New England Society of American Foresters (NESAF)

Executive Committee (EC) Meeting

Wednesday, June 10, 2009

Location: Cabelas, Scarborough, ME

Members present:

Deborah Boyer Website Administrator
Paul Dolan Rhode Island State Representative; Nomination Chair
Andrew Fast Secretary
George Frame Immediate Past Chair
Peter Greeno Membership Chair
Dana Hachigian Treasurer
James Harding Forest Science Coordinator
J Peter Howland New Hampshire State Representative; Policy Chair
Ron Lemin Jr. Chair
Spencer Meyer Maine State Representative
Ed O’Leary Vice-Chair
Randy Stone Massachusetts State Representative; Awards Chair

Guests:

Ken Laustsen Biometrician, Maine Forest Service

Members not present:

Joseph P. Barsky Connecticut State Representative
Roger Dziengeleski Council Representative
Don Floyd Canadian Representative
Margaret Machinist Co-Editor of NESAF News Quarterly
Scott Machinist Co-Editor of NESAF News Quarterly
Kurt Zschau Vermont State Representative

Meeting opened by NESAF Chair, Ron Lemin Jr. at 9:30 AM

A. Standard items:

Sign in sheet (Fast) - verify contact information: The standard sign-in sheet was circulated.
Welcome: Ron L. welcomed all present. No introductions were necessary.
Antitrust statement: The antitrust statement was presented. Ron L. can provide a copy of the antitrust statement to members of the EC upon their request.
Add/Adjust agenda: An update of the insurance coverage process and an online registration system Spencer M. is using was added to new business.
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Corrections/Additions for the March 17, 2009 EC meeting minutes (Fast): Line 153 had a typo. A motion was heard from George F. to accept the meeting minutes as amended; a second to the motion was heard from Jim H. The question was called and the motion passed unanimously.


Dana H. reviewed the Net Worth Report. She has received a couple more deposits, which are not reflected in the Net Worth Report. She will post them in the near future. Dana H. has updated contact information with the bank. Paperwork that was going to Larry Rousseau will now go to Dana H. No disbursements have come due from the CD; the next CD is due in September or October, 2009.

Dana H. reviewed the Budget Report. NESAF received another dues disbursement from National on March 31, 2009. This was part of a payment from last year’s dues.

Dana H. received an email from Matt Tansey informing her that $100 was deposited into an SAF account and he was not sure who submitted that money. SAF subunits have accounts at TD Banknorth with similar Federal ID numbers, but different signatorys on the accounts. Each subunit can see other subunits accounts and no one can tell who is making deposits.

Under income, the general operations account is $16,418.58. Grant account is $3,230.61. Total income is $19,649.19. Spencer M. informed the EC that he provided Dana H. with a check to reimburse NESAF for the winter meeting advance. The Winter Meeting Advance Refund line item will be changed to $1,000. Randy S. and Spencer M. pointed out the $3,133.24 in winter meeting returns from last year. This will be in addition to this year’s winter meeting returns so the revenue from this line item will look inflated.

Under expenses, NESAF has paid $4,035.75 in dues to divisions. News Quarterly expenses are up-to-date. The winter meeting advance will be paid out in the future and a HSD bill is expected based on NESAF membership numbers. Deb B. received a $125 bill for the website. Leadership Academy expenses were reviewed. The line item covers the cost of the Regional Leadership Academy and National Leadership Academy if NESAF decides to send anyone. There was some confusion over the leadership academy line item and how much revenue should have been carried over from last year; George F. will work with Dana H. to get the confusion resolved.

Dana H. informed the EC that TD Banknorth is consolidating some of its programs which will result in changes to NESAF’s checking and money market accounts. NESAF’s checking account is now a Business Core Checking Account, which results in a $15 monthly maintenance fee if $100 is not maintained in the account. Since there is little money in the checking account, no interest will be generated. 300 transactions can be initiated per month.

NESAF’s savings account is now a Super Money Market Account. There is a $12 monthly maintenance fee if $10,000 is not maintained in the account. Dana informed the EC that there are other options for a savings account one would require a $2,500 minimum balance to waive fees and the other would require $10,000 minimum balance to waive fees. Both options were discussed. The Business Money Market Account with the $2,500 minimum balance, would be easier to maintain. Dana H. will speak with a Banknorth representative about changing accounts. There are no transaction fees associated with the Business Money Market Account. George F. asked the EC if they thought it would be helpful to have a debit card for one of the accounts. Recent payments include a Cabelas room rental, hotel payments, website payments, etc. A debit card might make a paper trail more challenging if there were an audit. Dana H. informed the EC that online banking is an option. Dana H. will present a proposal about how to proceed with the accounts at the next EC meeting. A motion was heard from Paul D. to change the existing savings account to a Business Money Market Account; a second to the motion was heard from Ed O’L. The question was called and the motion passed unanimously.

B. Old Business:
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Form 990 - State compliance for 2008 (Frame, Hachigian): George F. is waiting for one final income sheet from Yankee Division. The accountant George F. was working with is no longer employed by the accounting office. George F. will make contact with Yankee Division and the new accountant and will keep Ron L. apprised of the progress. NESAF has until August 15th to get the form 990 in. A hard copy will go from the accountant to Ron L. if a signature is required. George F. and Dana H. need to keep working with subunit Treasurers to get reports submitted in a format that is standardized. Ron L. asked if the Form 990 EZ could be filed by the NESAF treasurer, George F. explained that the Form 990 EZ is easier to file, but is still complicated and it would likely be too much for the Treasurer.

NESAF 2009 Winter Meeting (Lemin Jr., Meyer): Ken L. and Ron L. met with the Granite State Division planning committee and provided them with “the good the bad and the ugly,” a summary of lessons learned with comments, critiques and input on what to do differently when planning the next business meeting. Ron L. finalized the bill with the hotel. There were issues that cropped up as a result of the hotel taking credit cards and online registration at National. New Hampshire will not go through national for online registration. The hotel is trying to track down some individuals whose credit cards were not approved. It might be best to pursue options other than credit cards for future business meetings such as check or cash. Ron L. passed out a copy of the Maine SAF balance sheet including a breakdown of the 2009 NESAF winter meeting. The numbers are not finalized, but $6,400-$7,000 in income each expected for both NESAF and Maine SAF. Spencer M. mentioned that there is a manual developed by Bob Ricard that can assist subunits in planning annual meetings. However, it has never been updated and there is no electronic copy. The tip sheet developed by Maine SAF this year could be included in the manual. Ed O'L. suggested some individuals who have hosted meetings in the past could get together and edit the manual, and he is willing to work with someone to get it accomplished.

Spencer M. highlighted one of the challenges he encountered when planning the winter meeting, which revolves around asking guest speakers to pay registration fees. Spencer M. thinks there should be protocol detailing when a guest speaker is subsidized for attendance, lunches, etc. and when they pay in full. Spencer M., Jim H., Ed O'L., Ron L. and George F. will develop the manual. Ken L. has background material that he will supply. The product will be digital, easily accessed, and updated annually so it stays current.

Integrity Award (Stone): The integrity award discussion will be tabled until September. Randy S. will report back to the EC on the Integrity Award Subcommittee’s recommendations. George F. commented that he does not think the integrity award should be a photograph and brief discussion ensued.

History Project Update (Laustsen): Ken L. sent out an email to history project contacts in all the states. He received three responses. Dave Stevens in VT and Karen Bennett in NH have started but have not completed much. Ed O'L. will assist Dave S. on the Vermont state history. Randy S. gave an update on MA status; he met with a lack of enthusiasm about 1 year ago when he approached authors. Randy S. contacted Charlie Thompson and Dave Kittredge who are eager to contribute. Lots of the information from MA should come in this summer. Randy S. will compile and edit MA history project drafts as they are submitted. Ken L. is considering asking Ingeborg Seyboyer or Mark McCollough to provide illustrations. A deadline may help create more urgency for authors and move the process forward. Ken L. will notify participants that he wants their complete contributions by the December EC meeting. Ken L. will work with EC members to get additional help for individuals if it is needed.

C. NEW BUSINESS:
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Insurance and Online Registration Update (Meyer): Spencer M. referred the email he sent the EC in April. Contacting the insurance company and getting the program covered was easy. The entire process was done in 48 hours. The contact at the insurance company was Dan Ziegler, JZA Affinity, 410-339-7234.

Spencer M. has been using the site regonline.com to register participants for Maine SAF programs. There is lots of functionality and flexibility including customizing forms, credit card payments, discount codes, early bird and late fees, online reports, lodging, etc. Registration online is $5/person or $150 and $2.99/person. The second option starts to become economically viable at approximately 75 people. Every month the account balance is checked and regonline.com sends a check with any income that is produced. Spencer M. has experienced no complaints by registrants. The drawback is if there are costs upfront and the subunit or NESAF has to wait 30 days for reimbursement.

(The EC took a break for lunch at 11:32am and resumed at 12:13pm)

Standing Committee reports:

Nominations and Election (Dolan): Paul D. circulated a June 9, 2009 memo titled “Nominations for 2009 NESAF Election,” a January 21, 2009 press release titled “Call for nominations - 2009 nesaf executive committee elections,” and a supplemental application sheet titled “NESAF Executive Committee Biographical Information for Prospective Candidates to Accompany Ballots.” Paul D. asked that Subunit representatives make sure that all contact information is up to date. Deb B. will put Paul D.’s hanouts on the NESAF website. Candidates should get applications to Paul D. by August 28. When Paul D. gets results from National, he will contact states to inform them of subunit winners and Ron L. for NESAF positions. The paper ballots received from states are returned to the Tellers Committee who tabulate the results. National sent Paul D. the 135 names that need paper ballots last year and Paul D. sent ballots out to those individuals. There should be no cost to individual states for voting. Ed O’L. pointed out that page 2 paragraph 2 of the memo should state that August 28th is the nomination deadline rather than September 15. Paul D. will make the correction on page 2 paragraph 2 of the memo. While August 28th is the internal deadline to get nomination to Paul D, August 1 will be the official deadline posted on the website. Deb B. will send out an email to membership about elections and the date for nominations.

Policy (Howland): Pete H. circulated two draft highgrading statements (draft #10 and #11) based on input he received since the last EC meeting. 8-10 people provided input. Peter G. highlighted the challenges the policy committee is facing bringing together diverse comments from so many parties. Pete G. commented that when he was working in Washington there were times when policy staff reviewed NESAF policy statements so they go a long way and have an impact. Pete G. also asked whether membership has had enough input into the development of the highgrading policy statement and does it reflect the broader membership’s opinion. There were comments that the EC should find a way to better support Peter H. Spencer M. mentioned that Maine is providing a number of feedbacks with full rewrites and it is unreasonable to expect Peter H. to figure out how to reconcile all these documents. The EC does not need to get membership’s approval to move forward and would need 2/3 majority if the policy was brought before membership. In the past, policy has always been adopted by the EC without a vote from membership. Ron L., George F., Peter G. among others commented that perhaps the EC should take a little more time and confer with national on what they are doing on the topic of highgrading. Spencer M. commented that there are two distinct issues 1) what to do with the highgrading issue and 2) how should the process work, i.e. how should membership provide input if at all, what is the role of the policy committee, etc. Dana H. asked whether the EC is trying to represent the members on this issue or dictate a policy that the membership should follow. George F. feels the EC should communicate the feeling of membership to folks at large. There are many different positions and ideas about what highgrading is. Peter G. commented that no
policy statement will make everyone happy, and before the EC takes on the highgrading statement, it should address the policy process. How do we receive membership input and accurately represent them?

Peter G. suggested that 3-4 members look at how other organizations form policy to inform the EC on options moving forward. A committee’s makeup is at the purview of the EC so the policy committee could be formed by members who are not part of the EC. The policy committee’s structure would have to be modified by the EC. Roger D., Pete H., Peter G. will discuss what sort of structure would be appropriate and report their recommendations to the EC at the September meeting. George F. suggested the NESAF website might be a tool to facilitate input from membership. Pete H. offered that something could go in the News Quarterly to the effect of "Is a highgrading policy statement something that we should pursue? Do you think it is an issue? If so, what should be in it..." Pete H. and Peter G. will develop language that should be sent out in the mailing, News Quarterly, and/or website. Randy S. recommended that Pete H. check with states to see what sort of regulations, policies, etc. states have implemented.

Membership (Greeno): In May, Christopher Whited, from National, informed Peter G. that NESAF had 111 non-renewals, while NESAF's lists indicated 157 such non-renewals. Peter G. found a couple of problems left over from the handling of membership at the National level. At present, emails have been sent to each non-renewal member from Peter G., and hardcopy renewal options to each non-renewal from Christopher W.'s desk. VT, NH and CT reps have indicated that they are calling members; Peter G. is beginning to call other division members that have not responded to initial contact. Please let Peter G. know if you are making calls to membership. At present, NESAF has 99 members yet to respond.

There are a few problems that Pete G. is aware of (1) When members join or renew partway through the year, National is charging them for a full year's dues, yet only registering them for the remainder of the year. The member then has a credit for the following year’s dues, but is not a member until they renew again at the beginning of the year. In some cases SAF is purging members that have already paid for part of their 2009 dues, sometimes even beyond the purge date. Peter G. has petitioned national to either only charge a prorated amount for the remainder of the year, or to set renewal dates reflecting a member-specific anniversary rather than the calendar year. Christopher W. is in agreement at the moment.

Jim H. asked how the student policy is affected since many students enroll in the fall. Are they included for the following year? Peter G. is not sure, but will contact National and get an answer for Jim H. There is a chance everyone will move to calendar year membership. It would be helpful to have a letter from Ron L. or the EC to National. Ron L. will speak with Peter G. about how to move forward with a letter. George F. also indicated interest in contacting Michael G. at National in his position as immediate past chair. George F. pointed out that changes could make things different for Dana who is used to getting dues in Jan., Feb. March. (2) The difference between NESAF's spreadsheets, which indicated 157 non-renewals and Christopher W.’s list which indicated 111 non-renewals, was due to students. On January 1st, National automatically renewed a number of the students that joined in fall of 2009, but never updated their 'Valid To' field. Our monthly reports have been incorrect in showing more students as non-renewals than what actually happened since January. Christopher W. corrected this earlier in the month. (3) National erroneously recorded a few member's dues and has been correcting the issue on a case-by-case basis.

Over the past month, Christopher W. has been implementing a new membership system that will allow members to set up an auto-debit. To kick this new system off national sent each of NESAF's non-renewal members an updated invoice that shows the balance necessary to renew for the remainder of 2009. In addition, they will be able to pay in portions throughout the year to make the $150 more manageable. It is Peter G.'s understanding that this will also help NESAF on renewals in future years by keeping members renewed automatically, much like any other service for which you might sign up.

Additional details about membership are available from Peter G.

(Ken L. left the EC meeting at 1:12pm)
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Forest Science Coordinator (Harding): 4 articles on forest pests were sent to the News Quarterly. Jim H. has no theme for this October yet. After the business meeting, he had a lengthy and lively discussion on working groups. Bob Brooks stepped up as Forest Ecology working group Chair. He contacted members who would be interested in being involved, but has not heard back from them. Dave Hall, new silviculture Chair (with Kenny Fergusson) have organized 2 tours. Jim H. will speak with Janice Mulherin about time for working groups to get together and whether that is something they still want to do. Spencer M. asked about national working groups. It is still a topic they are wrestling with? Jim H. will follow up with Roger D. to find out the status of national working groups. Janice Mulherin has a working group session planned for next year’s meeting in New Hampshire. Dana H. suggested forest inventory programs as a topic for the next News Quarterly. Jim H. asked the EC if they had any data sets (inventory, cruise data, other data) they could supply for a math course he is teaching. Spencer M. recommended speaking with Ken L. Spencer M. and Randy S. will supply Jim H. with some data sets.

NESAF Website (Boyer): There is a fair amount of material on the calendar and website. Dave Hall contacted Deb B. about silviculture working group fields trips. Contact Deb B. for any events you would like to share. There has been great feedback on mass emailings. Mass emails are particularly helpful if information can be written and provided by the membership themselves rather than Deb B. having to do it. Only 1 person asked to be removed from the email list. George F. recommended Deb B. model the email after the e-forester if possible where an index informs the reader what is in the body of the email. JP B. forwarded an email to Deb B. from Connecticut Extension asking to have the NESAF link on their website.

Grants (Barsky): JP B. was not present. Dick Weyrick from NH asked for an extension. Most individuals associated with the NH grant are presently consumed with another project, Good Forestry in the Granite State. In the past, there have been votes for grant extensions. A motion was heard from Randy S. to extend the New Hampshire grant for another year; a second to the motion was heard from Spencer M. The question was called and the motion passed unanimously.

Ron L. brought up a website inquiry in which a school wanted a forester to come to them and assist with tree planting. What, if any, support or role should NESAF have. Paul D. said there is an existing infrastructure for this sort of assistance. There was discussion among the EC about NESAF supporting the cost of an annual tree planting. Schools could write in and apply on a competitive basis to receive the award. Ed OL. asked whether NESAF should encourage subunits to sponsor an event (tree planting, walk in the forest field day) on earth day to get NESAF more exposure. Andy F. suggested NESAF use the existing infrastructure that is out there. For example, National Arborday Foundation fills an urban forestry, tree planting niche and does it well. Why expand the scope of what NESAF does to overlap with that organization? Spencer M. was not convinced NESAF has the resources to support many events and would encourage following the model Ed OL. suggested of encouraging local chapters to do something. Randy S. agreed with Spencer M. and is not sure this is a role for NESAF. Spencer M. mentioned that if NESAF wants more exposure it could develop a marketing plan. Also, a role of NESAF could be sharing success stories from different subunits and the transferability of different models. If there are requests in the future for tree planting help or other events, the request will be passed on to the subunits.

Awards (Stone): Deadlines for awards is December 1. Randy S. will report back to the EC in September with Awards Committee recommendations.

Budget Report (Rousseau): Dana circulated a “NESAF Executive Committee Expenses Reimbursement Form.” EC members who want reimbursement, should fill out the form, attached receipts, and
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submit it to the Treasurer. The EC complemented Dana H. on the form. Dana H. will send out an electronic copy to the EC. George F. recommended that Dana H. look at the budget line items and have the reimbursement form reflect those line items. George F. suggested tabling the vote on the budget until next meeting in order to sort out some confusion over the leadership academy line items.

NESAF News Quarterly (Machinist): Maggie and Scott M. were not present.

State Reports (NESAF State Representatives):

ME - Spencer M: Spencer M. provided the following Maine update:
1. Spring/summer tours
   a. Northeast Forest Health Field Workshop - successful two-day field workshop with about 40 participants each day - focused on using silviculture to reduce risk from pest and pests and pathogen updates from around the northeast. We also visited Acadia National Park to learn about their forest health programs.
   b. GIS workshop - June 19
   c. Joint biomass/biodiversity tour proposed
2. Biomass guidelines - MESAF reviewed sent back considerable comments
   a. Jeff Benjamin, Rob Bryan spear headed this effort unrelated to SAF but they sent it to us as part of the stakeholder vetting process.
   b. MESAF decided - "Not supported as structured due to lack of scientific basis and lack of implementation recommendations."
   c. Revisions and new approach in the works.
3. Ken Laustsen chairing MESAF licensure committee - attending ME Board of Licensure meetings
4. Beginning initiative to revisit our old Forestry Practices: Goals and Standards - not sure where our policy committee stands but are trying to resurrect it.

RI - Paul D: The International Society of Arboriculture has an upcoming conference in Rhode Island. RI continues supporting Walk in the Forest Field Days and Biothon. On Arborday, seedlings were distributed through RI SAF.

SAF Council Report (Roger D.): Roger D. was not present but emailed Ron L. an update. Ron L. read the report to the EC. Two items were of interest. 1) The council instructed the Committee on Forest Policy to rewrite the "public regulation of private forest land" position statement so as to specifically include highgrading as an unintended consequence of forest regulation and to expand those regulatory activities to include all government actions affecting forestry including zoning regulations. This may not be exactly what we wanted but it does provide a link to a national position statement for the NESAF position statement. Roger D. has sent some suggestions to Pete H. for his consideration and hopes to talk with him some more on how to leverage more movement from national with the NESAF statement. 2) The strategic plan is approved and looks very good. Roger D. will send some examples of how Louisiana SAF incorporated the plan in their state planning and meetings shortly.

MA - Randy S: DCR appointed a technical steering committee as part of the Forest Futures Visioning Process. There is a moratorium on harvesting on state lands until the process is complete. No sales on state lands will be green certified until the certification process is complete. Clean up from the ice storm will start shortly with 75% of the cleanup costs covered by FEMA. There is a new invasives alert focused on mile-a-minute vine.
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NH - Pete H: The Program committee has one of 2 keynote speakers in place and 6 of 42 speakers in the technical sessions. All moderators are in place. The poster session will be digital as well as physical. Good Forestry in the Granite State should be in draft form sometime in July with hopes that it will be ready for publication this fall. There is a workshop coming up on the 18th of September.

CT - JP B: JP B. was not present.

VT - Kurt Z.: Kurt Z. was not present and Ed O'L. provided the following update for Vermont. Chief of the Forest Service, Abigail Kimbell, came to speak with UVM students. The forestry department within the state continues to get smaller in size. Jim H. mentioned that GMD met a few weeks back. They are planning for the summer meeting. There was a strong turnout from students at the previous meeting, which took place at Green Mountain College.

Canada - Don Floyd: (not present)

Chair Potpourri (Lemin): Ron L. shared a letter he received from Pete Hannah titled "An Idea for NESAF," dated March 2009. The letter inquired about providing or facilitating financial aid to individuals who want to obtain equipment to enable easier and more affordable harvesting on small woodlots, or new entrepreneurs who want to work in the forestry sector. The EC understood the sentiments behind the proposed loan program, but felt it was beyond the scope of NESAF’s mission.

Other items for the good of the order: There were no additional items for the good of the order.

Calendar: The NESAF EC will next meet on September 23, 2009 9:30am at the Conservation Center, Concord, New Hampshire.

Thursday, December 17, 2009: Concord, NH: 9:30am-3:00pm

A motion to adjourn was heard from Jim H. A second was heard from Ed O'L. The question was called and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 2:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Fast, Secretary