

MICHIGAN BEEKEEPER'S ASSOCIATION

MINUTES

December 04, 2010

Meeting called to order at 10:05am

Motion made to accept the agenda, made by S. Tilmann, with R. Mendel seconding. **Motion passed.**

Motion made for the minutes to be accepted, made by S. Tillman, with D. Lam seconding. **Motion passed.**

Treasurers report (S. Tilmann)

Fall meeting income was \$4900, with \$965 in membership renewals. This makes for a \$2613.53 net loss for fall meeting. Malcolm Sanford's hotel was not included in this figure and the association will need to reimburse President Hoopingarner's credit card.

About 2/3 of the attendees paid through our online Constant Contact web link.

Our current financial situation shows \$24,585.53 in total assets as of November 30, 2010. S. Tilmann has reported that there are "glitches with transferring signature cards."

The association expenses were detailed. \$1864.87 was lost this year, up to November 30. We have been spending about \$7000 more than

we take in every year. Discussion of expenses followed and how to stop expenses with an eye toward reoccurring costs. (\$3000 was for the color calendar. (\$1378.11 in prior years, \$4787.27 for 2010))

S. Tilmann continued, detailing communication with our membership. We currently have 504 members (374 with email, 129 without) through Constant Contact

124 lapsed members.

60 self enrolled contacts (about 12% of members)

85 registrations for Fall Meeting

5 online renewals of membership

A discussion of categorization of members followed, with an eye toward board members, individual clubs, etc.

In regards to PayPal activity, there were 37 online transactions for \$955 in activity. (Which were \$785 in fall registrations and \$170 in memberships). \$38.83 in discounts (about 4%) so a net of \$916.17. Benefits were name tags and ease of registration.

Motion made to accept the Treasurer's Report, made by Dennis Klein, and seconded by Mike Risk. **Motion passed.**

Communications

An email was received from the ABF naming Roger Hoopingarner and Don Schram as correspondents.

In a message from the Freemont Foundation, they have notified us that we have money available, \$2618, for a grant. The association has spent it once in the past. It was noted that we haven't seen a recent budget amount, but it should be around the \$80,000 range. R. Mendel requested clarification of the grant monies, which was provided by R. Hoopingarner. The association can grant \$2618, but our original goal was to get the account to \$100,000. This is a 4.25% interest rate per year. We can take that \$2618 and roll it back into the account. It should be thought of as a dividend.

Historically, the fund was started with \$3500 from a beekeeper who had passed away. Traditionally, we get donations this way. The Freemont Foundation will match up to \$200.

The Grand Hotel on Mackinaw Island would like to host us as a meeting location, for \$200 per night. No action was necessary on this item.

Terry Klein, who has brought several letters regarding Star Thistle, would like to delay presenting until end of meeting.

Committee Reports.

No reports pending.

Old Business

Future Fall Meeting locations, dates and fees were discussed.

It was agreed that the Kellogg Biological Station would be nice, but onsite housing is limited to about 70 people. The location is between Battle Creek and Kalamazoo.

Higgins Lake's Ralph A. McMulin Conference Center (RAM Center) was used about 6-7 years ago. The biggest complaint was common or shared bathrooms. Rumor is that they have changed that aspect, although the website does not reflect this. T. Wenger states that in her experience, the lodge that she stayed in recently had separate bathrooms. Meals are included in the stay, with several past attendees commenting about the quality of the food. B. Hollis commented that it's located in the middle of nowhere, with further comments regarding where attendees are geographically located. Fees were for 2-3 nights, were about \$80 to \$100, not including conference registration.

A discussion of why we don't have the conference on Saturday/Sunday, instead of Friday/Saturday. It was concluded that it was the way that we've done it in the past and there appears to be no good reason why we need to be locked into those days.

D. Lam wonders what the purpose of the Fall Conference is. (An annual meeting is required by our constitution.) And why we don't have a one day conference. (Meeting room costs would go up considerably without rolled in hotel stays.)

Discussion of different aspects and locations for the fall meeting followed.

R. Mendel would like to conduct a survey of where our membership is primarily located.

ANR Week, D. Klein

Jerry Bromenshenk is slated to be our guest speaker. CCD and usage of Bees for Finding Things are his topics.

Program content is chaired by Dennis Klein. Vendor contact will be chaired by Don Lam. Dave Anthony will help with door prizes.

Numerous topics are slated by Dennis Klein.

Jane Wracan is submitting notification of the even to the journals. A discussion regarding organizational structure and timing followed.

R. Mendel will build a planning sheet for the Spring Conference with jobs that need to be done and positions that need to be filled. He will organize a task list (check list) for future use. brescue@att.net is Richard's email. This checklist will be maintained and handled by the secretary in the future.

Governing Board Meeting Dates, R. Hoopingarner.

Future meeting dates for 2011 were provided.

Star Thistle (Spotted Knapweed) Presentation

Ken Rauscher, from the Michigan Department Of Agriculture, Division Director, Plant Pest Management, came to speak to us.

The department is currently in transition. Keith Creagh will be the new department director starting January 1 as Ken will be retiring. Keith Creagh's replacement is unknown at this time.

Mike Hansen will continue to be involved. He is also slated to attend the ABF meeting in Galveston.

Rauscher has not seen results of the national bee disease survey. He reported that there will be another survey in 2011.

Monday's (November 29) meeting on bio-control (introducing an insect as a means of plant control) was said to be a good meeting by him. The department has recognized that Star Thistle is a significant honey crop. For a number of years, they've resisted permits for bio-control. They have since received a number of requests from public land managers. A year and a half ago, with Dr. Doug Landis, they were able to look at bio-control in the UP, and this past fall were able to implement a plan of insect based plant control. Two locations in the Upper Peninsula and four in the Lower Peninsula have since been "seeded" with these insects. This is in conjunction with a planned re-vegetation process.

Rauscher claims that tools to manage land have been diminished. (Tools such as controlled burns, repeated mowing or herbicides.) He points out that these same insect agents have been introduced in neighboring states. And those agents will eventually move into Michigan.

Rauscher outlined the definition of an invasive weed, which is one that pushes everything else out of an area. Star Thistle does this with a chemical growth inhibitor, which is a process called "alleopathic". He

claims that it takes 4-6 years for the alleopathic chemicals to dissipate to a level where other plants can grow.

A replacement seed will be provided, which contains natively flowering plants.

What the university (Dr. Landis and MSU) was trying to do is to proactively manage Spotted Knapweed and to re-vegetate the areas.

Private land is the issue, said Terry Klein.

The goal of the eradication of Star Thistle is driven by public land managers. They are mandated for managing weeds on their lands. In the early 1990's, seed head flies were introduced to control the plant, which were largely unsuccessful. Seed head weevil and root weevil have since been introduced since the mid-1990s in surrounding states.

EIS (Environmental Impact Studies) were performed; however an environmental impact statement was not required.

A discussion of Star Thistle followed.

Mr. Rauscher excused himself from the rest of the meeting.

Membership Communication, S. Tilmann

The problem of dispersing information to members who do not have computer access, or email was discussed.

After a lengthy discussion, using the membership list with phone numbers to reduce the number of members who receive a physical newsletter, along with utilizing district reps to get those email addresses, followed.

R. Mendel would like to officially push for a Communications Committee to be formed.

S. Tilmann asked that we amend the Constitution to allow for prior approval for all transactions performed by the Treasurer. It was agreed that the association can live with the current arrangement for a year, until the next annual meeting. Discussion followed. B. Hollis feels that checks and balances need to be in place. It was pointed out by S. Tilmann that Section 4, letter C, within the Treasurer's duties, with the wording of "any funds" causes a bottleneck.

New Business

S. Tilmann proposed acknowledgement of Judy Schmaltz for her prior duties as treasurer. A motion was made **to recognize Judy for the work that she's done in the last two years with the (provided) sample certificate**, was made by S. Tilmann and seconded by T. Wenger. **Motion passed.**

Constitution Committee

S. Tilmann made the **motion that the association recognize the Constitution Committee for their work, with the provided certificate**, which was seconded by D. Klein. **Motion passed.**

Certificates to be dispersed by the Secretary.

MBA Logo and Letterhead Contest

After a brief discussion, it was suggested by T. Klein to keep the logo round for use as stickers on honey jars. It was agreed that the current logo is too busy and unreadable in small size and a contest to find a new association logo was proposed. **Motion was made to proceed with a logo contest and create a contest environment in which the current logo can be improved upon to provide for the branding of the MBA,** was made by R. Mendel and seconded by D. Klein. No further discussion. **Motion passed.** Funding and prizes are to be discussed at a later meeting.

MBA Governance, by S. Tilmann

S. Tilmann provided a Power Point presentation on Membership Survey results, regarding web site usage, with the results indicated that the membership would like the Treasurer's Report, Board Minutes and Board Meeting Agendas (prior to meetings), on the website.

S. Tilmann stressed that the association should have transparency. The Treasurer's Report was given as an example for this transparency. No motion was needed, and S. Tilmann was told to go ahead.

Aspects of a log in required to access parts of an association website are "unacceptable" [edited], according to S. Tilmann. Other board members feel that there needs to be value to a membership, as remarked by R. Mendel. S. Tilmann feels that the association needs to do a better job of "selling" our membership. Instead of excluding parts or restricting access, we should seek alternatives. The rights of the membership and the visibility of the organization were discussed.

President Hoopingarner excused himself due to a prior obligation.

S. Tilmann discussed the creation of web email addresses for association officers, offering greater privacy from spammers. An email server discussion ensued with Z. Huang.

MBA Initiatives

A discussion of a Queen Breeders Initiative to provide for development of survivor stock occurred. It was realized that the timing may be right for such an endeavor and there seems to be an interest amongst members. Possible MBA funding was discussed, along with the possibility of the topic being a session at ANR Week followed. Ohio State's (Joe Latshaw's) group was brought up, with our thoughts being that we should watch their group before we model ours after them. There is clearly an interest. However, action may be premature. D. Klein was given the directive to follow up with the creation of a session regarding a Queen Breeders Interest session at ANR Week.

Master Beekeeping Course. No forward progress, looking for volunteers, with possible MBA funding. M. Risk, T. Tolland, R. Mendel, B. Perez and D. Schram have volunteered to be on a steering committee.

S. Tilmann brought up that social networking is a way to connect with younger beekeepers. Facebook and Linked In were given as possible channels, which are free. To be discussed at a later date.

S. Tilmann proposed the idea of MBA Member Insurance coverage, which would be patterned after the Ontario Beekeepers Association. As a member only benefit, there is a \$80/year premium for 49 hives or less (OBA cost \$68/year), or \$112/year (OBA cost \$98/year). This coverage would cover “All operations of beekeeping with respect to beekeeping, honey sales and demo hives displayed at schools, fairs, and other similar locations.” (Source at www.ontariobee.com , “About OBA” tab, under Group Insurance) Problems with companies in the past were mentioned. Further information will follow from S. Tilmann.

A beginning beekeeper video series, which was already begun at COMB’s November meeting, was mentioned. The group would like more people to become involved, with some possible funding in the future.

Star Thistle, Terry Klein

A listing of locations where the bio-control weevils were released will be provided to D. Schram. T. Klein has been gathering information regarding the statewide eradication attempt. He has requested information, such as an environmental study, economic impact study, and exact contents of the proposed replacement seed mixture. He has also been in contact with Ken Rauscher, Mike Hansen and Dr. Doug Landis.

The response from beekeepers across the state, in letter form, has been overwhelming. Most letters are from commercial operators, with many saying that they will be out of business if they remain in the state without the presence of Star Thistle.

There was shock that our association's president signed an approval for the release of the bio-control insects to control or eradicate Star Thistle. It was felt that President Hoopingartner had over stepped his bounds, and letters were sent from the membership that he should resign.

In regards to information requested under the FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) an invoice from the DNR for \$8,238.89 was sent, with 50% due, for the information. It was asked if Dr. Landis could provide a receipt for the insects he claims were released, and was simply told that the weevils were collected in MN and released here. No other proof was provided.

Prior notification of the eradication discussion was almost non-existent. Beekeepers were only invited at the last moments notice, and we were requested to only invite and seat 8 beekeepers. (We sat 15.)

The impact will be felt throughout the state. Not just in the beekeeping industry.

A lengthy discussion followed with several participants.

D. Schram pointed out two issues at the meeting that were contradictory. One is that the state of Colorado introduced the same weevils and the Star Thistle was noticeably missing from the landscape within three years, however, Dr. Landis also claimed at the same meeting that the weevil will only move a mile or two per year. The

second contradiction came when the Star Thistle plant was deemed by Dr. Landis to be a poor plant for the prevention of soil erosion, however, again, he also stated that the plant is responsible for not allowing the sand dunes to naturally shift, due to it's soil retaining properties.

Additional discussion followed.

(VN00182 8:14)

It was desired by T. Klein to be read into the minutes that Roger (Hoopingarner) did not represent the board or the membership. He did not communicate to the board or protect the honey bee.

Locations where Dr. Landis has said he has released the weevils are:

Lake Superior State College

Camp Grayling, Grayling

Porter Ranch, Near Houghton Lake

Flat River, near Greenville

Sharonville, near Battle Creek

Other locations which have had weevils previously released:

Hiawatha National Forest (UP)

Kalamazoo County (private land)

Oakland County (Oakland County Parks and Rec.)

T. Klein told that this issue was placed on the agenda at the Michigan Farm Bureau. He suggested that we get a hold of our local, state, and federal legislators and notify them of this potential disaster. T. Klein has spoke with Terry Randall (Sec. of the House in Lansing) and will arrange after the New Year holiday a meeting with the Secretary of Agriculture. He also urges people to write your local governing body.

Motion to adjourn at 2:14pm.

(VN00184)