

**MA/RI-TACF Summer 2019 Quarterly Meeting Minutes**  
**Broad Meadow Brook Audubon, 414 Massasoit Rd, Worcester, MA**  
**8/03/2019 10:00am - 3:30 pm**

**Board Members Present::** Jamie Donalds, Kathy Desjardin, John Meiklejohn, Gray Curtis, Michael Grames, Brian Clark, Karen Jones, Michael Novack, Rufin Van Bossuyt, Paul Wetzel, Rich Hoffman, Yvonne Federowicz, Josh Soojian

**Guests:** Ray Diaz, Lisa Collin, Tim Seale, Walt Yarborough, Mark Meehl, Dave Lent, Bill Davis, Kendra Collins

**Treasurer Report** -- Michael Novack

We need to create a budget for next year. Not having a Manton Grant this year set us back. A was selected: Jamie, Michael Novack, Brian, Paul

Paul Wetzel is preparing to assume the treasurer position at the end of the year.(??)

Chapter needs to switch to another bank. Bank of America is less convenient because they are closing branches in many locations. Also higher interest rates for a savings account are available at other banks.

Motion to approve Treasurer Report. Motion passed unanimously

**Secretary Report** - Kathy Desjardin

National needs the *Annual Report of Chapter Events* by September.

Volunteer Rewards -- Chapter members are not using the Volunteer Rewards program to report their chapter work hours. In order to increase participation, for the fall meeting, Kathy & Karen will do a short tutorial and bring a computer for recording chapter work hours.

Kathy has been contacted by numerous people interested in participating in chapter activities. She has responded to them and mailed journals to some.

Walt Yarborough, a guest who is interested in becoming involved in chapter activities, reported that he hiked Werner Trail and found numerous chestnuts and several large trees in Walpole.

Time to renew our membership with Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition and Environmental Council of RI.

Mark Meehl made a presentation to a group near the Lincoln orchard and has spoken with a person who has land and is seeking a tenant who wants a long term lease for doing organic farming. Kathy and Mark will follow up to explore possible collaboration..

### **Education & Outreach:**

Kathy & Bill Davis staffed a table at the 6/15/19 Donker Farm Event. It was a very worthwhile event. Kathy got a gift featuring a raccoon for Brian Clark, who discovered shortly after a big effort was made to plant out the rest of the Westborough Orchard, that nearly all of one plot and parts of others had been raided by racoons.

Curt Laffin gave a great presentation to the Homeschool Program at New England Base Camp in Milton, MA - in the spring.

June 2019 - Kathy followed up with the Homeschool Days Leadership Institute - Main Street Philanthropy Panel Day. The students raised \$140 for chestnuts. American chestnut trees are located on the property. Students and staff are documenting trees and have visited Tantasqua - Mt. Ella project and want to support that.

### **Upcoming Events:**

9/28 - 9/29/19- 21st Annual Garlic & Arts Festival in Orange, MA -- Great attendance and good exposure. Brian and Karen will staff. More volunteers are needed..

10/5/19 10 am - 4 pm 50th Anniversary Event for the Naturalist Club of Springfield to be held at AMC Nobleview Outdoor Center in Russell, MA. MA/RI Chapter is invited to table. Contact Kathy to volunteer or for more details.

11/18/19 Lancaster, MA Library - Curt will do a presentation. Jamie would like to attend.

Membership is stable at 278.

### **Communications Report - Yvonne Federowicz**

What should National put on their Chapters Site?

Getting info about PRR resistance. Joe James' work is not reflected in Jared's data?

Ask Kendra where rest of the PRR data are

Kathy: Outreach and Activity Report -- we can use the Reward Volunteers system, too.

We had an issue with the national WordPress -- only authors can edit their own work, so if Kathy puts in an event, Yvonne cannot edit it.

### **FALL 2019 Meetings:**

September 7, 2019 Regional Science Meeting, Urban Forestry Center, Portsmouth, NH  
KENDRA: Meeting will include transgenic issues.

October 19, 2019      National Annual Meeting Gettysburg, PA

November 3, 2019      Fall Meeting AT MacLeish Field Station? Paul to confirm.

December 7, 2019      Annual Meeting - Saturday Westborough Senior Center -- approx. \$300.  
Potluck -- chestnut items  
Paul Sisco - Keynote Excellent speaker, We'll need to fly him up, our  
standard honorarium. Paul has worked a lot with the PRR program.  
Kendra suggests breeding & PRR focus; Paul's take on the breeding  
program status

**Breeding Report:** Brian Clark

Brian passed out multiple spreadsheets on the genomics analysis of MA/RI lines --  
Percent Americanness Some results are surprising  
Many other selections are in the testing pipeline -- only about half of the material we submitted  
has been analyzed..

Some traits are hard to compare across trees because we did some selections 10 years ago;  
the main stem is likely to have died, but that is less problematic than if it died 1 year after  
inoculation

**Orchard Work:**

Granville: 2 lines, with students

Monument Valley 7th and 8th grade students worked with John Meiklejohn. Ratio of 1 student  
and 1 adult teams were very productive.

Weston: lots of replanting, had very poor survival.

Westboro: put in 4 new plots. Raccoons wiped out most of 1 plot. 2 others had about 40%  
survival.

Norfolk Aggie: 8 plots planted, 2 plots from seedlings, 6 plots from nuts.; students did a major  
part of the plot preparation and planting. amount of work. Lisa reported that the orchard has  
been mowed & weed whacked. They will work on hand weeding this week.

SKLT: is Nanking worth inoculating?

Seed orchards:

-- water system needed fixing

Solar system needed fixing

Weeding w/multiple volunteers needed  
1 inoculated, 1 selected

Smith 3 inoculated, 3 rated  
Pittfield, Granville  
Weston, Westboro -- most had inoculations, selections etc.

Breeding orchards: Hawley - Nanking, and several others are ready for inoculations

Getting American nuts for GCOs

If we are going to harvest nuts from American trees, notify Kendra what they are before harvest.  
Is it in database already? Is it in Treesnap? We need things to line up in the TACF database.  
Mother tree, pollens etc too.

Very little pollination done this year.

Sampling for genomic testing -- Jamie getting some folks together.

Let Kendra know how many trees you are getting samples of, she will send supplies.

## **Lunch**

### **Nominations Committee:**

Motion: John Meiklejohn is new chair of the Nominations Committee  
Motion Passed unanimously

John will contact all Board Members and Officers regarding continuing in their current positions.  
To nominate new Board Members -- please contact John Meiklejohn  
Paul W. is working with Michael Novack to learn treasurer's duties.

Michael Novack is transitioning out of Treasurer position. Create new position - VP of Strategic Planning  
Jamie suggests Michael Novack for the new position  
John Meiklejohn -- do we need to create a "job description" to focus the person in their duties?

Kendra: Science coordinators are working on breeding plan modifications  
Jamie will put together an email on setting up a phone call w/Kendra and what the VP of Strategic Planning needs to do.  
Yvonne suggested that the position needs to be in regular contact w/ other chapters and national discussion on relevant issues, via attending or ZOOM tech.

Tom Saielli has worked on SSA. Kendra will get more information from him when he returns from vacation.

Weaker strain of blight are now being used instead of EP; EP is extremely harsh.  
Could use on RI trees that are struggling due to poor sites

Report on Abingdon Science Meeting, July 19-20, 2019

Focus of meeting was genomic test results showing 9+ genetic loci involved in blight resistance.  
Jared presented this last spring

Plan: keep going w/backcross; if some lines are uniformly poor, then use for:

- a.) crossing w/transgenic trees
- b.) cross w/ earlier backcrosses, which are less likely to have lost resistance genes

Brian: if some lines are "of little interest" -- maybe replant those areas in seed orchards  
w/Graves or Nankings

Requirements for keeping lines separate no longer exist? Need clarification from science staff

Positive selection versus other methods -- Michael

Pillars of science program:

Breeding

Transgenic -- working w/wound-inducible promoter (so OxO gene not always "on")

Hypovirulence

Genomic analyses for better info

Massive numbers of hybrid trees Chapters and Meadowview have done enabled the mapping of  
resistance trees

CJA -- Chinese Japanese American -- trees surviving in a NH orchard -- Kendra will be going to  
look at them this week.

Kendra went through the superdonor issues  
w/hypovirulence

Don Knuss developed this; had a meeting planned w/USDA. USDA did not respond.  
Takes a while for virus-infected strand to be spread around Still have to treat individual  
cankers w/hypovirulent strain

Brian: Getting GCOs is fairly important for the long-term future of our program; wild germplasm  
is slowly disappearing. The original genetic diversity is crucial. Large surviving trees are also  
important; cruddy bark. Blighted but surviving. Clone? Graft?

GCOs are valuable whether or not we do transgenics. We might end up doing a different cross  
in the future.

Need someone to manage GCOs. Jamie is asking Mark Meehl to take on GCOs in Massachusetts. Will gather data. Writing it all down is crucial.

If anyone gets requests for a GCO, contact Brian and Mark. GCO's are very flexible. General recommendation. 10 sources, 10 trees/source. Need sources replicated on site. Replicated on other sites even better. These trees may not live forever, will die back etc.

We also want different ecoregions to be conserved. It's important to include underrepresented places/sources.

Nut producing trees are best; can also graft, transplant. Vegetative propagation of root collar sprouts -- Marty Cipollini has documentation of that.

Good management and care onsite by a collaborator is best. They should not be ½ to ¼ mile of another chestnut orchard.

Dave Lent has found lots of pure Americans; will work with Mark on documenting.

Snippets from meeting: plurality of approaches best.

Jamie: people were very generous at the meeting and welcomed him back.

Lots to learn, not an either or. Just the beginning of being able to really measure things.

Conversation not over.

#### **CHAPTER OUTREACH:**

Kathy and Karen Propose a systematic approach to outreach:

3 Programs yearly for the general public, in Western MA, Central MA and Eastern, MA & Rhode Island. Advertised in regional publications. Topics of General Interest

**GOALS:** Promote MA/RI Activities, recruit volunteers and partners.

Raise revenue through donations.

Bill Davis and Jim Pelletier have agreed to do programs.

Karen and Kathy requested budget for advertising. No action taken.

TACF has a standardized FAQ card and presentation materials for MA/RI representatives to use for public presentations. Various people give talks already:

Paul W. -- willing to do talks within one hour of his house. Other presenters include Mark Meehl, Yvonne, Kathy, Brad, Jamie, John Meiklejohn. These talks should be recorded in the Chapter Annual Report

#### **Signage:**

Karen reported that there is still a need to update signs at various orchards, particularly Westboro. Kathy suggested that Lisa Collins needs one for the Norfolk Aggie in preparation for the AG Expo this fall. Signage needs at other locations was discussed..

There was a discussion on 3 panel signs or single panels are needed..  
A list of orchards needing replacement signs must be generated.

**Motion:** Board authorize no more than \$1000 for A set of 3 panel signs for the Seed Orchards at Westboro and at Norfolk.

MOTION Passed unanimously

Please add additional needs

SKLT

**Motion:** That we provide \$500 to the SKLT toward porta jon, water, and gas.

Yvonne to negotiate invoice.

MOTION Passed unanimously

We need a receipt. Invoice the chapter for orchard expenses.

**Josh Soojian:** contact with forestry grant people: federal grant through state agencies;  
Has to go to small communities for park plantings

**Kendra:** staff started developing landscape scale restoration efforts

Had some partners; best materials were planned.

Project put on hold this spring following science review. Will wait until we know what we want to plant out. Potential for a large grant. Applications are regional

Kendra will talk to Josh's contact -- it is great to have a contact for our good trees coming down the pipeline

Meeting adjourned 3:10pm

### **Executive Committee Meeting**

Discussion of decisions made in earlier meeting

Possible nominations

