MA/RI-TACF Annual Meeting

11/12/10

Fuller Conference Center, Old Sturbridge Village

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT
Jamie Donalds, President
Yvonne Federowicz, Vice President
Kathy Desjardin, Secretary
Mike Novack, Treasurer
Lois Breault-Melican
Denis Melican
Guy Shepard
John Meiklejohn
Rufin Smith
Mike Meixsell
Brain Clark
Brad Smith
Rich Hoffman

10:15 am	Meeting is called to order
ELECTIONS	A motion was made to suspend the term limits for 5 of the proposed candidates, Richard Hoffman, Gary Jacob, Mike Meixsell, Guy Shepard, and Brad Smith. There was a discussion regarding Gary Jacob, who has missed many board meetings in the past year. Jamie felt that since we have never had a problem meeting a quorum, as a Board Member. Lois said she had talked with Lynn Jacobs, and she indicated that Gary did want to remain on as a Board Member, he has been very busy traveling in his job. It was agreed to keep Gary on the Board and hope that will be able to attend future meetings in the coming year, and we can bring this before the board in the future. With no further discussion the motion to exempt these members carries. The ballot was then filled out and tabulated. The vote was unanimous in favor of everyone on the ballot and a new slate of officers. The vote is unanimous, and all new board members and officers are elected
PLAQUES	Kathy brought 8 plaques, 3 for the National Grid award, with 5 blanks. Rufin and Jamie will be presenting these at a National Grid award presentation in Waltham this week, and 2 more will be presented to past TACF MA/RI Chapter Members Dan Howard and Jim Garland, who have been extraordinary supporters of our Chapter. A questions asked about giving a plaque to Nelson Caulkin who's 90th birthday is being celebrated at Heifer Project in Rutland from 1 - 4 pm this coming Sunday, November21st. Kathy said she could have a sign prepared by then, if her and Jamie can finalize the wording today.

YARMOUTH	The Yarmouth Conservation Commission (ConCom) has come across a large stand of American chestnuts, largest tree being 14" in diameter, with many smaller. Rufin thinks, these have the blight but may have some hypo virulence. He planted 5 of the BC3f3s in Orleans on Conservation Easement land owned by the Trustees of Reservations (TTOR).Yvonne agrees, and talked about other trees near the coast on Long Island, as there is a history of "chestnutting" there. As to salt damage, which usually occurs this near salt water, Rufin noticed no salt damage in Orleans, even thought the trees are near the ocean and the bay
10:45	Board meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

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2010 AMERICAN CHESTNUT FOUNDATION MA/RI CHAPTER MEETING, 11 AM.

About 50 people attended this meeting. Because all of the presentations were taped and will be available, only the highlights of each presentation will be documented here.

CHESTNUTs FOR DUMMIES by Brad Smith	Brad's Chestnut 101 for the non-scientist included chestnut species ID, including a description of horse chestnuts. He went on to describe the tree's range and its importance to wildlife as a reliable mast crop each year Some pre-Columbian chestnut history including the many uses, both edible and not, that native Americans used chestnut for. Chestnutting was a great fall activity in the park. The wood was used extensively, for split rail fences as it is long lasting and rot resistant. It was used in furniture as it's a nice wood to work. In the south people used the bark for tanning which was a huge industry. People got a lot out of the chestnut. Chestnut telephone poles are great because of the rot resistance, they last quite awhile. Having described blight in a Petri dish, Brad explained how devastating the blight was when it was discovered, and the methods that were used to stop its destruction. He talked about the frustrations early scientists, botanists and foresters faced in the early years as they learned more about this bark disease. Because chestnuts coppice very easily, and keep sending up sprouts, one of the ways that help the tree stay alive is mud packing and apply it. This method is both time consuming and ongoing. Other enemies include phytopthera and gall wasp, while friends include hypo virulence, and genetic testing. There were commissions set up to beat the blight, but research was rarely followed through, in most cases, and the prospects seemed dire. TACF, in its earliest days, wanted to take the cross-breeding to its furthest extent. Charlie Burnham, a retired corn geneticist, came up with the breeding scheme that he believed would work. Brad then showed a breeding chart and explained the back cross method that we are now using. The Chapters are lucky, as they had the opportunity to jump in

	somewhere in the middle of the process by receiving material from Meadowview Farm, where the first back crossed trees were planted and a new research building has just been built. It will take years to see if our efforts will work out in the forest, it will take a long time for this to play out. trees. Brad closed with an invitation join our Chapter, an to check out TACF on Twitter and Facebook. Questions followed, including why are we not doing genetic modification? Brad explained that it is very expensive, may be regarded as genetic modification, and the trees that are backcrossed are bred to an area.
RICH GIORDANO	Introduced the audience to Old Sturbridge Village, including that Chestnuts were huge here, and were used for "fattening family and animals" He is amazed at how little many people know about this, and is anxious to spread the story
CHAPTER HIGHLIHTS - JAMIE DONALDS	We have officially invited the people from RI to join us and now have 3 or 4 orchards and we are formally the MA/RI chapter. We've started selecting for keepers for our first seed orchard, and we are working to develop our first block in Granville MA beginning with a work party on November 20th to clear 11/2 acres of land to begin. The address is 183 Silver St in Granville at 8:30 a.m. A restoration branch event was held in Princeton to support orchards and get the word out. We will try to schedule more of these around our orchards. An intern was hired this year with a donation for a former board member, this was a great help for our all volunteer organization. NATIONAL There have been nut distributions to member for the last few years from trees that are flowering in Meadowview. More nuts will be available to members this year. A new laboratory building was finished this summer and we are in the process of raising money to add equipment. The National Annual Meeting was held at the Conservation Training Center in W Virginia, where numerous research presentations were offered. W Virginia is now a state chapter and is doing work with mine land restoration. They are one of the chapters that is having a Chestnut Festival each year. NY has made progress with genetic modification with 4 transgenic orchards in different climate conditions, which is not as easy as it sounds. In 2012 there will be an International Congress on chestnuts. NE chapter update CZ is not here so Kendra will talk about the science program. we had an odd summer, it was hot early and things happened early. then there was an early freeze. We look for a well drained site, and this summer was very dry. Pollination season came up really early and the season went from planting to pollination. MA established in 2001 took on the line of breeding 20 lines. this goal has been met and surpassed and we are starting to work on Nanking. There are 30 orchards in RI and MA

	ME 1998 goal was 20 graves and 10 clapper lines which has been met. They are also looking to continue 2 backcross pollinations this year that were successful. they collected over 6000 seeds. Their inoculation are at about the same point as Mass. They are looking at 2 5 acre seed orchards, planting some of the first plots in 2012. CT 1991 and started breeding in working on a GIS tool with UConn. This may create maps that we can use and Kendra will let us know.
RESTORATION	National wants input from our members and how they feel about this next step. Regional restoration meetings will be held in each state and Feb 12 is the date for NE meeting. More info will be sent out soon.
BRAD SMITH'S TRIP TO ITALY	Brad traveled to Monte Cimini near Rome this summer with his family, where he saw many example of Castanea sativa. The Romans probably spread them throughout their current range in their early travels, as the modern range of European chestnut pretty much follows Roman occupation. There is also Caucasus chestnuts in eastern Europe. There are differences in European and American chestnuts, although the trees don't look that different. The biggest difference is probably cold tolerance. The European trees have probably faced the same things as the Americans, such as gall wasp and blight, although apparently in Europe, hypo virulence is active, and the trees do not succumb to the blight. There's been over 2000 years of chestnut culture in Europe, including festivals, mechanical huskers, and it is still a workable tree for them. Just like it's played an important part in the economy of the area. They use the flour year round and call chestnuts the bread tree. They've been using the tree for lumber and coppicing chestnut forever. Chestnut festivals are still very popular, throughout the range. with roasting nuts, dances, etc. Brad took some great picture of chestnuts along the roads, in orchards, and in the forests in general, although he feels that these had been planted and managed for some time.
SARA FITZSIMMONS - TRIP TO CHINA	Two summers ago a group from TACF, including Sara went to China to examine the ecology of the chestnut blight and the reforestation potential with the Chinese and American native chestnut species as a model for restoration practices. This trip was a collaboration including Songlin Fei, Fred Hebard, Fred Paillet, Sara Fitzsimmons and Kim Steiner. They flew into Beijing then drove south into chestnut area. There has been some work on the range limits of these plants. The forests looked similar to here, including rhododendrons, rocks and streams, and even poison ivy (Sara thought) with similar species of trees. Chestnuts are vital to their economy there and they have been cultivating these trees for thousands of years. One of the main reasons they went was to promote the three Chinese species to replant chestnuts in agricultural lands. Agro forestry is gaining importance there.

	There are three species in China, including Mollisima henryi and seguinii. Songlin did a presentation at the National Annual Meeting about the diversity of Chinese species and the area they grow in. Seguinii is described as a short ever blooming species, but what they saw did not look like that. These trees were 80 or 90 feet tall. The henryi has very small nuts and is great for wildlife but not much of a nut crop for human consumption. They hope to go back to collect more samples, to bring our material over there test it, and explore more about blight resistance. This trip will take place this coming summer.

Respectfully submitted,
Lois Breault-Melican