



The American Chestnut Foundation Vermont/New Hampshire Chapter  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
Zoom Conference call, Thursday, August 13, 2020, 7:30 PM

Note: this meeting was recorded as a video and can be streamed at  
[https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/play/vcYqcu-t\\_2g3EtKR4wSDB6R5W9S\\_K\\_ms2nAb-vsEy03jV3EFMQenZrcaY7eSeROUABZZfZ9YBtv7Ddti](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/play/vcYqcu-t_2g3EtKR4wSDB6R5W9S_K_ms2nAb-vsEy03jV3EFMQenZrcaY7eSeROUABZZfZ9YBtv7Ddti)

All Board members were (virtually) present: Douglas McLane (President), Curtis Laffin (VP), Daane Crook (Treasurer), William Coder (Secretary), Yuriy Bihun, Dr. Gillian L. Galford, Terry Gulick, Gary Hawley, Dr. Ann Hazelrigg, James P. Powers, Dr. James Talbot, William Widmer, Jessica Wikle (Fellow)

TACF Staff present: Kendra Collins, Regional Science Coordinator

### **1. Self-Introductions by Three New Members**

The meeting began with Ann, Gillian, and Jessica providing short professional sketches. All are connected with UVM, with Ann being a plant pathologist with UVM Extension, Gillian being an Associate Professor at the intersection of ecology and environmental science, and Jessica being a PhD candidate in the area of forest management in the era of climate change.

### **2. Review and Approval of Treasurer's Report of February 7, 2020**

Daane's report covering from February 7, 2020 to August 6 2020 showed total income from membership and donations of \$4,312, and total expenses of \$781.50. At the end of the period accounts totaled \$24,798.04.

Upon a motion made by Curt and seconded by Terry, the treasurer's report documents were unanimously approved as submitted.

### **3. Review and Approval of Minutes from February 12 BOD Conference Call**

Yurij provided some feedback on the minutes of the February 12 conference call: he confirmed ownership in two cases where his name was followed by a question mark and commented that follow-up on educational / research plantings from VT Farm Show be reflected in the action items. Upon a motion made by Terry and seconded by Daane, minutes were unanimously approved with those corrections.

## **4. Committee Structure**

The meeting announcement and agenda Curt had circulated prior to the meeting included a proposed update to the committee structure, with a basic charter statement for each, building on the Governance Committee report of 2019. Doug verbally expanded on some of the write-up and noted that the committees can fine tune their statement of roles.

### **a. Nominating**

The Nominating Committee is somewhat self-explanatory (and defined in Article VI of the Bylaws). Doug noted that he plans to opt out of the committee while serving as President. Late into the meeting Terry noted that the Nominating Committee should be preparing to fill his board position for this spring's election.

### **b. American Chestnut Location Committee**

This is one of the standing committees described in Article VII of the Bylaws, which hasn't been actively staffed in recent times. Kendra noted that she receives tree ID submissions and that it would be helpful for her to know who to copy in order to follow up on trees with the potential for flowering. Curt noted confidence that he has five candidate trees from this year's activities.

### **c. Orchard Coordination and Science Oversight Committee**

Doug noted that Kendra has been de facto leader of many of the functions of this committee. (Note: The Bylaws reference the target functions as the Research Committee in Article VII.) The proposal is to have subcommittees for Breeding and Bioengineering .

### **d. Membership, Program and Outreach Committee**

This combines the functions of several the standing committees described in Article VII of the Bylaws. In addition to the functions described in the meeting agenda, web site management is another related responsibility.

### **e. Development and Governance Committee**

Originating from a Strategic Planning effort in 2016, Jim has been the primary active participant. There are several known areas to be followed up on.

There are other ad hoc committees which may be formed. One current example is Salvage Committee. All board members are to provide Curt with what committee(s) they would like to participate in by the end of August.

## **5. Salvage Committee**

Yurij and Gary checked on the chestnut wood from the Berlin tree being stored at Randy and Grace Knight's Perkinsville homestead. Because the property is currently up for sale there may be some urgency to dispositioning this material. He noted some interest from Adam of Tappan Chairs, and that this is an opportunity for board members to bid for lumber. Gary has a lead on someone who can plane the wood, and Terry noted that there is a Perkinsville craftsman who

may be interested in purchasing some of the wood. Yuri is familiar with the individual and is to follow up.

## **6. Brochure Boxes**

Doug briefly referred back to an email he had sent out suggesting educational plantings include plexiglass boxes with TACF brochures.

## **7. Acceptance and Acknowledgement of Safari International Donation**

Safari International ( [safariclub.org](http://safariclub.org)) is an organization with a primary mission to support hunting of big game, which has made unsolicited donations for several years. Doug proposed that we accept their \$500 donation again this year but the board may wish to consider future acceptance of their ongoing donations. Kendra noted that Safari's donation is actually made to the TACF national organization with the request that it be split amongst a set of chapters, many in New England. Bill Coder has the follow up to send a thank you to one of their officers with a summary of how the chapter would be using their donation.

## **8. Rutland Vermont Germplasm Conservation Orchard Site**

Kendra followed up on Doug's recent visit to a new GCO site in Rutland, proposed by member Tom Estill. The site is on Rutland school property on the Allen Street Campus in Rutland VT. Kendra noted educational benefits of having a greenhouse on site and administration support. She expressed some concern for the school not being in session in summer when the highest maintenance needs occur, but that it was proposed that an intern could help meet those needs on a trial basis. Kendra also noted the need for checking the soils, drainage and any ledge.

Gillian has investigated another VT site and will follow up on email to provide the board with further information. Replication of GCO content is a worthy goal.

## **9. Term of Officers**

Doug recapped that there are some inconsistencies around the bylaws defining officer's terms as one year vs. three years as had been recent practice. This year's officer election ballot was set up for serving one year terms. The Governance Committee is the appropriate forum to clarify bylaw provisions and consider policy.

## **10. Update to the Chapter Strategic Plan**

After committees are set up, Curt has volunteered to propose updates to the strategic plan the chapter created several years ago.

## **11. Contribution Toward Transgenic Pollination at Cape Elizabeth ME**

Prior to the meeting Doug had circulated a statement regarding expenses incurred by Tom Klak (ME Chapter) and Doug in pollinating trees in Cape Elizabeth ME with transgenic pollen from SUNY ESF. It was estimated that \$2500 would cover lift rental charges and some materials purchased on personal credit cards beyond financial support being funneled through the ME chapter. Curt expressed support for our chapter to make a contribution. Gary noted preferences to have known about the project upfront and to be supporting a similar activity in VT/NH. Bill Coder commented that the chapter's current financial condition appears to be positive. Yuriy noted that there is no precedent for contributions to other chapter's activities and requested more time to consider available information. Gillian spoke in favor as long as it did not set precedent and was viewed as an educational opportunity. The topic was tabled for further investigation and discussion, although no specific action item resulted.

## **12. Anticipation of USDA Comment Period for Transgenic Trees**

The USDA will open a 60 day public comment period on deregulating of the ESF transgenic trees and we should be prepared to help encourage member's to participate, via an outreach activity. The Science Oversight Committee may also play some role.

## **13. Email Voting on Board Actions**

Doug introduced the idea of being able to vote on board actions. No action was taken.  
*Secretarial note: possible Governance Committee issue.*

There was also a brief mention about tradeoffs between cc'ing all board members vs. subsets. Jim noted that committees should be careful to keep the full board informed on important discussions and decisions.

## **14. Adjournment**

Doug noted that the intended hour session had run over by ten minutes and the meeting was adjourned at about 8:43 PM.

## **Follow-up / Action Items**

1. All board members are to provide Curt with what committee(s) they would like to participate in by the end of August.
2. Yuriy will reach out to Perkinsville VT woodworker about interest in salvage wood.
3. Bill Coder to send a thank you to the designated Safari International contact with a summary of how the chapter would plan to use their donation.
4. Gillian will follow up on email to provide the board with information on another VT GCO site.
5. Curt volunteered to draft a proposal for updating the chapter's Strategic Plan.

