



VT/NH Chapter the American Chestnut Foundation

Board of Directors Meeting Marsh-Billings Rockefeller National Historic Park, VT

**April 27, 2019
2-4 pm**

Draft Final 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, Curt Laffin, and Bill Widmer (newly elected); Absent – William Coder, Daane Crook, Terry Gulick

Guests: Kendra Collins, NE Regional Science Coordinator; Don Merkle; Ina Ahern, NH Educational GIS Partnership

1. Review and Approval of Minutes from March 16, 2018 BOD Meeting

Gary Robertson had some edits that Jim clarified would be incorporated; Motion made by JP to approve the minutes, seconded by Curt; 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

Discussion: Curt sent \$168 receipt for Constant Contact subscription that will appear in the next Treasurer’s Report for 2019 expenses. Budget for next calendar year, 2020, will be prepared in October 2019 (revised October 2018); Gary Robertson suggested we have budget review prepared for annual meeting next year. We seem to be confused about how to apply the budget, but most agreed it should be applied to the calendar year. Thus, budget for 2020 completed with financial needs input from all Board members by next Board meeting, with draft 2020 Budget

done and approved at Fall 2019 meeting. Gary Hawley will prepare Excel version for a budget template for this next budget exercise. Signage expenses for 2019 included: Plymouth, Essex, Science Center, Jericho Research Forest.

A recommendation was made to discuss results of previous year's expenses at the spring annual meeting. Although we didn't do that at the 2019 Annual Meeting earlier in the day, we should add this line item to the agenda for next year. General discussion then focused on need for greater transparency (?? What more is needed); a better way of presenting financials, e.g., income-expenses-balance on a chart with numbers; state of finances and expenses. Gary Robertson suggested a budget-column for donations; use of pie charts as a visual aid; also, distinguishing if these donations are reserved versus unreserved funds; presently there is no accounting mechanism for these types of donations; how and who will report back to those folks who have donated, e.g. Hope Yandell for orchard work. Without a clear model, the discussion goes nowhere. Gary Hawley will develop a model with input from Daane, Gary Robertson, and Yuriy and finalize in time for fall.

Motion to approve the existing financial report made by Doug, seconded by JP, and all approved.

Discussion on proposed budget items for 2020 Budget: Ask Daane how he can better participate in meetings since his absences due to prior commitments were noted; suggestion to hold teleconference prior to next OD meeting to review expenses/budget; ask Daane to be available for this telecon.

3. Membership Update and Quarterly Report (Yuriy Bihun, Doug McLane)

Engaging Proactively With Chapter Members: A recommendation was made to call members personally to talk about renewal and continued participation in the Chapter. Kendra noted that National carries on their membership report to the Chapter expired members for 3-6 months, which are complete with contact information. A question arose: Did Constant Contact increase membership involvement? We really can't determine this yet since we have only had Constant Contact operational for under one year. Email should be the first point of contact for members; then phone call; Judy Antaramian can track and report on membership. Curt will contact Judy to work this out. Curt also recommended that Board members send directly to him the names, email addresses, and town and state of interested non-members to add to our contact list.

Nominating Committee Report (Doug McLane, Yuriy, Daane) - Bill Widmer now on BOD; some future possibilities were mentioned, e.g., Carol Wallace is considering a nomination; need Vermont nominee for Board, and improved gender balance.

Constant Contact Update (Curt Laffin) - Curt prepared a summary update note that all BOD received; Kendra will forward activity plan for upcoming 2019 field activities to post through

Constant Contact to solicit volunteers, as well as provide updates on field work for all members. Also, we discussed how to target specific counties in both states; for that, however, we would need listing by Zip code/town. There are 120 people in Constant Contact who are not Chapter members and more could be added, if provided by Board members. By increasing this pool, potential members could be identified, or volunteers sought.

4. **Strategic Plan Implementation: Report from the three active committees:**

4.1. Membership Committee – See minutes in the previous section.

4.2. Governance Committee – No discussion.

4.3. Orchard Committee - Essex Seed Orchard – leadership team on will meet on May 1 with VT State Forest Parks & Recreation (FP&R) and Essex Tech Center to plan work; 50 replacement seedlings; no browse; JP replaced all shelters. Fox Forest See Orchard - spring work day needed to do various tasks; GR will schedule; Kendra sent a draft management plan out to Gary Robertson for review. Tom Rush Forest Seed Orchard (Pending) – close with SPNHF on MOU; site work underway; 4 plots with 600 trees planned; some new national research could affect future plantings – “work smarter approach”; Monday, April 29, watch GMO webinar on NPR posted on chapter webpage.

Plymouth, NH Germplasm Conservation Orchard (GCO) Development (Doug McLane) - Kendra will review site; GCO easier than breeding orchard; no deer pressure so no fence; this will be our first GCO; 50-60 wild trees ready to plant out this year. Kendra wants replication of sources across all sites, e.g. 35 local sources from NH will be planted there.

Science Coordinator’s Report: Results of March 16, 2019 meeting on Chapter breeding strategy and new directions in TACF (Kendra Collins) – Board homework to watch webinar, Yuriy sent out link to watch; NPR Monday, April 29, Show: *On Point*. Manton Grant: 2019 Manton funds (Kendra Collins) - \$5000 to spend during 2019.

5. **Educational Planting Committee update (Doug McLane and Curtis Laffin)** – Curt toured sites; reported that trees are doing so-so; Kendra has additional 2-yr container seedlings for planting, if needed; Doug has trees as well; Gary Robertson wants new material for out-planting at the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, and he will also confer with Doug on a two-stage planting.

6. **Next Board Meeting** – To Be Determine. Either a conference call or possible retreat or workshop in New Hampshire.
7. **Update on National TACF BOD Meeting, April 5-6, 2019, at Meadowview, VA** – Yurij attended and reported that National is adjusting its backcrossing approach; Kendra noted that the EPA review is asking the question, “Does Transgenic American chestnut fall under FIFRA? Presently, this matter is under legal review; USDA sent TACF application back with request for additional studies; and SUNY may have early clones in a few years to get out into forest tests.
8. **Educational outreach and exhibits** - We still need to identify a candidate(s) to take over Terry Gulick’s stewardship of the displays. Educational outreach and exhibits – Although Terry wants a successor, nobody has stepped up; so consensus was to scale back on displays we are doing. Summer and Fall volunteer outreach opportunities include:
 - Addison Field Days – Yurij will help
 - VT Wildlife Festival
 - Others
9. **Ongoing business:**

Yurij covered the need for signage sty UVM Jericho Research Forest, Fairlee Town Forest and Essex Seed orchard. The Fairlee sign was paid from the 2018 Manton grant and we will need funding for at least three 3-panel signs in 2019-2020. Gary Robertson provided an update on the Canaan American Chestnut salvage harvest, noting that the tree was cut, transported to Madison Lumber’s portable sawmill, and is ready for sawing into 4/4, 5/4, and 14/4 slabs.
10. **New Business:** Grafting Workshop - Yurij reported that there could be a grafting and nursery workshop with Dr. Hill Craddock this summer; Doug said the same location as last year would be available; Doug must ask Dr. Craddock when he is available and the BOD could schedule it for our late summer regularly scheduled meeting.

Meeting Agenda Input - Jim mentioned that Yurij did not receive any feedback on this current meeting’s agenda, and that if we are to streamline our meetings on specific topics, agenda item suggestions are needed from all of the Board members in a timely manner. Curtr suggested that BOD members, who are scheduled to discuss an agenda item, send a written summary to other members prior to the next meeting. An example is the Constant contact summary that Curt sent for the April 27 Board meeting. If this is done ahead of time, folks will be prepared to participate more effectively in discussions. Gary Robertson asked if we could have an alternative technology for “group work.” One of our attending guests, Ina Ahern, suggesting using Google Documents as a iCloud-based work environment. Gary also

recommended that BOD members make a concerted effort to respond to requests for agenda items (and comments to meeting minutes) in a two-week window. In sum, Board staff work is a requirement for participation – read the draft agendas, provide feedback when asked, prepare ahead of time for meetings by reviewing all documents sent out prior, and so on.

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