

Naturally Meramec  
Maries County Meeting  
April 29, 2015  
Rock Eddy Bluff Farm

Attendees: Teresa Murdie, Kathy and Tom Corey, Dennis Woodhouse, El Willman and Penelope Beache

**Welcome and Introduction:** Connie Willman, MRPC, welcomed attendees, introduced Lyle Thomas and thanked hosts Tom and Kathy Cory, owners of Rock Eddy Bluff Farm.

**Rock Eddy Bluff Farm:** Tom and Kathy told the group that Rock Eddie Bluff is a 150 acre farm with secluded cottages including a cozy 1800s log cabin, all overlooking the Gasconade River. Patrons can fish, canoe, explore the river and hills, swim, hike, nature watch or simply relax.

Participants commented that Tom and Kathy's unique building and decorating style add an additional layer of interest to the farm.

**Introductions:** Attendees were asked to introduce themselves and tell a little about their businesses or entities involved with agriculture/tourism.

Teresa Murdie owns and operates Chyenne Acres in Maries County. She buys and sells horses and tack.

Penelope Beache: Penelope is directing the newly-formed Slow Food St. James Chapter. This organization is part of Slow Food USA, a global network of over 100,000 members in more than 150 countries that promote good, clean and fair food for all. This group champions local, culturally significant heritage foods, customs and recipes and brings these experiences into farms, markets, restaurants and homes.

Dennis Woodhouse owns the Vintage Homesteader Farm, managed by Penelope Beache. He is also a board member of Slow Food Saint James. The farm offers community gardens, educational classes and workshops, educational farm, fresh produce and herbs.

**Naturally Meramec Background:** Connie Willman reviewed the Naturally Meramec project. Staff have been working to finance the project for about four years, following a discussion of the MRPC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Advisory Committee presentation by Peter Hofherr. The need for a consortium of agriculture/tourism businesses that crossed "silos" was identified. The project was funded this year by the USDA Rural Development Farmer's Market Promotion Program and the Delta Regional Authority. The purpose of the project is to provide a forum for agriculture and tourism businesses to meet together to discuss ways they can use and market each other's products/services.

**Needs:** Staff asked attendees to share the top three needs of their businesses or agriculture/tourism related entities with which Naturally Meramec may be able to help.

Responses follow:

- Need to investigate group tourism insurance
- Need to investigate buying as a group
- Need a map of agriculture/tourism businesses
- Need to educate each other on the businesses
- Need to educate on how to treat tourists/customers
- Need to link websites
- Need updated resource list
- Need quick, easy, cheap way to reach a wider audience (with equal treatment of all businesses)
- Need to be able to find trained staff and/or consultants
- Need targeted marketing
- Need seasonal help
- Need a billboard that directs travelers to an area website for tourism information

- Need Facebook presence for Naturally Meramec

**Agriculture/Tourism Database:** Staff distributed a copy of the Maries County database of agriculture and tourism businesses. Attendees were asked to check their information for accuracy and to check the list for any other corrections or missing agriculture/tourism businesses. They should contact Connie with any changes or additions.

**Adjourn:** Following an invitation from the Coreys to tour the farm, the meeting adjourned.