



NGRAC Meeting – March 20, 2024 -- Minutes

National Genetics Resources Advisory Council Members Present: Dr. Jim McFerson (Chair), Dr. David Butruille, Dr. Paul Gepts, Dr. Stephen Kresovich, Dr. Sarada Krishnan, Dr. Mike Lomas, Dr. Margaret Smith, Dr. Troy Ott, and Dr. Terrence Tiersch - 9

Members Absent: 0

Ex-Officio Present: Drs. Harvey Blackburn and Gayle Volk - 2

Guest: Dr. Sarah Bodenstein, Postdoctoral Researcher, Louisiana State University

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

I. Welcome, Roll Call, Quorum Check, Minutes, and Updates

DFO Lewis welcomed the group, took roll call, and noted that the quorum was met.

Ms. Simmons asked if there were any revisions to the February minutes. There were a few edits and comments, which DFO Lewis incorporated. Dr. McFerson pointed out that some valuable commentary from Paul Gepts and Bert Cramer was provided in separate emails and shared via email, but those comments were made after the meeting itself was adjourned, so were not actually minutes of the meeting. The suggestion was made to include the information as a separate document and shared with the Council, which Dr. McFerson agreed to prepare. Ms. Simmons asked for a motion to approve the minutes. All were in favor. Ms. Simmons will post the February minutes on the NGRAC website.

DFO Lewis welcomed Dr. Bodenstein and asked her to introduce herself to the Council. She gave a brief overview. Dr. Bodenstein is assisting Dr. Tiersch with the Deployment Initiative.

II. Old Business

DFO Lewis congratulated Dr. Margaret Smith for her re-appointment from the FY24 candidate slate by Secretary Vilsack.

DFO Lewis talked about recruiting strategies to obtain new NGRAC members. The NGRAC will have vacancies to fill since some of the members terms will expire at the end of FY24. Dr. McFerson asked if there is a link or document that explains the recruitment process. DFO Lewis said there is document that describes the recruitment process. She will send the

recruitment information to the Council for further discussion at the next NGRAC meeting in April.

Deployment document update – Dr. Butruille stated he is pleased with the feedback provided from Council Members. It has been almost one year since the initial development of the document, which is now at version #11. The document is getting close to a draft for full Council review. He welcomes additional comments. Dr. McFerson thanked Dr. Bodenstein for her input on the document. He is looking forward to working with other scientists that might be involved.

Tribal Document update - Due to Dr. Preston Hardison's leaving the Council in September 2023, the Tribal document is on hold. DFO Lewis and Dr. Volk are working with the USDA Office of Tribal Relations to seek connections in the tribal communities. They are working on a PowerPoint that outlines the next steps for assisting with moving forward with the Tribal document and other issues where tribal input is essential. The PowerPoint should be ready to discuss at the next NGRAC in April.

NPGS Crop Vulnerability Statements – Dr. McFerson asked the Council if they had an opportunity to review the comments and revisions he incorporated from some of the Council Members prior to the March meeting. He asked if they were ready to vote on the document to make it final. Dr. Tiersch recommended that the Council as a whole go over each of the 8 listed recommendations for the common issues across crops in the four Quad Chart thematic areas. The Council members agreed. They reviewed and discussed two of the recommendations. To cover the remaining agenda items, DFO Lewis suggested that the Council review the NPGS Crop Vulnerability Statement and discuss the six remaining items at the next meeting in April.

III. New Business

Planning the FY24 in-person public meeting – The Council Members discussed setting a date and location for the 2024 in-person meeting. Dr. Tiersch noted that he can host the Council in Baton Rouge. Dr. Gepts also stated he can host the group at the University of California Davis in August. The preferred dates for the NGRAC in-person meeting would be sometime in the week of August 12. There will be a meeting of the USDA NPGS Plant Germplasm Operations Committee meeting and Curator Workshop on August 13-15. The Council could plan to have a joint 1–2-hour session with the USDA NPGS group. DFO Lewis stated the Council can move further in planning once we have a better understanding if there will be another continuing solution or an approved FY24 budget.

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

IV. Wrap-up/Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:08 p.m. EDT.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 17, 2024, at 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.