

May 9, 2012 MAPSS Executive Council Teleconference

Attendees: Johanna Szillery, President
Anna Kettel, Vice-President
Gary Fullerton, Treasurer
Dave Turcotte, Secretary
Don Phillips, Newsletter Editor

Mike Banaitis, Director
Ivan Fernandez, U of M Liaison
Tony Jenkins, NRCS Liaison
Chris Dorion, Webmaster (listening only)

The teleconference commenced at 5:05 P.M.

Follow-up from Annual Meeting

Gary stated that we were charged \$10 more (\$42 vs. \$32) per person than he anticipated by the University of Southern Maine (USM). There was nothing in writing beforehand, but he did tell them that we could afford what we paid last year (\$32 per person) when the meeting was at the University of Maine (U of M). He thinks that \$35 per person would be OK, and a compromise. He will get back to USM and try to straighten this out.

Education Committee

Michael Glessner has left the soil science profession indefinitely, so we are in need of a new chair. Dave states that – at the annual meeting – Rodney Kelshaw and Greg Perkins expressed interest in helping out with education, particularly the refinement and reproduction of our “Soils of Maine” brochure. Henceforth, he feels they may be potential chairs. Johanna and Don feel that Rodney already has too much on his plate to do this. Johanna stated Lee Burman and Steve Howell also expressed some interest in helping out with education. Johanna will ask Greg, Lee and Steve if they’d like to chair or serve on the education committee. Dave said he wishes to remain on the education committee in at least a supporting role. Johanna will proceed to seek a chair and committee for education to deal with the display, venues for the display, the Janet Engle Cormier scholarship, and the revision / reproduction of the brochure (discussed at the annual meeting in March).

Dave asked if someone would be willing to get the display board and supporting materials back from Michael. Gary said he might be willing to do that, but that he didn’t see it as being pressing until the display is to be used. Dave T. suggested that the display be set up at the 2012 Northeast Cooperative Soil Survey Conference next month (see below). He will not be at the conference to set it up, however. Johanna said she’d ask Tony if he thought that’d be a good idea. Later Tony joined the teleconference here and was supportive of having the display set up at the Conference. Someone needs to take the lead in getting the display board (and supporting materials) and setting it up there, however. The education part of the display board needs to be updated when it is clear how the Department of Plant, Soil and Environmental Sciences will be reorganized at the University of Maine.

Don suggested that we try and get the display set up for the semi-annual Maine Municipal Association meetings in Augusta, and leave it set up there for awhile. Johanna stated that former president Ken Stratton approached them about this two years ago, but that they weren't interested in this at that time. Don will follow up on this by contacting Dave Marceau and/or Dale Knapp to see what they think.

Dave asked Johanna if we had applied to continue our presence at the Common Ground Fair for a 6th consecutive year. She said that all she's been busy with that it was too late (the deadline to apply had come and gone). In addition, she and Don just aren't sure if it is a worthy/relevant venue for us, and that it has been difficult to get volunteers to staff the booth in recent years. However, she said that Dave could follow up on this to see if it indeed too late to apply, and to see if there is interest in our Association to help out again in this regard (staffing the booth, leading the soil trench tour, and/or delivering the "Soils of Maine" .ppt).

Don Phillips brought the issue up of removing or adjusting the GPA criteria for the Janet Engle Cormier scholarship. This was discussed at length at the annual meeting. In either event, this would expand the number of potential applicants from U of M, USM or Unity College. Ivan states that 3.0 is a standard used pretty universally for scholarships, and Anna concurs. Gary said the presumably the goal is to get more applicants? Ivan suggests that we remove the GPA criteria altogether, while Anna suggests lowering it to 2.5. Johanna thinks we should let the education committee (when it is formed) decide. Don thought that perhaps the applicants could express their financial need for the scholarship, but that was felt to be unnecessary and/or inappropriate.

Northeast Cooperative Regional Soil Survey Conference

Along with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Maine, MAPSS is co-hosting the 2012 Northeast Cooperative Regional Soil Survey Conference (NECSS), being held in Orono June 18-21 (and posted in www.mapss.org). A registration website has been set up for the conference, primarily because most of the attendees will be coming from other northeastern states. It was suggested that MAPSS set up a paper registration through its web site or as an e-mail attachment as an alternative for MAPSS, MAWS and MASE members. That would save \$25 per registrant, since that is what the registration web site will be charging. Gary and Anna thought this was quite manageable, as we do this at least twice a year for our annual meeting and summer workshops. Gary wasn't so sure that MAWS or MASE members would be attracted to the conference though. Tony stated that it remains to be seen if a second bus will be needed for the field trip. As such, it would be quite helpful to know how many people will be coming on the field trip as soon as possible, since a second bus will cost an additional \$900.

Tony is making an effort to put together "hospitality bags" for participants, which would include a commemorative tape measure, commemorative hat, a bug net, snacks, energy drinks, etc. The key issue with these at this time are the (retractable metric) tape measures, which would have the MAPSS logo on them. The tape measures would cost \$338 for 250. Tony is asking MAPSS to purchase these in advance, and then get reimbursed from Conference funds. He would only need about 100 for the conference though. NRCS may be able to pay for some of the remaining 150 or so. Johanna wonders if we could sell those in surplus, and Gary suggests that they be included

with the display as prizes or give-a-ways. The consensus is that MAPSS should order/purchase the tapes ASAP, and be reimbursed for at least 100 of them thereafter.

Possible Partnership with Soil Science Society of America (SSSA)

After the annual meeting in March, Johanna and other participants went out with Dawn Ferris (of SSSA) for dinner. Dawn shed more light about a possible partnership between SSSA and MAPSS. This would be the first of its kind – i.e. a partnership between SSSA and a given state's soil scientist association of society. The pros for this would be more support for marketing of our profession and liability insurance for executive committee members, while the cons would be the time involved for the MAPSS president to coordinate this. Don thought that this is promising, and that we have time to figure out how the partnership would work. Ivan thought that the liability insurance aspect of the partnership (including for field trips/workshops where accidents are possible) would be a significant benefit for MAPSS. Tony said that liability insurance can be purchased on a case-by-case basis for field workshops without such a partnership. Ivan wondered just how robust this partnership would be if Dawn left her position with SSSA. Johanna will seek more information about a possible partnership with SSSA from Dawn. Tony suggests that a committee be formed to sort this out, with Johanna, Ivan and Samantha Langley-Turnbaugh (of USM) on the committee. Johanna and Ivan agreed to serve on such a committee.

Fall Field Workshop

Johanna has been in contact with Samantha Langley-Turnbaugh of USM about the possibility of having a fall urban soils workshop in Portland in October. Students there at USM (and elsewhere) would be encouraged to participate in the workshop. Anna and Don felt that the type and location of this workshop would attract a lot of people, such as code enforcement officers and engineers. Johanna wondered how long it has been since we had such a workshop, and Dave recalls that it has been about a dozen years. The consensus then is that it has been long enough since we have had this type of a workshop, in that it would not be redundant. Since Dave Rocque (State Dept. of Agr.) and Dave Wilkinson (NRCS) were very involved with that last workshop, they should be consulted to see if a) they think it is a good idea to have it again; b) just how did they help last time; and c) if they would be willing to help again. Johanna will ask Mike (who needed to leave this teleconference) to contact Dave R. about this, and Anna will do likewise with Dave W. (since they work in the same office).

Johanna stated that MAPSS and MASE should continue to cooperate with the state's annual field exam for site evaluators this September.

Newsletter

As agreed upon at the annual meeting, semi-annual "The Lay of the Land" will now be distributed electronically, save for members without e-mail and/or those who prefer a paper copy. The question arose about getting the summer issue out early to serve notice about the NECSS, but Tony said that the MAPSS website and e-mail correspondence with members will suffice as far as getting that work out (and that it was more important to news about the fall

workshop squared away by then). Don encourages people to start thinking about submissions for the summer newsletter, including photos, clip-art, quotes, tid-bits, etc. He is still on dial up, and so would prefer a “heads up” when photos are being sent as e-mail attachments. As an afterthought, he suggested that they be compressed beforehand, or that they be snail mailed to him on a CD. Following up his movie review of Dirt: The Movie!. Dave will be sending Don a book review of Dirt: The Ecstatic Skin of the Earth for this summer’s newsletter. He would also like to see a short article in there about the display, and seeking potential venues (such as county fairs) for its presence.

Teleconference ended at 6:20 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dave Turcotte,
Secretary