

## **Short Rotation Woody Crops Operations Working Group**

### **Steering Committee Meeting – October 19, 2010**

#### **Syracuse, New York**

##### Participants

Ron Zalesny, John Kitchen, Jeff Wright, Gary Kling, Dalia Abbas, Larry Abrahamson, J. Peter Hall, Ray Miller, Bruce Arnold, Tim Volk, Marilyn Buford, Lynn Wright. Tim Volk chaired the meeting, Lynn Wright took notes.

##### Topic 1: 2010 meeting plans

Tim Volk shared that Mark Downing Team Leader in the Biomass Group at Oak Ridge National Laboratory and Tim Rials, Director of the Center for Renewable Carbon at the University of Tennessee have offered to jointly organize the next meeting in the Knoxville/Oak Ridge area in 2012.

Since neither Mark nor Tim could attend the meeting, Lynn Wright offered insights on reasons why the Tennessee location should be of interest to the SRWCOWG. A large amount of research on bioenergy feedstocks and conversions technologies that could be of interest to the SRWCOWG membership is being performed at both institutions. More information on ongoing programs could be found at the following websites: <http://www.ornl.gov/sci/bioenergy/index.shtml> <http://www.utbioenergy.org>

For nearby field tours, the most obvious option is Genera Energy's demonstration cellulosic ethanol pilot facility being operated as a joint partnership between DuPont Danisco and the University of Tennessee. Also located nearby is a network of nearly 4000 acres of switchgrass being grown as a feedstock for the biorefinery. The opportunity exists for pre and post meeting tours of wood crop plantation plantings and/or installations using wood for biopower or biofuels in several nearby southeastern states.

Marilyn Buford offered her opinion that accepting the invitation to Knoxville would be a good idea, and she supported the idea of broadening the meeting to include herbaceous crops as well as wood crops. Support for both proposals was unanimous.

##### Topic 2: Financial report.

The group's treasurer, Eric Schilling was unable to be present. Tim Volk offered that while he does not yet have all the details on the meeting expenses, income will exceed expenses and funds should be left over to give the group some working capital. Industry and government supporters of the group provided \$10,000. Registration fees from approximately 100 participants obviously helped to make the meeting a financial success.

##### Topic 3: Meeting Information Distribution.

The SUNY-ESF meeting support team will put all presentations (authorized by the authors for web publication) on the SUNY-ESF outreach site and provide relevant files or links to Lynn Wright for adding

to the SRWCOWG web site. A list of all participants will be made available to all attendees. [Follow-up Note: news highlight on the www.woodycrops.org homepage links to more explanation with an imbedded link to the SUNY-ESF outreach website.](#)

#### Topic 4: Steering Committee Members

Tim Volk suggested that the industry and research organization sponsors of the current SRWCOWG biennial meeting be recognized as sustaining members. New sponsors will be invited to provide a representative to the Steering Committee. Tim will follow up with the industry sponsors to determine who from their companies should be included on the Steering Committee and also check with people in question from the previous list of SRWCOWG Steering Committee members.

Membership on the Steering Committee was offered to anyone present at the current steering committee meeting. Ray Miller, a woody crops researcher at Michigan State University and, John Kitchen of PRT (a Canadian Forest Nursery Company) expressed interest in being on the steering committee.

Bruce Arnold suggested the idea of inviting some NGO's to be on the steering committee. Getting their perspective would be very valuable. The group needs to start discussing life cycle analysis. This could be a session in the next meeting.

Lynn Wright and Tim Volk will work together to update the Steering Committee list, share it with current members, and get the new list loaded on the woodycrops.org website. [Follow-up: A new list has been created and shared with Tim.](#)

#### Topic 5: Election of Steering Committee Chair.

Mark Downing and Tim Rials were nominated to be Co-chairs of the next steering committee. All present agreed. This implies responsibility for the organization of the next biennial meeting to be held in 2012.

It was assumed that Eric Schilling would continue to be the treasurer for the group, using the services provided by NCASI to perform that task. Lynn Wright will continue to be the secretary and web-site content provider for the group, donating a significant portion of her time to the effort.

#### Topic 6: SRWCOWG Website

Lynn Wright proposed that the group purchase the woodycrops.com website as well as the woodycrops.org website. The group supported that proposal provided the cost was similar to the woodycrops.org cost (~\$125.00 for 5 years). Lynn Wright will investigate the cost and if higher than assumed, will get back with the Committee on that proposed action. [Follow-up Note; By the time Lynn decided to take action on securing the woodycrops.com website name, some other group had already purchased it although advertising a willingness to sell it \(at an undisclosed price\). No action will be taken since searches on the term "woodycrops" currently lists several of the woodycrops.org website pages at the top of the search results.](#)

Tim requested that logos of all sustaining member be included on the web site and that website links be updated to include all sustaining member websites. It was discussed that different sponsorship levels may suggest a need to offer differing levels of attention on the website. Lynn suggested that the home page of the website be changed every 3 months to feature one of the major sponsoring companies. [Follow-up note: The website links were updated in March 2011 with note made of all of the sustaining sponsors on the Links webpage.](#)

Lynn noted that since the last meeting in 2008, the University of Tennessee had done an excellent job of redesigning and hosting the SRWCOWG website. However, updating of the website using the Microsoft Content Management System has proved to be a little more complicated than hoped – particularly since updates only occur occasionally. Lynn requested whether any other member of the Steering Committee would like to assume responsibility for adding updates to the SRWCOWG website. None volunteered. Lynn will try to get more training from UT but if difficulties with website updating continue, Lynn will report back to the Committee and seek guidance on finding some help with performing this function. Tim volunteered that the outreach people at SUNY will prepare the information to be distributed from this meeting in a way that should be easy to add to the website. [Follow-up note: Lynn Wright reported that she has overcome the updating problems with the purchase of a new computer and updated software and is willing to continue updating the website for the SRWCOWG as an administrative supporter to the organization](#)

#### Open discussion on other topics

Questions arose about our interaction with the US and Canadian Poplar Council. Tim Volk said we try to coordinate with both, but that the US Poplar Council has not been active lately. Several meetings have been coordinated with the Canadian Poplar Council. Tim Volk suggested that the SRWCOWG think about actually holding one of our meetings in Canada in conjunction with the Canadian Poplar Council.”

There was uncertainty among those present as to whether CPC meets annually or every two years. It was noted that Cees van Oosten’s work on weed control and his sharing of that information has been a big help to keeping the Canadian Poplar Council active. Tim Volk agreed that more synergy between groups would be great and recommended that the Steering Committee follow up on building better connections. [Follow-up Note. All attendees of the 2010 SRWCOWG conference received, in early February 2011, an announcement of the Canadian Poplar Council survey regarding their website and announcement of a fall meeting in Edmonton together with the US Poplar Council.](#)

Regarding the US Poplar Council, Ron Zalesny reported that Randy Rousseau was Chair and that Rick Hall was the secretary last time the US Poplar Council was active. Ron has talked with both persons about helping to re-invigorate the US Poplar Council. Ron Kitchen suggested it would be great if there was only one NA group supporting development and deployment of woody crops, he would like to see the groups become one larger group – or at least work very closely.

Some thoughts (unattributed) shared in the discussion:

“There is no single image for biomass like there is for wind and solar.”

“To get the message across we have to be politically astute and not politically stupid.”

“We need to reward innovation instead of penalizing people.”

“We need to elect the right people who will implement the policies that will support investment in bioenergy.”

“Our young people don’t understand where we get oil from. We need to tweet energy facts or biomass facts to our young people.”

“There is a need to develop a recognizable image for biomass that grade school kids (and politicians) can understand.”

Marilyn Buford stated that the current Secretary of Ag really does understand biomass. Energy Security, Environmental Quality, Economic Opportunity and Security are the reasons why the government (USDA) is interested in supporting alternative energy. She explained that the focus on biofuels (as opposed to biopower) is because the US has plenty of sources to make power but no substitutes for liquid fuels.

#### Next Steps

Tim Volk and Lynn Wright will finalize the minutes, Tim make contacts and get back with Lynn on current Steering Committee members. Lynn will get minutes out to the Steering Committee and the minutes will be put on the web site. [Follow-up: Minutes were sent to the Steering Committee on March 8, 2011.](#)