



The American Chestnut Foundation
Vermont/New Hampshire Chapter

Board of Directors Conference Call
Wednesday, August 21, 2019
7:00 pm- 8:45 pm

All board members were present: Yuri Bihun, Gary Robertson, Jim Talbot, Daane Crook, William Coder, Terry Gulick, Gary Hawley, Curtis Laffin, Douglas McLane, James Powers, William Widmer.
Absent: Kendra Collins, Regional Science Coordinator.

1. Review and Approval of Minutes from April 27 2019 BODs Meeting

Curt moved to approve meeting minutes as submitted. Seconded by Terry. Motion approved with no nays or abstentions.

2. Review and Approval Treasurer's Reports

Daane proposed transferring \$5000 from savings to CD; no concerns were voiced. Questions were raised about breakdown of national and chapter dues, recognition for (major) donations to the chapter and how the Manton Grants are allocated and administered.

Curt moved to approve the treasurer reports. Seconded by Terry. Motion approved.

3. Review of Membership Update and Quarterly Report

Curt noted that chapter membership is trending upward slowly and is possibly at an all-time high. He has been reaching out to those who haven't renewed. Yuri expressed gratitude of the board for Curt (and Carol's) work in keeping membership involved through Constant Contact. We don't have much track record yet with bringing out volunteers through Constant Contact emails, but the board is encouraged to let Curt know of the need to publicize work days, allowing members to volunteer and participate better in chapter activities.

4. BOD development

a. Nominating Committee Report (Yuri, Doug McLane & Daane)

The nominating committee report listed several candidates for future board membership. Several were discussed. There are no known vacating board members in 2020, so there is no immediate need to fill a seat, but a desire for greater gender and age diversity was discussed again. Steve Lewis from Atkinson, New Hampshire was invited by Curt to the upcoming regional meeting in Portsmouth, NH; he may have potential. Gary Hawley also brought up a bear biologist in Vermont whose name may be Forrest.

5. **Governance / Executive Committee succession issues:** entire existing executive committee terms expire in 2020 or prior (Jim's term as secretary expired Spring 2019). Yuri, Daane and Jim indicated willingness to remain on the board.
 - a. Jim mailed out an updated description for executive board members before the conference call, and noted that it is subject to refinement by board members.
 - b. Gary Robertson opened a sidebar discussion of board policy regarding 3BUR as an important issue for his future role with the board.
 - i. Gary expressed concern that the board had not adequately sought out member's opinions about 3BUR as a policy direction, especially from members hosting breeding orchards.
 - ii. Several board members expressed that the 3BUR program is about opening possible approaches, not about deciding for or against any one future course of action.
 - iii. In response to Gary's comments about polling our membership, several board members discussed reaching out to membership via Constant Contact following the regional meeting (and national meeting) regarding science-related developments and policy.
 - iv. Doug observed that developments around transgenic trees are increasingly apparent, including within the region. Maine and Massachusetts / Rhode Island chapters have also voted in support of 3BUR.
 - c. President:
 - i. Gary Robertson was not willing to take on the role of president in light of board directions regarding 3BUR.
 - ii. No other candidate stepped forward leaving nomination of candidates for president unsettled for the moment. Board members are encouraged to consider their own possible candidacy, if at all interested.
 - d. Vice President
 - i. Doug McLane has volunteered for the position of board vice president.
 - e. Treasurer
 - i. Daane Crook is conditionally willing to continue as treasurer. If the processes he has developed may not be meeting the expectations of the board. he needs that to be clearly explained, e.g. with a sample provided for such a new work product for the treasurer. Expanding beyond current methods and his attendance at board meetings is limited by his work commitments.
 - ii. Members expressed appreciation for the reports that Daane had prepared for this and other meetings as covering our basic needs as a board.
 - iii. Gary Hawley and Yuri have proposed incorporating spreadsheets into the treasurer reports and budget processes. Offering a specific example could move the discussion forward.
 - iv. Regarding coverage when Daane is unable to attend meetings it was suggested that Gary Hawley might be a backup treasurer or that Daane might be able to brief executive board members beforehand via phone.
 - f. Secretary

- i. Jim has stated that he needs to resign as secretary at the end of August.
- ii. Bill Coder is open to serving as acting secretary and Jim and Bill are testing out tools to facilitate capture of conference call proceedings. Handoff of processes and records from Jim to Bill will also be important to a smooth transition.

6. Plymouth NH GCO

Doug gave a quick summary of his Germplasm Conservation Orchard project in Plymouth, NH: 90 trees representing 25 mother trees from four different states. Outlay of \$0 (but it is recognized that Doug has accomplished this with a great deal of personal effort).

7. Vermont Outreach Coordinator

There was discussion of whether there is any possible successor to Terry's outreach role in Vermont. No one stepped forward from the board. This is another subject for outreach via Constant Contact seeking volunteers. We also need to determine who has in their possession the Vermont presentation/display board, which has gone missing.

8. Chapter B3F3 Nursery

Doug is looking for a volunteer to take over managing a chapter B3F3 nursery. Yuri mentioned a member (Warren Spinner, a member of the chapter from Vermont) with available space who might be approached to take that on.

9. Set date for next BOD meeting or conference call meeting.

Discussion was around November 2, 9, 16 or 23 in Burlington, with somewhere in the Upper Valley as a possible alternative. Yuri will email with firmer information.

- a. Key agenda items deferred or unresolved on this conference call:
 - i. Presidential succession and firming up rest of executive board slate
 - ii. Update on orchard activities
 - iii. Budget

10. Adjournment – Terry moved to adjourn, while Curt seconded and all approved, at approximately 8:45 PM.

11. Followup / Action items

- a. Possible Constant Contact messaging, led by Curt:
 - i. Need for volunteer help in outreach activities, especially in Vermont; possible mention of Fryberg Fair.
 - ii. Potential updates for members on both transgenics and cross-breeding genetics based on regional meeting. Consider inclusion of Rowan Jacobsen article: <https://psmag.com/ideas/most-controversial-tree-in-the-world-gmo-genetic-engineering>
- b. Gary Hawley and Yuri to propose spreadsheet(s) for potential use in budget and treasurer reporting.
- c. Gary Hawley to clarify possible board candidate, VT State bear biologist.
- d. Bill Coder / Jim Talbot will work on logistics for our next meeting, which Yuri has tentatively scheduled for Saturday, November 9th at UVM in Burlington, VT.
- e. Board members should all be continuing to consider possible solutions to succession issues on the Executive Committee.

