

Massachusetts Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation
Quarterly Meeting Minutes 7/24/2005

Board Members Present: Jamie Donalds, Yvonne Federowicz, Mike Novack, Mike Meixsell, Brad Smith, Charlotte Zampini, Rufin Van Bossuyt, John Emery, Gary Jacob

Others Present: Hollie Emery, Denis Melican, Louis Melican, John Meiklejohn

The Meeting was called to order at 1:05 by Brad Smith.

I.) Treasurer's Report and other financial issues: people have begun to get Mike N. receipts. Mike will provide a standard Treasurer's report printout for the autumn quarterly meeting.

Informally: we have no cash flow problem. We didn't spend much over the winter, money is flowing out now. Anne had been estimating the budget based on expectations of receipts from National (until these came in.) (MN)

National is doing well financially, the federal government is giving \$350,000 next year. (RVH) We also have more money coming from the Foundation (Sudbury).

TACF received a rating of "Excellent" from a Charitable Foundation; this rating equals that of The Nature Conservancy.

II.) Report on National Board of Directors Meeting and Meadowview. (Rufin is now on the National Board.) (RVH)

There was a discussion re. the National vs. local Chapters' roles. Don W. is very interested in keeping germplasm within the organization. Many of the National original people were there when the chapters were few, most of work was at Meadowview. Now there is much more emphasis on the chapters.

Rufin felt that the Ohio meeting last Feb. had a positive impact upon the latest National Meeting.

Meadowview visit: Rufin saw the future White House tree. The Department of Agriculture wanted their own tree after hearing about the White House tree. A good collaboration is underway with strip mine reclamation people. New technique includes not leaving hardpan on old mining sites; they found chestnut grew twice as fast as oak.

What constitutes a "line" in our chestnut breeding program: assumed different Americans for each line all the way back, but that hasn't always been done.

***National had re-used mother trees. This made it worse for us to re-use mother trees. Half the diversity comes from local trees, also. (Half the genetic material is the local mother tree's.)

Mike N.: we could introduce more diversity later easily, locally.

III.) Summer Intern Report (Hollie Emery)

Hollie helped with numerous pollinations, helped at numerous orchards include. With mulching, weeding, Bitrex, irrigation system installation

F1 Crisis... we worked on producing some locally. Got Chinese pollen from a Brown University tree and Upton, MA trees. We did 4 F1 pollinations using these Chinese pollens as male and also one F1 pollination with an American as male.

All new orchards are lacking in F1s completely.

Terri Tatter can be a source of pure Americans.

Mike N. has pure Americans.

John Mirick has some squirrel-planted Chinese. Some have strange, crinkled leaf growth.

(Yvonne might be able to get pure Chinese nuts this fall, if the squirrels don't eat them first.)

Orchard needs for Hollie to work on:

Tree tags – John Emery might have an engraver.

Ties

*** For next meeting: plant exchange – Hollie can help with this

IV.) Orchard Updates

Now more than 20 orchards!

14 + 7 or 8 new

(some of the new ones are at the same location, but each has 2 lines)

Middlefield is inactive but has living trees; Conway also has living trees

Selected orchard updates:

Holly orchard looking great; new area not doing as well, slow germination (MN)

***Nut planting notes: Ruffin – roots will start to grow from nuts in fall in chestnut oaks, but in white oaks they start in spring. It's possible chestnuts would start in the fall. Western Mass. Not frost-free until Memorial Day (MN)

Ohio grower: chestnut nuts can live down to 21 degrees F.

Gary Jacob orchard: deer browse problems; about 70% germination on 2 lines

***Charlotte: needs tree survival stats sooner – by end of August – including the ratings. Jamie D. has an easy way to rate – take pole with height ratings around to all trees

Mike N. – doesn't think spring survival that meaningful – looks like more dead than there are, if under 2 years old – die back, then grow again.

CZ – should measure at end of year

Intern's term length: Hollie currently hired for June-August. Can she work through the harvest – how will we be financially for next year?

Mike N. : informally thinks we have enough money.

Motion: (Gary Jacob) we extend the position of the intern for up to another two months based on a decision by the executive committee, which would be based on their review of anticipated workload and finances, through the end of October.

Seconded by Jamie Donald.

Unanimously approved.

John Emery: we have been working with Americore – youth in Weston – on the Weston orchard – got peat pot seedlings planted quickly. They are growing beautifully. Problems: unafraid deer, watering.

Rufin: West Boyleston – some have germinated quite late – some cut off like a tomato cutworm does. Bill David helped to make hardware cloth shelters.

Jamie has more panels with signs like Tower Hill's. Designs for mounts were discussed – non-rusting hardware recommended. John Emery may wish one if town allows it on that orchard.

Jim Garland has not lost any trees.

Brad Smith – Tower Hill trees almost all over 6 feet; “problems” with blight.

***Charlotte – need to record if trees die of blight.

V.) Irrigation – covered in morning Orchards meeting

VI.) Pollination

We did 15 trees. 3 were redos, some were done partly as F1s, which are sorely needed. We needed 10-11 to “finish”; we are the edge of “completion” although there is more we could do.

Last year's big push did really well. We had losses, though, and need 8 new lines this year.

People need to get old pollen back to Charlotte.

Charlotte had trouble getting pollen in time for the Newton tree. Charlotte helped CT folks – used some of the pollen from the CT and 1-year-old pollen from Gary for Newton; we will see how well this works

Rufin – 2 Quabbin mother tree leads

Mike N. & Rufin – “champion” American chestnut in MA is in Athol, may have found

People are encouraged to enter all trees into the online tree database

We should not stop collecting mother trees but can be more selective now.

VII.) Newsletters – Seedlings Articles and Publication (Brad)

Brad is working on the Winter/summer updates

***Work list: might need volunteers for various tasks in the summer; Brad could put that into “Seedlings”.

***We need a mailing list of willing volunteers; also need to send pictures of volunteers in action to Brad, and to thank utilities who donated trucks etc. in letters. They can use assistance to us for their “Tree Line USA” recognition.

***We need to make placques – can give one to:

- MassElectric
- Western MassElectric
- Narragansett Electric

There was discussion on whether to send this just to the parent company, National Grid. Loose consensus seemed to be to send recognition/thanks placques to the subsidiary company people, with whom we worked more directly; possibly also to the parent company.

Hartney Gremont – Boston Tree. (?)

Should invite all these folks to our annual meeting, including the arborists

VII.) Denis & Lois – The Big “E” – September 16th, runs for two weeks

The Big E is a very large agricultural faire in Mass. They are creating interpretive landscapes. Chestnut could be one of the main ones. We would need to provide potted *Castanea dentata*, possibly also a Chinese and hybrids for comparison. This would eventually be a semi-permanent exhibit. Many, many viewers. We could have our literature available. Next year would be permanent.

Idea: lots of small pots with trees, pot hidden by mulch, in orchard-like arrangement.

***Fred might send up a tree. Rufin will contact.
Kathy has a few potted ones.
Mike N. has a few potted ones.

We will need to get the materials. This is in the publicity budget.

Hollie available. (see later motion.)

Motion (Charlotte Zampini): We plan to prepare an exhibit for the Big E this autumn.

Seconded: Mike M.

Unanimously approved.

Motion: (Mike M.) to approve the minutes of the April 3rd meeting.

Seconded by Brad.

Unanimously approved.

VIII.) Vacant Board Positions

Gerry Cormier was the Nominating Committee Chair – we need one for our annual meeting.

Each of the committees are free to appoint a member to the Nominating Committee.

Anne and Susan could continue on the Board, or they could participate as Advisors. We could also let their terms expire and then change their status. We need to know when the terms of various people expire.

Problem: we have to have a quorum at each meeting, and having board members who cannot generally attend meetings subtracts from our quorum.

Motion (Charlotte Z.): Yvonne will be nominating committee chair

Jamie seconded

Jamie and Mike M. will help “enforce”...

Unanimously approved.

Our bylaws allow our board size to be increased. Quorum is 9 board members at each meeting, with our current board size of 17.

Motion (Mike N.) moves that board authorizes up to 3 additional positions on the board if necessary.

Mike M. seconded.

Unanimously approved.

IX & X.) Next Board and Annual Meetings

Littleton may be a good place for the Annual Meeting.

Possible speakers:

- a scientist who has modeled likely changes in tree distributions using two global warming models (YF)
- vision for the long-term plan of TACF (have Marshall Case come) (Rufin)

National TACF meeting is October 28-30, 2005.

Mass. Annual Meeting: Nov. 19th or 20th first choices (Sat. preferred)
Backup dates Nov. 12th or 13th.

New England Forestry building as location.

Next quarterly meeting: October 22nd. Need to check on facility's availability.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:10 pm.

Executive Committee, directly after meeting – voted to extend the intern's contract through at least September for the Big E coordination.