**Minutes of the *Pyrus* Crop Germplasm Committee (CGC) Meeting**

**February 18, 2013**

**Hood River Inn, Hood River, Oregon**

**Attendees**: Richard Bell, Amit Dhingra, Jim Doornik, Todd Einhorn, Rachel Elkins (Chair), Kate Evans (Secretary), Chris Hendrickson, Jim Koempel, Tyson Koepke, Des Layne, Jim McFerson, Brent Milne, Chuck Peters, Joseph Postman, Barbara Reed, Harold Schell, Peter Shearer, Tim Smith, David Sugar, Fred Valentine, Dave Weil, John Wells, Chuck Leslie, Mike Willett. ***By phone***: Margarita Bateman, Mark Bohning, Peter Bretting, Chuck Ingels, Gary Kinard

The minutes from the February 21, 2012 meeting were approved after an amendment to distinguish those present by phone only. They will be posted on the CGC website as soon as possible. Minutes from the 1st Joint Apple, *Prunus* and *Pyrus* CGC meeting in Miami, August 3, 2012 were also circulated for comment.

**Membership update and acceptance of nominees**

A reference document outlining the CGC roles and responsibilities was circulated.

Nominee responses were as follows: Lynnell Brandt (advisor rather than member), Doug Hemly (no response), Ray Schmitten (agreed), Frank Dellamano (agreed), Charlie Embree has retired (Suzanne Blatt might be a possible Ag Canada member), Ken Johnson (agreed), Dorrie Main (no response), Terence Robinson (no response), Chris Walsh (agreed).

Rachel Elkins will inform the successful nominees, follow up on those with no response and contact Michael Kauzlaric (Vineland) as a potential nominee.

**NPGS and NGRL reports (circulated) – Bretting/Kinard/Bohning**

Highlights of the report from Peter Bretting included the update of the USDA plant hardiness zones and the current budget issues. The federal government is being funded under a continuing resolution until the end of March, but with a possible mandatory 5% budget sequestration which may happen March 1. The National program is still under review (the *Pyrus* program did quite well ) – the CGCs were requested to please serve as reviewers if asked. The International Treaty of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture has yet to be considered by the Senate and only a few of the required 40 countries have approved the proposed biological diversity benefit sharing. National Genetic Resources Advisory Council members have been appointed but have not met yet. There was a large increase in the number of accessions of horticultural crops that were sent out last year, especially specialty crops. There was some discussion about where to find bioinformatics support information (only one sentence is included in the action plan). Regarding exchange of germplasm with China, no progress can be made until the new Chinese government is established as a change in status of organizations is expected.

Gary Kinard provided an update on GRIN Global; feedback is being used to improve v1.0 (Dec 2011) software. Version 1.5 was released on the project website 2 months ago and another version is due in a couple of weeks. No final date has been fixed for Global Live but the expectation is within fiscal year 2013.

Mark Bohning thanked the group for service on the CGC and for using the NPGS telephone link for this meeting.

**2012 CGC Web Chair Conference Call, November 15, 2012 – Elkins and Bohning**

Much of the content of the Chair conference call had already been covered in this meeting. Powerpoint presentations are available on the CGC home page (2012 CGC chairs program) – <http://www.ars-grin.gov/npgs/cgc2012mtg.html>

**Acquisition/importation issues for NCGR - Bateman**

Margarita Bateman reported that APHIS had released 439 accessions this year. She suggested the group read the papers circulated by Joseph Foster (APHIS program director) as guidelines for release from APHIS are included. APHIS will only send budwood now, not rooted cuttings, and in order to reduce the amount of germplasm they are holding, they are requesting permission to destroy material from importers once the material is established elsewhere.

James Susaimuthu has now changed positions at WSU Prosser and will be part time at the Clean Plant Center (CPC) until June. The CPC will be juggling his responsibilities until the current funding situation is resolved.

**NCGR Corvallis report - Postman**

Three handouts summarizing the germplasm collection were circulated with the meeting agenda. New accessions have been established from e.g. Albania, Pakistan and Russia (a list is available on request). Joseph Postman summarized the distributions noting the growing emphasis on perry pear requests. The SSR fingerprinting (using the ECPGR SSR set) is continuing through the collection in the Bassil lab. Data is now available for comparison of accessions with the UK National collection at Brogdale. SSR fingerprinting of the OHxF series has revealed that ‘Farmingdale’ was not the pollen parent, in fact ‘Bartlett’ appears to be the parent of some of the series e.g. OHxF87. Further DNA analysis is on-going with Fort Collins looking at wild pear relatives (of Middle Eastern origin). For the Quince collection, 20 clones for propagation testing in layer beds were selected following the cold hardiness testing; these are also now being put into tissue culture for grafted tree production.

Peter Shearer asked about information on pest resistance of the collection. Little information is available however Postman suggested that maybe a trained eye walking the collection would be a useful first step. Testing accessions for resistance might be a possible use for an evaluation grant.

Rachel Elkins congratulated Postman for the recent article in the *Good Fruit Grower* about the collection.

**Update on the U.S. Pyrus breeding programs (Bell and Evans; Elkins on California discussions)**

Richard Bell advised the CGC that the ARS committee had approved the public release of ‘Gem’. budwood should be available this spring. The advanced scion trial planting is due this spring. Bell’s CRIS, which is currently awaiting approval, now contains rootstock evaluation and breeding; he hopes to evaluate some semi-dwarf selections as rootstocks. New germplasm in the WV collection includes Romanian psylla resistant selections, dwarf pears from Forli, Czech scab resistant selections, Kaazarkstan rootstocks, Chinese varieties, fragrant pear types, plus several others. Bell’s program is working on inheritance of chilling dependent ripening and psylla resistance, FastTrack pears and the functional genomics of dwarfing related genes is being investigated.

Kate Evans reported that the first potential rootstock parents were planted at WSU Sunrise orchard in 2012; more should be planted this spring. Other possible diverse germplasm discussed included interesting seedlings at Corvallis (Fazio/Postman), the Horner series (Einhorn) and the S quince series (Weil).

Due to some specific biotic and abiotic stresses found in California growing conditions, there is some interest in screening material for resistance to *Armillaria*, *Phytopthora* and iron chlorosis. Chuck Leslie willassist in contacting different germplasm sources and in initiating the screening.

**Pyrus Germplasm and Orchard Improvement Roadmap – Willett**

Mike Willet (Northwest Horticulture Council) outlined recent developments with the ARS including the ‘Pyrus Roadmap’, extracted from a recent white paper, which was submitted to ARS last week (circulated with meeting agenda). There is also a possibility that Larry Pusey’s position (USDA-ARS Wenatchee) might be reworked to cover genetics/genomics in pear to replace Larry Pusey’s position.

**Exploration/acquisitions/exchange – Bell/Postman**

RFPs for two grants (FY2014 Plant Exploration and Exchange Proposals) were released recently (see attachments distributed with agenda). Rachel Elkins will send out a memo requesting proposals to the committee for comment by June 1 as they are due for submission by July 26, 2013.

**Pyrus CGC Report and Genetic Vulnerability Statement – Bell**

Richard Bell reported an outline for addressing the vulnerability statement. He will send it to committee for volunteers to tackle specific areas. Changes to format and areas covered will also be considered (look at other crops for examples).

**Update for Pyrus CGC web pages**

* <http://www.ars-grin.gov/npgs/cgclist.html>

Rachel Elkins will update this site as soon as possible.

**Pyrus germplasm and propagation workshop at NCGR – Elkins**

Peter Bretting expressed concern about lack of focus, stressing that we should emphasize uniqueness for an ISHS meeting. Perhaps targeting just Rosaceae would give some uniqueness? Other suggestions included a hands-on workshop highlighting the *Pyrus* collection, or a Curators meeting.

**Future meeting dates and locations options**

Joint *Malus*, *Prunus, Pyrus* Meeting (Cameron Peace) at ASHS, Palm Desert, July 22-25

NCGR, Corvallis

2014 NW Pear Research Review Feb18-19th Yakima (probably)

The CGC agreed to maintain the usual NW Pear Research Review meeting with the joint ASHS meeting as an extra for those who can attend. The ASHS meetings usually widen the scope and are complementary to the annual meeting.

**There was no other business so the meeting was adjourned.**

**Submitted by Kate Evans, February 22, 2013**