Pressing Problems in Minnesota – Note Transcription
September 29, 2023

Overview of Session: This session utilized the diverse group of attendees to get different perspectives on some of the most pressing sustainability problems in MN. The following note transcription represents the topical areas of conversation. Obviously these don’t capture the richness of the discussions but give an idea on topics covered.

Economic Inclusion, Facilitator – Steve Kelley
- Solar Commons (Kathryn Melen’s Team)
- Faculty assisting with energy resources distribution
- Including rural people
- Inclusion requires empowering people
- Legislature authorized support for tribal energy council
  - Bois Forte
  - Green back in commercy - UMN can identify projects
- Possibly to further support Center for Small Towns (Argie Manolis at UMN) teaching those more comprehensively serving small towns
- Outreach to new tribal energy council
- Including indigenous people
- Participating in decisions that are related to rural economic future
- University Extension is focused on more privileged groups
- IonE guy (Gabe Chan from HHH?) on sabbatical with GRE
  - $1B great for implementation
  - Electric Co-Op Innovation Center
  - Center for small towns
- Inclusion of students with disabilities
- Food justice and access – Morris
- Capital for cost effective projects
- UMN research to identify cost effectiveness

Biodiversity, Facilitator – Elizabeth Borer
- Climate trends
- Water
- Science - social science
- Habitat
  - Small and large spaces
    - Pollinators
    - Soil Carbon
- Awareness/Values stewardship
- Cultural norms
- Tie into identity of community economic and emotional benefits
- Local Connections
**Climate Adaption, Facilitator - Amanda Kohn**
- Public health and mental health toxins, air quality, access to green space
  - How do we support and act when we and others have climate anxiety?
- Scaling what’s possible
- Resilient communities is different than sustainable-regenerative
- Cold Climate electrification of buildings
- Models
  - Viewing failure as success to inform decisions
- Creative framing and mutual values
- Christof Mauch, slow hope
  - Environmental storytelling
- Addressing fear with compassion
- Listening is critical
- Take care of yourself
- Starts at community and local level
  - Makes it more digestible
- Divisiveness
- Create short list of similar classes that can be referenced in said classes (if you like this course, then here are 5 others)
- Building more time to connect and share what’s happening at UMN
- Reduce academic teaching silos

**Water, Facilitator - C.W. Johnson**
- Restoration peatlands hydrology
- Groundwater depletion
- Measuring attitudes
- Land back
- Tribes
- Disinformation
- Farmland tile drainage
- Water politics
- Wild rice
- Rewilding
- The fate of pollutants
- Circular economies
- Mining communities
- Preservations versus use
- Political science
- Water quality