

Restoration Committee Meeting

August 30, 2021

10:00 – 11:30 am; Zoom

In Attendance: Bruce Wakeland (Chair), Sara Fitzsimmons (Staff Liaison), Jay Cude, Carolyn Keiffer, Jamie Van Cief, Yurij Bihun, Kendra Collins (notes), John Scrivani, Gary Carver, Steve Barilovits, Brian Roth, Vasiliy Lakoba, Eric Jenkins, Lily Kingsolver – who else??

Agenda:

Distribution Policy for B3F3s

New Business

TACF Distribution Policy:

Meadowview seed orchards are now rogued and the B3F3s produced should be a bit better than we have produced in the past. How do we handle distribution? And do we continue with the germplasm agreement (GPA)? The Restoration Committee has been asked to make a recommendation to the TACF Board of Directors at the fall 2021 meeting.

Do we need the GPA? How are the nuts going to be used? Bruce does not think, based on the current expected levels of resistance, these trees are not ready for landscape-scale restoration and still need some manner of agreement. No disagreement with this approach. The GPA could be tinkered with to be more appropriate. The first section, which describes the material, should be updated. We also might think about changing the name to “Restoration Trial Agreement” or something with a better connotation than “Germplasm Agreement”. Previous agreement and testing protocol was board-approved so likely need to have new recommendation sent out 30 days before board meeting and then approved by the board.

Current field testing protocol – 350 seeds, 50 individuals per family. It’s a challenge to find collaborators to install larger restoration plantings. Eventual goal is a LSR (Landscape-Scale Restoration, through the USFS LSR grant program) project – 16 replicated plantings across the range. Won’t have the seed for the project this year. Do still want to use restoration trial plantings to help inform performance of parents at Meadowview, to add to the artificial inoculation data we have. Reintroduction vs. restoration vs. silvicultural trials vs. field performance trial? Some difference in definition, can get confusing to keep all terms straight. Several people liked “field performance trial” or “performance trial”.

There have been several calls to get rid of the GPA – this committee is tasked with advising on this decision. Perhaps it just needs to be revamped, perhaps move to an MTA (material transfer agreement). GPA can be a hindrance to partnership. Little worry about commercial nurseries claiming our work for profit, though certainly within the realm of possibility.

One suggestion to name the trees something that implies they are not a final product – trial or test chestnuts. Include a certificate that explains what they are. Most of the advanced seed we are currently giving out go to individuals and they need to know what they are getting. And for trial plantings have a

simple agreement that outlines expectations and parameters. We need to retain access and get the data back.

What is the cost of installing trial plantings and is it worth it with this material? Good value to silvicultural trials to better learn how to plant in the forest and encourage regeneration. A lot we can learn from forest plantings, even with wild-type Americans or inferior material. We do also get a fair amount of ROI with experimental plantings. Collaborators are still interested in being involved, even knowing that we're not at a final product. We've gleaned some useful information from early trial plantings, and with better material available now we should be able to learn more from future plantings. Comparing field performance to artificial inoculation is of great interest.

Consensus seems to be the GPA should be changed in some manner. Some interest in moving to an MTA, and editing the language to better describe the material. A trademark might be an option – but for that you need to be able to define the traits of your product. Difficult with the backcross chestnuts, likely a better option for the Darling 58 transgenic chestnut. The intellectual property (IP) protection of transgenic chestnut would come out of SUNY-ESF. We were advised by IP counsel that if backcross material is already protected with an agreement, we should continue to maintain that to set the precedent for any future material TACF produces. It can be a friendlier agreement than the current GPA, but should not be dropped completely. Getting IP counsel recommendation on this would be helpful. We want to avoid unintended consequences.

Field performance trials need to have agreement of some manner that secures access into the future to ensure we can collect meaningful data. An MTA should protect access – we could make sure it does. A lease would be the strongest way to ensure access. One benefit of the current GPA is that it states the agreement can be terminated with notice but that in the case of a sale of the property we'd like to be able to pursue a GPA with a new landowner. Any legal access to property is an encumbrance and can be a liability for the landowner.

What do we call these trees? The breeding generation is B3F3s or selected B3F3s, but outside of our program most people won't know or understand what that is. What about "Meadowview" and the year? There is also material coming out of the chapters – could use the chapter name for those seeds. "TACF hybrid" or "TACF backcross". Including the year in the name would be helpful in tracking back to what all the material is. Whatever the name is, it should be simple enough that people will use it to reference their trees.

Operational concerns from Meadowview? Field performance trials sound good – will want Jared's input. Should harvest about 30,000 nuts from the seed orchard this year. Unsure if current level of rogueing in the seed orchards (done with Clapper, 2/3 done with Graves) will make a big impact on performance. Meadowview refers to the trees by their generation – B3F3 or B3F2, or "hybrids". Uncomfortable with small demonstration plantings – resistance is still uncertain and variable. No issue to alter the label on seed going out the members – seeds are getting labelled already so just need to decide what we want them to say.

Bruce will tinker with his paper to better address the following suggestions from the group:

- A friendlier MTA seems the way to go, rather than the current GPA, but will await IP lawyer input.
- Use “performance trial” as a simpler descriptor of test plantings. Need to ensure access to trial plantings and that we know where they are.
- For naming, using location and year – like “Meadowview - YEAR” – seems a good route for naming. Will need to include the chapter material as well.
- Need to clearly describe what the trees are for anyone receiving them.

Bruce will make changes to his document shortly, and then get the committee to vote. Cherin could probably set up a survey monkey for a simple vote. We may not be set up for electronic voting per our by-laws – may need to reconvene a 5-min Zoom meeting to vote. Will the board need a motion to vote on? This is heading more towards an informational paper – not a policy. We’re primarily providing guidance to the board. Because the distribution policy was board-approved in the past unsure about the logistics of voting. Sara will seek clarification and report back on voting requirements, as well as what the IP lawyers have to say.

New Business:

No new business.

Meeting adjourned.