



## Western Forest Genetics Association (WFGA) Business Meeting

University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada  
June 29, 2017

### Attendance

1. Andreas Hamann (AB)
2. Andy Benowicz (AB)
3. Brad St. Clair (OR)
4. Brian Barber (BC)
5. Deogratias Rweyongeza (AB)
6. Greg O'Neil (BC)
7. Marie Vance (BC)
8. Mary Frances Mahalovich (ID)
9. Michael Stoehr (BC)
10. Patrick Lenz (QC)
11. Pia Smets (BC)
12. Sally Aitken (BC)
13. Shane Ford (BC)
14. Stephanie Steele (CA)

### 1. Review and approve the agenda

- The agenda was approved without changes/additions as previously communicated to all members through the mailing list.

### 2. Review and approve the June 24, 2015 minutes

- These minutes were posted on the website in July 2015
- Approved as is

### 3. President's report (Deogratias Rweyongeza, President)

#### I. Organizing the 2017 CFGA-WFGA meeting

- Earlier plan from the 2013 meeting in Whistler was to host the 2017 meeting on Banff National Park to attract good attendance –not successful due to high projected costs; meeting coinciding with the high tourism season in Banff; Canada 150 years and free admission in National Parks would also inflate hotel costs.
- Settled for the University of Alberta, Edmonton

#### II. Meeting sponsorship (in Canadian dollars)

- Alberta Government (Agriculture & Forestry) \$ 15,000
- Alberta Innovates \$ 5,000



- University of Alberta (Faculty of Science) \$ 5,000
- University of Alberta (Agriculture, Food & Life Sciences) \$ 5,000
- Weyerhaeuser Company Ltd \$ 5,000
- West Fraser Mills (groups of forest companies) \$ 3,000
- Genome Alberta \$ 1,500
- Integrated DNA Technologies \$ 1,000
- FastTRAC (Fast tests for rating and amelioration of conifers)
  - Funding one invited speaker (Natalie Isabel) \$ 2,500
  - Funding for one sponsored one student \$ 1,500

### III. Conference attendance

- 91 people (85 full conference & 6 one day registrants) attended the conference
- 29 people participated in a post-conference field trip to the Alberta Tree Improvement and Seed Centre & Smoky Lake Forest Nursery, in Smoky Lake, Alberta

### IV. Mailing list

- Opened a Google group (Email: [wfga@googlegroups.com](mailto:wfga@googlegroups.com))

Encouraged to use it for sharing information, promoting discussions, sharing publications, posting job opportunities, graduate and postdoctoral positions, etc.

President report was discussed and accepted into the minutes (motion –Greg O’Neil; Seconder - Mary Frances Mahalovich).

## **4. Treasurer’s report (Brad St. Clair, Treasurer) (finances in US dollars)**

### Financial Report for the period June 1, 2015 to May 31, 2017

WFGA has two accounts: (1) a Bank of America checking account and (2) an OSU Foundation trust account.

#### Bank of America Business Investment Account

The Bank of America account is our operating account with the primary purpose of providing initial funds for meetings. The objective for each meeting is to break even with registration income providing enough funds to reimburse any upfront meeting costs. Any meeting surpluses are deposited in this account and any deficits are subtracted from the account. The goal is to maintain a balance that provides enough funds for initial meeting costs, but does not grow to be too large.

The balance between 1995 and 2017 has been between about \$1,072 and \$11,362 (although I do not have records for the period 2005-2009). The last meeting in Seattle had a deficit of \$7,127.10 payable to the Western Forestry and Conservation Association. In March 2016, I provided the organizers of the



Edmonton meeting \$3,000 for upfront costs of the 2017 meeting. The high balance at the beginning of the period was the result of a \$4,316 surplus from the 2013 Whistler meeting. The current low balance is because of the deficit from the Seattle meeting and upfront costs for Edmonton.

<b>Opening Balance on June 1, 2015:</b>	<b>\$11,362.30</b>
Income:	
Interest	\$1.49
Debits:	
Monthly maintenance fees	\$165.00
Costs for 2015 meeting in Seattle (paid to WFCA October 2015)	\$7,127.10
Upfront costs for 2017 meeting (paid to U Alberta March 2016)	\$3,000.00
<b>Closing Balance on May 31, 2015:</b>	<b>\$1,071.69</b>

#### Oregon State University Foundation Account

The OSU Foundation account is a trust fund administered by the OSU Foundation with the purpose of providing a stable fund that generates income to be used to pay the Critchfield Award for the best student presentation. There are two parts to the fund, an Endowment account and an Expendable account. The Endowment account includes the historical gift amount (i.e., all donations to date) and any gains or losses in the investment. Every quarter, a portion of the accumulated gains are distributed to the Expendable account, which are then available for the award. Investments are in mutual funds composed of US and foreign equity markets and a fixed income fund in corporate bonds and US government obligations. There is a 1.5% annual fee assessed quarterly for managing the account. The funds for the Critchfield Award were moved to the OSU Foundation in year 2000 with an opening balance of \$11,783 in the Endowment account and \$980 in the Expendable account. **The current balances are \$19,809.44 in the Endowment account and \$7,218.27 in the Expendable account (as of April 30, 2017).** The balances for the Endowment Fund for the last ten years, including distributions to the Expendable account, are given below.



	Beginning Market Value as of Start of Fiscal Year – July 1	Net Contributions & Additions	Net Endowment Gains (Losses)	Distribution to Expendable Account	Ending Market Value as of End of Fiscal Year – June 30
FY17	\$18,568.89	-	\$1,865.88	(\$625.33)	\$19,809.44 <sup>1</sup>
FY16	\$20,018.25	-	(\$613.72)	(\$835.64)	\$18,568.89
FY15	\$21,280.91	-	(\$432.92)	(\$829.74)	\$20,018.25
FY14	\$19,248.54	-	\$2840.42	(\$808.05)	\$21,280.91
FY13	\$18,393.68	-	\$1,646.29	(\$791.43)	\$19,248.54
FY12	\$19,843.64	-	(\$664.41)	(\$785.55)	\$18,393.68
FY11	\$17,529.41	-	\$3,149.07	(\$834.84)	\$19,843.64
FY10	\$13,990.37	\$3,225.15 <sup>2</sup>	\$1,184.48	(\$870.59)	\$17,529.41
FY09	\$19,560.29	-	(\$4,753.16)	(\$816.76)	\$13,990.37
FY08	\$21,646.10	-	(\$1,255.81)	(\$830.00)	\$19,560.29

<sup>1</sup> The gains and ending market values listed for FY17 are only through April 30, 2017 as the May and June endowment processing was not yet posted.

<sup>2</sup> This amount includes \$3,000 that was transferred from the expendable to the endowment as decided by the WFGA membership at the 2009 meeting.

The Treasurer report was discussed and accepted into the minutes (motion –Greg O’Neil; Seconder - Mary Frances Mahalovich).

**Winners of Student Awards**

- William B. Critchfield Memorial Award, best student presentation
  - Miriam Isaac-Renton, University of Alberta (subject: *Characterizing Drought Tolerant Lodgepole Pine Populations for Planting under Climate Change*)
- William B. Critchfield Memorial Award, second best student presentation
  - Blaise Ratcliffe, University of British Columbia (subject: *Single-step Genomic Evaluation of Simple and Complex Pedigrees*)
- William B. Critchfield Memorial Award, best student poster
  - Barbara Wong, University of British Columbia (subject: *Dead or Alive: Molecular Assays for Pathogen Detection*)

**5. CFGA, WFGA and SFTIC working together**

NOTE: Most of the people who attended the WFGA business meeting on June 29, 2017 had previously attended the CFGA business meeting on June 27, 2017 where this agenda was exhaustively discussed. Consequently, the WFGA business meeting endorsed the approach that was already agreed upon at the CFGA business meeting which was attended by members of



CFGA, WFGA and SFTIC. It should also be mentioned that the incoming CFGA co-Chair (Patrick Lenz) attended the WFGA business meeting. Therefore, to maintain consistency in what was discussed on this agenda and allowing us to move forward, the rest of the text in this agenda is exactly the same in the minutes of CFGA and WFGA business meetings.

In recent years, members of the Canadian Forest Genetics Association (CFGA), Western Forest Genetics Association (WFGA) and Southern Forest Tree Improvement Conference (SFTIC) have expressed concerns about the continued decline in attendance at the forest genetics and tree improvement meetings/conferences, and general funding of forest genetics research. This has prompted informal discussions on increased integration of CFGA, WFGA and SFTIC activities that may range from having a single North American forest genetics association (USA, Canada and Mexico) to having a system of joint meetings/conferences while retaining local regional associations to cater for regional-specific needs and audiences.

This agenda was tabled at the 35<sup>th</sup> CFGA and WFGA business meetings in Edmonton; Dr. Steve McKeand (SFTIC) and Dr. Brad St. Clair (WFGA) attended this meeting and took active part in the discussions. It should be noted that by participating in CFGA business meeting discussions, Steve McKeand and Brad St. Clair were not officially representing SFTIC and WFGA decisions but had prior knowledge of informal discussions that have taken place within and across SFTIC and WFGA. Hence, their participation in the discussions was very helpful in setting up a roadmap to advance the discussion within and across the three organizations and come to a decision before the next meetings in 2019.

From the discussions, the following were observed

- While the idea of having a single forest genetics association for North America is possible, local associations still have value because they serve audiences with specific needs; members want to retain these associations.
- There is strong support for regularly scheduled joint conferences/meetings; the issue is how to schedule them so that regions have opportunity to host the meeting every 2 to 3 years. This is especially critical for SFTIC where not hosting a meeting beyond 3 years would be a deal breaker. Not hosting meetings in the regions for a longtime has risk of undermining interest and coordination of activities, especially for people who cannot regularly attend international conferences outside their regions.
- Alternative conference scheduling have been suggested through email discussion between some members of SFTIC and WFGA, which will provide a starting point for formal CFGA-WFGA-SFTIC discussions.

It was decided that:

- Because all three associations have an already scheduled meeting for 2019, leadership teams of the three groups should get together quickly and see if one group can host the



joint meeting in 2019 (i.e., the other two drop their 2019 meetings), and then figure out scheduling of successive meetings beyond 2019. This is an action item for

- Dana Nelson (SFTIC)
- Jessica Wright (WFGA)
- Natalie Isabel (CFGGA)
- Patrick Lenz (CFGGA)

## **6. Locations for future meetings**

- 2019: Proposed Location is Institute of Forest Genetics, Placerville, CA
- 2021: British Columbia (exploring options)
- NOTE: Both meeting locations and hosting agents could change depending on CFGGA-WFGA-SFTIC discussions and decisions.

## **7. Election of officers**

- President: Jessica Wright, US Forest Service, California
- Vice President/Secretary: Nicholas Ukrainetz, Forestry, Lands & Natural Resource operations, BC
- Treasurer: Andrew Bower, US Forest Service, Washington State

New officers were unanimously approved

- motion to approve Nicholas: –Greg O’Neil, Seconder –Pia Smets)
- motion to approve Andrew –Pia Smets, Seconder –Sally Aitken)

WFGA thank Brad St. Clair who has been Treasurer since 2011. He has decided to retire from the Treasurer position to concentrate on other duties.

Meeting Adjourned

Recorder:

Deogratias Rweyongeza

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

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