

MA/RI-TACF Summer Quarterly Meeting 7/11/2021

Bolton Town Common, Bolton, MA - 9:00 am - 1:00 pm - In person and on Zoom

We had difficulties with the tech, unfortunately -- connection unstable, sound cut out a lot

Board Members Present: Kathy Desjardin, Brian Clark, Karen Jones, Brad Smith, Gary Jacob, Gray Curtis, Mike Grames, Michael Novack, Paul Wetzel, Yvonne Federowicz, Jamie Donalds, Bill Davis **Guests:** Tim Seale, Isaiah Powers, Mark Meehl, Dave Lent

On Zoom: Mike Meixsell (Emeritus), Guest: Ed Croteau,

Jamie - Welcomed guests

Report on 2021 Interns:

Isaiah Powers introduced -- URI student, forestry biology interests, loves the project

Saman Sheeko (Simon) - new intern - very enthusiastic too

Norfolk Aggie intern - Lisa has been supervising, Evan MacLellan who graduated from Aggie

We would like the interns to also do controlled pollinations and inoculations - not just weeding; we would like them to be learning potentially useful skills and chestnut lore

Treasurer Report- Paul Wetzel

Treasurer's Report Accepted

Secretary's Report - Kathy Desjardin

Membership 285

Request to renew membership with the Mass Land Trust Coalition at \$50.00 level - accepted

Reminder - Chestnut Chat Series on TACF Website #'s 1 - 24, #25 will be live on 7/16/21

TACF Photo Contest 2021 deadline is 9/01/21

Communications Report- Yvonne Federowicz (she/her)

Brad contributing to Instagram. Ray Diaz contributing to Facebook.

We should all look at Website more often (WordPress)

Refocusing upon the website could help our publicity

How can our Chapter be more welcoming and inclusive?

We can put in gender pronouns, for instance on Zoom meetings -- esp. Chapter officers.

It is considered a courtesy now. We don't know how many people we might be making uncomfortable without this. It is one signal that we are working toward being more welcoming and inclusive.

It would be great for National to do this on forms but we cannot control that.

We can do this on our Zoom and in other places we put our names.

Please contact Karen and Yvonne about this if interested in exploring ways to help our group become more welcoming.

Strategic Plan: Karen

Karen would like to work on strategic plan with Brad and Paul

Strategic Plan - Reference NH/VT Chapter / Vote of Confidence / Send ideas to Karen

5 people to review Jamie will be a reviewer

Isaiah can help with this, also Yvonne, Gary

Blue Hills Chestnuts

Gray: Susan Fleck told him about Blue Hill Reservation chestnut with burs on a tree located about 1.25 miles from the museum. Blue Hills and Museum Gray wants the Museum involved - they are interested if it is an area with native chestnut (which it is) . We could get seeds from Blue Hills trees and plant them in a GCO Orchard. Michael Novack - if you have several Americans in a GCO-like orchard, usually one or more is big enough at one time to flower.

Kathy: At nearby New England Base Camp - Camp Sayer - Boy Scout Camp - there are many American chestnut trees. Brad: The Museum is different from the Scout area. Yvonne: Is there someone there who can help with the orchard? Gray: would be involved personally Brad will help, he thinks there will be lots of interested people. Carla Rosenstein at the museum is a contact.

Kathy: Can Gray look into the signage options on National's site & personalize it for the BH site? We might be able to get some B3F3 seeds from Deni.

Brad: let's get the BH trees ID'd. Everyone is positive about this.

Scientific Planning Report - Michael Novack

We want to increase the number and percent of trees with higher resistance while keeping the mother trees' resistance in there.

Brian - still an open question about whether mixing resistance lines provides any advantage

We believe that Clapper lost most of one chromosome's resistance genes

We don't know the genetic diversity in resistance in Chinese chestnut though

There are probably other Chinese resistance genes that we don't have in any current Chinese sources, those might play a similar role in blight resistance, or not.

Male sterile F1s with different Chinese parents

We might see more and more resistance if our population average goes up to 85, we won't know which getting to "pure" resistance will be possible with genetic testing. We know other trees to be propagating -- getting male sterile F1s

Every generation is 5-10 years

The SUNY people have pushed 1 year trees to produce pollen (only a minority of the trees do, but still) . We can get pollen in just a few years. However the population needs to be able to produce nuts too. Our current seed orchards - we can remove some trees and put in later generations

Brian - We are currently roguing out in seed orchards down to a few trees. What criteria for final selections in the next year or 2. We haven't seen the new criteria from National.

Michael- statistics - thinks we should keep the 5 best trees of each plot

Gary - Site differences in growth rates depending on where planted.

Brian: breeding orchards, we (Kendra and us) dropped down to 1-8 trees. Depends upon the line, trees. Spots within orchards vary a lot.

Orchard Report- Brian Clark

Norfolk Orchard: Replanted 6 plots direct seed in May 2 plots seedlings in June.

6 Graves, 2 Clapper lots

We (Chapter) are funding a student intern for summer maintenance at Norfolk Aggie

Granville completed! 300 replacements for the four 2020 lots, 2 new Graves x Clapper plots (seedlings), 2 new Clapper plots (seedlings)

Westboro completed! 200 replacements for 2020, 2019 plots, 3.5 Graves new plots

Completed "seed" orchards:

SKLT: 20 lines Clapper

Smith/MacLeish Station 20 lines Clapper

PittsfieldSpringside Park: 20 lines Clapper

Granville: 19 lines, 13 Graves, 4 Clapper, 2 cross

Westboro: 40 plots, 33 Clapper, 7 Graves

Weston: 42 plots: 40 Clapper, 2 Graves

Inoculations: lots of issues -blight plates had mold on many of them; sometimes shipments delayed;

Inoculations & Rogued Orchards

Westboro - 1st inoculations 5 plots

Pittsfield Springfield- 4 plots done in 2019 (SG), 5 more plots done in 2020 (SG), 3 more plots done in 2021 (SG) Extensive roguing of 2019 & 2020 plots

Smith McLeish - 3 plots done in 2018(SG), Weakly in 2020, 5 more plots with SG in 2020, 2 more in 2021

Weston- 8 plots in lock 1 with SG in 2020, rogued this year

Hawley Nanking Breeding Orchard-

4 lines of Nanking with SG and Weakly in 2020, 2 lines of Nanking with SG and Weakly in 2021

Granville- 2 plots done in 2018? Weakly in 2021, 6 more plots done in 2021 (SG), Extensive roguing of 2018 plots

South Kingstown Breeding Orchard (Nanking)- SG & Weakly 2021

Quabbin Breeding Orchard (Graves) - SG & Weakly 2021

New Seed Orchard-Sandisfield:

Doug is working on an easement with his lawyer, need fence in place - not much has happened since April. Still need to harrow, Bobcat - 1½ hr drive to Sandisfield for Brian, John Meiklejohn is trying to help, he is closer, Jim Pelletier in Pittsfield is close too but very busy with the Pittsfield Springside orchard.

Pollinations:

Brian had little luck with the F1s sprouting radicals started but once they were in pots they all rotted

Forest-type Chinese trees - in Upton, MA 50' tall Pure chinese- CCC Planting - Conserve germplasm of Upton Chinese. Taller than most Chinese trees get - Male Sterile F1's Upton State Park - Chinese 2021 plan, pollen from timber form Chinese at Upton, cross with several different wild Americans Also doing a normal cross (American pollen, farm Chinese).

Outstanding Selected Backcross Trees

7 Graves x Clapper crosses planned

Trees from Lincoln, Princeton, Grafton, Weston, Wayland, Hawley

Jamie: Can we graft some Upton Chinese onto other Chinese we have, like our orchard control Chinese (Most are shorter, spreading in habit, whereas Upton are taller)

Acknowledgements- All the orchard managers, Deni for stepping up and filling in for Kendra, Bill Davis for managing the interns (Laura, Isaiah, Saman & Evan) Lisa for managing Norfolk intern Evan. Mark Meehl for GCO development & pollinations. Dave Lent for locating trees and assisting Mark and last but not least, all the volunteers that helped with planting, inoculations and orchard maintenance!

Many thanks to Rufin & Rena for donating the money to support our interns!

Mowing the Eastern MA Orchards

Trailer to move a mower around: :there is a group of Eastern MA orchards that could use mowing; Westboro has a dedicated zero-turn mower. Some have been mowed using push mowers. Lincoln, Weston. Rogued 8 plots in Weston and cleared a hedgerow of invasives and mowed with 2 push mowers & the Westboro zero turn in June 2021

Wayland was infrequently mowed; Weston overgrown. Moving the large Westboro mower around could help those others; it sits there 90% of the time.

Mark could own the trailer and cover it with insurance; the Chapter could reimburse him.

Jamie: what about a rental that we can move; the rental company insurance would cover it Similar to Brian's email but that we lease

Brian - is the liability correct? What about liability?

The trailers would be very low-weight; under 1500 lbs. Many vehicles can tow.

more mowers means more maintenance.

Jamie --We need to know the liability Mark asked his insurance agent re. towing a lift 3200 lbs trailers can break loose - trailer insurance covers the trailer and items on it.

Car insurance covers people Jamie will reach out to our existing policy person re. the liability Kathy has an umbrella policy over car and house that goes over and above

If the Chapter owns the trailer, how would we work this

Brian: if you have a vehicle, adding a trailer to insurance is easy

Jamie: we want our liability to covered

Jamie will reach out to our insurance agent to propose a couple of these policies, see what is most cost-effective

People should not operate any of this equipment without training

Umbrella policies require a certain level of other insurance

Liability insurance, leasing vs buying...

Brian could cover the capital expense part

Mark has a towing vehicle

We need a solution for this year
Mowing: fewer ticks, voles
We need a commercial mower

MOTION: Board authorizes up to \$250 to rent trailers to move Westboro mower to different orchards.

Approved unanimously

MOTION: Board authorizes that our mowers be moved by a trailer purchased by an individual if there is no difference in liability issues, i.e. that the liability issues are equivalent to a rented trailer

All in favor except Gary abstaining from vote

Jamie will check the liability issues for the Chapter first, before any rental

Brian wants to buy a trailer... Mark might.

Mark has been mowing Lincoln for 5 years. It takes 4 days with a walk-behind mower.

Lincoln now has another 2 acres - GCO Flint Farm

Jamie will talk to his agent.

Renting a riding mower is very expensive

Lincoln GCO Report - Mark Meehl

2 acres in Lincoln - Flint Field potential for 400 - 600 trees

180 flags so far 110 trees planted 20' margins between blocks of trees - 10 trees 5' spacing - same mother tree spaced in 2 rows 10' apart. 7' between rows because of extra room

10 trees - Beverly, Orleans, Sharon Westboro, Shrewsbury

Depository for excess trees and Western MA, Berkshire County, Pine Cobble

Lines being discontinued or hybrid trees 94% American are ok

Mulch with biodegradable cardboard add wood chips

7 feet between trees. 30 of the best hybrids. Also pure Americans.

100 trees is proposed minimum for a GCO

Can we get trees from down south too?

Wilbraham, Freetown, Fall River

Lincoln GCO orchard is very visible. They have loaned a generator to pump water with.

they will pay for the signage too. Mark wants to give appropriate info for a GCO

Flint Farm is the oldest 11th generation family farm that has been continuously farmed in New England and maybe even in the United States.

Mark will be hosting our display at the Farmer's Market in Lincoln throughout the summer.

John Emery's orchard: needs a sign - Rte 117 - 177 trees - Single panel sign - Land Trust Property a partial backcross orchard -- a single BC line of new Nanking trees, plus older BC trees. Need a single panel sign -- could go right on the same post as the bike sign.
Mark will work on the verbiage for the new sign -

MOTION: authorize purchase of single panel sign contingent upon approval of Lincoln Land Trust to mount it on the existing posts.

Lunenburg GCO: established 3 or 4 years ago. Also a GCO in Harvard, managed by Brian McClain.

Mark: would like to get southern U.S. nuts due to climate change issues

Wild American seed harvest last year 3,000 1600 sent to National Sales

Jamie: - we have no GCOs in RI yet. BLT would have to do some cutting probably

Burrillville Land Trust (Yvonne, filling in for Ed)

Ed Croteau was unable to comment due to the poor Zoom connection; Yvonne did her best to cover the Burrillville status

Burrillville Land Trust -- several potential orchard sites, mostly in forested areas with nice native chestnut numbers. They may need to do some sort of cut in order to plant.

Kathy can come, Isaiah lives in Burrillville too

President's Notes:

Next Meeting: 10/16/21 Saturday-Field Station at McLeish - indoors if appropriate at the time

Annual Meeting: early December -- let's try for an in-person one

Location: Westborough Senior Center Date: Sun Dec 5

Possible Speakers - Sara Fitzsimmons? Jamie is interested in knowing how numbers of genes were determined before. Brad would like to hear Genetics 101, updates on genetic analysis - what are they learning? Chestnut bee update.

Nominations and Elections: Jamie plans to complete as president at the end of this year

Between work, home, chestnuts - something is suffering, it's been 3 years.

Kathy Desjardin is willing to be nominated as our next President

Please reach out to John Meiklejohn for other positions, nominations etc.

Options for a new Secretary?

Plimoth/Pawtuxet Plantings and Interpretive signage - the manager is still working on getting the trees to survive. Looking into signage

No info about Google Groups yet.

Chestnut bee update: (Yvonne) Many genuses and species found; honey bees, bumblebees, andrena rehni, others. Jamie will send out a summary from Michael Veit.

Meeting adjourned 1:05pm