

Concern

Solutions

Membership

- Loss of Members

- Find ways to let members know what might be available to achieve hours.
- Write articles for the blog or website to help earn hours if short.
- Post jobs that need to be done on projects (Regularly scheduled work time, but also work on your own)
- List of certified MG hours to contact those who haven't met them yet.
- Don't require annual recertification by your members. No longer required per Program Office.
- Presently, SEWMG is looking into adding more social activities that were previously not blessed by Extension to try to liven things up, and show association's value. These include open garden tours (member gardens) and picnics. Also increase social media presence through Facebook, Instagram and website. The picnics drive engagement and the enjoyment of being a member of the association (not to get volunteer hours).
- One challenge is to attract younger members in the 20-30-year-old range.
- UW needs to consider more public outreach to advertise certification to increase the amount of prospective MGs recruitment across more diverse populations. Becoming a MG is sort of word of mouth on the "how".
- To make MG training affordable, can we ask the Program Office to make the training manual available for purchase without taking the Foundations course? Prospective members can then self-study. Not as good as Foundations with all the videos, etc. but the lower cost would make this an attractive option for those who cannot afford \$300 for FIG. Could learn enough to pass the exam.
- Open member garden tours/picnics.
- Give presentations in the evening at libraries, etc.
- Exit interview idea. Check the directory and find why they are leaving.
- We have plenty of committee assignments that members can volunteer for hours. Now, getting all the volunteers we need to drive committees is another question!
- Also, electronic survey asking members what they like, didn't like, and would like to see changed. The results can be used to drive Strategic Planning Initiative.
- Hold listening sessions (via Zoom) where members could air their concerns. Shows that Association leadership is listening to their wants/needs.

Concern	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of Members, cont. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital can help bring videos, articles, etc. to help those with full workloads to retain hours. Is there any way to see/know who hasn't completed OnBoarding? Do WIMGA Academy presentation that focuses on getting volunteers to take leadership roles such as serving as officers or committee chairs. Everyone wants to follow but not lead. That is what is hurting our membership.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small MG group sizes with loss of members resulting in more projects than can be accomplished. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization can set who can be a volunteer on that project on website and newsletter (all are still in place). Lost some project leads/liaisons. Publishing project information can make people more aware of what is available to help on. Some challenges that we're still fully understanding that others can join the project. Citizen volunteers are working in conjunction with the MGs. Reduction in members has reduced what new projects/activities can be taken on.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inability to know who is certified to confirm membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opt-out versus opt-in for information sharing is being added for 2022 reporting. Potential limited access to ORS reports is a possibility in 2023.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inability to know who is taking/passed training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See above
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inability to share MG information without them signing an additional waiver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Above
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention of existing Master Gardeners is difficult given the Program Changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MG Training has been the conduit for new members as a rule for our group. There has not been any new training going on for a long time. Proactive at identifying who is short on hours and help them to keep them as MGs. Have someone work with those who have issues with entering the hours to help them to get the hours recorded.

Concern

Solutions

Program Changes

- Frustration with all the changing rules; members are confused and tired of changes.

- Encourage people to fill out the paperwork for “Honored” status if they have issues with technology.
- Routinely send out info regarding “Honored” status to those eligible to help them apply for it. Start talking about it in September since application is due in November.
- Seems to be counter to attracting volunteers.
- Honored are still volunteering as they did before. Took some of the pressure away from them and kept them in the association.
- Perception is that honored status is “retired” but that’s not the case. If you don’t get the hours that’s okay. You’ve done enough in the past.
- Using the Honored status to reduce the frustration with the clerical side of the program.
- Another aspect is the bonding nature of “Honored”. Less likely to go away but keep volunteering. Proud of their badges.

- Confusion and frustration with using the State’s online system. Members need assistance in learning it.

- Some groups are holding learning groups to show how to access and navigate through ORS.

- Lack of access or knowledge of technology to complete certification

- Not all areas of Wisconsin have access to technology that allows for home access that can support using ORS.
- Computer issues is a real concern for retaining members. For the last several minutes I had “unstable” signal format during this meeting and missed some of the talk.

Concern	Solutions
Cost Concerns	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program cost is not affordable, limiting the potential number of MGs taking and completing training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate fee for the MG for OnBoarding scholarship. Offering scholarships to help them with OnBoarding. Can the Program Office make the manual a stand-alone self-study as an alternative? Could a senior audit the class with UW as a way to reduce the cost?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of insurance and liability protection is high especially for smaller Associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not all projects are sponsored and managed by a third party who can provide the insurance. We are a small group and the need for liability insurance is something we can't afford. UW's budget can support the cost of insurance, a small group can't. Maybe smaller groups could combine to purchase insurance together.