

Pennsylvania Chapter of The American Chestnut Foundation
Science Committee Meeting
June 19, 2006 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
231 Forest Resource Building, Penn State University

In attendance: Timothy R. Phelps, Chapter President, committee chair; Tim Eck, Treasurer, committee member; Chandis Klinger, President Elect; Sara Fitzsimmons, Breeding Program Coordinator, committee member; Kim Steiner, Chapter Scientist and Professor of Forest Biology, Penn State University, Sue Oram, Chapter Administrator. Minutes were taken by Sue Oram.

The purpose of the meeting was to review the following:

1. Old business, including review of past minutes, management practices and the status of the grower's manual.
2. Execution of the planting season, pollination and inoculation updates.
3. Plans and needs for 2007

The group approved the minutes from the Science Committee meeting of December 19, 2005.

Review of Management Practices:

Poor Site Selection-Soil tests were distributed at the spring meeting, and most growers have sent in their results and are making the appropriate soil amendments. The Science Committee (SC) will recommend that orchard soils be tested every 2-3 years. A table will be created to list fertilizers the chapter has in inventory versus what most growers needed to amend their soils. The SC will recommend to the PA-TACF Board that herbicide and fertilizer be distributed at the growers meeting, with a board mandate to request cost recovery for the supplies. An orchard package (fertilizer, herbicide, supplies) could be tailored to each orchard based on recommendations.

Lack of Orchard Maintenance-There has been no progress on identifying a key person in each region to oversee orchards and activities. Most regions are covered, except the northern tier and southwest region. The SC agreed to insert a volunteer recruitment postcard in the next newsletter, and suggested that a regional volunteer plan be developed from responses instead of a county level plan.

Grower's Manual-The manual needs some minor updates and will be worked on again in August 2006. Completion of a full draft of all elements of the breeding program is expected by the TACF Fall meeting in October.

Using B3F4s as Final Distribution Material-A discussion was held regarding the need to further weed out inferior b3f3's by continuing to cross selected individuals onto b3f4s's to be used for forest distribution. This notion is also being evaluated at the national level.

Inoculation Status (from tables presented at last meeting):

- Longwood Gardens-not a priority
- Beech Creek-35 trees will be ready in 2007
- Brogue - inoculated, has deer and cicada damage; heavily blighted
- Codorus State Park- inoculated, in good shape
- Kuhns - will be inoculated June 23
- Ober - will be inoculated in 2007
- Red Clay- not ready to inoculate, grower's did not maintain
- Thorpewood - did last week; has cicada damage; heavily blighted
- Moshannon - recommended for next year
- Allegheny National Forest - next year, 2007

The committee suggested having a “good grower” honor roll or award each year in an effort to recognize good growers and encourage best cultural practices.

Plantings (from tables presented at last meeting):

- Blooming Grove - done in May
- Rutgers Hort – could not follow through. They want \$\$\$. Planted that material at Lark Nursery in Stockton, NJ.
- Hartlieb - done
- Schuylkill Center - still in pots
- Sewickley Heights- done; good stuff
- Longacre - planted, no deer damage
- Beagle Club - doing ok; didn't really plant at the Club, but planted at other sites across Mercer County.

A discussion of the balance between new CMS orchards and finishing the Regional Breeding Program was discussed. The Science Committee recommends to that Board that a large-scale CMS approach, i.e. one that encompasses all counties throughout the state, could focus too much energy from the Regional Breeding Program.

The Committee continues to recommend a slow pace on the establishment of new CMS orchards throughout the state, but one that continues new and steady expansion in both resistance sources and geographic regions as possible.

Tim Eck suggested that the Lancaster County Conservancy could take on a large-scale planting of Graves B3F2s. Sara requested at least 5 acres for the site. A small planting will take place in 2007 to test and evaluate.

General Needs for 2007

- Two interns to help each year, one central, one regional
- More travel \$\$ for inoculations, selections, and pollinations
- Train more growers on inoculation process, perhaps through a workshop or attendance at the actual inoculation.
- Extra funds for mailing, materials to make blight, pollination bags
- Microscope. Tim Eck has loaned Sara a microscope, however, one should be purchased.

Harvest Needs-Control pollinated trees. It is the last year for Clapper and Graves lines. One line of Douglas-two places.

Funding Needs: The DCNR Wild Resource and Conservation Fund grant is due June 30. PA-TACF has an impressive amount of volunteer hours, which should be included. Land rental and any in-kind donations will also be documented. The Norcross Wildlife Foundation grant proposal, for \$5,000 towards a vehicle, was submitted. PA-TACF is waiting for a decision.

It was mentioned that it may be time to approach potential donors about having resistance sources or genetic lines named after them (ie-for \$10,000 we'll name a Tree line after you) For example, in Lancaster County, we used a Chinese tree owned by the president of Fulton Bank; could we get him or somebody to fund an endowment or sponsorship that could take that source through completion of backcrossing (about a 30 year commitment on any one source). Progress on this front could be advance once TACF Science Cabinet develops a naming policy for seed for distribution.

6/26/2006