

Minutes of the MAPB AGM

May 2, 2009

Carolyn Sifton Theatre, Agricultural Plant Science Building, University of Manitoba

12:30 pm Registration

1:05 pm Introduction of our first speaker by Julie Pelc.

Marcia Monreal's talk was "An Overview of Arbuscular Mycorrhizae Research at the AAFC-Brandon Centre". Marcia is a research scientist at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Research Centre in Brandon, Manitoba. She presented a bit of an overview of mycorrhizae in general and then discussed the current research involving crops and their interactions with mycorrhizae at the field station.

John Markham's talk was "The ecological cost of symbiotic nitrogen fixation". John is an assistant professor with the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Manitoba. He presented a general overview of nitrogen fixation and raised the question about why it is not more commonly utilized by plants. Using examples from his research, he suggested that other than just an energy cost, there are other reasons, such as genetics, as to why nitrogen fixation is not more widely employed by plant species.

David Punter's talk was "Botanical Freeloaders". Dave is a senior scholar with the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Manitoba. He presented a survey of the five main categories of parasitic plants and the families in which these types occur. In addition, to plants parasitizing other plants, some species parasitize fungi, and are described as mycoheterotrophs.

Refreshments and poster session

Two student presenters were present, Sharon Inch and Ru Li.

Business meeting

In attendance: Jeannie Gilbert, Julie Pelc, Helios Hernandez, Richard Staniforth, Mason Kulbaba, Marilena Kowalchuk, Elizabeth Punter, David Punter, Sharon Inch, Colin Hiebert, Jim Menzies, Karen Sereda

Approval of the agenda: moved by Jim, seconded by Dave, carried.

Approval of Minutes from previous AGM: moved by Dave, seconded by Colin, carried.

President's Report—Jeannie Gilbert

This marks the fifth year that I have served as president of the Manitoba Association of Plant Biologists. It has been an honour. As in past years, we have had two meetings: In the fall we heard presentations on Invasive Species and the activities of the Invasive Species Council of Manitoba. We thank Julie Pelc for organizing the speakers for that meeting. And of course, today we have heard presentations on Plant Interactions in Natural Environments. I wish to thank our speakers once again and Dave Punter and Jim Menzies for contacting the speakers as well as offering to speak.

This past year, Cary led plant inventory excursions to areas recently acquired by the province and Richard Staniforth attempted to initiate a province-wide botanical survey in light of climate change and the potential for changes in current and future plant distributions. A few members made a start, some more tentative than others, and Richard continues to make collections of ferns.

Marilena Kowalchuk and Cary Hamel promoted the selection of a provincial grass for Manitoba and you are encouraged to place your vote before leaving today.

At this time I would like to thank all members of the executive who have given their time to make the meetings and activities of the association a success this year.

Respectfully submitted
Jeannie Gilbert
President MAPB

Treasurer's Report—Jim Menzies

We had \$247.50 in our account most recently, and with interest the current balance is probably a bit higher. Jim moves that we accept his report as presented. Seconded Dave. Carried.

Auditor's Report—Jim Menzies for Tom Fetch

see auditor's report as a *.jpg file

Jim moves that we accept Tom's report as submitted. Seconded Marilena. Carried

Appointment of Auditors—Jim Menzies

Tom Fetch is willing to be the auditor for the upcoming year as well. Jim moves that Tom be reappointed to be our auditor for the upcoming year. Seconded by Dave. Carried.

Committee Reports

Membership Report—Jeannie Gilbert for Isobel Waters

Our membership numbers are down to 22 individuals. We need to encourage more members to join MAPB as our membership is dwindling. Richard moves that we accept the report as presented. Seconded by Dave. Carried.

Web News—Jeannie Gilbert for Charles Burchill

We have moved to a new domain, although the old website appears to still be active. The fee was apparently missed being paid on time and we lost our old web location. MAPB.ca is our website address currently. Info@mapb.ca is how we contact Charles for information that may be of interest to the membership. Charles would like members to submit information for him to include in a periodic mailing of botanical news of note. Charles will no longer be continuing as webmaster. Jeannie suggests that we show Charles our appreciation for all his hard work by a round of applause. Clapping....Liz moves we accept the report as presented. Seconded by Helios. Carried.

Endangered Species/Conservation—Marilena Kowalchuk

The conservation conference will be held here in Winnipeg next year. There is a link to the website on our webpage. The conference theme is patterns of change. One of the sessions, "Changing Socio-economic Factors" is looking for co-leads. Co-leads have input into the selection of speakers as well as the format of the workshop/session. They also need volunteers for the conference.

Programs—Julie Pelc

Our scientific meeting in November was on Invasive Species. The Invasive Species Council has formed a committee for the early detection and rapid response to invasives. Volunteers on this committee are welcome, and you can contact Julie if you wish to do so. Julie is the rep for the MB region. The committee wants specifically to train volunteers for plant identification and collection, as well as other aspects related to invasive plants.

For our meetings, Julie would welcome any suggestions for future program themes. Richard moves we accept the report as presented. Seconded by Jim. Carried.

Projects—Julie Pelc for Cary Hamel

Report on 2008 activities:

On July 26th, a joint MAPB/Nature Conservancy of Canada Volunteer event was held at NCC's 800 acre Elk Glen Property near Rosburn, Manitoba. The property is located immediately adjacent to the southern boundary of Riding Mountain National Park.

The property's rolling terrain supports a mix of habitats, from aspen and mixed-wood forest to ponds, wetlands, and streams. Grassland areas exist on some of the property's hills. Prior to the event it was thought that these may represent remnant native fescue or mixed-grass prairie.

NCC's long-term goals for the property include restoring and maintaining these grasslands. The need for a thorough botanical inventory and ecological assessment of the property, and especially its remnant prairie sites, was identified. The purpose of the MAPB/NCC event was to create a baseline to compare future ecological changes on the property. Prior to any prairie restoration activities, a thorough inventory is a first, critical step.

In advance of the event, MAPB's Liz Punter surveyed the property in June. Her surveys produced an initial list of 109 species, including 2 provincially rare sedges (*Carex microptera* (S1S2) and *Carex hookeriana* (S1)). This list grew to 155 confirmed species after the July 26th survey. The presence of Plains Rough Fescue in some of the grassland areas suggests that the property supports fescue prairie - a community type rarely encountered in Manitoba. The species list is on MAPB's website, in the 'Species Lists' section.

Proposed 2009 activities:

Survey of the new Pembina Valley WMA addition

A previous MAPB survey looked at the nearby Pembina Valley Provincial Park. Ironwood-birch (provincially rare) forest is known to occur on the southern edge of the property, but no complete inventories have occurred. The WMA is officially part of Manitoba's Network of Protected Areas, and the Protected Areas Initiative is very excited about the possibility of having expert botanists conduct an inventory.

Members are asked for their survey date preference between: Sunday, August 9th or Saturday, August 22nd (note that consideration was given to an early-season inventory, but the relatively

difficult access, including stream crossings and ravine terrain, not to mention woodticks, made this a more appropriate summer inventory.

A species list for the vascular plants and lichens of Pembina Valley Park is available on the MAPB website, in the 'Species Lists' section.

Cary will be sending out an email to the group with more information and asking for RSVP's. There are handouts with background on the Pembina Valley WMA addition and a map available.

Other upcoming volunteer conservation events that MAPB members may be interested in:

A search for bloodroot will be occurring on Saturday, May 23rd

Stony Mountain Prairie survey and spurge pull – Saturday, June 27th

For more details on both these events (and other botanical events that may be posted soon), go to the Nature Conservancy's website. Interested MAPB members and other individuals may register at www.conservationvolunteers.ca

Julie moves we accept the report as presented. Seconded by Marilena. Carried.

Awards—Jim Menzies

Colin and Jim looked at both student posters displayed today and felt it was very close between the two posters. It was decided to award the cash prize to Sharon Inch. Jeannie will present Sharon with her prize later this week.

Election of New Executive (* Continuing in a 2-year term)

Nomination Slate—David Punter

President	Richard Staniforth
Vice-President	vacant
Secretary	Karen Sereda
Treasurer*	Jim Menzies
Director-at-large	Roger Garrod
Director-at-large	Keith Knowles
Director-at-large*	Helios Hernandez
Director-at-large*	Liz Punter
Student director-at-large	Mason Kulbaba
Associate member director at large	vacant (presently no associate members in MAPB)
Awards	Isobel Waters
Education and Curriculum*	Alex McIlraith
Endangered Species/Conservation*	Marilena Kowalchuk
Issues*	David Punter
Membership	vacant
Programs	Julie Pelc
Projects	Cary Hamel
Webmaster	Carl Szczerki

Other Nominations

Khalid Rashid may possibly be interested in either Vice-president or the Membership chair position. Jeannie will contact him in this regard.

Jim moves nominations cease and the nominated individuals obtain the positions as presented. Seconded by Dave. Carried.

Other Business

Resolution—David Punter

In light of the province's announcement about funding biofuel production from plant wastes, Dave proposes we bring forward a new resolution regarding our position on this issue to the government. The resolution is as follows:

Biomass Energy programs:

Whereas Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI) Minister Rosann Wowchuk announced on Earth Day that the province will accelerate, and provide \$895,000 to, programs that use crop and forestry byproducts as heat and power sources to reduce or eliminate the use of fossil fuels, and, whereas residual biomass, such as straw from cereal fields and woody debris and slash from forests, makes an essential contribution to the health of ecosystems by

- i. returning nutrients to the soil,
- ii. improving the texture and water-holding capacity of the soil,
- iii. serving as a substrate for beneficial microorganisms such as earthworms, mycorrhizal fungi and bacteria that support ecosystem functioning and
- iv. breaking down to humus which acts as an important growth substrate for tree seedlings

Therefore be it resolved that MAPB urges the Governments of Manitoba and Canada to support research to determine how much of the residual (so-called waste) biomass can be removed without causing long-term damage to ecosystem functioning, before these programs are implemented on a large scale.

Dave moves we accept the resolution as presented. Seconded by Jim. Carried.

Our new incoming president, Richard thanked Jeannie for acting as president for five years. Clapping.... Richard feels that one of our new projects should be membership. We need to find someone willing to take on the membership role.

Jim moves we adjourn.

Adjournment 4:20 pm

Karen Sereda, Secretary