use or help people find those alternatives that will be useful to them. And then something that we do a lot of here at like Park Zoo is invasive plant species removal. So we have a program called upcycle. And we work together with our local parks, parks and rec services to go out into local parks and remove mostly honeysuckle for us. But any, any kind of identified invasive plant species remove that item. And then if it is on the approved browse lists for our animals, we're able to bring that back to the zoo and offer it as a browse item for the animals here at the zoo. So it's kind of a really nice full circle program. But any kind of invasive plant removal that you can do is going to definitely benefits our native habitat, plants and species. And then just in the toolkit suggestions for how to increase knowledge for our guests and our communities that we're speaking to information about why value pollinators are important. Partnering with local organizations is something really important that can help ease your workload and then also maximize your impact. So really, working in partnership is so beneficial. And then develop those social media posts about pollinators. As you see fit, but especially during pollinator week is really good. You can do a series of different pollinators every day or you know, kind of play off of one another or why it's important or actions that you can do. And then we also do, I wanted to point out the community science opportunities that are available, they are listed in that toolkit. But journey north is a really good one. City nature challenge, something that you can get your whole community involved with. And then just a few of the specific activities or actions that

you can do on site are making milkweed with the bomb. So we all know milkweed is a important plant for our monarchs. And I think I see Chris is on the call Chris and I have made countless seedballs together in my time here. And it's just a really fun activity hands on activity to for kids but also adults. To get them involved in the process. You get them for a little bit longer than you normally would so you can talk to them. about why this plant is important and what we're doing. And then off, say, help anyone in your community, plant those native plants and gardens, if you have the capacity, we have gone out and helped plant a couple of gardens with our master gardener program through a local university. So it helps them but then it also helps us to talk about our program that I'll be talking about here very shortly. And then again, just remove invasive plant, see what people are already doing and you're doing in your community and asking how you can partner and join in on those efforts. And then just to kind of wrap up the toolkit. There are a lot of partner examples in the last couple of pages of things that everyone is doing their own facility. And so go ahead and click on those logos and see what their programs entail. And then if you have any questions, you can always email any of us on the network board or off network, it's fine, we are more than happy to share what we're doing and share our resources. And I think the great thing about I'm going to talk about a big program that we've been working on, but a really good part of pollinator projects is it doesn't have to be big. It can be a tabling event, it can be a couple of one off things and whatever you can give is going to definitely make an impact. And so I suggest everyone check out the toolkit and use it as you see fit. But then definitely share back with us to let us know if it was useful if it wasn't useful, how we can make it better. All of that feedback is really useful as we go forward with these toolkits. All right, I think we'll probably do, sharing and questions at the end. But I wanted to spend a few more minutes talking about our program at Blank Park Zoo, it is called plant grow fly. And this year, we are celebrating 10 years of the program. So it's very exciting for us. And it was created by staff and volunteers. In 2014. After we are seeing reports of Monarch numbers were in decline. And everyone wanted to obviously step up and and do something positive for their community. And this program brings awareness to threats to pollinators, and encourages the community to take action to save them. Since 2014, we have registered almost 1800 pollinator habitats are across our state and beyond. And we really like to encourage people that no effort is too small, and that everyone can do their part to save pollinators, just by planting pollinator friendly host and nectar plants in a garden space. Whatever size that can be. It can be a pot on your porch, it can be an acreage, it can be anything in between we, we accept it all. And we want to really make sure that we are empowering participants to take that action and really see that change in their communities. And then so once people plant that host and nectar plant, we ask them to register their garden with the program. This provides us with data on the number and types of plants that are in the ground sides of that garden space and location. And then we submit this data to our monarch conservation partners. And then also it helps us to really target our efforts of where we need to get some more pollinator habitat space within our area.

And then over the years, we've had staff and volunteers share this program through educational programs at schools, garden clubs, senior centers. We've made so many seedballs we've created interpretive signage, we've dressed and danced and butter as butterflies at our monarch day. demonstration that local garden shows we've really done a fair amount of outreach to get the pollinator information in as many hands as we can. And so we all know that those native plants are numerous or are are beneficial for so many reasons. They filter water, reduce erosion and provide food and shelter for our pollinators, which includes insects and our songbirds. They all play a role in that system supporting each other. And as we enter into our 10th year we've been planning for this and We've got a goal of getting 2024 Gardens registered. So we've got, we're, we're closing in on that, but we still got a ways to go. And our major goal was to get those gardens registered, but also to step up outreach efforts to make sure that we are reaching that. So, again, within our community, we

were at a local, Home and Garden Show, we've done Community Center events, garden club events, we have partnered with a local Seed Company to create pollinator packs that people can purchase. That way, they've got everything they need to just start their garden right away. And we know that by raising awareness and getting plants in the ground that we are making a difference. But we're not doing it alone. Another really important element of this program is partnerships. So we lead the plant grow fly program, but it is a partnership made up of 45 organization. And our annual meeting recently, we shared how all of our individual work is helping to support the overall work of the program. And so it's allowed us to share resources, ideas, and then just partner together and share those ideas along the way. And this is just my little plug that one, register your gardens, we'll take any garden from anywhere. And it definitely helps us along the way. But you can also join as a partner. So if you're feeling overwhelmed, and you don't know where to start, plant grow fly, it's a great resource. And we would love to have you on board with our work. But outside of that other things you can do just feed feed the migration feed those be those pollinators along the way, make sure we are providing space for them. So if that's at your facility, do that to your capacity and get as many plants in the hands of people as you can, again, reach out to your local garden centers, make sure that they have plants free of neonicotinoids. But you know, a couple of questions, most of our local garden centers are pretty good with that. But definitely make sure you check with that first. But see if you can form a partnership there. We also work with a local organization called Good Neighbor. And they encourage people to not use pesticides on their lawn. So that is a great resource. I mentioned it before, but make sure that we're volunteering and partnering with what our community is already doing and not duplicating services. Just support one another. And let's see those numbers grow. And then just be an advocate. You know, tell everyone about those native plants and what they can do to have a positive impact. And in all of our conservation work, we want to make sure that we're giving a take action with with what we're promoting. So we want to empower people to go out and make those changes. I hope that is useful. And again, don't don't feel overwhelmed. If you are like oh my gosh, I can't do that. Just do what you can. And every little bit helps. And you'll you'll get to where you where you want to be. So thank you all.

Thanks, Erica. Yeah, so I'm Kelsey. I am also the another co chair of the conservation action committee. I'm the Public Engagement Coordinator at Como Park Zoo and Conservatory and St. Paul, Minnesota. So I helped to facilitate free programming for the public, but also our youth volunteer program in the summer. For this segment, though, I'm going to talk a little bit about an activity that we developed on site that's about pollinator conservation. So like Erica was saying this activity is a little bit of a one off something easy you can do at your institution if you have an event that you need to station to help support pollinator conservation. So a little bit of background, one of the conservation events that we host here at Como is called party for the planet. And this event is always around the weekend of Earth Day. As part of the public engagement department, and having a station of this event we really wanted to do something that was related to promoting native born I'm saying, so como friends, they're our fundraising department. They were also had a station at this event, and they worked with the DNR. And they got, I think it was two to 3000. For oak saplings that they were handing out for free to visitors. We decided we also wanted to do something similar, but we decided we wanted to hand out seed packets of native plants and milkweed. So that folks could plant either in their yard or in their neighborhood or in pots. Something that was accessible for everybody, kids and adults. So as part of this event, my colleague came up with a fun pollinator activity that both kids and adults and families could partake in that was at the table. And this is linked in the pollinator toolkit, so you can definitely find all the resources in there. So really, if visitors participated in this activity in any way, we would give them a seed packet as a prize. Even if people ask them, we would give them a seed packet, we had plenty to hand out. And people were really excited to take it, it was just nice to have that interaction and have that learning experience for people to connect to plants

and pollinators. Photos of what the station itself looks like are also linked in that toolkit. So you can kind of if you look through that, get an idea of what I'm talking about. So before we even started planning this, we have the luxury here since we're a zoo and a conservatory, we have a conservatory that grows lots of different types of plants. So we asked our outdoor gardener staff, which native plants they were planning to plant in the outdoor gardens this year, and if we could borrow a few of them to have on our table as Ambassador plants for visitors. So based on what they came back with, we looked at pollinators that were able to match up with these specific plants that lived in Minnesota. So my colleague came up with a fun idea that each plant would have a pollinator match with that. And these pollinators would have specific preferences or likes to help both kids and adults match the pollinator to the plant. So for example, the cellophane bee doesn't like strong smells. So then the visitor would look well, which plants does it have a strong smell and they could match them up. And that will help visitors really connect to understand that there are certain plants they can plant around their yard or around their neighborhood that you know what attracts these types of specific pollinators. So the actual activity had little laminated tokens that were representative of each pollinators. So visitors could actually move the pollinator token to the corresponding plant based on the clues. And I was at the station, some parts of the weekend and facilitating this activity. And it was really fun. Both families, adults and kids enjoy this activity. kids liked it, because many of them would come up to the table and they would recognize these specific pollinator animals in their own backyard and in their neighborhood. And then the adults or you know, educator could explain how the plants would helpful to pollinators. Adults liked it a lot, because they were curious about the plants, especially the ambassador plants, they would find similarities to what they had in their own yard and their neighborhood. And then they can they realize they could plant these in their own spaces to help pollinators. So we did find, though, that many visitors would ask specific questions about the seeds and about the plants and how to grow them and how to take care of them. And while we aren't experts on this type of thing, we definitely tried to help an answer as best we can. But it was really nice to see people getting excited about the opportunity to you know, plant, native pollinator seeds and native milkweed seeds and be excited about that. So we tried to find seeds also that were very easy to plant where we would just say, Okay, you just can sell them and go like, just let them you know, let them go and you know, in a couple years, potentially have some pollinator plants and ones that could Yeah, like I said, be planted in pots or in just small spaces as well. So yeah, the resources and activities for this are in the toolkit, like I said, So I'm happy to help answer any questions that you might have them. I understand that the plants specifically in this activity are native to Minnesota, so Oh, you know, obviously, different zones in the country are going to have different native plants. But this is definitely something I think that everybody could find, you know, a similar activity for their region. Yeah, so that's a little bit about that specific activity. It was it was really fun. And I'm really happy with how successful it was. And we ordered, I think, four or 500 seed packets for the weekend and handed out all of them. So it was really nice to, you know, have people come and talk about their their native plantings and how they were helping pollinators. Yeah, so now, I do want to open it up now the time for the informal discussion as part of this lunch and learn. So this also includes a question and answer session. If you have any initiatives at your institution that you'd like to share, we'd love to hear them. Also, if you'd like to ask any questions about how you can develop pollinator initiatives and activities, you can definitely brainstorm as a group. So thank you.

Feel free to either come directly off mute. Or you can raise your hand if you would rather do that, and then we can just go through. I did have a question for Kelsey slash anybody else in the room? And you might have mentioned this when you were talking about how you got your seed packets? But did you like do a partnership with like a local greenhouse? Or like, is that something that you got drafted from the conservatory? Like, how did you acquire 500? packets of seeds?

Yeah, yeah, we for this specific instance, we ordered them online from Bentley seeds. We looked into them, they're a sustainable company that puts together seed packets.

In the future, yes, we were on a little bit of a shorter timeline, a tighter timeline. But in the future, I know, our conservatory has different locations that they partner with to get their plants. So I'd, I'd think a little bit deeper about partnering with someone local, if we plan to do that again, but we did what we could in the time that we had. Yeah, for sure. Good question.

Does anybody who may have a similar like, seed packet pollinator program at their organization like partner with a local greenhouse or botanical organization in their area?

We've done our one off for an event but didn't do any. It wasn't local, it was online.

I have a question for the group. Something that our was working on this past year was Trent was getting some legislation to ban the use of those neck and neck and like a lot. nica- chemicals I never remember how to say it. And I was just wondering if and our our approach was the two we had a contact in the state senate who was willing to introduce legislation focused on like, just individual use rather than then agriculture, because we just knew that was going to be a whole a whole big thing. And so starting with that, and I was just wondering if any of your other zoos have considered trying to do some legislation or something or petitions or something to advocate for, for the ban of those in your state? I know it's a controversial issue, but just wondering if that's something that you think that there would be any interest in or, or willingness to, like at least have people sign petitions to or write postcards to their their state reps or something?

Hi, Ron, I'm Lindsay from Minnesota Zoo, and we're a state entity so we're not able to do that. So Anything but one thing I really did like that we were able to do this year was the no mow May. And we'd have signs all over our parking lot, advocating for non mold May and also telling people why we're doing that. And then another thing I was going to mention about seed packets, we also hand out seed packets here. And it was very sort of like a contentious issue between staff because our conservation department felt very strongly on the types of seeds that we were passing out. And so one year, I don't know if it wasn't vetted by the right people. But the next year, it was like a multi department conversation. And there was multiple meetings about seed packets. So it's definitely something that we have going on at our zoo as well. I would love and I can't stay for very much longer. But one thing that I would love to talk to you all about, is how you use Kelsey mentioned that how you use plant ambassadors in your programs. And I'd like to incorporate that more here, if possible, someday. And you know, how you do feel those questions, kelsey people thinking you are then the experts. You know, and where do you start? Do you start with milkweed? Do you start with it like a pot? Or do you started in a vase or like, you know, just sort of how we would even because when I brought it up with people, I was like, Oh, that's so different from what we normally do. We just normally bring animals and I'm like, but plants too. They have a lot of associations, and especially when we can't bring animals to certain places. I would love to bring plants. So any ideas about how we could get people on board with that would be great.

So Oh, go ahead. Go ahead.

Oh, for us, we have a permanent signage about our plant ambassadors. So we have like our graphic designer made, like cartoon versions of the plants. So like, oh, we had mentioned some other things, but I can't remember what all they were. But she put cartoon characters on them, and then explained what the plant was and why it was important and what pollinators use it. And we have that in our pollinator garden. And then we have little scavenger hunts for like the school groups of can you find each ambassador who's out there each sign and write down what that what their name is. So it's kind of a permanent addition to our pollinator garden. But it's the first step we've had in associating plants as the focal.

I just shared one in the chat.

I was gonna say, I mean, I feel like and I could be wrong, but most institutions have at least outdoor groundskeepers, or staff taking care of the plants outside on grounds. And I'm wondering, you know, like, we connected with the gardeners, and they were able to provide us with plants, it's maybe it's as simple as Yeah, connecting with the outdoor groundskeeper is like, Hey, could you save a couple of these for us, you know, in the plant in the pot before you plant them. And like we could use them for education, to promote pollinators, like in the springtime. Just because it was nice. When people asked, you could say like, oh, yeah, these are going to be out, you know, in the gardens, pretty soon here. So they're just, you know, telling their story right now that soon they'll be out and planted for pollinators to enjoy. And, Lindsey to your question about Fielding, you know, the horticulture expertise questions, I would just be honest with people and say, as much as I knew, and then be like, you know, there's a lot of great resources online like University of Minnesota extension and just researching specific native plants, I would try to point them in the right direction of resources instead of answering specifically because there's a lot of variables to I think that go into people's own personal outdoor garden, like, I don't know, your soil type or sun or shade or anything like that. But I'm curious, Lindsay, what, because we didn't have any controversy with seedpackets it's I'm curious, what was the what was the controversy? Like what was I don't

know if it was a certain seed packet went out one year that had a specific plant that wasn't necessarily native to Minnesota. Okay, so it might have been native to like a nearby state or something, and it was specific to our area. And so people had feelings about that.

Sure. That makes sense. Yeah.

So now it's a group discussion, and it's everybody He's involved in picking which seeds are going in the packets.

So with our seed packets when we handed those out, we made plant care sheets that went with it, about what kind of soil what kind of sunlight? What kind of art Do you so the deepers not and ours were actually scatter on the surface. So they were super easy. But we tried to give them a here is a fool proof way of making this plant actually happen.

Christian got your hand up.

So yeah, I will say that was probably one of the biggest lessons learned with when we first started plant grow fly, we were working again, we have lots of partners, and one of them was a called Ryman garden. So it's a botanical place that people go and see the beautiful flowers and butterflies that locate and joined with one of our with Iowa State University. So of course, very much experts in the field on plants. And we had in our first rendition of our what to put out for nectar plants, we had butterfly bush, because that's a pretty easy one that people find. And our native plant community was very, very upset about that. And we're like, well, we won't like this is a great program, but we're not going to support it. If you have that on your list. Even though it's not invasive. Here in Iowa, there are other places that can be invasive. So we had to kind of step back and even though even our experts were like, so having those conversations, but it is important, because we want of course, the Iowa Native Plant Society to support this. And so it wasn't in house, but definitely that community aspect of it, which is like is really important was a good learning lesson for all of us to, to get to get that buy in. So and another part we did a few years ago, we were part of that. Parks. Oh, like the parks and refuge zoos and refuge kind of getting together, there's there was a grant, I can't remember the whole thing about it. But we had were part of that for a little bit. And one of our local refugees, they grew the plants for us to give out one summer, which again, that's a lot of staff time for them. And then a lot of staff time for us to water the plants to make sure that they're getting in the ground and all that. So anybody has more like ideas of how you can do that. That's great. But those are some of the resources out there with grants that AZA has some some opportunities if you want to go down that road.

I think too, about not being a plant expert. One, I have had a crash course in native plants over the last couple of years. Um, but we are really honest, and just say, Hey, we are not the experts. We support you doing what feels good. And maybe it'll work. Maybe it won't work. That's part of gardening, but also, here's a list of experts to get in touch with. So I think too, with gardening, it feels sometimes the experts can feel really overwhelming. So we try to always present it as really approachable and like, maybe it'll die. But maybe it won't. And that would be great. So just really supporting along the way.

And I know about presentations, I always talked about why the zoo because people will be like, Well, why does the zoo care about monarchs or hummingbirds and things like that. So I usually start off with Well, this is our mission. And so we have all these wonderful, exotic animals that are also pollinators in their own rights in their own countries. Yet, we can't, we're not going to be able to go tomorrow and like, help that out. So how can we help in our backyard. So then that turns that conversation, kind of back into what you can do with yourself with your own backyard and getting people excited about that. And I will say I'm always very nervous when I go to the garden clubs, but they are like the best ladies. Well, there's, there's some men there too, but I shouldn't generalize. But I'm always like, Oh, I'm just talking to the people because I'm not. I just kind of trial and error all the

time. And they're like, Oh, sweetie, that's what we do all the time. So it's okay. And they're the most I think they're those are actually for me, I go in a little bit stressed, but then I come out like, Oh, those are the best. That was the best ones where sometimes you go to other places and they ask you really high level questions. I'm like, That's great though. I had a church group get into bees with me one day and they're like, ask me all the bees questions. And I was like, I just told you I'm not an expert on bees. And then hiding in the background. They had these experts in the bees. I was like, Oh my gosh. Like you come up here and do this. You can talk about it. Thank you. So Oh, yeah, it's just leaning in, like, like anything with education, you lean into your crowd and lean into who's there. And asking more questions of them sometimes then I can provide answers, but also lean into our partners, because that's why they're here is an important part of our project for sure.

I wanted to circle back to seed packets a little bit, because it reminded me of a previous activity I had done pre pandemic. So it took a while for it to get out of my brain. But instead of ordering seed packets, I ordered I had more time. So I ordered bulk seeds from a local company where it was different types of bulk seeds. And then I would put them in different containers with little scoops, and there were envelopes and people could make their own seed packets. So that's a way you could be a little more, you have a little more control over what's going in the seed packets if you're just ordering the seeds, but then also people have the choice of which seeds they would want to put in their yard or on their property and have. So that's kind of a another option, instead of just ordering the seed packets, you can order the seeds and have people make their own own packets.

Does anybody know? I think, from my understanding, a lot of the stuff that we talked about, or have been talking about is very, like invertebrate insect focused, which is good because they are overlooked a lot. I think in our messaging for the most part. Um, does anybody do stuff on non like invertebrate pollinators like bats, or birds? Or any sort of other species? And if so, what does that look like? And like, how does that differ from some of these like no-mow May, or plant grow fly, things like that?

We don't really have a program fleshed out specifically for that. But in all of our programs, about pollinators, we do talk about lemurs. We have three species of lemurs here, and bats as well. So we incorporate those into our conversation.

Any other questions, or things that folks want to share with the group around pollinator initiatives, successes, challenges or anything in between?

I found a really good event focused like mini activity that we did during Earth Day one year when we were focused on pollinators. And it covered all types of pollinators. It was basically a flashcard matching system of here's, here's a cactus, what do you think could pollinate it? You know, it's got this big an opening. So it's going to be a bat, right? And here's a this so it's got a long trumpet. So what's it going to be? Right and so they could the kids could figure out what went with which and why plant evolution and animal evolution were tied together in pollinators specifically.

So cool, I love that.

I just said something that was shared me from Minnesota zoo and it's a direction are taking where instead of just doing no-mow May, it's slow, slow, mow summer and kind of trying to push the initiative to extend the life through May and into the summer of not willing to kind of encourage people to continue thinking about it. And I thought it was really interesting.

I will say in our community, they came out pretty hard with No mow May last year, and the the city agreed to lift their restrictions on lawn height for May. And then over the year it has there was you know, a lot of backlash. Everyone had a lot of really strong opinions about what people were doing with their lawns but it over the year it has evolved into mo less May. And I think that's the direction that everyone is more comfortable going in. But wherever we land on that, I think in our community, even on like all of the angry community boards, it's created a really good dialogue about why we should rethink our current practices. And that mo less, I think, really helps those people that may not be super supportive, feel a little bit more supportive. I just read one this morning. And they were like really going at it. But it kind of like all nicely tied up. It was like a local Reddit thread, and it tied up really nicely at the end by everyone being like, Oh, I agree with you, we should think differently about our lawns. It was really a weird evolution for a Reddit board. But I think it it has generated a really good conversation at least. And also spring or summer came really early in iowa. So we didn't No, no, my way last year. And there's no way we could have done it this year, we mowed a week ago, and it was already like past our needs. So with climate shifts, and all of that, you know, it's definitely maybe not attainable this year.

One thing where we will be hosting a web or a workshop here in August with the Iowa State Extension, and then we're going to be talking about bee lawns. So how to plant and give out seeds. So people can have those, those flowers that are great, but you can mow them down and instead of just being grass because of course grass isn't really going to do isn't doing anything for anybody but creating more work. But But how do you make that your lawn really productive, but also look nice. And for everybody who wants to make sure they have both and helps the pollinators out as well. So I'll let y'all know how that goes. When we when we did that in August.

Has anyone had any success or failures with trying to reach out to specific HOAs and talk to them about their requirements for lawns and things like that? I do know,

the Zoological Society of Milwaukee and did do some work on that. Because a couple years ago, when they really were focusing on the no mo, may they? Yeah, they that was something that there was a lot of backlash about. So they actually do have something they mapped did like a map of all of the HOAs and the, in the may even be the state but I believe it's in the toolkit, and you can see what they've done. And you know, potentially, if that's something that would at least be adapted for for your greater community. But they did do something with that.

Anything else that folks want to discuss? All right. All if that is it, um, definitely let us know. And I'll

pop that email back in the chat again. empathy@zoo.org, if you or your organization has anything that you want added to this toolkit, if you're using it, and you have any questions for the committee about like, why did you put this in there or like, Oh, I think this would be a good addition, or I was having like I use this resource and tweaked it to do this. Any sort of feedback or input that you have that you want to share with the committee on this resource is definitely welcome. And you can just shoot it to empathy@zoo.org. And then I can pass it off to Kelsey and Erica and the rest of the committee. This is something that's updated annually, or as needed. So if we get more resources now, while it's still summer, we'll definitely throw them in. But otherwise, we'll be doing a call for more resources for this toolkit and all other ones at the end of this year. So even if you're working on something that's not completed yet, I think we're gonna put that call out in October if this is something you'd like to contribute to. Um, but otherwise, yeah, unless anybody has any other or questions or comments. I think we can probably end our lunch and we're a little early unless Erica or Kelsey, you have anything else you want to add?

Now, thank you all for your time. I think this was a good discussion and we hope that you find the toolkit useful. Awesome.

Thank you everyone. Have a good rest of your day. Thanks, y'all.