

## **MA/RI-TACF Fall Quarterly Meeting 2018 October 14, 2018**

**Leominster Sportsmen's Association, 1455 Elm St., Leominster, MA**

### **Attendance - Board Members & Guests**

Lois Breault-Melican, Denis Melican, Kathy Desjardin, Mike Novack, Yvonne Federowicz, John Meiklejohn, Gray Curtis, Jamie Donalds, Rufin VanBossuyt, Michael Grames, Karen Jones, Brian Clark, Josh Soojian, John Emery, Brad Smith, Kendra Collins, Jim Pelletier, Jordan Keating, Mark Meehl, Dave Lent, Linda Donalds, Bill Davis, Dave Lent, Tim Seale, Kaitlyn Mellor, Bill Goodwin

### **Morning 10am**

#### **WELCOME: Lois Breault-Melican**

We are glad to welcome lots of new guests today!

Worcester Telegram front page - Lois & Denis harvesting burs at Green Hill Park Worcester.

Lois & Denis will be doing a presentation at the Cape. There's interest in permaculture with involvement from our chapter.

This is our first all day board meeting combined with growers information. At our last meeting we voted to cut an hour off of quarterly meetings and combine orchard planning & board business.

#### **ORCHARD PLANNING: Brian Clark**

Spreadsheets passed out: Clapper and Graves - Reviewed harvest by orchard and lines

**Harvest:** Waiting for a few more numbers, so far we harvested approximately 14,000 nuts

Clapper: getting closer to being done in more seed orchards!

Graves: 2019 two new Blocks possible; Norfolk Aggie & possibly Buckland

Nanking: Two Mother Trees - New tree in Weston - Very nice tree - 213 nuts harvested. Any idea for where to plant this new line?

Repeat Pollination of YMCA tree 45 nuts harvested, to be used as replacements.

Squirrels were active this year! Brian had to harvest the Stockbridge Orchard early due to squirrels harvesting early .Burs were green, not ready for harvest. However squirrels were ripping apart burs on the tree and gnawing off the ends of branches in order to drop burs.

**Seed Orchards:** Jim Pelletier has been maintaining the Pittsfield Orchard. It looks great, possibly Jim could become the new Orchard Manager.

Using the new 2 ft. spacing at the Pittsfield Orchard has worked out very well, more survival.

**Purchase Needs:** Fencing: Norfolk ( electric, less money) ? Buckland possible site for 2019

We may receive another Manton grant, should wait to purchase large items until after April 2019

Orchard Signs: Westboro, Norfolk Aggie

**Research Orchards:** Rogued orchards & inactive orchards require new signage.

Jamie discussed getting standard sign format that is single a panel. Some of the 3-panel signs are outdated or in poor shape and need to be replaced.

Investigate use of a QR code sticker that would link to chapter web page. Web page would describe the stage of each orchard individually. Need to identify which orchards need signs. Medway could use new signage, perhaps in a more visible location.

Kathy described the chestnut lumber that Rufin has in storage as suitable for routing the names of orchards. Seed Orchard dedications coming up in 2019 in Pittsfield, Westboro & Norfolk Aggie would be potential sites for this. Norfolk Aggie has a Woodworking Dept. that might be able to help with this. Gray suggested cutting the lumber as veneer to extend the quantity.

**ACTION ITEM:** Create QR codes. Bill Goodwin mentioned there are some good apps for that. Can we create QR codes that link to a page specifically for individual orchards? Jamie is willing to chair a committee for this.e

**QR Code Committee:** Jamie, John Meiklejohn, Kathy Desjardin & Bill Goodwin

**Westerly Orchard:** Mike Grames has volunteered to help at this orchard

#### **GENERAL DISCUSSION:**

Projects — when considering, how will this help our project?

Projects involving schools going great!

What do we need them to do? We need to be consistent on the message too.

#### **Volunteer time logging:**

Cabot volunteer website: RewardVolunteers.coop Free, easy way to record volunteer time. An Organization Account has been created for :The Massachusetts/Rhode Island Chapter of The American Chestnut Foundation. Individual volunteers register by setting up their own Individual Account and can log time from any smartphone, tablet or computer at rewardvolunteers.coop Will check with Jules Smith regarding embedding the Reward Volunteers widget on our website. Kendra will also research this.

**ACTION ITEM:** Embed VolunteerRewards widget on a website.

Tracking volunteer hours is very helpful. Especially for grant writing purposes.

#### **.President's Report: Lois Breault-Melican**

GMO Issue: How should we approach communications from our chapter? We should draft a letter to our cooperators. National is moving forward with Transgenic.

Lois suggests we draft a letter explaining and asking for feedback -

Kendra suggests we ask our entire membership in a less formal way about their opinions.

We need to think about the chapter's response and position. We need to educate membership & cooperators on the potential options. People with GermPlasm agreements need a formal letter. Karen Lois, Kathy, Yvonne to work on developing letters.

**Treasurer's Report: Michael Novack**

Should annual statements be on website?

Michael has the annual reports from 2007 on. "Standard Form" — previous year and this year — hard to do since we switched account names sometimes.

We could do each year pretty easily. Doing the "Standard Form" would require editing year by year. Michael will get the RTFs to Yvonne, who will put them on website from 2010 on.

Will try to get them into a uniform format.

"Mower Fund" matching donors overview — mowers were a large expense, and we got matching contributions to help with them.

Shed costs included. Both donors willing to contribute again. Jamie would like to be able to ask them early in the year.

John Emery: What about harvesters for 5-10 years in future? Larger grants

Manton Grant very likely for this year. Kendra will let us know about the timing of the grant. We are getting regular organizational donations from "Community Chest" type drives.

Amazon Smile is another way for Chapter to get financial support. Kathy will set this up.

Karen mentioned Massachusetts License Plates with chestnut leaf as a means to receive donations. Kathy thinks we need to have a certain # of plates committed (reserved) before approval is granted.

.Bill Goodwin - asked if we have any sort of structure for seeking donations. Mike indicated that we do not have any particular development for that purpose.

Kathy mentioned that the national website has a "Chapter Resources" password protected page. Some of the content has helpful information on grant writing.

Brian: need a few weeks to come up with a budget on large items.

**MOTION:** to accept Treasurer's Report: accepted unanimously

**MOTION:** to reimburse Lois for all travel expenses related to her TACF Volunteer Service Award, to be awarded in Huntsville AL.

Passed unanimously

**Nomination Committee: Jaime Donalds & John Meiklejohn**

John & Jaime have contacted all of the officers and directors whose terms are expiring this year. Waiting to hear back from Paul Wetzel. All others have agreed to be on the ballot. Ballot needs to be posted one month prior to elections, will post list by Oct. 31st. John distributed a draft of the ballot for the 2018 Annual Meeting to elect Officers & Board of Directors for 2019.

Jaime will stay on the committee for another year.

Student Board Members (non voting) We need to finalize criteria for Junior Student Board Member & Senior Student Board Member. Involving students and teachers to empower them. How to select them? Duties? Needs to be focused, educational benefit for them. Two levels. Will post the handout we received at a previous meeting on the “Board Members Only” page.

**Secretary Report: Kathy Desjardin**

Membership: As of September 2018 our membership is at 280. 2018 started off with 292 members and fluctuates throughout the year.

**MAILCHIMP**: Free marketing platform to organize contacts, some other chapters use it. National uses Constant Contact. Keeps all the information in one place accessible by Managers, Authors, Viewers - based on level of access. Currently Lois, Yvonne, Kathy, Karen & Mike Grames have access. We discussed this at the 2017 Fall Quarterly Meeting and established a committee. Yvonne opened an account in Feb. 2018 and used it as a trial for the Spring 2018 Quarterly Meeting. Kathy has been learning how to use this and feels it's an efficient way to communicate with our membership and individual segments of our chapter. Trial emails sent out to members in early September, some new sign ups as a result. Recent emails to Board Members Group. Our website & Facebook Page now have a sign-up form that links into the Mailchimp lists. Can also use this to create postcards for mailing. Kathy created a postcard invitation for the annual meeting and has ordered 4 trial cards. The trial cards should be received by Lois, Yvonne, Brad & Kathy.

Mailchimp is a time-saver and ensures that the contact info is up to date, relying on individuals to update their preferences. Official communications thru this program are less likely to unintentionally leave people off a communication list.

**New Facebook Page**: not “FB group” helps us network with other groups better. Getting lots of traffic. Page has a sign-up form which is beneficial for volunteers & membership

**MA/RI-TACF Chapter website**: Lois, Kathy, Yvonne, Brad are classified as administrators and can make changes.

Website changes: new “password protected” page - “Board Members Only” & “Orchard Data” Now that we are learning more about how to set up the webpage please send comments and information to Kathy. We want to post up to date pictures and articles about our work.

After National TACF meeting — Jules Smith can provide more guidance.

John Emery: Is traffic measured on the website? Can we look at the Analytics?

Gray Curtis: Can a conversation occur on the Password-protected site?

John M. Google Groups works well with groups, allowing interaction between group members.

Kathy: Board members have a Google Group already, will look into levels of authority to manage

We've created subcommittees but follow-through is difficult at times. Google Docs often helpful.

**ACTION ITEM:** Integrate forum-type software with Chapter Website

“Push” functionality? Conversations?

### **Chapter News:**

Esprout Newsletter- will be published every 2 months, rather than monthly. Article on Mower donations hoop house should be submitted for next issue.

Chestnut magazine - Winter Issue - Article on Educational Collaborators.

### **Press Releases:**

Jamie put together a press release for the NEFF harvest event and got no response. Kendra mentioned that Jules can give us press contacts to send these to.

Kathy suggested sending the pictures and information for posting on our Facebook page and website.

Lisa Collins would like a press release re. students harvesting in Medway.

**Instagram** is an important Social Media type for younger people

### **Communications Report: Yvonne Federowicz**

Social Media changes — new FB page

Website additions:

REPORTS:

Orchard reports

Financial reports

Minutes, Strategic Plan etc.

National Education Committee — collaborating local and national educators

Minutes

Strategic Plan

Offering Demo chestnuts to Narragansett Food Sovereignty Initiative. Board is in favor; check GPA.

Jordan Keating introduced himself. Is very interested in permaculture. Has numerous varieties of trees such as paw paw, hickory, walnuts & apples.

**Norfolk Aggie:** The school is owned by the County. Kaitlyn Mellor and Tim Seale are Seniors majoring in both Plant Science & Environmental Science. Seed Orchard at Norfolk Aggie will be 1.25 acres, next to an apple orchard. Another new project raising Bobwhite Quail will be located adjacent to Seed Orchard. American chestnut orchard & studies will be an ongoing project passed down to Juniors & Sophomores as an FFA project — All students are members of Future Farmers of America. Norfolk has a 30-ft chestnut on campus located at the edge of a forest bordered by a hayfield. Campus used to be mostly corn, now is woodland and hay. There

are several barns & academic buildings. Alumni come by frequently. The Seed Orchard will be mostly student-run. Numerous departments will be involved academically. The Math Dept. will be doing graphing.

Tantasqua Jr. High School has a page on their website "The American Chestnut Tree Project". They've documented a lot of their work with photos. Norfolk Aggie may want to check that out. Also contact us for any web content we can put up. Norfolk could have as many as 7 plots of Graves.

**ACTION ITEM: Bristol Aggie:** Potted seedlings to be moved to Brian's greenhouse for winter storage.

**Kendra's Report:**

Regional Meeting - Kendra reported on updates from Jared Westbrook & Sara Fitzsimmons. Will be facilitating conference calls this winter regarding main science goals.

Science Review: got official feedback from scientists doing similar but not identical work. Kendra will provide the results once Jared has a chance to review & comment.

Seed Orchards at Meadowview

Continuing BC breeding

More sources of resistance

Need about 10 more sources of resistance

Continue with Chapter Breeding

Transgenics supported but problem with single founder. Need at least 2, more better. But not too many.

What to do with Nanking: Regional seed orchards? Combined? All three sources in an orchard?

Meadowview: need to find best resistance that we have. More selections to do. Probably need 2 more generations.

New sources of resistance; want BC2 only. Hudson Alpha in AL has been mapping chestnut. American reference genome. B2 is 85%. Get more American out of that.

Phenotypic selection first. Then genotypic on small number of survivors.

Nanking: we have about 16 lines. How to do seed orchard?

Graves & Nanking have PRR resistance.

What are Jared's criteria for additional resistance sources?

Diversifying transgenics: chapters 1-page science plans needed first. To be done this winter. MA/RI wants to get its Strategic Plan done too; could overlap. (Jamie)

2 conference calls to discuss what are main science goals over next few years, what our interests are. No chapter can do all the possibilities.

Jared will have a list of possibilities for chapters to work on Science. Yvonne asked that Chapter discuss this.

F2/F3 have subsets of the complex of genes related to resistance? Cross-breed with objective of getting supersets of those in one set of trees.

We likely have some about as good as F1s.

Different possibilities were discussed about Small Stem Assays and reducing future work plus increasing to 2' spacing in seed orchards, Which helps the trees thrive. Brian is pleased with this year's results on SSA & 2' spacing in seed orchards.

### **Partnerships:**

**Town of Monson Tree Committee:** Mt. Ella - Still working on plan.

**Norfolk Aggie :** Is moving quickly. Boundaries are staked, winter rye will be planted.

**Pittsfield:** Orchard dedication for Bob Presutti hopefully by July.

**Westboro:** Orchard dedication should be scheduled on one of the monthly board meeting dates when the 7 member regulatory committee are present.

**New Bedford Water Dept.:** Questions about costs involved, not wanting to burden town. Jamie suggests we give them some test seeds from the pollinated New Bedford tree. He has over 650 nuts from this years harvest of one of the New Bedford trees in his orchard.

**501c3 Status:** National asked again if we would like to do this; be under their "umbrella". Betsy & Heather at national have put together a write up on this that we could ask to look at.

Michael: not a huge amount of additional work to be separate from National. Much would still have to be done. Finances & Legal would be managed by National. Insurance standpoint: we'd be under National, Our current cost for Liability Insurance is \$877.00.

Carolinas, Ohio, West VA went under national's 501 c 3. One fell apart due to the lack of requirement for business meetings.

Most TACF Chapters are their own 501c3; modeled after Audubon.

Ownership of what we're doing is a huge part ( of our work motivation ) — Jamie

**Motion:** to table this: approved unanimously.

### **Karen:** Strategic Plan Update

The committee realized they need to move backward before they can move forward. Would like to write a narrative of chapter history before proceeding with the draft. Copies of the proposed narrative have been sent out for comment. The Committee is still editing the narrative.

Brad would like to do a presentation, a lexicon on "terms" at the annual meeting this year.

**Annual Meeting Planning:** Location Westborough Senior Center. Kathy will send email invitations and postcard mailing.

Chestnut Potluck. Tablecloths? Dishes & Flatware?

**MOTION:** Approve Summer Meeting. Minutes  
Approved unanimously

Lois introduced Jim Gettens, Conservation Chairman of the Leominster Sportsmen's Association. He has planted 210 nuts total over 3 years on the club's property ; 2015 planted 50, 2016 -100 nuts & 2017- 60 nuts. Last week he inventoried plantings, 140 are living which is a 67% survival rate. These are all planted on rough ground (clear cuts). During the drought of 2016 he had a watering team of 4 people hand watering trees. They carried 5 gallon pails with covers to the clearcuts.. During a 2 week period while they were away there was a lack of watering which contributed to some mortality along with 4- 5 trees being choked out by hornets nests and a few moose knock downs. The overgrowth in the four clearcuts is quite high and filled in now The 4 clearcuts range from 800 - 900' above sea level. Slash has been left on purpose to release nutrients. There are native American chestnut sprouts that are now 12'-15' high throughout the clearcuts. The young forest overgrowth consists of briars, blackberries, grass sedges, low blueberry bushes, maple, oak, gray birch, beech. These plantings have tough competition and have been raised to be hardy. He has cleared overgrowth around each planting. Jim used 36" tomato stakes, which turns out to be 24-28" above ground. He ordered biodegradable tubes from a company in the Pacific Northwest, which degrade after 5 years. Rex Baker, consulting forester passed out maps of the clearcuts.

**Meeting adjourned, tour of plantings led by Jim & Rex in clearcut areas followed.**