

American chestnut - A Symposium

Report

On **March 26, 2014**, at the Royal Canadian Legion, 9 Main Street North in **St. George, Ontario**, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Canadian Chestnut Council held the its first symposium for those working with the American Chestnut in Ontario.

The program was:

9:30 Arrival and registration - coffee was on. There were in excess of 50 guests and presenters in attendance, not including the presenting committee of Ron Casier, Christine Vey, John Hill, Chuck Beach, Dragan Galic, Steve Schmidt , Lorraine Norminton and Doug Fagan. The guests represented the Ontario MNR, various conservation authorities, municipal foresters, naturalists, woodlot owners, stewardship , arboretums and other interested groups.

10:00 Welcome - **Mr. Ron Casier**, Chair Canadian Chestnut Council

10:10 Greetings - **Ms. Lorraine Norminton**, MNR Guelph

The Past

10:15 CCC video "A Legend in Crisis" - Introduced by Mr. Dragan Galic

10:30 American chestnut in Ontario - Past, Present and Going Forward presented by **Dr. G. Boland**. Chestnut blight (what it

is - how it spreads), a strategy of recovery and a brief history of the Canadian Chestnut Council's over 25 years of

working toward the restoration of the American chestnut.- past experience with hypo virulence, etc. as it applies to

southern Ontario. Included a history of the CCC and its involvement with American Chestnut recovery and the

development of the American Chestnut Recovery Strategy adopted by the MNR. Mention made of other participants

in the development of the strategy - **Dr. Brian Husband, Dr. John Ambrose and Mr. Ken Elliott**

11:00 Tree survey conducted in 2004 **Dr. Brian Husband** - mention of **Dr. Greg Boland** Planned American Chestnut Tree

Surveys -methodology, standardized protocol, etc. - presented by **Dr. B. Husband** Mention of **Dr. G. Boland**

Where We Are

11:15 Breeding for Resistance presented by **Dr. Adam Dale** assisted by **Mr. Dragan Galic**

11:40 Lunch - a light lunch and beverages were provided.

12:30 Strategic and Scientific Thinking about American Chestnut Recovery -The MNR Government Response Statement to the Recovery Strategy - **Dr. Eric Snyder** - plant conservation and invasive species specialist MNR.

12:45 Tree Survey of Golden Horseshoe - presented by **Mr. Paul O'Hara** (Blue Oak Native Landscapes)

1:00 Propagation tools - cutting and etiolated sprout grafting propagation techniques and their significance - presented

by **Mr. Dragan Galic** - doctoral candidate

Going Forward

1:15 Preservation and restoration plans of the Canadian Chestnut Council - presented by Mr. Tom Welacky - Chair CCC Science Committee

1:30 American chestnut DNA - overview of proposed project - standardizing a protocol, usefulness, etc. - presented by **Dr. B. Husband**

2:00 Somaclonal variation as a breeding tool in American chestnut - presented by **Christie-Anna Lovatt** - Ph.D. candidate

McGill University

It was planned to break up into working groups - discuss concerns of group - establish some seed questions to stimulate discussion - group develops questions for Q & A - Present questions to group - get answers from floor - present Dilemma questions - review of questions for a report to MNR. **Lorraine Norminton** was to accept questions on behalf of MNR. **This was omitted due to time constraints.**

3:00 Closing Remarks - Safe Journey - Visit to CCC Nursery at Onondaga Farms available

The day was well received and plans are being discussed to hold another in February of 2015. A number of the presenters have provided outlines of their program and they will be available shortly on the CCC website - canadianchestnutcouncil.com.