

2014 Annual Report

Saint John's Outdoor University and Abbey Arboretum

July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014

THE PROGRAM

Saint John's Outdoor University provides environmental and outdoor education through classes, events, and initiatives with the Abbey Arboretum, Saint John's University, and the College of Saint Benedict.

THE PLACE

Saint John's Abbey Arboretum is more than 2,500 acres of lakes, prairie, oak savannah, and forest owned by Saint John's Abbey and surrounding Saint John's University.

OUR SHARED VISION

Saint John's Outdoor University and the Abbey Arboretum celebrate the unique beauty and richness of God's creation in central Minnesota and foster the Benedictine traditions of land stewardship, education, and environmental respect.

OUR MISSION

Saint John's Outdoor University provides environmental and outdoor education in pursuit of:

- Environmental literacy and connections to the natural world that motivate responsible environmental decisions;
- Leadership development and personal growth through experiential learning;
- Sustainable land use and conservation;
- Learning, recreation, and spiritual renewal in the Abbey Arboretum and other great outdoor spaces.

Saint John's Abbey Arboretum

- Preserves native plant and wildlife communities of the Abbey lands;
- Provides opportunities for education and research;
- Models practices of sustainable land use;
- Makes accessible a natural environment that invites spiritual renewal.

Environmental Education & Community Outreach

Saint John's Outdoor University is committed to providing environmental and outdoor education opportunities to its neighbors, students and the surrounding community.

CSB/SJU Education & Student Development

- CSB/SJU students participated in our programs 4,719 times (not including more than 2,200 rentals from the Outdoor Leadership Center to more than 950 “customers”).
- The student senates of both CSB and SJU are very supportive of Outdoor U, OLC, and PRP programs, including funding for gear improvements, student events and our new initiative to make attendance at our maple syrup festivals free for all CSB/SJU students.
- The number and variety of events our students plan and host continues to grow. Wilderness trips went to Forestville/Mystery Cave, the Grand Canyon and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Campus recreational events included a night bike, Adventure Challenge, Apploozza and Outdoor Week. Clinics included bike maintenance, backpacking 101, geocaching, wilderness first aid and more!

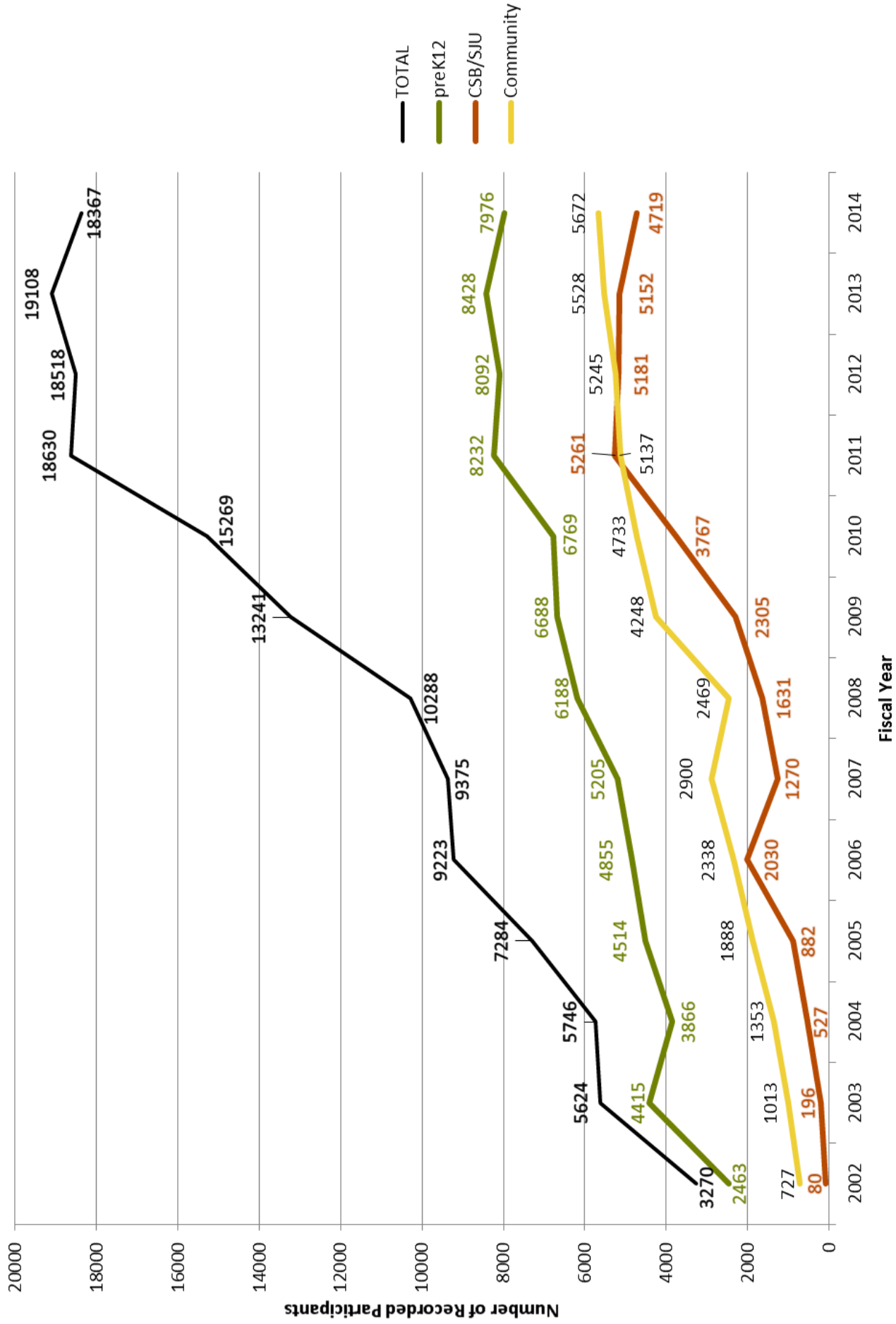
Community Education

- Community members participated in our programs 5,672 times this year – the highest participation rate recorded!
- We had a significant increase in off-campus groups participating in our low-ropes Challenge Course for team-building and group-bonding activities. Facilitation of the groups is done mostly by the volunteer efforts of the CSB/SJU students in the Peer Resource Program and their skills as facilitators is becoming well-known in the area.
- In maple syruping, one should expect the unexpected as so many external factors influence the success of the maple syrup season. This year was no different as we had a record-breaking 1119 participants in just *one* of our two festivals. Between the two festivals, we served nearly 1,800 people (including double the attendance of CSB/SJU students!).

preK-12 Education

- With 7,976 student visits our preK-12 programming was very busy. The lower attendance than previous years was due to the extreme cold weather. Our winter field trip schedule was down by 650 student visits due to the cold weather cancellations.
- We achieved a long-term goal to have 20% of our student visits from middle schools (grades 6-8). In FY2014, 24% of our preK-12 visits were from middle school students, a sign of great growth in our programs!
- We continue to enjoy a successful partnership with Resource Training & Solutions in St. Cloud to host the annual Project Earth Conference for about 200 7th and 8th grade students. The conference gives students a chance to learn more in depth about our natural world with a variety of outdoor sessions – from tree-planting to wetland ecosystems to paddling a Voyageur canoe!

Outdoor U Participation Numbers - by Audience



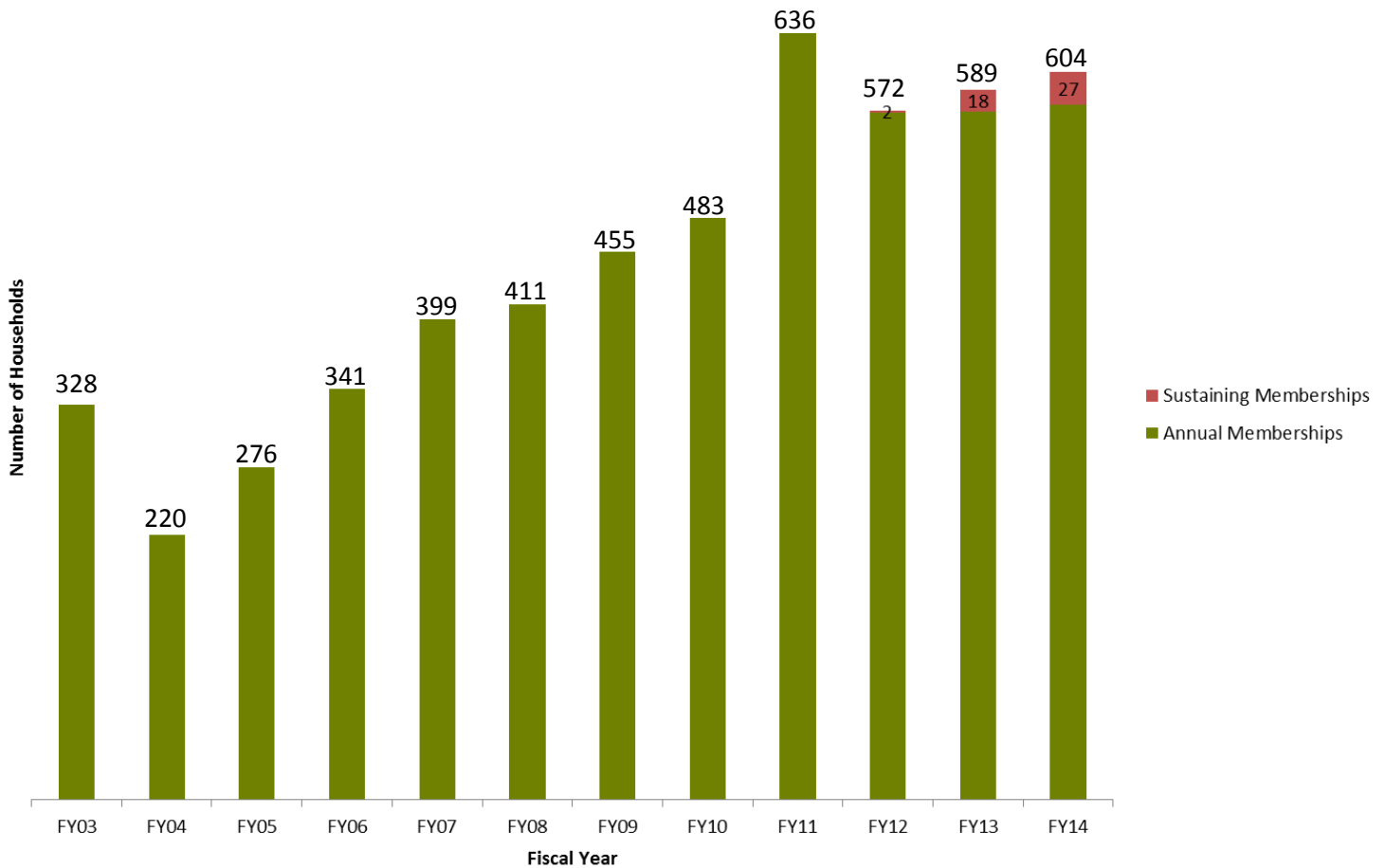
Fundraising Report

Funding Source	Balance 7-01-13	Additions	Expenses	Balance 6-30-14	Purpose
Individual Memberships/Special Gifts	\$93,756	\$34,667	(\$86,327)	\$80,515	Outdoor U program support
Outdoor U Educational Programs & Events		\$20,993			Community and CSB/SJU education
preK-12 Programs		\$17,426			preK-12 education
Adventure Programming	\$38,227	\$32,171	(\$25,782)	\$44,616	PRP, OLC, Collegebound, Challenge Course, CSB/SJU student programs
Income drawn from Dedicated Funds*	\$0	\$18,937	(\$18,937)	\$0	Outdoor U program support
Summary: Outdoor U General Funding	\$131,983	\$124,194	(\$131,046)	\$131,983	
Environmental Education Endowment in memory of Father Paul Schwietz	\$82,302	\$24,256	\$0	\$106,558	K-12, Community and CSB/SJU environmental education
L&M Schwietz Abbey Endowment	\$178,946	\$27,546	(\$8,722)	\$197,770	Abbey-related land stewardship activities and environmental education
Fr. Jack Conway Fund	\$60,741	\$0	\$0	\$60,741	Outdoor U environmental education and land stewardship
Land Legacy Fund	\$6,428	\$530	(\$2,172)	\$4,786	Arboretum land preservation
Buy a seat on the bus	\$0	\$8,043	(\$8,043)	\$0	Bussing for preK-12 students
Central MN Community Foundation	\$3,561	\$290	(\$3,851)	\$0	Closed fund, transferred to Bus Fund
Summary: Endowments/Dedicated Funds*	\$331,978	\$60,665	(\$22,788)	\$369,855	
Master Mark Plastics	\$0	\$5,000	(\$5,000)	\$0	Avon Hills conference sponsor, Outdoor U program support
ThirdStreet Brewhouse	\$0	\$1,000	(\$1,000)	\$0	Avon Hills conference sponsor, Outdoor U program support
St. Cloud Subaru	\$0	\$1,000	(\$1,000)	\$0	Avon Hills conference sponsor, Outdoor U program support
Blattner Energy	\$0	\$1,000	(\$1,000)	\$0	Avon Hills conference sponsor, Outdoor U program support
Summary: Outdoor U Sponsorships	\$0	\$8,000	(\$8,000)	\$0	
Environment & Natural Resource Trust Fund	\$0	\$19,865	(\$19,865)	\$0	Preserving Avon Hills landscape, Outdoor U community education
Summary: Avon Hills Initiative Funds	\$0	\$19,865	(\$19,865)	\$0	

*Income drawn from Dedicated Funds is taken from the Expense line of the Summary of Endowments/Dedicated Funds. The values are different by an amount of \$3851 in FY2014 because the expenses from the Community Fund were already accounted for as income to the Bus Fund, thus were not counted again as income/expenses on the Income drawn from Dedicated Funds line.

Membership News

Outdoor U Members



Abbey Arboretum Stewardship & Conservation

We promote conservation and stewardship through education and modeling sustainable practices.

- The logging season was deterred by cold and snow in the woods and also by the need for the logging crew to shift to campus snow removal. We harvested 14,000 board-feet plus 55 cords. Nearly all was hardwoods salvaged from the 2011 windstorm.
- We completed prescribed burns on 26 acres in the prairie and oak savannah. A growing partnership with the environmental science classes gives CSB/SJU students more in depth study of prairies restoration practices, culminating in assisting with our prescribed burns.
- 563 hunters applied for our first archery deer hunt in fall 2013. 108 hunters were selected and 51 deer were harvested, of which 50 were antlerless (one party took the required three antlerless deer and were able to harvest a buck).
- Plans for the second archery deer hunt are underway. With the change in MN Department of Natural Resources rules allowing hunters to take just one instead of two deer, we anticipate a smaller pool of interested applicants.
- We are moving forward with the plans to rebuild the concrete block bridge on the Chapel Trail with a timber frame bridge in summer 2015. The hope is to also install a timber frame trailhead at the beach if funding can be secured.

Goals for FY2015 and beyond

- Continue to build on the success of the rollout of our new names for program and place: Saint John's Outdoor University and Saint John's Abbey Arboretum. Initial reaction this year has been good, although we want to continue to help our visitors know and understand us – and our vision – better.
- Long-term strategic planning to review our existing program successes and challenges. Since our last strategic plan expired, we have undergone many significant changes as an organization – new staff, a greater variety of programs and new audiences.
- Even as our finances remain stable, be prepared for the change in demographics affecting enrollment at CSB and SJU and how best to continue to provide our services to the campus and beyond.