

MA/RI-TACF Winter Quarterly Meeting

February 10, 2018, Wachusett Meadows, Princeton, MA

Morning Orchard Meeting 10:15am

Present:

Josh Soojian, Doug Rademacher, Mark Meehl, Dave Lent, Brian Clark, John Meiklejohn, Paul Wetzel, Michael Novack, Karen Jones, Gray Curtis, Jamie Donalds, Mike Grames, Rufin Van Bossuyt, Denis Melican, Lois Melican, Yvonne Federowicz, Kathy Desjardin
Kendra Collins present via cell phone/speaker setup

Potential New RI Seed Orchard

Doug R. introduced himself and the Providence Randall Park site possibility.

Northern end of strip: 600 ft x (100-75); Strip is along end of Northern Burial Ground but deeded to City as Park. Sandy soil, Parks have had trouble planting there. Water at site. Cemetery is higher. Human traffic an issue. Open to public. Doug and Yvonne met with Doug Still, Providence City Forester.

Kendra concerned that the geometry is not ideal for open pollination. Even the Wider end.

GCO another possibility. Yvonne worried about location as not great for a GCO.

Paul: take Parks folks to one of our other orchards and see what they think.

Jamie: get Parks more clear on long-term view of this.

Park Dept. a presentation would be good to do first.

Michael N. we should do multiple soil tests.

Early step – do a soil test.

Jamie – human support seems the key issue for an orchard's success

Board is very committed

Lois mentioned that the Tantasqua Chestnut Club could be a model for this.

Jamie expressed appreciation that Doug came up to our meeting! Lots of support.

Next Steps in PVD:

- show City of Providence staff/administrators/forester a seed orchard
- do soil tests and consider results
- show them presentation on project
- Investigate geometries
- Consider stacked resistance in addition to standard seed orchard, compare options' needs to geometry of site

Seed Orchard Updates – Brian Clark

Great harvest this year! We need a Graves block.

Harvest of over 10K nuts. We can't put these all in the ground.

Loads of replacement plantings needed.

If we get all our Clapper done that we have this spring, we will be almost done.

Weevils in some seeds this year...

Should be some more Graves lines being created this season.

Six "lines" available.

Planting supplies. Need more fabric, more materials for John Emery.

\$3000 in planting supplies. Yvonne has some Stuewe pots.

Irrigation supplies

New hoop house: Bill Davis suggested using structure from 2 hoop setups on one fabric hoop.

We can make a base. Wind got inside because it was already ripped. 12x6x6.

Michael Novack has experience with similar houses. People in MA F&W do also.

No UV protection on fabric? We had the least expensive material.

Seed Orchard Status

- Westboro: expansion in place, might have green manure coming up. Planting early this spring if we can. Late May for seedling planting. Lawn tractor ready to be picked up. They could deliver alternatively?
- Weston: John E. very busy until recently. Many new plots to go in. We need to help John more this year. Chipmunks got 80% or so of some plots there last year.
- Granville: bunch of seedlings ready to go into existing plots. Inoculation? John Meiklejohn did a local talk at a church on project. Needs local volunteers.
- Smith: 2-3 ready for measurements re. if inoculation-ready this year. Students can do fill-in.
- Springside Park: Bob & Brian unable to get fence moved. Tree in way, is now ok. Spring: fence being moved then new plots going into new area. Issue re. Mower?
- Brian can call Jim Pelletier and Mike Novack offered to be involved. Jim also involved in Upper Goose Pond chestnut monitoring. Jim McGrath would like to name the Springfield orchard for Bob! South Kingstown: let's concentrate on getting the current plantings in better shape rather than adding another plot (would be 21).
- Kendra to do a talk in May at South Kingstown Barn. Yvonne & Kendra to be in touch.

Mowers

Jamie mentioned a donor willing to donate for half of new Chapter mower(s) but needs someone to contribute the other half.

Mower is \$3000ish. Zero turn mower.

Possibilities for new seed orchards:

John Meiklejohn investigating property in Tolland. Owner of dairy farm might want to be involved; possible seed orchard site.

Paul working on potential site in Buckland. Historic site, museum, farm. Contrabecki. 2019 maybe.

Mike Grames: talking with people who have CSA in Brookfield, MA. Person could help maintain it. CSA run by 2 people.

Doug Rademacher working on Providence RI possibilities, earlier.

Genetic analysis: scions being collected

cuttings from our Selections from BC3 orchards. "AIM" ancestry informative markers.

Grant funded through TACF. Researcher wants to help us find out several things.

Genetics Professor at Notre Dame. Chestnut species differentiation. Kendra will send out researcher's info.

We have around 100 samples for her. Brian collecting.

Jamie and Kendra discussion: not helpful to send nuts to other chapters.

We might get 15-18 lines of Graves.

John Emery needs assistance this spring. He teaches Saturdays.

NEFF: Jamie and friends doing work – need some assistance

Jamie thinks cutting at ground level is best. Carbide chain?

Quabbin no longer "abandoned" – some uncertainty about what is there and it needs work. Bruce Spencer back working on it.

Outreach: (Partly combined with Communications Report in pm)

Karen Jones passed out a sheet re. hours spent preparing for this meeting. Proposing that we track volunteering hours in general.

Mailchimp – Yvonne sent out a test message. Not a discussion board though. Limited to newsletter-like use.

Wordpress – better for discussion boards – will National get this going?

Paul can sort our main membership list by area – National has our list

Misc. issues

Dartmouth: Nankings. Huge chestnuts across the street. Russ Hensel Owner was out of our loop. Needs training.

Brian: lines at Dartmouth are unique.

Afternoon Board Meeting 1 PM

Board Members Present:

Brian Clark, John Meiklejohn, Paul Wetzell, Michael Novack, Karen Jones, Gray Curtis, Jamie Donalds, Mike Grames, Rufin Van Bossuyt, Denis Melican, Lois Melican, Yvonne Federowicz, Kathy Desjardin, Brad Smith, Josh Soojian

Guests: Mark Meehl, Dave Lent, Kendra Collins present via cell phone/speaker setup

Previous Minutes Accepted -- Motions passed unanimously:

Minutes of Annual Meeting accepted unanimously w/changes made in meeting

Minutes of Autumn Quarterly Meeting accepted unanimously

MOTION to appoint Charlotte Zampini as Director Emerita (voted) unanimously approved.

Mike Meixsell also Director Emeritus

Treasurer Report Mike Novack

Needs to report on t-shirts we sell. Most have been given away. But sales are important to track!

Mark Meehl questioned whether fuel to travel to orchard can be reimbursed

No more "Mighty Giants" will be printed

MOTION to accept Treasurer's report, accepted unanimously

Jamie mentioned need for donor to match on a new mower for Springside

Secretary Report Kathy Desjardin

286 members, down slightly. Still getting new members.

Annual Meeting printing: was sent to 600 people, under \$400. Much better price.

Dover Middle School – communicated to us. Citizen Action Group.

Secretary's Report accepted unanimously

Jamie thanked everyone for the annual meeting, feels it was one of the best.

President's Report - Lois Melican

Partnerships: Tantasqua. Munson Parks and Rec. Tree Committee. Jesse knows another science teacher. Kids will do presentations if asked.

Video that was played at Annual Meeting was played at Laurel Hill, audience had great response.

Tantasqua Jr.

Laurel Hill Association is the oldest remaining Village Improvement Association in U.S. – was model for other towns.

Yvonne to put Tantasqua Video on our website

Harvest Party in autumn? Hike on Monument Mountain?

Tom Wessels sent email re. chestnuts on Monument Mountain.

NEFF has told Jamie that we can have meetings in their building any time.

They work with groups and owners. They also now are part of the easement w/John Meiklejohn's land

Marshal Case, Bruce Spencer, and Rufin met w/NEFF people – forestry guild. Excellent partner.

State Agency people – talk by Lois, Denis, Rufin;

Griswold Conservation Area in Greenfield – doing selective cutting and doing test plantings of different species. Lois will let us know if they do another planting.

Communications Report Yvonne Federowicz

John Meiklejohn – small committee to work on snailmail letter to local people

Mailchimp: Yvonne discussed

Various options involved in setup

Double opt-in

Maine has several options and they use double opt in

Communications Report accepted unanimously

Orchard Development Report Brian Clark

Mostly covered in morning meeting.

MOTION: Brian Clark to be authorized to spend up to \$4000 in orchard planting supplies

Unanimously approved

Strategic Planning Karen Jones

Identifying goals are crucial!

National, '16 MA/RI one examined

National's is quite succinct, but their implementation plan is very long.

National does not record in-kind donations from all chapter members, just chapter presidents, and the latter data are used in grant applications; they cannot gather the data for everyone.

We'd like a reporting form or means to gather this. Karen working on this idea.

We need to maintain records of our volunteer Citizen Science contributions!!!

Jamie: We could ask at each Quarterly Chapter Mtg, how many hours since the last meeting did you spend on chestnuts?

Lois has info from presentations she does on her calendar and can reconstruct for the annual TACF reports

Tracking time can help organizations get grants and such.

Some people will find tracking this easier than others.

Karen would like to have several people work on the Strategic Plan

Short concise, not implementation

Committee for Strategic Plan:

Members -- Karen, Brad, After the discussion of Karen's proposal that we draft a new strategic plan, Jamie suggested that she choose folks to work with, who were. Jamie and Brad

Finding meeting places

Process of vetting – adequate space, electricity outlets, bathroom, accessibility, phone jack, wireless, parking, weekend availability, inexpensive, kitchen facilities a plus, near partnership, sympathetic organization,

Known good past locations (Yvonne)

NEFF – Littleton, MA

Wachusett Meadow Audubon, Princeton, MA

SKLT Barn, South Kingstown, RI

URI East Farm Building 75 South Kingstown, RI

Norcross Bldg, Wales, MA

Springside Park, Pittsfield, MA

Roger Williams Park Botanical Center Providence, RI

River Bend Farm, Uxbridge, MA

Purgatory Chasm Park Bldg

(National Grid in Boylston, MA – former location)

Macleish Field Station, West Whately, MA

Mass Horticultural Association MA

Granges, Senior Centers, Libraries, Churches

Email possibilities to Karen!

Misc. expenses and purchase in the works:

Pop-up tents – need storage. Type: one that can be set up by one person, ideally

Lois will order

Laminator – Lois working on

Hoop house – Bill might put up a fence around it? But not enough room

UV protection – keeps fabric from getting brittle

Bill suggested doubling up on tubes. Anchor.

Ask him if UV is really an issue with the fabric becoming fragile.

Quonset Hut is name. Farmtech has lots of info on how to keep these in good condition.

Alternatives to hoop house -- Investigation -

Plastic shed

Drop-off You-ship pod

Trailer like what landscapers use? Ramp to push mower up.

Trailer has to be registered; could we use a “Farm Plate” ?

Container company might like to donate a container?

Committee: Looking into Storage, Trailers, etc. for Westboro

Kathy, Brad, Gray, Lois

MOTION: Authorize excom sending SKLT funds for port-a-jon

Approved unanimously

Funds for contract assistance from foresters

Kendra:

VT/NH if over certain number of miles, qualify for mileage reimbursement

If no financial hardship most would not ask

Mass Form PC – Mike says Board Members not being compensated for anything simplifies legal situation

Compensating volunteers for mileage

Nonprofit rate is \$.14 / mile – may not be able to deduct

Can have intern who is not paid but who is compensated for expenses

Michael: suggested that volunteers working more than a certain number of hours can be reimbursed ?

Mark: 3 important orchards 70 miles away. He usually works a morning or an afternoon at each place.

Problem is that the orchards are not always conveniently located for people interested in doing important work.

Mike:

MOTION -- Create category of Unpaid Intern. Unpaid but compensated for expenses agreed upon.

Seconded and discussed. Unanimously agreed upon.

John Emery would be supervisor of Mark.

Agenda item for spring: consider how to support Mark in his work at Lincoln etc.

April 29th Spring Meeting date was set

Rufin has chestnut wood that we could use, sell etc. Small quantity for many uses.

Guido's

Yvonne: Possible contract workers / laborers for emergencies. Won't have them if we don't set this up beforehand.

Knowledgeable.

Jamie: they need to be knowledgeable workers

Josh will talk to several possible people. Small scale of work and only for critical needs.

Gray: work sessions better with social after.

Sign-in Sheet:

During the meeting, Karen presented the draft of a proposed new sign-in sheet which includes space for folks to estimate their travel to the meeting and time spent preparing for the meeting. Everyone signed in on it. It was the first step toward MA/RI routinely recording in-kind donations from all volunteers. Karen will bring a revised version on Sunday.

Meeting adjourned 3:28

Note from Kendra after meeting: Curt Laffin and [Jim Talbot](#) from VT/NH may help with our strategic plan; Kendra will send email