

## WNF&GA Strategic Plan 2013 – 2015

### **The Context for Planning:**

As the Woman's National Farm & Garden Association approaches the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding in 2014, the group's leadership and members undertook a planning initiative to address current challenges and ensure a strong future for the organization. The Vision and Planning Steering Committee was formed and, over the course of nearly two years, examined trends, revised the mission statement, identified core values and a vision statement, then moved on to identify strategies, priorities, and goals for the organization over the coming three year period. This document represents the fruits of their labor.

### **Purpose, Direction and Principles:**

**Mission:** The WNF&GA improves our communities through education and activities in support of agriculture, gardening, and environmental stewardship.

**Core Values:** The most deeply held values of Woman's National Farm & Garden Association are education, member enrichment, friendships, connecting with like-minded women, and community improvement through gardening and agriculture.

**Vision:** We envision a future in which WNF&GA is recognized for its national efforts to promote partnerships with other organizations in support of agriculture, horticulture, and environmental stewardship.

**Key Challenges:** The following challenges were identified by members of the Vision and Planning Steering Committee and the Executive Committee of the WNF&GA as those needing to be considered and addressed by any strategic priorities going forward.

1. Declining membership and the increasing average age of current members, suggesting the need to engage new members in existing branches and to form new branches.
2. Members perceiving limited value from the national organization and being unaware of the impact of their dues to the national organization, suggesting the need to provide good value and demonstrate high impact in all national activities.
3. Lack of a national goal or vision that members can engage in and get excited about, suggesting the need for a visible national project(s).
4. Limited member interest in national officer succession and time to give to national activities, suggesting the need to create engagement opportunities that do not require extensive time commitments.
5. Lack of visibility of the WNF&GA regionally and nationally.
6. Limited funding, with a single funding stream (dues) supporting the organization, suggesting the need to diversify funding. Dues are insignificant and unlikely to enable the organization to accomplish its mission.

### **Priorities and Goals:**

1. **Local Food Initiative:** Taking advantage of the national trend toward supporting local food production and eating local, WNF&GA will develop a local food project that taps into our interest in gardening and farming and has potential for good local and national visibility.
  - a. Identify and pursue opportunities for partnerships at the national, regional, and local levels.
  - b. Encourage and select projects that demonstrate high impact on key areas of concern.
  - c. Build in multiple, low-effort engagement opportunities and include a call to action and an invitation to join WNF&GA in every communication pertaining to this initiative.
  - d. Create a web-based resource to provide relevant educational materials to members and the public.
  - e. Create a communication strategy that both educates the public and highlights the 100 year anniversary of WNF&GA.
  - f. Create visible, educational events that engage many members and partners.

- g. Work toward a visible presence for WNF&GA at local farmers markets and county fairs. Provide educational information and invitation to join the branch. Ask branches to commit to this.
2. Native Plant Initiative: Educate members and the public around the importance of native plants to environmental stewardship while engaging as many members as possible in a project that appropriately celebrates the 100 year anniversary of WNF&GA.
    - a. Identify and pursue opportunities for partnerships at the national, regional, and local levels. (Consider Arbor Day Foundation, master gardeners, and all native plant organizations in the states where WNF&GA has a presence.)
    - b. Encourage and select projects that demonstrate high impact on key areas of concern.
    - c. Build in multiple, low-effort engagement opportunities and include a call to action and an invitation to join WNF&GA in every communication pertaining to this initiative.
    - d. Create a web-based resource to provide relevant educational materials to members and the public. Include a form to submit plantings that qualify for the project.
    - e. Create a communication strategy that both educates the public and highlights the 100 year anniversary of WNF&GA.
  3. Communication/Membership Development Initiative: Create effective messaging to encourage awareness of WNF&GA and interest in membership.
    - a. Develop messaging to convey value and promote widespread visibility to encourage membership.
    - b. Engage a national PR resource (volunteer or hired) to help publicize.
    - c. Emphasize 100 year anniversary.
    - d. Develop video content on WNF&GA for You-tube, Google Channel, and other appropriate media.
    - e. Identify and recruit a national spokesperson.
    - f. Create web-based resources for easy branch creation. Develop a support system for those creating new branches.
    - g. Develop and implement a geographic strategy for inviting new branches.
    - h. Develop and implement a member at large cultivation strategy.
    - i. Develop and implement a member appreciation strategy.
    - j. Create a structure to assign people to cultivate new and potential members including, perhaps, a membership chair.
    - k. Create a procedure for engaging members when a branch folds.
    - l. Develop messaging around dues and donations impact – how the money is used.
  4. Funding Diversification Initiative: Identify alternate funding streams and evaluate for mission fit and sustainability.
    - a. Explore ways that similar organizations are funded.
    - b. Create a task force to evaluate and select strategies.
    - c. Implement one or two selected strategies for diversifying revenues.
      - i. Include a request for donation to national on a standard dues application.
      - ii. Explore online membership form and dues payment. Consistent forms branded for WNF&GA might help create a national identity.

**Monitoring Progress:**

Progress on completion of the actions outlined in the strategic plan will be regularly monitored to ensure successful achievement of the prioritized goals.