

Maine Association of Professional Soil Scientists March 12, 2013 Annual Meeting

Maple Hill Farm, Hallowell, Maine

The meeting commenced at 8:45 A.M.

President's Message

President Johanna Szillery reflected on her two years as leader of the Association, and thanked the membership for the opportunity to serve the Association in this capacity.

Treasurer's Report

The treasurer's report was presented by Gary Fullerton. Our checking account on December 31, 2011 totaled \$11,139.90. As of December 31, 2012, it totaled \$9,877.17 representing a loss of \$1,262.73 over the 2012 calendar year. Our checkbook balance is down mostly because we provided funding to the UMaine Soil Judging Team in the amount of \$2,000 at the 2012 annual meeting, and because we split the profits from the Urban Soils workshop with MASE and MAWS. The Association's biggest annual expense is the annual meeting.

Chris Dorion made a motion to approve the treasurer's report, and Amy Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Membership Report

Gary F. stated that in 2012 MAPSS had 60 full, 21 associate, 4 student, and 3 honorary members. For 2013, prior to the start of this meeting we have 29 full, 2 associate, 2 student and 3 honorary members. About 48 people registered for today's meeting, and some of those people renewed their dues today, so those numbers will go up.

Secretary's Report

After attaining a copy of the 2012 annual meeting minutes (taken by vice-president Anna Donahue) from Dave R., secretary Dave Turcotte solicited feedback about those minutes. Don Phillips mentioned that the only error that he noted was Lee Burman's name being misspelled. Chris D. made a motion to approve the secretary's report, and Dave R. seconded the motion. The motion passed.

MDEP Task Force

With the absence of Michael Banaitis (our Task Force representative), Johanna S. presented this update. Michael informed Johanna before the meeting that he encourages someone else to be the new Task Force representative (and director, the other position he held for MAPSS in 2012-13) for MAPSS in 2013-14. The Task Force was to meet in May 2012, but that meeting was cancelled, and it has yet to meet since then.

Johanna asked the membership for issues that should be brought up the next time the Task Force meets. Dave Marceau stated that one important issue was to coordinate septic system setbacks with stormwater rules and regulations better.

Darryl Brown emphasized that that it is important to have a representative from MAPSS on the Task Force to insure that there is a voice for soil science, and reported on how the meetings and the group is run. He stated that the Task Force used to be much more active (meeting 4 times / year), and that we (MAPSS) should remind the DEP commissioner of the importance of the Task Force meeting regularly again.

Johanna noted that MAWS has expressed an interest in having a representative serve on the Task Force.

Envirothon

Dave R. once again expressed how he is a strong believer in Envirothon (lead by the National Association of [Soil & Water] Conservation Districts) being a sound cause to support, both in terms of steering/preparing some students into environmental career paths, and in educating future society decision makers as to an understanding of the environment and its relevance/importance. Last year ~ 60 teams participated across the state. Along with the standard sections in soils, aquatics, forestry and wildlife, this year's special topic will be multiple uses for forests.

Dave stated that though there are several sponsors for Envirothon, nevertheless historically the donations have barely met the costs for teams participating around the state (never mind the costs of the winning team going to the national competition). Bruce Verrill made a motion that MAPSS donated \$1,000 for this year's Envirothon, and Darryl B. seconded the motion. The motion passed.

University of Maine Soil Judging

Ken Stratton (who has lead the team in recent years) expressed gratitude for MAPSS' past financial support of the soil judging team out of the University of Maine. For various reasons, there haven't been enough students to be able to commit to soil judging the past two years, meaning that UMaine hasn't been able to form a team since 2010. The \$2,000 that MAPSS has donated to soil judging over the past two years resides in the Maine Soil & Water Society's checking account (earmarked for support of soil judging whenever a team is formed).

Last year's regional competition was at Wilmington College in western Ohio, and this year's will be in hosted by the University of Maryland (in early October). Students traveling to the regional competition are usually gone for about a week.

In order to help attract students to soil judging and give them credit where credit is due, Ken would like to get the University designate soil judging as a 1 credit course. Dave T. questioned Ken about this issue having been brought up at a MAPSS annual or executive council meeting 3-4 years ago, and what came about from that. Ken answered that the University agreed to allow one credit for students participating in the competition, but only as "Special Studies".

Bruce Verrill and Tony Jenkins emphasized that the State of Maine (for soil science certification) and the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (for qualifying academic criteria as a federal soil scientist), respectively, were much more apt to recognize soil judging as a credit course if the competition was credited and titled as "Soil Judging", rather than "Special Studies" (in soil judging). Ivan Fernandez is supportive of the idea, and states that it could compliment the 1 credit field soil morphology class on an alternative year basis. There is some funding (albeit minimal) that would come with this from the university, but also a commitment that would need to come with it from the Department of Plant, Soil and Environmental Studies (or what it comes to be merged with – see the University of Maine update below). Dave R. made a motion that the next MAPSS

president write a letter to Eric Gallant, the Department Chair of the Plant, Soil, Environmental Sciences Department, asking the university to make soil judging a 1 credit course unto itself. Bruce seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Peter Crane felt that the University should host the northeast regional competition again if it continues to compete, as it last did in 2006. Ken said that we should be on track to host it again in 2014 or 2015, since there are six other schools that usually compete (Penn State, Ohio State, U of MD, Wilmington, U of WV and U of RI), with a couple of others (UMass and UNH) in hope of returning too. Peter stated that he felt that we should include this (the University hosting the competition again) in our letter to the University.

University of Maine Update

Ivan Fernandez reiterates gratitude for the Association's support of Soil Judging, as well as our continued funding of the Janet Engle Cormier scholarship. The University's budget is relatively flat (i.e. it hasn't changed much from last year), and restructuring of the Dept. of Plant, Soil and Environmental Science (into a College of Food and Agriculture) is still forthcoming. Currently there are 2.5 full time equivalent soil science professors at the University: Ivan (1.0), Sue Erich (0.75) and Stom Ohno (0.75), along with Ken S. as an adjunct soils professor. Ivan's current primary assignment is now in the Dept. of Forest Resources, though he is still partially assigned to the Dept. of Plant, Soil and Environmental Science.

For students interested in focusing in soil science in the future, Ivan envisions them attaining a degree in Ecological & Environmental Science, with a concentration in Soil & Water Science. As always, employment opportunities in soil science are key to attracting students into our profession, starting with summer employment.

Darryl Brown felt that UMaine, as our flagship land grant university, should renew its focus to agriculture. He thinks that Maine currently has too much farmland in fallow, and that we should promote it more as the "Breadbasket of the Northeast". Ivan and Rod Kelshaw expressed that they felt that part of the problem is that agricultural/environmental colleges/departments are becoming too interdisciplinary. Ivan also said that another factor in this regard is that state appropriations for the university (separate from tuition and federal grant appropriations) have declined.

University of Southern Maine (USM) Update

Samantha Langley-Turnbaugh – who is the only soil science professor at USM - took a part time job in administration last year, so the number of soils courses being taught has declined. She is now (albeit temporarily) in administration full time, so no soils courses are being taught out of the Environmental Science and Policy Dept.. Henceforth, USM could use an adjunct soils professor for some time, and she welcomes anyone here to talk with her if they are interested. In general, USM is moving away from (to be) tenured professors and – as they retire – are replacing them with lecturers (often with a Ph. D.) that teach only. The USM chancellor wants to see more cross-university cooperation, though soils courses aren't very conducive to being taught on-line.

Johanna suggested that maybe a MAPSS member or two could come in and share their experiences and career opportunities in/with our profession with USM and UMaine students. Samantha says that the Environmental Science and Policy Dept. has a "club" that could be spoken to from time-to-time in this regard.

USDA-NRCS Update

Tony Jenkins stated that Maine NRCS would continue to support the UMaine Soil Judging Team, however they can. He let people know that version 3 of the “Field Book for Describing Soils” is out, and will try and get some extra copies for the Association. He touched on the national Soil Data Join Recorrelation initiative (a.k.a. “Harmonization”), and on how the mesic soil temperature regime is being reconsidered for southern Maine. The soil survey staff in the state is down to 4 – all based out of Dover-Foxcroft. The two soil resource specialists (out of Oxford and Augusta, respectively) are doing more Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Determinations that they ever have.

Tony thanked MAPSS for its support and participation in the June, 2012, Northeast Soil Survey Conference in Orono. In 2014 this Conference will be held in Vermont, where perhaps SSSNNE can support and participate in it. MAPSS still holds the balance of funds from last June’s conference that will be passed onto the Conference in Vermont. Gary F. said that MAPSS received \$1,000 from the National Cooperative Soil Survey for administrative costs associated with sponsoring last June’s Conference.

Tony mentioned that he is now on the National Hydric Soils Technical Committee.

Election of Officers

Vice-president Anna Donahue presented the slate of officers nominated for reelection. They were herself, treasurer Gary Fullerton, and secretary Dave Turcotte. She solicited nominations from the floor for president and director. Tony J. nominated Amy Jones for president, but she respectfully declined. Jennifer West nominated Don Phillips for president, and he accepted. Tony Jenkins nominated Dave Marceau for president, but he respectfully declined. Dave T. nominated George Bakajza for director, and he accepted.

Chris Dorion made a motion to approve the following slate of officers for the 2013-14 MAPSS Executive Committee: Don Phillips for president; Anna Donahue for vice-president; Gary Fullerton for treasurer; Dave Turcotte for secretary; and George Bakajza for director. Johanna Szillery seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Break

USDA-NRCS Ecological Site Descriptions

Sally Butler of the NRCS (in Farmington) provided an update in Power Point on forthcoming Ecological Site Descriptions, with one handout provided.

Technical Committee Update and Proposed Changes

Chris Dorion (chair) presented the revised drainage class key, as approved at last year’s annual meeting. To summarize, the changes made were to: a) having metric units as the primary basis; b) replacing “Ap” horizons with “A”; c) allowing a chroma of 3 for “Bh” and “Bhs” horizon criteria; and d) making how where “Bh” or “Bhs” horizons occur in the poorly drained part of the key less confusing to interpret / easier to comprehend.

Chris presented a proposal (drafted by him and Dave Marceau) to supplement Maine’s soil mapping standards to a connotative style, as has been done in New Hampshire (RE: HIS Mapping). Categories that would be accounted for would be drainage class, parent material, depth to bedrock, slope gradient and

hydrologic soil groups. One of the slope gradient breaks – 20% - would be well suited for shoreland zoning and septic system design applications. Dave Marceau expressed concern about the subjectivity of determining hydrologic soil groups (and implications for stormwater management and plumbing codes), and Tony J. volunteered to present the Committee with clear and concise guidelines for them out of Chapter 7 of the National Engineering Handbook (calculated in the National Soil Information System database). Dave Rocque felt that we are better off continuing to tie hydrologic soil groups to what they are identified as with respect to established soil series. Tom Peragallo stated that if connotative mapping standards are introduced then there should be a link of some sort between how they and our current mapping standards are connected.

Mount Blue Soils and Natural Resource Workshop

As outlined in the Winter Edition of “The Lay of the Land”, Dave Rocque provided an overview of the forthcoming September 4th Workshop at Mt. Blue State Park. Besides MAWS and MASE, SSSNNE will also be co-sponsoring the workshop. Dave is going to ask MAWS if they can provide a couple of botanists for the occasion.

Education Committee and Outreach Efforts

Johanna S. delivered a short Power Point presentation on how education relates to our mission, as outlined in our constitution. She then solicited the membership for ideas as to how we can use our display board and a new brochure that has been created by Rod Kelshaw. In the past we have set up the display (upgraded a year ago by Dave T.) @ the Agricultural Trade Show (~ 2 years), the Common Ground Fair (~ 5 years), and the Construction Expo (~ 2 years). Johanna asked for a show of hands as to who might want to make presentations on the importance of higher intensity soil mapping to planning boards, and 5 people or so raised one to express such a willingness. She also stated that the Maine Municipal Association might be a venue for us (she did inquire once with them about this a couple of years back). Dave T. stated that Ivan, Samantha and Greg Perkins had already expressed to him that we could set up the display for weeks at a time at UMaine, USM and Unity College, respectively. He said he (and Dave Rocque) would be willing to lead another effort for us to set up the display (along with the soil trench tour and “Soils of Maine” .ppt) again at the Common Ground Fair, following our absence there last year (save for the tour and .ppt). Dave T. asked for some volunteers to help him and Dave R. there, and received positive affirmations from Samantha, Corinne Leary, Anna Donahue, George B., Lee Burman and Morgan Fuller.

Johanna then presented a new proposed brochure, developed by Rod Kelshaw (with feedback from the Executive Council and some Committee Chairs). Rod stated that Bacon Printing (out of Bangor, and who developed our first brochure in 2006) could print out 500 of these for \$342, or 1,000 of them for \$656. Dave Moyse and others talked about the possibility of putting a .pdf of the brochure on the website, and of folks simply printing them out as needed with a color printer (on heavier, glossy paper). Johanna tabled the vote on this until the P.M. break so people could take a closer look at the brochure, stacked on the table that the display resided on. She commended Rod on his efforts in developing the new brochure that is geared for more general audiences.

Buffet Lunch

The Northeast Temperate Network

Kathryn Miller, Plant Ecologist with the National Park Service (NPS) out of Acadia National Park, delivered a formal Power Point presentation about the Northeast Temperate Network, and the variety of data available from this project, through Google Earth. These data vary from bird counts, stream data, to the impacts of acidic atmospheric deposition and invasive species on the ecology of various parks and corridors managed by the NPS in the northeast. .

New England and National Hydric Soils Indicators

Tom Peragallo, Senior Soil and Wetland Scientist with LEC Environmental Consultants, Inc., delivered this Power Point presentation, and offered a couple of key handouts (one pertaining to Hydric Soil Indicators used in the Corps of Engineers Regional Supplement that pertain to New England and one that pertained to guidance on distinguishing mineral from mucky mineral from organic soil).

Break

New Brochure (continued)

After further discussion about the virtues and options of printing out copies of the new brochure individually on a case-by-case basis, Ken Gardner made a motion that we approve expenditures for printing out 500 brochures through Bacon Printing. Dave Moyse seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Human Transported Material Soils of Anthropogenically Altered Estuarine Shorelines

Sean Donohue – Project Manager & Environmental Scientist with VHB, Inc., delivered this Power Point presentation on his graduate work under Dr. Mark Stolt out of the University of Rhode Island.

Morphology, Properties and Classification of Human Transported Material Soils

Tony Jenkins - USDA-NRCS State Soil Scientist out of Bangor – delivered this Power Point Presentation, taken mostly from proposals on anthropogenic soils made to ICOMANTH from John Galbraith. He offered one handout that summarized these proposed changes to Soil Taxonomy (to families and subgroups, as well as horizon nomenclature) and to the National Soil Survey Handbook.

The meeting adjourned @ 3:50 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

David Turcotte, Secretary

