

## Short Rotation Woody Crops Operating Working Group Meeting

Held August 20, 2008 in Bloomington, Minnesota

### **Summary of highlights and action items.**

#### **Highlights**

Tim Volk was nominated to be the next SRWCOWG Steering Committee Chair.

The SUNY team will host the next SRWCOWG meeting in New York.

Jeff Wright of ArborGen and Bruce Arnold (a consultant representing 25x25) joined the SRWCOWG Steering Committee

A shortfall in income for the 2008 meeting was reported and strategies for handling it were discussed.

Lynn Wright will continue producing newsletters and supporting the SRWCOWG activities.

The University of Tennessee will become the new host for the website: [www.woodycrops.org](http://www.woodycrops.org)

#### **Action Items**

The new SRWCOWG Chair, Tim Volk, will issue formal letters of invitation to potential sustaining sponsors, ArborGen, Case New Holland and others.

Lynn Wright will: (1) contact all current SRWCOWG board members to determine their interest in remaining on the Steering Committee; (2) quickly get the minutes of the meeting to the Chair and all Steering Committee members; (3) work with the University of Tennessee to move the website and re-organize the contents.

A decision will be made after consultation with all Steering committee members regarding how much to contribute to defray the 2008 meeting cost overrun.

A proposal to send out an e-mail inviting membership in the SRWCOWG to the most recent membership list and possibly to all conference attendees will be discussed with all SRWCOWG steering committee members.

### **Detailed Steering Committee Report.**

The meeting started with some of the participants complimenting Bryce Stokes, Marilyn Buford and other meeting Steering Committee members on the great job that was done in organizing a very successful meeting.

## **Treasurer's Report**

Eric Vance of NCASI reported that there is currently \$13,008 in the SRWCOWG account. Sustaining Members will be invoiced in the Fall. No membership dues have been collected since the last meeting in 2006.

Bryce Stokes explained to new participants in the group that the SRWCOWG has 3 ways of raising funds. They include:

- (1) Administrative Sponsors – These sponsors provide either \$5000 cash annually or in-kind services worth that value.
- (2) Sustaining Sponsors – These are companies or groups willing to pay \$500 per year to provide operating funds (normally used to assist in organizing the biennial meetings).
- (3) Individual Membership – This has been set at \$10/year but the money has recently only been collected as part of the meeting registration fee. Efforts to actively collect the money has not proved to be worth the effort.

### **Status of SRWCOWG sponsorship and membership.**

The administrative sponsors currently include NCASI, the USDA Forest Service, and Oak Ridge National Laboratory and it is assumed that they will continue to provide cash or in-kind services.

The current sustaining sponsors were determined to include GreenWood Resources, Irrigation Mark and Peterson Corporation. Boise Cascade's status is an unknown, and Potlatch drops off the list since most of the plantation management staff of Potlatch are now employees of GreenWood Resources. It was reported by Bryce Stokes that Case New Holland was potentially interested in becoming a sustaining sponsor, Bryce will explore this further. Jeff Wright, a meeting participant, noted that his company, ArborGen, would likely be interested in being a sustaining sponsor, if formally invited.

No vehicle currently exists for collecting the \$10/member fee. In recent years it has been included as part of the registration fee. However that was not done this year due to the international scope and multi-purpose function of this meeting. Discussions among several of the steering committee members after the formal meeting lead to the proposal to send an e-mail to the SRWCOWG membership and possibly all participants in the conference soliciting membership fees. This will be discussed with all steering committee members.

### **Finance Report related to the Current Conference**

The meeting steering committee chair reported that the 2008 Short Rotation Crops International meeting is currently about \$33,000 in the hole since meeting registrations were less than anticipated. An effort will be made to negotiate with the hotel to reduce the cost. Due to the lack of air conditioning creating an uncomfortable meeting environment, it was felt that the hotel should be willing to reduce the costs. It was also reported that Dale Buchannon, USDA Undersecretary of USDA's Research, Education, and Economics mission area (and a meeting keynote speaker) promised to find \$10,000 in support for the meeting. The Department of Energy's Biomass Program will also be asked to contribute \$10,000. It was also requested that the SRWCOWG steering committee consider contributing some funds to assist in

covering meeting costs. Tim Volk made the suggestion that at least \$5,000 be contributed. No vote was taken at this time since a quorum of the steering committee was not present and representatives holding government offices could not vote. It was decided that the discussion on how much SRWCOWG could contribute would be conducted by e-mail with all members of the committee.

### **Nominations for Next Chairman of the SRWCOWG Steering Committee**

Since it is most convenient if the Steering Committee chair is also directly involved in hosting the next meeting, the discussion immediately digressed to consideration of potential sites for the next meeting in 2010 (or sooner if desired). Three different groups were willing to be 2010 meeting hosts. These included, the Tennessee contingent (Tim Rials of University of Tennessee together with Mark Downing of Oak Ridge National Laboratory); the New York/Syracuse University representative, Tim Volk; and the USDA, Rhinelander, Wisconsin representative, Ron Zealesny. The group concluded that it made most sense to meet in New York in 2010 to catch up on what was happening with respect to progress on willow research and commercialization. Given that, Tim Volk was nominated to be the next SRWCOWG Chair and all present voted in favor.

### **Discussion regarding content of the 2010 meeting**

Tim Volk wanted feedback from the group regarding whether an effort should be made to continue the tradition, instituted by the 2008 meeting, to include herbaceous crops research in the meeting reports and tours. Bryce Stokes recommended that herbaceous bioenergy crops be included in the next meeting, however, he noted that leaders in the herbaceous field had declined his invitation to join the SRWCOWG and thus become a formal part of the primary group organizing these meeting. Several participants expressed their pleasure at hearing about herbaceous crops research and progress at this meeting and also recommended their inclusion in future meetings.

### **Nominations for membership on the SRWCOWG Steering Committee**

Bryce reported that Steve Pottle, of Boise Cascade was interested in remaining on the committee but that Tom Houghtalling had retired from Minnesota Power Company and also wanted to retire from participation on the steering committee. There was some uncertainty about the interest of other steering committee members not present at this meeting. Lynn Wright volunteered to contact all current committee members and determine their interest. Two participants at the meeting expressed an interest in being on the steering committee. These included Jeff Wright of ArborGen, and Bruce Arnold, a private consultant representing the 25 x 25 organization. The group present was delighted to add these two new members to the steering committee.

### **WrightLink Consulting Services for 2009**

In recent past years, Lynn Wright, of WrightLink Consulting, has been maintaining the website [www.woodycrop.org](http://www.woodycrop.org) at a minimal level, preparing 1-2 newsletter per year, supporting conference planning, documenting and distributing minutes of meetings to steering committee members, and other odd jobs, such as responding to questions directed to the website. Lynn Wright offered to basically continue these services, but recommended that the website be moved off of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory server so that it could be more easily accessed for management either by herself or by others. She also recommended that the site be re-organized and brought more up to date with current website

technology. Tim Rials of the University of Tennessee made the offer to have the website managed as part of the SunGrant Initiative activity at the University of Tennessee. Lynn agreed that this would be desirable and scaled back her proposal to one of contributing materials to the website, preparing two SRWCOWG newsletters, and providing other support to the Steering Committee Chair as needed for \$2000 or less. The exact amount would depend upon actual work performed at a rate that is considerably less than her normal consulting rate. The group present supported Lynn's continuation in this role. For record purposes, Lynn will prepare a more detailed proposal for Tim Volk, the incoming Chair, for his consideration and that of the steering committee. An invoice for 2 years of work, including support to the current meeting, was submitted amounting to \$3400.

**Participants: Steering Committee Members**

Marilyn Buford – USFS, Headquarters

Eric Vance (for Eric Schilling) – NCASI

Mark Downing (for Bob Perlack) – Oak Ridge National Laboratory

Tim Volk – State University of New York, Syracuse

Bryce Stokes – USFS, Headquarters

Lynn Wright – WrightLink Consulting

Bill Berguson – Natural Resources Research Institute, U of M

**Participants: SRWCOWG members or visitors**

Ray Miller – Michigan State University

John Kitching - PRI Nursery Company

Bruce Arnold – Consultant, representing 25 x 25

Ron Zealesny – USFS, Rhinelander

Tim Rials – University of Tennessee, Forestry Department

Micheal Labrecque - Plant Biology Research Institute, Montreal

Larry Smart - State University of New York, Syracuse

Dan McDonald – Phenotype Screening Corporation