



NGRAC Meeting – June 26, 2024, Meeting Minutes

National Genetics Resources Advisory Council Members Present: Dr. Jim McFerson (Chair), Dr. David Butruille, Dr. Paul Gepts, Dr. Sarada Krishnan, Dr. Mike Lomas, and Dr. Terrence Tiersch – 6

Members Absent: – Drs. Stephen Kresovich, Troy Ott, and Margaret Smith - 3

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

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 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 April minutes. There were none. The minutes from the April 2024 meeting were approved after a motion and a second motion. All approved the minutes, and none opposed. The April agenda and minutes will be posted to the NGRAC website.

Ms. Simmons stated that the May NGRAC meeting wasn't an official meeting. She took notes for the Council's records. Therefore, the May minutes didn't require a vote for approval.

Remarks from Dr. Jim McFerson, NGRAC Chair

Dr. McFerson welcomed the Members. He had no remarks this month.

II. Current Business

Strategy, process, and timeline for recruiting new NGRAC members

DFO Lewis discussed the overall goal of recruiting scientists to work as volunteer members of NGRAC. She expects to target individuals who are interested in working collaboratively, represent diverse stakeholders, and will actively contribute to NGRAC activities. She stated that the Council needs to recruit to fill four vacancies for Members' terms that will end September 2025. DFO Lewis recommended that from now until the end of this calendar year the NGRAC Members as well as the NAREEE office staff should increase engagement with stakeholders and identify potential applicants.

DFO Lewis will reach out to genetic resources senior advisors within USDA. She gave an overview of the application/recruitment cycle. One component is the posting the official public Federal Register in early January that details dates and deadlines of vacant memberships. Another component is the posting of vacancy details on the NAREEE Board's website with required application information if eligible members wish to reapply. Applications will be accepted from January to the end of May. The applications are reviewed, the candidate slate is submitted to the REE Under Secretary's office for review/approval, and then routed to the Secretary's office for review/approval. The goal is to have the candidate slates and vacancies approved by August or September for onboarding new Members by October 1st.

Dr. McFerson stated that he has a list of federal agencies that are suggested to provide ex officio members and will share that with DFO Lewis. He also encouraged the Council to think about folks in their network who might be interested in serving on the NGRAC. He asked DFO Lewis if she had the professional societies list that Dr. Kresovich provided? DFO Lewis stated that she has the list of names that Dr. Kresovich provided. She will use the list to inform folks of membership vacancies. DFO Lewis stated that REE's Communication office will also send out a press release of the application process and membership vacancies.

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

Tribal Document

Dr. McFerson has engaged with Mr. Edwin Kitzes, a new NAREEE Board Member. He works at a tribal technical college in Bismarck, North Dakota. Mr. Kitzes has agreed to provide some input on potential NGRAC members who could represent tribal interests. He is also providing feedback on the NGRAC Tribal document. Dr. McFerson will provide updates on the report as they become available.

Dr. Volk stated that she can reach out to the Tribal Relations Office (OTR) to see who might be able to assist with the tribal document. DFO Lewis said that she is also working with the OTR. The OTR sends out a monthly newsletter and serves as a single point of contact for tribal issues. She will share the newsletter with the NAREEE Board, Committees, and Subcommittees when it is published. This is an opportunity to identify potential recruits at the Subcommittee and Committee level.

NPGS Crop Vulnerability Report

Dr. McFerson gave an update on the Crop Vulnerability Report. He described feedback on the report that the NAREEE Advisory Board provided at their June meeting, which he attended virtually. He asked for input on a revised version of the NPGS Crop Vulnerability Report the Council had previously approved. He indicated he tried to address NAREEE feedback in the revised report. There was a call for a motion and a second. All approved the revised NPGS Crop Vulnerability Report, and none opposed.

The revised draft report will be forwarded to the NAREEE Advisory Board for review and approval.

Deployment Document

Dr. Butruille gave an update on the Deployment document version 15. He received a few comments and edits prior to the June NGRAC meeting. Dr. Butruille went through the comments and edits with the Council. There were a few additional edits that were

made during the meeting. He incorporated the edits and will send out version 16 for the Council to review. The goal is for the Council to approve the Deployment document at the July meeting and then forward it to the NAREEE Advisory Board for their review and approval.

Interagency Aquaculture Initiative

Dr. Blackburn informed the Council that developing the white paper is moving forward. He should an updated draft in September 2024. He indicated he did not expect further updates would be needed until then.

III. New Business

Council work product/recommendations follow up

Dr. McFerson discussed new business Council work product recommendations for FY25. He has been talking with DFO Lewis about next steps forward. There wasn't enough time in the meeting for further discussion. The Council will talk about work product and recommendations at the next meeting in July. Dr. McFerson asked if there were any questions. There were none.

IV. Wrap-up/Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:09 pm ET.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 17, 2024, at 1 p.m. ET.

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.