



NGRAC Meeting – December 21, 2022, Meeting Minutes

National Genetics Resources Advisory Council Members Present: Dr. Jim McFerson (Chair), Mr. Preston Hardison, Dr. Paul Gepts, Dr. Terrence Tiersch, Dr. Sarada Krishnan, Dr. John Buchanan, Dr. Stephen Kresovich, Dr. Margaret Smith, Dr. David Butruille and Dr. Katherine Rainey – (10)

Members Absent: Dr. Chad Dechow, Dr. Amir Ibrahim, and Dr. Steven Kerns – (3)

Ex-Officio(s) Present: Dr. Peter Bretting and Dr. Harvey Blackburn

NAREEE Board Staff Present: Danielle Farley and Michele Simmons

Guests Present: None

I. Welcome, Roll Call of Council Members, Ex-Officio Members, Other Attendees, and Quorum Check

The roll was taken, and the quorum was met at 1:06 p.m. Danielle Farley introduced Michele Simmons to the members on the call. The Council welcomed her on board. Michele is the acting Program Support Assistance for the NAREEE office on a detail from the REE front office. She will provide the NAREEE office with administrative support for helping to package work products, nomination packages, and other administrative duties.

II. Approval of November 2022 Meeting Minutes

The November meeting minutes were moved and seconded, and all were found in favor.

III. Remarks from NGRAC Chair

Dr. McFerson noted that Dr. Ann Marie Thro passed away. She was an NGRAC ex-officio member and was very impactful in her career, especially in the plant breeding community. He will work with Council to draft and upload a remembrance document to the NGRAC website.

Follow-up on work products have been ongoing. Work products seem to be where they were September 2022.

What are the next steps? The delays on where we are with the work products are somewhat frustrating. Dr. McFerson suggested that a follow-up memo be sent to Cikena Reed, USDA Management Officer, with a query on the slow progress and current status of the NGRAC reports. Dr. Margaret Smith agrees that a follow-up memo be sent to Cikena Reed.



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IV. NPGS Strategic Plan Update

Dr. Bretting didn't have more to report about moving the plan through the clearance review. Kate informed him that the Congressional Liaison Office in ARS should/would be involved in the NPGS plan since it's a congressionally directed product.

Dr. McFerson stated that the Animal Report is posted on the NGRAC website. The other reports should be made available, along with the NPGS Strategic plan report so stakeholders can access the work products. Should the NGRAC report on the NPGS plan be public before the plan is public? Future product has gone through necessary approval so future reports should be posted without much delay. Dr. Margaret Smith- Posting the NPGS Report will have no context if the NPGS Strategic Plan isn't posted.

Dr. Katherine Rainey – Testified last month at a Senate Hearing on research funding for the Farm Bill. The Senate wanted someone who was involved in National Association of Plant Breeders. Her testimony was put together in collaboration with the American Seed Trade Association (ATSA). The NPGS plan was mentioned, with the hope it will be released soon. Council - Is there anything the Council can do to direct funding in the Farm Bill towards implementation? Dr. McFerson – In our role, the Council can't do much, but stakeholders can be at the table regarding funding in the Farm Bill towards implementation.

Indigenous Seed Sovereignty

Mr. Preston Hardison - Establishing a global mechanism for digital sequence information has been approved. He will update the Council at a later date. Dr Gepts alerted the Council to a recent release from a White House office regarding Seeds and Sovereignty. Mr. Hardison stated he didn't know there was such guidance on seed and sovereignty. It's much better to have guidance coming out of the White House as official policy. Having been through the Digital Sequence Information process, there needs to be a lot more thinking about seed sovereignty. There's little discussion on overall protection of traditional knowledge. Dr. Paul Gepts – There is a lot of traditional knowledge that exists among farmers that we don't realize and that's not reported. How do we document that information?

Based on input from Dr. Bretting, an email was forwarded by Danielle to NGRAC about an ARS project that is supporting indigenous seed sovereignty in the Northern Great Plains area with Tribal colleges. Seed sovereignty investment is through ARS.

V. Discussion on Agenda Development and Next Steps for Upcoming Face-to-Face Meeting

Dr. McFerson opened the floor for suggestions/thoughts for the April 2023 Meeting to be held in Ft. Collins, CO.

1. Agenda supports the Council and the activities going forward. Would like to see outward facing things that could be done, not just strategic plans. Would like to discuss what's exciting and where are we headed?



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2. There are 3 ½ months before the meeting. Strategy is in the agenda, but is there something technical that can be done between now and then and maybe addressed at the meeting?
3. Folks at Ft. Collins ARS & CSU are committed to participating at the April NGRAC meeting.
4. Suggested to start brainstorming on what our products should be and the bigger strategic planning questions early in the meeting. Then come back later in the meeting for follow-up discussion.
5. Suggested that Council members do homework and come with 1-3 topics of their most important topics and ideas prior to the April 2023 meeting. Maybe discuss at the next couple of NGRAC meetings.
6. Discussed that each member come up with a 5 minute presentation on one important issue for committee to work on. Have a couple of people pitch 5 minutes on their topic at the next 3 NGRAC monthly meetings. Members could take a vote for the top 3 topics to consider for discussion in April.
7. Possible tour of the Botanical Garden on the afternoon of Monday, April 10th. Dr. Sarada Krishnan has offered to look into the logistics for a tour.

VII. Final Remarks and Adjourn

Danielle or Kate will provide updates at the next meeting on the status of the work products.

The meeting adjourned at 1:54 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 18th.