

MA/RI-TACF Summer Quarterly Meeting July 21, 2018

The Lodge, Norcross Wildlife Sanctuary, 30 Peck Rd, Wales, MA

Morning Orchard Meeting: 10am

Present: Denis Melican, Rich Hoffman, Mark Meehl, Dave Lent, Karen Jones, Michael Grames, Kathy Desjardin, Brian Clark, Lois Melican, Jamie Donalds, Kendra Collins, Yvonne Federowicz, Rufin Van Bossuyt, Grey Curtis, Josh Soojian, Jessie Greene (presenter), Lisa Collins (presenter), Sarah Hevrin (check spelling of name), Mike Novack,

Orchard Discussion:

Mark Meehl may be able to pollinate Wayland tree next year.

Brian reported on the spacing for plot change from 2'x4' to 1' x 7' saying the only negative is that it takes more fabric. There is a new 4' fabric that is fuzzy, the surface is more hydroscopic and may absorb the rain better. We can check below the plots for erosion in order to determine the absorbency of the fabric.

Rufin spent 3 days in the last week weeding in Westboro. There had been a period of dry weather followed by heavy rain.

Some areas of planting have had poor germination. Wondering if the parking lot for Kopin is treated with chemical, Mass Fish & Wildlife will create a diversion ditch to divert runoff from parking lot.

There has been a nice red tailed hawk hanging around the orchard!

Pittsfield Seed Orchard has a range of survival rate between 60% & 90 %.

Gray mentioned he had a call from Phil Benjamin, New Bedford Water Supply.

Kendra - Seed Orchard?

Lois will contact Phil.

New Bedford Vocational School has an Environmental Science Program

Should remove fabric at the Westboro Seed Orchard after trees are 4' – 5', there's been lots of new growth on trees 4-6" of new growth this year.

Concerning this year's harvest, we should start a list of people in advance who will be available at harvest time in order to better coordinate gathering and storage of nuts.

Norfolk Aggie Presentation (Lisa Collins)

Presentation by high school teacher Lisa Collins on collaboration with Norfolk Agricultural High School

Lisa Collins teaches Environmental Science at Norfolk County Agricultural School, located 13 miles southwest of Boston. NCAHS is a public high school over 100 years old, attended by over

500 students from the 28 towns of Norfolk County as well as more than 40 out of county towns. The students have four majors to choose from – Animal Science, Agricultural Mechanics, Environmental Science and Plant Science. All freshmen have classes in Environmental Science and learn to operate tractors. There are 3 teachers who teach Environmental Science. Students belong to Future Farmers of America (FFA) and are able to write grants. Students are hired over the summer for grounds keeping. Due to the Animal Science courses there is something going on 7 days a week at the school. The public is welcome on the grounds outside of school hours. Upperclassmen learn to operate more advanced equipment such as a chipper and sawmill. In 2014 the construction of 5 new buildings was completed. The campus has 11 buildings and 4 greenhouses. There is a field that has been fallow since 2014 adjacent to the apple orchard and within sight of housing for the school's superintendent. Lisa is proposing 1.25 acres for an orchard site. She presented soil testing by U-Mass that was done in the fall of 2017. Agricultural Mechanics use part of the field to screen soil and can prepare soil for the orchard.

Tantasqua Chestnut Research Project presentation (Jessie Greene)

Presentation by Jessie Greene, 7th grade science teacher at Tantasqua Middle School included photos of the tornado damage, kids finding burrs, bagging.

Research orchard underway!

Jesse has been teaching about the American chestnut story for years and now with the research orchard onsite (planted in 2017) there is lots of interest school wide. Jesse presents the American chestnut story as one that illustrates "Hope in Human Ingenuity." He finds interesting ways to engage students in learning about ecology. He introduces the idea that people are parts of the ecosystem.

On June 1, 2011, the town of Monson MA was struck by severe tornado damage. On June 7th, 2018, Jesse's students gave a 1 hr. presentation at the Monson Free Public Library. Jesse has been taking his students to Flynt Park (town owned); they discovered a profusion of stump sprouts due to the devastation of the tornado. The area where the students are pollinating and planting is known as Mt. Ella. Following the presentation someone from the audience volunteered funding for chestnut restoration at Flynt Park. A consequence of the tornado damage was a fund established by the state for tree restoration. It was actually the chairman of the committee who has worked with the state to determine distribution of the fund. The fund can be used for planting trees, short term maintenance, site preparation, and to develop a forest management plan. Jessie informed us that the park was established by Mr. Flynt years ago, he had remembered playing in the forest as a kid.

Currently the planting of the research orchard at Tantasqua is over half done with an 88% survival rate. This is the 3rd yr. Jessie has had American chestnut as part of his curriculum with over 300 students per year learning about the American chestnut story, which means 900 students have been introduced to the story! There are 40 students enrolled in the Tantasqua Middle School Chestnut Club.

Kendra suggested harvesting open pollinated nuts for germplasm conservation and asked Jesse to give her an idea of how many B3F3 seeds he could use from the fall harvest. Kendra also suggested that Jesse might want to consider a donation to get a Legacy Tree. Jesse mentioned a group called Nomads for Hope – church based nationwide – service activity, which came in 2011 and will be back to Monson in 2019 looking for a project. The group will consist of 500 people.

Rich Hoffman stated that Wilbraham, MA has similar issue with lots of potential at Minnechaug Regional High School – He has counted 55 American chestnut trees in a grove on school property. He mentioned that the teachers might be interested if Jessie could spearhead projects in the school, Jessie agreed. It was mentioned that we have school groups acting as citizen scientists.

Rich has F1s near there. Offered to show people the trees after meeting.

Kendra's report:

First inoculation of seed orchards in Granville (1 plot), Smith (3 plots), and SKLT (1 plot)
Selections timing t.b.d.

Selections have been made at the research orchards in Princeton, W. Boylston & Uxbridge.

Small stem assay (SSA) round 2 – stacked resistance project done last year (“stacked” meaning a combination of Graves and Clapper). SSA technique is more difficult than regular inoculation; using a larger opening this year in hope that more seedlings will have the blight “take” from inoculation. Very few did last year in round 1.

Germplasm collection for range wide American chestnut genetic diversity analysis. Kendra has sampled Granville so far. 5 trees, 50-100 meters apart. Not highly related.

Jared is working with Virginia Tech

Quabbin orchard needs info

Rhode Island – collecting leaves for Jared's genetic diversity study; Kendra requesting that Yvonne and Doug provide some, from different types of forest/habitat

Interns: Kendra has one – inventorying orchard – available!

Learning Box: need new ideas for things that can go in, activities that it can be used for groups.

Brian Clark's Report: Brian submitted a detailed **Orchard Report** which included the following categories: Spring 2018 Seed Orchard Plantings, Breeding Orchards Final Selections, Rogueing, Inoculations, Pollinations, and Other Major Activities & Upcoming Activities.

He also submitted a detailed **Seed Orchard Planting Summary for both Clapper and Graves Seed Orchards**,

Lincoln – Mark has a tree with cruddy bark; will be another Nanking line

Tantasqua put in a new Windsor Line and replacements

W. Boylston – selection done

Princeton – selection done but not rogueing

Uxbridge – selection done but not rogueing

Inoculation:

Weston – new tree

Pollinations at Mt. Ella
Brian did Clapper replacements

Removing old tubes from older plots is a priority

Westboro – good tent for mower
Pittsfield – have new mower. Jim Pelletier is stepping in and doing great work.

15 plots of irrigation, they have materials to do more.

Some Nanking lines are now ready for inoculation
We will need seed orchard sites for Nanking.

Focus is on harvesting for Graves for next year.

Landscape fabric can be removed after tree is about 4+ feet tall.

Not many days to do harvest: organizing harvest in advance. Adjourned for lunch

MA/RI-TACF Afternoon Board Meeting 1pm

Board Members Present: Rufin Van Bossuyt, Grey Curtis, Rich Hoffman, Michael Novack, Kathy Desjardin, Brian Clark, Denis Melican, Yvonne Federowicz, Lois Melican, Jamie Donalds, Karen Jones, Mike Grames, Josh Soojian, Paul Wetzel

Guests: Kendra Collins, Dave Lent, Mark Meehl,
Sarah Hevrin (sp?) sophomore at Providence College- studies Math & Environmental Biology –
volunteered in Hawley and Granville
Interested in internship next summer

Chestnut wood discussed (details?)

Motion to approve minutes of spring meeting
Approved unanimously

Treasurer Report: Michael Novack

Brian has numerous invoices still to get to Michael
We have received numerous donations
Mower was funded via donations!
Motion to accept treasurer's report

Michael: Setting the amount of fixed assets helps the Chapter even out budget. "Durables" such as lawn mowers and orchard ladders.

Motion to Raise chapter fixed asset boundary from \$400 to \$600.
Approved unanimously

This means – Immediate expense vs. fixed asset; a fixed asset depreciates over 4 years. Price of even things like ladders is now over \$400 so we needed to raise this some.

MA Form PC receipt was returned. Michael showed us.

Secretary Report: Kathy Desjardin

Membership 285, down a bit from 300+ over the winter
Donations have increased during the last quarter.

Brad sent a letter to the Arnold Arboretum

Pamela Thompson responded and proposed a joint program rather than a lecture. The program would consist of 3 presentations – perspectives, methodologies of each followed by a moderated debate. She referenced an article in the Arboretums magazine entitled “Did American Chestnut Really Dominate the Eastern Forest?”

Suggested the following speakers:

TACF

William Powell, ESF Syracuse

David Foster, Harvard Forest or Edward Faison, Highstead Arboretum

Would be scheduled for the end of March, beginning of April 2019, but needs to be submitted soon to be put in schedule – talk by National's person at the Arnold?

Great bookmark with/QR code made by Kathy

We could put our Chapter Home as a link from a QR code, which could be applied to current orchard signs and publications or special info about orchard(s)

ACTION ITEM: Yvonne to-do

Change the image more often on website for Chapter

MA/RI-TACF Autumn meeting date

Leominster Sportsmen's Club

October 14th – Sunday

Come early and have breakfast! Between 7 & 8

ACTION ITEM: get Autumn Date w/breakfast option up on our website! FB!

ACTION ITEM: Organizing harvesting – important this year!

Secretary's report approved unanimously

Communications report: Yvonne

Education Committee --- Education website for national – ideas? Several phone committee meetings recently about possibilities for website

Kathy – get Tantasqua info up on both MA/RI and National's education

Video – YouTube

ACTION ITEM: Yvonne: Orchard Reports from Brian – get up on website

Kendra: TACF (and Chapters) website has new host for the WordPress Specialist in environmental websites

Michael N.: Learning Box should have higher-level info in it
Kendra: Carroll County Middle School curriculum is available
One school does a DNA extraction lab
College-age student info?

Jessie and Lisa might help us
Dr. Caroline Keiffer also has sponsored students – Ohio College. Kendra mentioned that students will get a reduced rate for the gala after the poster session.

Communications report accepted unanimously

President's Report: Lois Breault-Melican

Think about:

“How does this move the mission?”

T-shirts – more a give-away item and very inexpensive advertising.

“Planting Crew” or “Orchard Crew” or “Weeding Warrior”
National has a nice shirt though doesn't have western MA !!
Also VT, NH, ME. Was based upon the little map.
Cotton ones fade in the sun.

Motion: Buy 50 more MA/RI-TACF shirts for giveaways. 2 types.
Accepted unanimously

Purchase approvals:

Motion to spend up to 3000 for a mower and shed for Pittsfield seed orchard
Accepted unanimously

Brian will have more detail soon

Grey asked about solar irrigation setup
Jamie has one!

Jamie provided new batteries for the South Kingstown RI seed orchard!
YF transferred and the URI Master Gardeners installed them.

Changing the format of Chapter Quarterly Meetings
Duplication of info from morning into the afternoon has occurred
Make the whole day an official Board Meeting
(Classify and advertise whole day as Board Meeting)

Motion: whole quarterly meeting will be a Board Meeting
Accepted unanimously

Phone meetings & conference calls work out pretty well. Uber meetings.
Kendra can help with our conference calls esp. in winter.
Subcommittees – good for this

Free events to public Karen asked if the board would endorse the concept of allowing a subcommittee to organize and authorize free events of interest to the public. Karen suggested the following format :

The event would begin with a quick intro about chestnuts & a request for donations and volunteers. She has spoken with Jim Pelletier who could do a 45 minute presentation on interesting footage of wildlife from trail cameras. Another possibility would be Bill Davis and his experience with wildlife. Karen suggested that there be 2 events before the end of the year on an interesting topic and feels it won't take a lot of time to organize. Kathy has agreed to help organize these events. Others agreed to help too:

Paul: could use MacLeish.

Kendra: can also publicize a field activity or workday near that talk
“Piggybacking” onto a somewhat related issue but also focusing on their community. Chestnut ID workshop – Kendra offered to do a walk/talk on what are lookalike species.

Sarah mentioned getting people in her college community who she can get involved in a talk like this. They have a lecture series.

Kathy – Worcester League of Sportsmen- Fish & Wildlife possibilities exist for this

Rufin – Bill Davis might be able to connect us with that group

We passed around a sheet (Yvonne has it, also took photo)

Discussion on online outreach and publishing events, Kathy mentioned the letter that John Meiklejohn drafted and sent out to members in his area. He got an excellent response for volunteers at his orchard.

Karen: Publicizing MA/RI in regional newspapers – this helps us a lot
Nice photo of Bob Presutti in Pittsfield Observer! Orchard in background

We can get signage – QR codes help.
We need more signs at some orchards – tell Yvonne and Jamie

For QR codes: laminated sticker that we can add

Basspro Shop with interpretive trail is a good place for the QR code

ACTION ITEM:

Paul and Jamie will work on the QR code stickers

ACTION ITEM:

Inventorying sites that need signs; Lois is organizing info for this

Send to Lois your site and signage needs
Generic or specific

Signage needs so far:

Westboro
Smith
Tantasqua
Littleton
Wayside
Providence
Weston
OSV
Lincoln !

If orchard was rogued down to a few trees, public needs to understand that the removals were intentional, so this needs to be on signage

Price ?

Jamie will report back in October

QR code needs to link to something that explains

Side line signage could be smaller – Sarah

Nominations Chair – Jamie reported that John Meiklejohn volunteered to be nominations chair and Jaime will be on the committee.

Lois is willing to continue as President.

We need people to train to be the Treasurer and Secretary. Kathy and Michael have been in positions more than 10 years.

Annual Meeting MA/RI-TACF

Saturday December 1st, 2018

Location – getting inside Rte 128?

Speaker -- suggestions:

Jamie – scientist studying genetic diversity of all trees in our orchards
Lauren, Fielder ? Indiana

Rufin -The author of "Thirty-Eight" *The Hurricane That Transformed New England*
Stephen Long

**We need to schedule Seed Orchard dedications for:
Springside Park & Westboro Fish & Wildlife**

Could the orchard dedication for Bob Presutti be part of their Arbor Day event?
Could the orchard dedication at Fish & Wildlife be part of one of their events?

Draft Strategic Plan Discussion -- Karen Jones

There is a need for Coordinators of volunteers and interns.

Karen is concerned that volunteer recruitment needs (bolstering); there is a need for volunteers in various orchard locations.

How do we make contact and pass along dates and locations?

Can we send notices and who has access to membership contact information?

Kathy mentioned that the president and secretary are the only ones who receive the monthly membership reports and would need to be involved in the contact aspect of recruiting volunteers from our membership if we were reaching about by mail or electronically or phone calls.

Kathy and Karen: volunteered to coordinate volunteers, interns – clarify responsibilities
They will create a list of volunteers, figure out a plan and share information back to board.

Draft 1 Strategic Plan done!

The Strategic Plan subcommittee which consists of Karen, Brad & Jamie has gotten good feedback and plan to integrate it for next draft

Jamie: we all need to be behind this document, the committee would like to have the final draft ready by the fall meeting. They will continue with follow up phone conversations. Please give feedback!

Kathy: who has not responded to the committee concerning the Strategic Plan?
Most people have been contacted for feedback.

Please send us a MS Word Doc (Yvonne requested)

Priorities for the Chapter (Karen requested people suggest)

Lois: The 3 most important items that will move our mission are - **Education**, Promotion & **Outreach**

Jamie: Strategic Planning team will implement everyone's comments

Harvest Parties! (Denis suggested) –

Harvest Party in Littleton! Jamie is organizing for September 29th.

Needs a lift

Motion: approve \$300 for a lift for the Orchard Party in Littleton

Approved unanimously

Motion: approve a lift for Princeton if it can be harvested

Approved unanimously

The book that Brian suggested at the Spring Quarterly meeting “Champions” by Sally Walker as a replacement for Mighty Giants does not have a discount through the author

ACTION ITEM: Investigate getting a case of books for Annual Meeting.

Mark Meehl presented on the seedlings he brought and project for small “GCO” type orchards

Wild American chestnut seedlings – at least 10 different sources

If you don't have any, Mark Meehl has nice ones in pots (at meeting)

Flyer must go with them.

Meeting adjourned approx. 4pm