

MAPSS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes: November 21, 2008

Members Present: Chris Dorion, Dave Turcotte, Andrew Carpenter, Amy Jones, Johanna Szillery, Anna Kettell, Don Phillips, and members of the UMO Soil Judging Team (Ken Stratton, Kaj Thomson, Mary Beth Parent, Abel Palaud and Eileen Spinney)

CALL TO ORDER - The meeting of the Maine Association of Professional Soil Scientists (MAPSS) Executive Committee (ExCom) meeting was called to order by President **Chris Dorion** at about 1:00 PM at **Andrew Carpenter's** Northern Tilth office in Belfast. A special welcome was extended to members of the University of Maine (Orono) Soil Judging Team and its advisor Ken Stratton.

Chris asked the team to talk about its recent regional competition in Pennsylvania and, backed up by a PowerPoint presentation shown by **Eileen Spinney**, each member spoke in turn. The competition was spaced over two days near the host college (Delaware Valley State College – which is about midway between Philadelphia and Allentown, PA), but that members spent a lot of time traveling to different sites. Eleven colleges competed, and the UMO team came in fifth overall, beating among others the University of Maryland, Pennsylvania State, and Ohio State. Individually, Alison Montgomery –team leader but who was unable to attend the day's meeting – came in eighth overall. Judging was strict: while chemical data was provided, physical data had to be “spot-on” (said **Kaj Thomson**) to the point that members had to document soil colors exactly as pre-determined by the judges, even its chroma. And, the percentage of clay in a textural sample had to be within $\pm 3\%$! **Johanna Szillery** asked what kind of soils were there? Team members said mostly moderately well drained soils from parent material that originated from windblown loess, glacialfluvial outwash, and even (to everyone's consternation!) colluvium. Pits were mostly in fields, but some were in forestland. **Dave Turcotte** suggested that **Chris** write a letter of appreciation and support of the team to the University, ~~which he agreed to do and also added that he'll submit his letter to the Bangor Daily News.~~ Chris asked Ken Stratton to contact the University Public Affairs Department to send out a press release about the UMaine Soil Judging Team results. **Andrew** asked about donations, to which **Ken Stratton** replied that the University's Soil and Plant Sciences Department paid for transportation costs, and that the Student Government paid for lodging. Overall, said **Ken**, the team spent about \$1,700 this year. Unfortunately, though, he anticipates that costs for next year's competition will increase, largely because of on-going budgetary cuts the entire University System of Maine has to deal with but also because next year's competition will be held in Ohio. Discussion at this point focused on how much MAPSS donated to the Soil Judging Team last year, and ended by suggesting that the Executive Committee will have a discussion item at the Annual Meeting (during the morning) to ask the general membership if they will support the UMaine Soil Judging Team. ~~lobby to increase the MAPSS donation next year.~~ Their presentation ended at 2:12 pm.

The business meeting then proceeded in general order of the numbered items according to the Agenda that Chris handed out.

- 1) Reid State Park wrap-up - **Andrew** (Treasurer) stated that we made more than \$4,000 from the workshop, which accounts for almost half our savings account.
- 2) MASE/MAPSS Hallowell workshop wrap-up - **Chris** commented that, while he thought this workshop went well, he nonetheless wished that more MAWS members attended. Outside of a few consulting firms who reliably send both wetland and soil scientists to these workshops, people around the table were only able to count two or three wetland scientists in attendance.
- 3) Common Ground Fair wrap-up – **Dave** strongly encouraged the ExCom that we should continue our presence at this fair, not simply because it's free but because it is a good way to educate the public about the value of soils. He was dismayed by the lack of volunteers from the membership. **Don Phillips** asked, who did volunteer? Besides for himself, **Dave** said that **Johanna**, George Bakajza and Dale Knapp volunteered. **Amy Jones** asked, what other benefits do we get from our presence there? Exposure, outreach, and education, replied **Dave**.

At this point, **Johanna** mentioned another potential upcoming conference that we might want to think about attending, the 2008-2009 Maine Land Conservation Conference hosted by the Maine Coast Heritage Trust scheduled for Saturday, May 3rd at Brunswick High School. **Don** wondered if attending this Conference would be a good fit for MAPSS, based on his knowledge of this Conference. Chris thought that perhaps the Education Committee (**Johanna** and **Anna Kettell**) should look more into this possibility. **Don** volunteered to send any information he may have about previous Conferences to the Education Committee. **Andrew** stated that, in his experience, hands-on exhibits like the trench at the Common Ground Fair present the most valuable educational lessons, and asked if this Conference could have something similar?

3.5) **Dave** responded by handing out color photocopies of what appears to be a simple-to-make model that shows the movement of water in the soil as affected by variously textured soils and other features. This is the “groundwater model”. All groundwater passes through the soil, so this model could be an important part of the MAPSS display. The general membership will be asked to purchase this model at the Annual Meeting.

- 4) Treasurer's Report – **Andrew** read that we have a balance of about \$8,500 now, and that all our major bills have been paid this year.

- 6) Annual Meeting Agenda, speakers, location – Skipping ahead to this item, **Chris** asked for suggestions where the Annual Meeting could be held next spring, saying that - while he hoped it might be in the Belfast area – he got a lot of feedback requesting that it should be held elsewhere. Earlier, he had tasked **Anna** and **Johanna** with coming up with suggestions. Six places were discussed, including: (1) the Hutchinson Center (which is a part of the University of Maine) in Belfast; (2) MOFGA in Unity, (3) the Grandeur Sun Banquet & Conference Center in Waterville, (4) the University of Maine at Farmington, (5) Maple Hill B&B and Conference Center in Hallowell, and (6) the University of Maine at Augusta (who did not respond to **Anna's** request for information). Details of all these places were briefly discussed, including catering costs (generally, this costs about \$1,700 to \$2,000 per year according to **Andrew**), acoustics (poor at MOFGA) and how dark a room could get for presentations (poor at the Elks Club in Augusta, said **Chris**), and ease of getting there (the thinking is that the Hutchinson Center would not be as easy to drive to for folks coming from southern Maine as an Augusta or Waterville locale). **Don** volunteered to get more information, including photographs if possible, of the Grandeur Sun in Waterville and pass it on to **Anna** and **Johanna**.

Moving on to Annual Meeting topics, **Chris** would like to schedule the business meeting first thing in the morning (as in past years), which would then be followed (after lunch) by the speaker presentations. ~~He would like to invite somebody to talk about the new soil drainage indicators. As an aside, whoever we get to discuss this should be provided with lodging the night before, preferably at or near where we'll hold the Annual Meeting.~~

The MASE annual meeting is February 24th; MAWS is March 27th. MAPSS is looking at March 10, 11, or 12th, 2009 (Tues, Wed., or Thur.)

Dave would like to attract students by giving them a discount. **Andrew** asked, why not let students in for free? **Chris** agreed on principle but worried that more than a van full of students might show up, which could present problems. After discussion, the ExeCom agreed to charge students \$15 to attend, and that this fee would ~~go towards~~include one year's associate membership (as well as the meeting registration).

Chris spoke at this time about inviting a member of the National Technical Committee on Hydric Soils for a 25-minute presentation followed by a Q&A. He would like to invite somebody to talk about the new soil drainage indicators. As an aside, whoever we get to discuss this should be provided with lodging the night before, preferably at or near where we'll hold the Annual Meeting.

If we did this, then a second speaker could discuss what appears to be a mounting trend to conduct "expedited" soil surveys, despite the lack of guideline standards for same.

Chris thinks this is an issue that needs to be *thoroughly*¹ discussed by the Maine soil scientists, ~~particularly since Dave Roque seems to asking for this kind of survey on current windtower projects.~~ This idea prompted **Johanna** to suggest a panel discussion. Panelists could potentially include the DEP's stormwater staff (~~Mary Ann~~**Marianne** Hubert & **Jeff** Dennis ~~_____~~), ~~Dave Waddell~~, Steve Howell, Bill Noble, and Dave Roque. A central theme for the panel, suggested by **Andrew**, might be a case study on how the Mars Hill (for instance) windtower project was managed, and suggested that a civil engineer who was involved with the project should be invited too.

The last item discussed regarded current membership. Dave reported that MAPSS currently has 3 Honorary Members, 46 Full Members, and 32 Associate Members.

The meeting was adjourned at this point.

Respectfully submitted on November 25th, 2008 by Don Phillips

1 : Chris highlighted the importance of this issue by falling out of his busted chair at this time.