



## **VT/NH Chapter the American Chestnut Foundation**

### **Board of Directors Meeting Forest Service, Northern Research Station, South Burlington, VT**

**March 16, 2019  
1-3 pm**

### **Final Approved Minutes**

**Attendance:**

Executive Committee: Present - Yurij Bihun (President), Gary Robertson (Vice-President), and Jim Talbot (Secretary);

Board of Directors: Present – Gary Hawley, James “JP” Powers, Doug McLane, and William Coder (on telecom); Absent – Daane Crook, Terry Gulick, and Curt Laffin

Guests: Kendra Collins, NE Regional Science Coordinator; Bill Widmer, prospective Board member (on telecom)

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#### **1. Review and Approval of Minutes from November 17, 2018 BOD Meeting**

Motion made by JP to approve the minutes, seconded by Doug; approved unanimously by Board members present; final minutes will be uploaded to chapter webpage by Janet Robertson for future reference.

#### **2. Review and Approval Treasurer’s Report and Proposed 2018 Budget**

2.1 The Board asked that there be a more detailed Treasurer’s report for the forthcoming Annual Meeting. Kendra noted that we picked up \$5,000 under the Manton Grant for this next year’s orchard work. The Chapter must spend the money between April 1, 2019 and March 31, 2020. The Chapter also supported American chestnut lectures and a panel discussion at the Arnold Arboretum in Boston on March 30, 2019 with a donation of \$150 from our Treasury. It was noted that Curt Laffin spent \$250 of his own money to help set up Constant Contact. This type of support in the future must come out of the budget so we agreed to add this as a future line item in our Annual Budget. Gary Hawley volunteered to set up an Excel spreadsheet for use in preparing detail treasurer reports and budgets. Gary

Robertson motioned for approval, JP seconded, and all approved.

3. **Membership Update and Quarterly Report (Yurij Bihun, Doug McLane)** – The Membership Report is made available four times per year and it will be available for the April 27 meeting in Woodstock. Membership levels have been increasing, in some part due to the use of Constant Contact. Gary Robertson remarked that the composition of the Board is all male and doesn't reflect the membership-at-large regarding gender. The Nominating committee must increase their search capacity to include more women candidates. One possible candidate would be Carol Wallace, Curt Laffin's wife, who has assisted the Board on numerous occasions in our work. Use of "student board members" was mentioned as a possibility to bring young scientists and others into the Chapter either in an official or unofficial capacity. Further discussion at the Annual Meeting was suggested for this topic. The Board voted to include Bill Widmer on the slate to vote for new Board members for the April meeting. There were no further suggestions for additional BOD members made at this time, other than names which had been suggested at previous recent meetings (Warren Spinner, Will Abbott, Todd Ross, Forest Hammond). For existing Board members slated for re-election, Jim Talbot offered to serve another three years on the Board, but must step down as Secretary by September 2019. The Board agreed to put Jim's re-election on the slate for the Annual Meeting. Nominating new Board members requires active recommendations on the part of all of us!
  
4. **Strategic Plan Implementation: Report from the three active committees:**
  - 4.1. Membership Committee – See minutes in the previous section. In the context of membership, we noted that Curt Laffin should prepare a brief summary of the progress to date on *Constant Contact* for the Annual Meeting in April. This should include successes; lessons learned; number of messages received from membership; and additional feedback.
  
  - 4.2. Governance Committee – No discussion.
  
  - 4.3. Orchard Committee- Kendra and Gary led the discussion. Essex Seed Orchard– lost 40 trees and need to fill in for the lost seedlings. In terms of Fox Farm, there is no written management plan and one is needed; having a hard time getting volunteers; seed and tree predation requires greater management; Kendra will work with local staff to flesh this plan out. Tom Rush – Draft agreement or MOU (done by SPNHF lawyer) out for review, with edits from Daane Crook and Kendra; issues include: who will take on management, ownership, fund-raising, hiring fencing contractors, and providing on-site water management. Regarding this agreement, Daane Crook, the only lawyer on the Board, will review at his convenience but as soon as practicable. Cary Deegan prepared

a list of volunteer duties; training will be necessary as well for all volunteers. Old Town Prison, Windsor, is another possible site for a seed orchard when the State takes over the property management.

Germplasm Conservation Orchards (GCO) were briefly reviewed by Doug, who noted that the first would be located on his own plot in town, and the second possibly at Fred Kelsey (a friend of Doug's and TACF member) property in Plymouth. Hope Yandell plants chestnut on her own land, and this might be another GCO, if we were to put in place an official access agreement. As we seek wild seed from American chestnuts for GCO a note should be placed in Constant Contact to solicit support from the general membership for this effort. In sum, we need 5-10 seed replicates per tree source and there is additional guidance on how to set up from Kendra.

5. **Educational Planting Committee update (Doug McLane and Curtis Laffin)** – No updates available other than Gary Hawley's recommendation to plant several chestnut trees at UVM's Aiken Center. He would be able to receive 2-3 trees from Doug's land.
6. **Next Board Meeting**, Planned to follow the Chapter Annual Meeting at the Forestry Center of the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Park, Woodstock, VT on Saturday, April 27, 2019. There was a recommendation to raffle chestnut trees at the meeting to increase interest among the membership. Curt will need to send out another reminder via Constant Contact to those attending to order lunch in advance, if a member wants the Board to provide such. To date Jim will order approximately 20 lunches based on BOD attending, guests, and others who pre-ordered. The agenda will be released with the spring newsletter.
7. **Spring Newsletter** – Yuriy reported that the newsletter is done and ready for press. We will be scaling back on paper production of the newsletter, using a digital version to reach the membership currently on Constant Contact. There are 40-50 members for whom we do not have Email addresses. There will be additional paper copies available at the Annual Meeting. The total number of paper copies still eludes us, but we agreed to print approximately 120 for this year.
8. **Educational outreach and exhibits:**  
We still need to identify a candidate(s) to take over Terry Gulick's stewardship of the displays. The inventory of what we have includes: large format display held by Kendra; small format display with Curt Laffin. Kendra also has the SAF display, which she uses. The large format display is the one we would consider for disposition as it is unwieldy and outdated.

**9. Ongoing business:**

Regarding “signage” at the

UVM Jericho Research Forest, Fairlee Town Forest, and Essex Seed Orchard, Yuriy noted that each sign/kiosk costs approximately \$300; Fairlee already has a sign; we need to move ahead with completion. Brian Jap, forestry instructor at Essex Tech Center, has a template, and Yuriy will approve this immediately. Jericho will split the cost with the Chapter

- 10. New Business:** Canaan Tree – This state champ tree, which was involved in the breeding program for five years, had succumbed to blight and was in the process of being harvested and the merchantable timber will be salvaged. Gary Robertson is in charge of the effort and he wanted the tree to continue to work towards fundraising for the Chapter. It was recommended that the logs go to Ed Wills, Madison Lumber Company, who will process the wood. There will be a \$475 expense for such processing (skidding, sawyer, fuel for transport). Gary Robertson will handle disposition and all related matters regarding of the Canaan tree. It was also noted that the Salvage Committee consists of Gary Robertson, Yuriy, and Gary Hawley. Attendance at TACF National Meeting – We are encouraging one of the Board to attend this mid-October 2019 meeting in Gettysburg, PA.

**Adjournment** – Doug motioned to adjourn and Gary Hawley seconded; all approved.