

**Minutes of the Board for the
Pennsylvania Chapter
of The American Chestnut Foundation (PA-TACF)**

Friday, March 20, 2004

Held at the Milton S. Hershey School's Environmental Center
Hershey, PA

Those in attendance were: Bill Lord, Frank Brouse, Dale Vazetti, Phil Gruszka, Larry Patchel, Tim Eck, Livey Eck, Ann Leffel, Chandis Klinger, David Armstrong, Alex Day, Tim Phelps, Bob Summersgill, Lee Saufley, and Sara Fitzsimmons. Sara Fitzsimmons took minutes

The meeting was started at 3:00 pm.

1. Breeding program

Sara Fitzsimmons detailed the placement of new plantings within the PA Chapter, as well as where significant amounts of replacement seed will be placed.

As part of the CMS breeding program, a total of seven new F1 plantings will be started, with two of them being started in central New Jersey. In addition to those plantings, one BC1 planting will be started in Bucks and/or Pike County. Remaining BC1 seed will go to the first F1 planting in Maryland.

Ann Leffel noted that a key to the CMS program as laid out is to keep regionally produced nuts within the region. She noted that the chapter did not really do so in producing and planting advanced hybrid material of Clapper and Graves, but that the Chapter should be more particular with this one.

As part of the continued efforts in the Regional Breeding Program, a new BC3 planting of Graves resistance material will be planted at Reineman Wildlife Sanctuary. Another potential advanced hybrid site will be tested this year with American seed. In addition, the potential Graves B3F2 site, called "Jarboe", will be tested this year with unselected, open-pollinated B3F2 seed. Those trees will be removed within 2 years time, in order for selected Graves B3F2 seed to be planted.

Sara Fitzsimmons detailed the orchard sites that are to be inoculated this upcoming season. Those sites include trees at the following orchards: Hummelstown 1997, Thorpewood 1999, Moshannon 1998 and 1999, Ober 1998 and 1999, and Red Clay 1999. Inoculations will take place in late May to early June. The first inoculations will probably occur at Red Clay, because of it's most southern geographic location.

Larry Patchel asked the board about the possibility of inoculated the open-pollinated BC2F2 trees that are planted in Highland Park in Pittsburgh, PA. Several members of the board noted that that particular orchard was planted as a performance test in order to study how natural blight infection. At present, inoculations at Highland Park will not take place this year.

Dave Armstrong announced a plan for gaining new pollinators in the upcoming season. People who have submitted tree for identification will be sent information on pollinating and harvesting procedures, and those interested will reply back to Dave and/or Sara. Currently, people in 8 or 9 different counties have expressed interest in making CMS F1 crosses and starting orchards. This puts us very close to the PA-TACF Science Committee goal of establishing CMS orchards in 10 more counties, in order to have at least one orchard established in every region.

Ann Leffel noted that another great reason to get hand-pollinating done is to get people ready to pollinated within our BC3 orchards to produce BC3F2s.

Mr. Armstrong also detailed his and Ann Leffel's recent meeting with DCNR. Members of the Board received a mailing outlining the details, so Mr. Armstrong merely noted that the meeting took place, and that he was optimistic about PA-TACF's future with DCNR.

Dave Armstrong went over a draft letter that he composed, the final version of which would be presented to the TACF Board and the TACF Science Cabinet at their meetings in mid-April, 2004. Mr. Armstrong went on to state that the purpose of presenting the letter to the TACF Board and Science cabinet is to let TACF know what the chapter is doing, especially as it pertains to the pursuit of backcross breeding using CMS as a way to utilize open-pollination as a method to advance breeding generations, as well as a way to involve multiple sources of resistance.

Phil Gruszka made a point that, while the chapter could adopt and fully endorse the CMS breeding program as previously outlined, PA-TACF should continue to support those growers, present and future, who wanted to plant and maintain orchards with Meadowview sources of resistance, included source(s) of resistance other than Clapper and Graves.

Tim Phelps seconded the notion.

Dave Armstrong noted that he would approach that point in the draft letter to the TACF Board.

Phil Gruszka made a motion that the PA-TACF chapter endorse and move forward with the CMS program as outlined in the draft letter to the TACF board.

Lee Saufley seconded the motion.

The motion was then unanimously passed.

2. Election for 2004

Dave Armstrong stated that he was very pleased with the way that the voting method worked out this past year. The cost was about \$500, but the return on voting was about 60%. Mr. Armstrong went on to note that such a direct mailing made the membership feel like it was involved, and that such a strong return was very positive for the chapter. For those reasons, a direct mailing voting campaign is in the budget for this year.

Mr. Armstrong went on to note that there are three board positions that will be available this year – those positions are Lee Saufley’s, Greg Yochum’s, and Blair Carbaugh’s. Neither Lee nor Greg will seek reelection. Mr. Armstrong recommended both Jim Walizer and Tim Eck as possible successors.

Although the treasurer is not an elected position, Bob Summersgill wondered if the chapter would be able to have someone take over the treasurer position around the same time that new board members begin their duties.

Because Phil Gruszka still held that position of Past-President, he was appointed to head the nominating committee for the board. Phil then appointed Chandis Klinger and Bill Lord to that committee.

Phil Gruszka noted that TACF is moving their nominating committee to be a standing committee instead of an ad hoc committee.

3. Fall meeting in Pittsburgh.

Phil Gruszka outlined the plans for the upcoming PA-TACF fall meeting in Pittsburgh. The venue will be the home economics building in South Park. The cost for the building will be \$142.50. The capacity of the building is a bit over 100 people. Mr. Gruszka regretted that the facility did not have breakout session space, nor did it have a screen or a projector for presentations. However, the venue is located within close proximity to the skybus location.

Bob Summersgill questioned the availability of a speaker system and the building.

Phil Gruszka stated that a speaker system was probably not located at the venue, and recommended that the chapter bring its system. Mr. Gruszka continued detailing the plans on the meeting. He received a bid for lunch and supplied it to Dave Armstrong. The bid came out to be about \$8.00 per person. He is still trying nail down speakers for the meeting. Mr. Gruszka noted some possibilities. One would be Dr. Cynthia Morgan who is on the staff of the natural history museum; she would speak about genetic issues.

Ann Leffel recommended both Fred Hebard from TACF and Gary Griffin from the ACCF.

Ann Leffel went on to note that the meetings always run out of time for our members to participate in the meeting. She recommended the scheduling of an hour-long member sharing session.

The board was in agreement.

Larry Patchel inquired as to the possibility of TACF running a campaign in western PA, one similar to the one they did in eastern PA.

Bob Summersgill noted that he had talked to Marshal Case about that subject. Mr. Summersgill went on to say that the biggest reason a similar campaign had not taken place was money. The return from those ranges from 1-3%, and the cost takes almost 3 years to return.

Phil Gruszka further noted other possible speakers for the Pittsburgh meeting: Wayne Bender; Dr. Gordon; Bill Macdonald; Bill Lord could speak on "From blight to Burnham". **The meeting date is October 16th. Board meeting would be Friday, October 15th.** Mr. Gruszka went on to note that we have the Schenley Park Visitor's Center for the board meeting. The center is across the street from the Phipp's Conservatory.

Bob Summersgill made some various announcements concerning upcoming meetings and TACF activities. Mr. Summersgill went over the schedule for TACF annual meetings: Asheville, NC on October 28th and 29th, 2004. In 2005, the meeting will be in Lexington, KY. In 2006, the location will be Abingdon, VA. Then, in 2007, the location is scheduled for Shelburn Farms in Vermont.

Bob Summersgill went on to note that TACF just received \$250,000 in federal funding for research in the south. That funding will be coming from the USFS. However, the forest service expects to have their 2005 budget to be cut by 40%.

Alex Day noted that the cut will be made because the forest service is still paying for the fire bill from the past two summer fire seasons.

Bob Summersgill discussed the current status of operations in New Jersey. There will be a meeting on April 3 in Morristown, New Jersey in order to garner support from residents of New Jersey.

Discussion concerning the recent lease agreement with the Morris County Parks Department ensued. Phil Gruszka noted his concerns about the indemnity clause on Page 3 of the agreement. Alex Day stated that that particular clause means that PA-TACF would have to defend the Parks Department should they be sued for something happening during any PA-TACF related work.

Ann Leffel recommended that PA-TACF be referred to as "Chapter" as opposed to "Foundation". Ann Leffel went on to note that the chapter should adopt a liability waiver like that used a Penn Nursery, or like that outlined for landowners by SFI's VIP program.

Mrs. Leffel went on to point out a concern she had about the agreement with the Morris County Parks Department. She pointed out that the chapter should have the right to inoculate and select in accordance with the CMS breeding program.

Phil Gruszka wondered if a copy of the CMS breeding program protocol shouldn't be attached to the agreement as an amendment. Because CMS is used in the "whereas clause", it should be a supporting agreement.

Tim Eck agreed that a copy could be attached. He noted that one could still say something to the effect of, "The CMS protocol is subject to change", but that you should attach the current program as an illustration.

Bob Summersgill noted that he had traveled to Bennington. He said that, while he was up there, he and Marshal Case added TACF throughout the pages so that they are part of the agreement with the New Jersey Conservation Foundation. He noted that he, Mr. Case, and Don Willike deleted the parts concerning indemnity and insurance. Currently, the newly edited agreement is with NJCF's lawyers.

Tim Eck said that the chapter should send a copy of our newsletter to all members in New Jersey.

Ann Leffel noted that we did the same thing with Maryland, and they became a chapter very quickly.

There was general agreement from the board that that was a good idea.

Ann Leffel pointed out that matters Provision F on Page 3 (the indemnity clause) of the draft agreement with Morris County Parks Department were still unresolved.

Dave Armstrong pointed out that the Chapter has insurance for volunteers and the chapter in general through the Foundation. The certificate states that it is for the chapter. He further noted that, if we as a group cause any kind of harm to anyone else or where we're working or vehicle damage, etc, that there exists \$200 million in coverage through the Foundation.

Tim Eck inquired as to whether that would cover Provision F.

Mr. Armstrong answered no, stating that this has a different focus. The insurance to which Mr. Armstrong was referring has to deal with liability. If the Chapter causes injury or damages anything, that insurance will cover it. It covers the Farm Show, pollinations, etc. Mr. Armstrong stated, though, that he would look into the possibilities of melding that insurance with Provision F.

Dave Armstrong also noted potential insurance problems with interns or volunteers. He pointed out that the Chapter needs to make sure those people, especially interns, have their own medical and personal coverage. He further stated that the state of New York requires TACFNY to have workers compensation, which costs them about \$1500/year.

Mr. Armstrong went on to detail the liability waiver found in SFI's VIP Risk Packet. The company that drafted that waiver recommends that a landowner have in their homeowner's policy at least \$1 million in liability coverage. He stated that, for our volunteers, we're going to offer our landowners a statement that they can use. It's an acknowledgement of risk form (like that found in the VIP risk packet, and let the landowner know of potential liability issues.

Phil Gruszka thought that, whenever the Chapter organizes a volunteer activity day, that everyone should sign a liability waiver.

There was general agreement, but Dave Armstrong pointed out that the waiver still does not completely cover everyone involved.

4. Finances

Dave Armstrong summarized the Chapter's current financial position. He noted that TACF finally sent in the remaining dues owed to the Chapter from the past three quarters.

Mr. Armstrong went on to note that he and Bob Summersgill had discussed having a CPA review the Chapter's finances every so often. An audit would be very expensive, but incredibly thorough. However, Mr. Summersgill's CPA, Wendy Spinner, said that a review would be appropriate. The cost would be \$400, or about \$1300 less than Mr. Armstrong received as a quote from an accounting firm in York County.

Phil Gruszka wondered if the Chapter should not put a review in as a line item in next year's budget.

Ann Leffel moved that the Chapter should have a review performed at the change of every treasurer, or whenever the Board determines that such a review is necessary.

Tim Phelps seconded the motion.

The motion was then passed unanimously.

Dave Armstrong further described the Chapter's budget. He pointed out that, currently, the Chapter's only expected income for the year is coming from Tom Pugel's Exxon grant. He noted that we have \$9600 set aside from the Hardwood Forestry Fund in order to cover the cost of fencing at the Arboretum. Mr. Armstrong stated that we will have \$5000 from the Department of Agriculture's Hardwood Forest Council. That money will go toward Chapter interns.

Phil Gruszka stated that he has a proposal before the national board about grant writing. Mr. Gruszka pointed out that he would be interested in participating in grant writing with the Foundation as long as it were to be done in a cooperative manner with TACF and the other chapters. He elaborated that his idea is that the Chapter participate with the national foundation by drawing up a budget for going to large grants. He noted that he saw that as a potential to be maximizing our return.

Bob Summersgill noted that Phil Pritchard has expressed the need for the chapters and the Foundation to coordinate well in going for grants. Mr. Summersgill agreed, but also stated his hesitation to go through TACF for all grants.

Larry Patchel suggested that for small grants, e.g. those under \$5000, the Chapter does not go through TACF.

Dave Armstrong raised caution on that suggestion. He noted that the Chapter should not have to limit itself to \$5000 grants.

Tim Eck pointed out that Alcoa, the company for which he works, donates some \$100,000 to TACF through the National Wildlife Foundation, at least according to rumors he had heard. Mr. Eck wondered if the Chapter should be writing up separate grants/proposals to the Alcoa Foundation? He pointed out that, like a lot of companies, Alcoa had spun off a separate, independent charitable organization.

Dave Armstrong pointed out that the Chapter does not want to disrupt any flow of money to TACF. He said that, should we do something like that, we need to be careful. Alcoa would need to know that we are independent, but still a part of TACF.

Bob Summersgill noted that Alcoa might not know anything about the PA Chapter because the money is going through several hands before it even gets to TACF.

Dave Armstrong finally noted that the Chapter has in a proposal, through the PA House of Representatives, for \$160,000. He pointed out that the ruling on that funding would be held in early April. Without that funding, opening a chestnut office would be next to impossible for this year.

All other items on the agenda had either been resolved previous to the meeting, or the representative in charge of those items was absent.

Phil Gruszka made a motion for adjournment.

Tim Phelps seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.