

**CT Chapter, The American Chestnut Foundation
Minutes of the Board Meeting of Friday, November 16, 2018**

Present: Philip Arnold, Bill Austin, Jim Gage, Jane Harris, David Bingham, Jack Swatt, Bert Malkus, Mark Vollaro; by Teleconference: John Baker, Jack Ostroff, Garrett Smith, Kendra Collins.

President Jack Swatt **called the board meeting to order** at 11 a.m.

On a motion by Jim Gage, seconded by Bert Malkus, the minutes were **unanimously approved. The minutes were submitted for posting on the CTACF website.**

Jim Gage said the budget is in good shape; Kendra said that the Manton Grant will be received in February or March, 2019. On a motion by Jane Harris, seconded by Bert Malkus, the Treasurer's Report was accepted unanimously.

Other Reports: Jack Ostroff and Kendra Collins attended the National TACF meeting. Jack reported that the Chapters Committee is looking for TACF to "adopt" some chapters; it has already done so with one chapter. Headquarters can also help chapters with insurance if needed.

Kendra reported on the science review of the chapters, and said the result had been largely positive. Jared Westbrook is working on his response to it. Garrett Smith asked if stump sprouts would be of use in the transgenics program, and also whether sprouts can be dug up, root and all, and be transplanted. Kendra said it is possible, but that grafting is the preferred method, and that requires expertise to do properly.

Backcross Orchards: Kendra has visited Woods's orchard and Great Mountain orchard. Inoculation should occur at Salem and Litchfield in 2019, so diameter measurements will be needed. Woodbridge had few nuts and lots of dieback. Trees are over 25 feet tall. Kendra has nuts from Swann Farm for Rock Cobble and Norcross orchards. David reports that the healthy tree near him in the Nehantic Woods is over 60 feet tall.

New Seed Orchards: Karl Ryder has left Rock Cobble Farm and there is a new arborist on staff there. Jack will try to make an introduction. Ginny Patsun emailed her report on Norcross, saying that she has many trees over 4 feet tall, but that fewer than half of last season's nuts germinated. She will need more nuts from Swann Farm.

Future Seed Orchard Sites: Denison Homestead – Jack Ostroff will follow up with Jess Brown, the contact at Denison. They have a commitment from a local farmer to help prepare the planting site. Jack has seedlings growing in his shed which should be ready to plant in the spring. David suggested that, if their fund-raising is going slowly, they might apply for a grant from the South Eastern CT Community Foundation. **Sherman Conservation Commission** – interested in an orchard. They have town-owned land; Jack suggested they might visit Litchfield to understand the process.

Germplasm Conservation Orchard: Bill Adamsen is investigating whether the land has been transferred to the town.

Outreach: Jack Swatt reported on the events of the past months, including a chestnut information session in Salem and a walk in Naugatuck State Forest. He and David will explore ways to more effectively advertise events such as David's fall hike in the Nehantic State Forest. He also manned a booth at the Durham Fair, where he had chestnuts still in their burrs for demo purposes. He has also scheduled a booth

for the second year at the Hartford Flower Show in February. He recently did a chestnut planting with the Hamden Land Trust in honor of the Rocky Top Preserve volunteers, and will be doing a demonstration planting in Cheshire in the spring. Lastly, the CT Land Conservation Conference will be coming up in the spring. There was discussion of having an information table there (\$500) or simply a poster (\$250.) David asked if someone from the chapter could do a presentation instead. The CT Forest & Park Association has requested the name of a CT Chapter member who could be the subject of an article in CT Woodlands, their magazine. David volunteered to be interviewed.

Organization Chart: Jack asked whether the board wanted to revive any standing committees other than Nominating, which is the only one active currently. John Baker and Jim Gage will prepare an audit for the Finance Committee.

Communications: Jack will ask Bill Adamsen to update information on the CT Chapter landing page. A newsletter was recently emailed to the Board, and will be mailed out soon to members. Further discussion on the relationship between headquarters and chapters ensued. Dissolving the chapter is a question that has arisen because of concerns about liability insurance, which headquarters will only provide if chapters dissolve or otherwise come under their umbrella.

Breeding Orchards/Strategic Breeding Plan: Each chapter is expected to have a breeding plan which will expressly indicate whether we permit transgenics. On a motion by David, seconded by Jim Gage, the Board voted unanimously to approve the use of transgenic plant materials as needed. Kendra offered to help organize such a breeding plan. The Board will need to schedule a conference call to discuss the options as set forth by Kendra. This will take place after the start of the new year.

Bert recommended that we be prepared to face opposition from anti-GMO factions. David said that the restoration of a keystone species works to justify this approach. There is a position paper on biotechnology available on the TACF website.

Nominating Committee: John Baker asked for volunteers to take over the position of Secretary now held by Jane Harris.

Spring Annual Meeting: Kendra will look into dates for having Jared Westbrook come to speak at the Chapter's annual meeting, to be held in March or April.

Jack declared the meeting adjourned at 1 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Harris
Recording Secretary