



## IMPORTANT COMMUNICATION TO THE MEMBERS OF WGIF

### **WGIF Implements Strategic Plan for the Future**

*WGIF Merges Programs and Services into WNLA Effective July 1, 2018*

The Wisconsin Green Industry Federation's (WGIF) board of directors began strategically planning in 2013 and has been working to create a more sustainable and effective organization for the Green industry member Associations. The plan has taken five years in the planning, but they wanted to get it right. The strategic plan and the action plan has evolved over that period and was accelerated with Executive Director Brian Swingle announcing his retirement from both WGIF and Wisconsin Nursery and Landscape Association (WNLA).

Reorganization of WGIF has been needed to reduce expenses, increase efficiencies, better serve our members and develop a sustainable model for the organization of the WGIF member association's interests. The current member organizations are: Wisconsin Nursery and Landscape Association, Wisconsin Sod Producers Association (WSPA), and Commercial Flower Growers of Wisconsin (CFGW), and the Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers Association (WCTPA) is an "affiliated association" of WGIF. The WGIF and WNLA Board of Directors have worked simultaneously to create a sustainable and improved model that meets the needs and expectations of all the current member associations of WGIF.

WNLA has signed a 3-year agreement with Wisconsin Association Management, LLC. Of Milwaukee, WI effective July 1, 2018. Chris Ruditys will then become WNLA's executive director with a secondary executive director yet to be named.

Chris Ruditys, owner of Wisconsin Association Management, LLC and Brian Swingle, owner of Torii Phillips Association Management have worked with one another and staff members for the past 5 years on joint association conferences and other events. As professional colleagues they have also attended numerous international conferences and were both members of the American Society of Association Executives attending their annual conferences over the years. This relationship should help insure a smooth transition to the new management team.

Chris and WAM, LLC manages over 20 associations, at both the state and national level, with 11 professional staff members who specialize in various facets of association management. Due to increased efficiencies and a larger economies of scale opportunities, management costs will be lower than the current management costs of WGIF and WNLA combined.

### **Recent WGIF History**

In 2013, the Wisconsin Landscape Contractors Association terminated their association's membership in WGIF. Two of their five Chapters, Madison and Southeast became independent associations affiliated with WNLA. Each WNLA "Chapter" has their own Board of directors and treasuries, committees, etc. WNLA (formerly

WNA), WNLA Madison and WNLA Southeast are currently discussing merging the three groups completely into one WNLA association with one Board of Directors, and one association management company.

In 2016, LaWN merged into WNLA and this past January, Gardens Beautiful Gardens Centers (GBGC) a garden center buying cooperative, dropped out of WGIF since they numbered only ten members. Most GBGC members are also members of either WNLA or CFGW, so WGIF encouraged the remaining few companies to join CFGW or WNLA.

### **The Big Picture**

Thus, in the big picture WGIF will basically merge into WNLA reducing the need for a separate WGIF - Federation of associations. It will also eliminate the need for an additional WGIF Board of Directors, support staff, and several operating expenses. Since the association directors that serve as representatives on the WGIF Board also serve on their own association's Board of Directors, this eliminates redundancy and 2 times the number of Board meetings that each must attend.

### **Representation of CFGW and WSPA in WNLA**

WGIF and WNLA's Boards came to an agreement that CFGW and WSPA's association or relationship with WNLA would be like the one it has currently with WGIF. That is, each association would belong to WNLA as an "Active member" with one vote being assigned to the association under the current WNLA bylaws. Each association would designate their voting member. In addition, each association will be offered a seat with a vote on the WNLA Board of Directors. Most likely the voting member of either CFGW or WSPA would be their President or representative on the WNLA Board. This is a similar relationship that each association currently has with WGIF. Also, any company currently holding membership with CFGW or WSPA always has the option to join WNLA directly as a member should they so choose.

### **Advocacy**

WNLA will assume the legislative and regulatory responsibilities (including lobbying). The WGIF Board voted unanimously to transfer the legislative fund to WNLA in June 2018. This fund is a "restricted fund" which may only be used for legislative lobbying and regulatory agency advocacy efforts on behalf of the Green Industry. That fund is estimated to be approximately \$55,000 at the time of the transfer. The WNLA Board will assume the duty of managing the fund as WGIF's Board has in the past.

### **Dues supporting the legislative fund**

WNLA, CFGW and WSPA would continue to collect membership dues from their individual members but instead of paying \$80 to WGIF annually per member, with \$16.50 designated to the legislative fund and the balance to cover operating expenses, each association would pay that \$80, or a lesser amount to WNLA, with a greater percentage of the dues appropriated to the legislative fund than before with the intention of building the legislative fund for the future.

WGIF dues have already been paid for 2018 by the member organizations. The WNLA Board will set the dues amount before the 2019 membership renewal period in October, but after WNLA elections this fall, to include WSPA and CFGW with a representative on the WNLA Board. The WCTPA currently makes an annual contribution to the WGIF legislative fund, to support green industry advocacy in Wisconsin, but is not a member organization with representation on the WGIF Board. This relationship would not change going forward with WNLA.

## **Membership Programs and Events**

WNLA will assume the partnership with ILCA in iLandscape, the annual Brewer Game in September, membership communications, the Spring Spectacular and Hall of Fame. The Cornerstone Credit Card Processing Program will be assumed by WNLA and open to all WNLA, CFGW, WSPA, and WCTPA members. Any other relationships developed, or in the process of development by WGIF or staff, will carry over to WNLA.

WNLA also currently has its Winter Workshop program which hopefully will include other associations actively partnering and participating in going forward under a new and improved format.

WNLA currently belongs to the Great Lakes Nursery and Landscape Leadership Council which meets annually rotating host states, where presidents, vice-presidents and executive directors meet to share valuable experiences, lessons, and information with one another. This also prevents some redundancies for WNLA and WGIF.

## **Communications**

Communications with members will continue with a monthly or bi-monthly e-mail newsletter like the current WGIF e-news. We need to move into the electronic age while reducing costs. The Green Side Up magazine was a great publication but increases in printing, set up and staffing costs along with shrinking advertising revenue made us look at alternatives. The May/June issue of Green Side Up will be the last produced as will the 2018-2019 WGIF annual directory. As an alternative, WNLA is committed to provide our members with enhanced electronic communications and website. We're looking at cost savings and efficiencies to invest in our future. Ours, and yours.

## **Dissolution of WGIF-Distribution of WGIF funds**

As stated previously, the WGIF legislative fund estimated to be \$55,000 near the end of June, will be transferred as a restricted fund to WNLA. In June all WGIF debts will be paid, and the treasury will be divided between the current member organizations (WNLA, WSPA and CFGW) prorated according to the total amount of dues paid to WGIF by each during the previous five-year period. Effective July 1, 2018 WGIF will be dissolved with WNLA assuming the role that WGIF has played since 1974.

## **Questions?**

If you still have questions, we invite you to contact our current executive director, Brian Swingle or any of the WGIF Board Directors listed on the following page. Thank you!

## 2018 WGIF Board of Directors

### President

#### **Ross Swartz (WNLA)**

Paul Swartz Nursery  
& Garden Shop  
30728 - 93rd Street  
Burlington, WI 53105  
262-537-8083  
[ross@paulswartznursery.com](mailto:ross@paulswartznursery.com)

### Vice President

#### **Mark Jasperson (WSPA Rep.)**

Jasperson Sod Farm  
21521 Olson Road  
Franksville, WI 53126  
262-835-2826  
[mark@jaspersonsod.com](mailto:mark@jaspersonsod.com)

### Secretary/Treasurer

#### **Brent Gustason (WNLA Rep.)**

David J. Frank Landscape  
Contracting, Inc.  
P.O. Box 70  
N120 W21350 Freistadt Road  
Germantown, WI 53022  
262-255-4888  
[brent.gustason@davidjfrank.com](mailto:brent.gustason@davidjfrank.com)

### Past President

#### **Dave Moyer (WNLA-Madison)**

Moyer's Inc.  
930 Starr School Road  
Stoughton, WI 53589  
608-873-9141  
[david.moyer@moyersinc.net](mailto:david.moyer@moyersinc.net)

### Executive Director

#### **Brian Swingle**

4323 Milton Avenue, Suite 210  
Janesville, WI 53545  
608-743-9696  
[bswingle@toriiphillips.com](mailto:bswingle@toriiphillips.com)

### Commercial Flower Growers of Wisconsin

#### **Paul Ruskiewicz**

Paul's Petal Pushers  
28058 North Lake Drive  
Waterford, WI 53185  
262-895-4636  
[kim@paulspetalpushers.com](mailto:kim@paulspetalpushers.com)

#### **John Lewandowski**

Bluemel's Garden &  
Landscape Center  
4930 West Loomis Road  
Greenfield, WI 53220  
414-282-4220  
[johnl@bluemels.com](mailto:johnl@bluemels.com)

### Wisconsin Nursery and Landscape Association-Southeast

#### **Jonathan Stickels**

Mariani Plants  
13715 Horton Road  
Kenosha, WI 53142  
866-MARIANI  
847-810-6994  
[jstickels@marianiplants.com](mailto:jstickels@marianiplants.com)

#### **Jeff Osmolak**

Ground Effects Landscape  
Management  
180 West State Street  
Burlington, WI 53105  
262-763-7422  
[Jeff.grandfx@gmail.com](mailto:Jeff.grandfx@gmail.com)

### Wisconsin Nursery and Landscape Association-Madison

#### **Tony Callies**

Madison Block & Stone  
5813 North Highway 51  
Madison, WI 53704  
608-249-5633  
[tcallies@madisonblockandstone.com](mailto:tcallies@madisonblockandstone.com)

#### **Becky Kielstrup**

Avant Gardening & Landscaping,  
Inc.  
3055 Siggelkow Road  
McFarland, WI 53558  
608-838-2054  
[beckyk@avantgardening.com](mailto:beckyk@avantgardening.com)

### Wisconsin Sod Producers Association

#### **Tom Halter**

Halter Sod Farms, Inc.  
22920 Hanson Road  
Union Grove, WI 53182  
262-895-6820  
[Haltersod@prodigy.net](mailto:Haltersod@prodigy.net)

### Wisconsin Nursery & Landscape Association (formerly WNA)

#### **Kathy Swingen**

The Bruce Company of WI, Inc.  
2830 Parmenter St  
Middleton, WI 53562  
608-836-7041  
[kswingen@brucecompany.com](mailto:kswingen@brucecompany.com)