



**NGRAC Meeting – May 17, 2023, Meeting Minutes**

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

**Members Absent:** Dr. John Buchanan, Dr. Chad Dechow, Dr. Steven Kerns – 3

**Ex-Officio Present:** Dr. Peter Bretting – 1

**Ex-Officio Absent:** Dr. Harvey Blackburn - 1

**NAREEE Board Staff Present:** Ms. Kate Lewis, NAREEE Board Executive Director/Designated Federal Officer (DFO) and Ms. Michele Simmons, Program Support Specialist

**Guests Present:** Dr. Gayle Volk, USDA-ARS, Dr. Clarice Coyne, USDA-ARS

**I. Welcome, Roll Call, Quorum Check, and approval of April 2023 meeting minutes.**

DFO Lewis welcomed everyone, took roll call, and noted that the quorum was met. She asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from April 19th. Dr. McFerson had a few minor edits. He will send DFO Lewis his edits for Michele to incorporate into the draft of the April minutes. DFO Lewis asked if we could approve the April minutes since there were only minor edits and no significant changes. Dr. Smith moved to approve the minutes. No opposed. All was in favor. Michele will work with the web team to get the April minutes posted to the website after the edits are complete.

DFO Lewis asked if there were any questions or edits for the NGRAC April In-person meeting minutes that was held in Ft. Collins, CO., April 11-12, 2023. Dr. McFerson had a few revisions which were already incorporated on the draft. The minutes were approved. No opposed. DFO Lewis will send the minutes to the NAREEE Advisory Board Members for review prior to their June 2023 meeting. The minutes will be posted to the NAREEE website if the Board approves them at the In-person meeting in June.

DFO Lewis provided an update on the FY23 new/reappointed Council Members. The nomination package with the candidate slates for the Board, Committee, and Subcommittee (C/S) vacancies are with the Office of the Secretary. She was informed by USDA's Office of the Executive Secretariat that the candidate slate could hopefully, be selected any day now.

DFO Lewis stated that five of the FY23 Member's terms will expire the end of September FY2023. The Members are Dr. John Buchanan, Dr. Chad Dechow, Dr. Preston Hardison, Dr. Steven Kerns, and Dr. Margaret Smith. If they wish to be reappointed, applications are being accepted from now until May 31, 2023. Further details on how to apply are posted on the NAREEEAB website under the Applications page. Michele and DFO Lewis are available by phone or via email if there are any question on reapplying.

DFO Lewis stated we have no updates on the four Agricultural Research Service (ARS) reports and the National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS) recommendations. We are continuously checking with the USDA Committee Management Officer (CMO) for updates.

Dr. Tiersch – Will you explain what that means?

DFO Lewis – The reports and recommendations are currently in the Secretary's office for review. We work through the CMO for updates on briefing memos and nomination packages that are routed to the Secretary's office for review and approval.

Dr. Tiersch – Would it help if the Council made a request to inquire about the status?

DFO Lewis - I think that's a great suggestion. Dr. Jacobs-Young recently met with the American Seed Association. They asked her about the status of the NPGS plan. Stakeholders are continuously asking about the status and release of the NPGS plan.

Dr. Bretting – At last month's NGRAC meeting, I reported that I and other folks from ARS briefed the Office of Management Budget (OMB) about the NPGS plan. They had questions about the budgetary figures. The OMB replied to us and asked that we insert a statement that the cost cited in the plan are estimates and don't constitute a USDA request for funding. I went through the 4 documents and where there was a significant mention of budget, I inserted the statement that "the plans are estimates and don't constitute a USDA request for funding". The edited document was returned to OMB. We are waiting to hear back from OMB whether they will clear or not. If they clear the plan, the next step would be to return it back to Secretary Vilsack for submittal to Congress.

Dr. McFerson – I can draft a memo together asking for a status report on a long-standing item.

Dr. McFerson – I'm participating in the NAREEE Advisory Board Meeting in June. I can share the issue with the Board. DFO Lewis- who should I send the memo to.

DFO Lewis – I think you and I should meet with Dr. Jefferson-Moore when we're at the Board meeting in June to talk about a plan on how to address this issue.

Dr. McFerson – I'll make some notes, will draft the memo, and will report back to the Council.

Dr. McFerson – Have you received any input from the organizations that Dr. Kresovich and I submitted regarding outreach for the application process for the Board, C/S?

DFO Lewis – We received updates from Sage that is assisting us with outreach for applications for the NAREE Advisory Board, the Citrus Disease Subcommittee, the NGRAC, and the Specialty Crop Committee. Psychological Society of America, America Genetic Association, Ecological Society of America, Insect, Council for Agriculture Science and Technology, Intertribal Agricultural Council, Woman Food and Ag Network, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, and Food Tank, have all posted the call for applications. There has been broad outreach for the request of applications.

Dr. McFerson – Was there a contact person that folks would reach out too?

DFO Lewis - Interested applicants will be directed to the [nareee@usda.gov](mailto:nareee@usda.gov) email address.

Dr. McFerson – He thanked DFO Lewis for the update. Dr. McFerson asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

## **II. Remarks from Dr. Jim McFerson, NGRAC Chair**

Dr. McFerson – He will attend the NAREEE Advisory Board meeting in June to provide information on FY23/FY24 updates and projects for the NGRAC.

## **III. Discussion and next steps from face-to-face meeting (April 10-12, 2023)**

Dr. Butruille – Gave an update on the Deployment Document kickoff. The Deployment Team met on April 22<sup>nd</sup> to put their ideas on paper. Additional Members are welcome to assist with ongoing efforts. The paper will be ready to share with the group around version 5 or 6. Dr. Butruille will schedule a follow-up meeting. He's happy to share the current white paper with any of the Council Members.

Dr. McFerson asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

Dr. McFerson – Noted that DFO Lewis shared the USDA Science Research Strategy document that was recently released. As this document is developed, we have some complementary aligning language in the overall strategy. The ones that are specific to the NGRAC are plant regeneration, identifying and responding to plant, animal, infectious diseases, and pest. These are meant to last over a 3-year period.

Dr. McFerson asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

Dr. McFerson would like to review some of the other initiatives. He asked Dr. Hardison for an update on the Tribal report.

Dr. Hardison - He's working on the report and is making progress.

Dr. McFerson would like to meet with Drs. Smith and Krishnan regarding the Crop Vulnerability Statements initiative. Any other Members that are interested in joining are welcome to attend to close the loop on that project.

Dr. McFerson - We talked about having an ad-hoc group of the Council to show what we're using for orientation, onboarding, outreach activities.

DFO Lewis – We would be happy to show the materials that we created with Sage Communications for the Board, C/S Members.

Dr. McFerson – Another initiative we need to follow up on is to look for other federal agencies that have been ad hoc member of the group.

Another topic for discussion is to have two in person meetings a year. We need to understand the travel and logistics. What site would work for the Council?

DFO Lewis – The Committee and Subcommittee Chairs were invited to the NAREEE Advisory Board's meeting to provide an update on their FY23 work products and what they are planning to work on in FY24. She will forward the final agenda soon. Everyone is welcome to attend in person or virtually.

Dr. McFerson asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

#### IV. **Wrap-up/Adjourn**

Dr. McFerson thanked Dr. Volk and Ms., Coyne for keeping engaged with the NGRAC.

The meeting adjourned at 1:41 p.m. EDT

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 21, 2023, 1 p.m. EDT.

**Acronyms:** DFO: Designated Federal Official; NLGRP: National Laboratory for Genetic Resource Preservation; NAREEEAB: National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board; NPGS: National Plant Germplasm System; OBPA: Office of Budget & Program Analysis; OCS: Office of the Chief Scientist; OGC: Office of the General Counsel; OCR: Office of Congressional Relations.