

Spring Orchard & Board Meeting Minutes

MA/RI-TACF

April 22, 2017

MacLeish Field Station of Smith College, Whately, MA

Morning Orchard Meeting

Rich Hoffman, Dennis Melican, Lois Breault-Melican, John Meiklejohn, Gray Curtis, Gary Jacob, Mark Meehl, Brian Clark, Mike Grames, Paul Wetzel, Dave Lent, Josh Soojian, Michael Novack, Jamie Donalds, Yvonne Federowicz

10:15am

Orchard Updates

MacLeish orchard -- Smith College: Paul Wetzel and his students are using drones to count chestnuts! They are comparing altitudes. Can measure biomass too. Very exciting possibilities!

Pittsfield orchard: has an area that could be better. Lots of frost heaving this winter; seedlings went up 8 inches and roots were exposed. Brian suspects many losses.

The city will need to agree is we are to move it to a better location.

SKLT orchards: Yvonne, Brian et al. got more Chinese controls (50 nice 1-yr bare root seedlings, about 1-2 ft tall, transported to Pittsburgh from Greg Miller of Empire Chestnut and then by Brian & Karen & Lois to MA) for the seed orchard; there had been poor survival in numerous years' plantings of controls.

Problems: gypsy moths and winter moths both attacking; BT a possibility? Last year the intern did a great job of physically removing some caterpillars, 1 per sprout does a lot of damage.

YF added hollytone to BC3 orchard, will monitor... (ongoing pH/nutrient issue)

Tantasqua has a lot of events and work plans coming up! (LOIS: more detail here?)

Westboro/Mass Fish & Wildlife: the Norcross funding is being used for the Westboro expansion. Brian can spend all that on Westboro. Jamie, Brian and Michael will coordinate.

ACTION ITEM: Need small hoop house for mower to go in, along with a few other items. Denis will tell Jamie size, need door at each end.

Experiments (Brian):

- 1.) GravesxClapper stacking resistance, compared with between-type resistance (pollination last summer) Graves also has PRR resistance so good to interbreed perhaps
- 2.) Small stem resistance experimenting -- is it as accurate as 6-8 yr regular testing?

ACTION ITEM: Brian needs a planting spot for these experiments -- possibilities:

700 seeds, long-term (30 yr?) spacing between is 4'; between seed and breeding spacing

- Gary will meet with town of Medway to discuss space
- UMass could be great but might take a while to set up
- Smith/MacLeish: Paul will investigate

Littleton/NEFF: Jamie needs help roguing; Volunteers: John M, Gary, Josh, Mike G.

Stockbridge: Craig Moffitt -- they are reorganizing their land trust, and might want more trees/orchard.

ACTION ITEM: we will invite the Stockbridge people to our summer meeting at Springside Park.

Scraggy Neck: 18 seedlings planted, plan to do this each year for 10 years.

Bag Lunch

Delicious chestnut hermits from Lois as always, and numerous other great contributions.

Afternoon Board Meeting

Approx. 1:15pm

Board Members: Rich Hoffman, Dennis Melican, Lois Breault-Melican, John Meiklejohn, Gray Curtis, Gary Jacob, Brian Clark, Mike Grames, Paul Wetzel, Josh Soojian, Michael Novack, Jamie Donalds, Yvonne Federowicz, Kathy Desjardin, John Emery

Volunteers: Mark Meehl, Dave Lent

Treasurer Report: Michael Novack

Several nice donations

Michael has to do 1099 if anything more than \$600 paid to a person, e.g. intern, not including mileage

ACTION ITEM: please don't mix expenses when sending to Michael!

Also: some expenses can come from our Manton Grant, and some cannot.

Motion: accept Treasurer's Report -- passed unanimously.

Secretary Report: Kathy Desjardin

February membership is 315, up from last year!

Bristol Aggie "Expo" -- tabling day -- Yvonne will tell Michael if she can do. May 13th is also SKLT planting day, conflict.

ACTION ITEM: Volunteers to contact:

Medway volunteer: Eli is a freshman in Bio

Bill Goodwin, near Medway

Town of Conway we plan to get seedlings to, 5 good.

June 16-18 with Parade on 18th, w/planting.

Paul can be local contact.

Motion: accept Secretary Report -- passed unanimously.

\$7K Manton grant award! April 1st is starting date for expenses.

Demo Plantings-- BC3F3s from National -- (YF passed out tracking spreadsheet)

Seeds: National sent Lois 30 this spring.

YF will update sheet.

ACTION ITEM: Mike will check Sturbridge

ACTION ITEM: Bristol Aggie plantings of spares: YF will talk to Brian. Check Stuewe Pots and other supplies.

UMass Learning Center -- degree in Sustainable Forestry -- might plan orchard. Denis and Lois met with; hoping to meet w/again, get agreement. (Orchards/demo plantings)

ACTION ITEM: Paul W. will contact this UMASS Dept. "Arboretum Committee", Gary King, is contact.

Planned Pollinations 2017: Windsor, Lorraine Park, 4 total. (need details?)

Pittsburgh TACF Chapter Science Meeting February 2017 -- report

Small stem assay (SSA) techniques

Training talk also given, Brian is working with this.

SSA might let us grade trees at an initial level within a few months of sprouting.

Genetic analysis hoped for on best seedlings from SSA then.

How will chapters deal with transgenic issues?

We briefly looked at the draft Chapters & 3BUR documents. YF and Brian outlined thoughts.

Hypovirulence/"superstrain" also discussed.

Paul Cisco: varying orchard spacing -- 1 foot, to 7 feet. We need a roomba mower!

Number of blocks per line "really needed" per Jared: reduced to perhaps 3 from 9 (!!!)

If we can use genetic testing to find all the truly good ones... SSA too.

Brian is rotating tubs and doing numerous techniques in this. (could add more detail)

Blight strains: EP vs SG. We talked about how to avoid killing our trees, esp. BC3s, which can die too quickly once EP is on them...

ACTION ITEM: There is a strain that is less virulent than EP but more than SG, could we switch EP to that? Will it do enough differentiation? Sara/Jared seemed to think this possible.

New Website: please get Yvonne a formatted list or other content for web pages, she can add.

Website contributors -- Yvonne, Lois, and Mike Grames

ACTION ITEM: ask Ruth to add Mike Grames as website editor

Yvonne will come to Kathy & Lois to help train them on website. Chestnut liqueur as training aid...?

Add our (still draft?) Strategic plan once done

Important note: we need to have seed orchard plots as full as possible for the 1/64 "homozygous for blight resistance" math to have a decent chance of working out. Wide range of resistance in Mollissima!

June 10th -- MA F&W tour, good event, need chestnut items etc.

Next meeting: July 16, 2017 Pittsfield

3:45 adjourned