



Chair’s Report to the AGM 2014

Barb Thomas, Chair, Poplar Council of Canada

Our 2013 AGM, held in conjunction with the 13th Biennial North American Agroforestry Conference of the Association for Temperate Agroforestry in Charlottetown, PEI was a very good and interesting meeting. The tours of willow phytoremediation studies and a broader review of the environmental impacts of shelterbelts around farm fields was enlightening as was the cultivation on previously forested lands of wild berries over many decades and mushroom production using trees as nurse logs. Jim Richardson provided a full review of the meeting in our 2013 fall newsletter (www.poplar.ca).

One of the major focuses this year has been attending to the new federal government requirements under the Canada Not-For-Profit Corporations Act. These regulations come into effect in October of 2014 and our Technical Director, Jim Richardson has spear-headed this effort. Another major initiative under taken by the Board of Directors is a proposed name change for the PCC with the recognition and inclusion of ‘willow’ in the title. This name change recommendation will be presented, along with a new logo, at our 2014 AGM, in combination with the proposed new by-laws.

A third focus of the PCC recently is an issue that has challenged us in recent years and is the slow but continual drawing down of our financial resources as our income is outstripped by our annual expenses. To address this, a small committee was struck to seek out new opportunities to fund raise, increase membership, and cut unnecessary expenses. Preliminary recommendations from this committee will be presented at the 2014 AGM.

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Working Groups

The Pesticide Working Group (PWG) has successfully secured a new Chair with Richard Krygier, from the Canadian Wood Fibre Centre, part of the Canadian Forest Service, agreeing to take over the helm. Richard is based out of Edmonton and is in close proximity to the PCC office. We look forward to Richard working with the PWG and their members and continuing on the good work in the area of weed and insect/disease management.

The Genetics Working Group (GWG) has also seen a change in leadership this year with Bill Schroeder stepping down as co-Chair while Pierre Périnet will now continue as Chair. Work in this group has focused on development of a white paper outlining our current Canadian poplar and willow collections, exploring the challenges of both maintaining and promoting these unique and critical collections and providing a national perspective on the need for preservation and use of these materials by industry, academics and landowners. Work has also been underway on renewing various IUFRO provenance collections and collecting and storing pollen for future breeding.

For the 2014 AGM, the PCC will be joining the 6th International Poplar Symposium (IPS VI) being hosted by and held at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, British Columbia. The IPS meetings are held every four years and it is a great honour to have the 2014 meeting in Canada. Our vice-Chair West, Cees van Oosten, the IPS meeting Chair, has been instrumental in making this meeting a success. Several of our Board members are also participating on the science panel for the meeting including Annie DesRochers, Raju Soolanayakanahally, and myself. John Doornbos, our past-Chair, assisted with financial and logistical planning. The location of the 2015 AGM will also be selected in July.

I would like to once again recognize and thank Jim Richardson for his continued commitment and dedicated work for the PCC. Jim provides us with reports from all conferences he attends, answers questions from the public, maintains our web-site and took on the challenge of rewriting our new by-laws this past year. As an organization we are well served by our Technical Director and he ensures a high level of communication to our members through his thoughtful and comprehensive reports. Thank-you Jim for all your hard work.

In closing, I would like to thank my Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and working party Chairs for their support and hours of volunteer work on council. Deborah Brenton has continued to keep the office running smoothly, looking after the newsletter, running of the day-to-day financials, banking, membership and directing the inquiries that come in over the year. Deb effortlessly carries out her duties making our monthly or bi-weekly meetings as efficient and easy as possible. Thank-you Deb for making my job that much easier.

Finally, after 5-years as Chair, I will be handing the reins over to a new and energetic Chair in the coming months. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as Chair and working with the Board of Directors and my Executive committee. A small selection committee will be struck and I will make every effort to make the transition to a new Chair as smooth and seamless as possible. Thank-you to all the members for your support and participation in the PCC.

Technical Director's Report to the AGM 2014

Jim Richardson, Technical Director, Poplar Council of Canada

This is the 18th annual report to the Poplar Council membership from the Technical Director, a position created by the Executive Committee in April 1997. The general objectives of the Technical Director are to supply technical services and advice to the Council, to promote awareness and support for the Council and to increase membership. More specifically, the responsibilities of the technical director include maintaining and updating the Council's website; responding to technical enquiries using E-mail, phone, fax and mail; providing an international dimension to the Council through participation in the International Poplar Commission (IPC); contributing to the PCC Newsletter and supporting technical aspects of the organization of the PCC Annual meeting; and providing services to members and the Board of Directors of a technical rather than purely administrative nature. The specific responsibilities continue to change somewhat, reflecting the changing ways in which the Council operates and new directions and initiatives of the Council.

Website

Management and maintenance of the Poplar Council website (www.poplar.ca) continues to be one of the most important on-going responsibilities of the technical director. The new website, which was launched in August 2012, is hosted by Sencia Canada Ltd., a professional web design and hosting company based in Thunder Bay, ON. The main current website activities involve reviewing and updating the 'What's New' pages and 'Events' pages regularly, as well as 'Links'. Information about individual and corporate members is updated once a year. Publications and news of Working Group activities are added as available. The electronic newsletter is now distributed exclusively through the website.

The Council's interactive, searchable directory of poplar and willow clones had been made available through the website, with access limited by password to members only. However, due to technical difficulties with the format of the directory database, when the new site was launched the database had to be left physically on a remnant of the old website, though this was transparent to users. In January 2014, a cost-saving decision was made by the Executive Committee to close the old site. Thus, the database is temporarily unavailable online until it can be made technically compatible with the new site as part of a planned revision and updating of the directory.

International Dimension

My colleague, J.G. Isebrands of Wisconsin, and I were very pleased to have finally seen the publication in February of a completely rewritten and updated edition of the FAO-IPC book on poplars and willows. This book, entitled 'Poplars and Willows: trees for society and the environment', had been in the works for 12 years. An international team of 'lead chapter authors', supported by nearly 60 individual contributing authors, including 8 Canadians, prepared the content of the book's 13 chapters. FAO entered into a co-publication agreement with the UK-based international scientific publisher CABI, which specializes in agricultural topics, to publish the book. The first public appearance of the book was at a workshop of the Environmental Applications Working Party of the IPC in New Zealand in March. It was subsequently more formally launched to a larger audience in June at an IPC side-event during the biennial meeting in Rome of the Committee on Forestry (COFO), FAO's senior advisory group on forestry. Copies of the book may be ordered directly from CABI (www.cabi.org/bookshop/). It is also available

online through Amazon and other major booksellers. An article about the book was published in the Spring 2014 E-newsletter of PCC.

The workshop of IPC Working Party 6 'Environmental Applications' which took place in Gisborne, New Zealand in March was attended by PCC Executive member Cees van Oosten as well as myself. This relatively small, but interesting and informative gathering of mostly local farming participants focused on the use of poplars and willows in combating soil erosion in the pastoral hill country of New Zealand. An illustrated report on the workshop was published in the Spring 2014 E-newsletter.

The IPC Executive Committee, which includes PCC Chair Barb Thomas and myself, met in a day-long session in Vancouver immediately prior to the start of IPS VI. This report was prepared prior to the meeting which was expected to focus largely on plans to reform the IPC, expanding the range of tree species with which it is concerned and making the organization more attractive to new member countries. The outcomes of the meeting will be reported through the website and E-newsletter.

Newsletters and Other Publications

The technical director makes regular contributions to the Council's newsletter, including reports from meetings and other events. An article reporting on the North American Agroforestry Conference held in Charlottetown, PEI in June 2013, along with the Council's annual business meeting and associated field tours, was prepared and published. Photos from the conference field tours were uploaded to the website photo gallery. A separate article on the conference and related events was also prepared and published in the recently-initiated E-newsletter of the International Poplar Commission. As previously noted, the New Zealand workshop of IPC's WP6 in March 2014 was the subject of another recent article, as was the publication of the IPC-FAO book on poplars and willows. A complete report, including photos, on the series of meetings and field tours in Vancouver in July (IPC Executive Committee, IPS VI, PCC annual business meeting) will be available on the website.

Annual Meeting

A report on the June 2013 North American Agroforestry Conference and associated annual meeting of the PCC and field tours was prepared for the website. Following the conference, I served along with PCC colleagues John Kort, Raju Soolanayakanahally and Bill Schroeder as a guest editor of a special issue of the journal *Agroforestry Systems* in which about a dozen papers are to be published as the proceedings of the conference. The role involved solicitation of fully-written-up versions of presentations made at the conference, and managing the formal peer-review process for the journal, resulting in the final acceptance of papers. The guest editors also jointly prepared an introductory paper for the special issue, which is expected to be published in summer 2014.

News items on the International Poplar Symposium being held in Vancouver in July 2014 have been posted to the website, and links made to the IPS VI website. The Council's annual business meeting is associated with this major international event.

By-law renewal

As a federally-registered not-for-profit corporation, PCC is required to follow the regulations of the new Canada Not-For-Profit Corporations Act which comes into force in October 2014. The Act requires PCC to renew its Letters Patent, granted to the organization when it was established

in 1979, as ‘Articles of Continuance’ formally adopted by the membership. In addition, a new set of by-laws, conforming to the Act is required to be adopted. I have taken the lead for the Council in researching the requirements under the new Act and drafting Articles of Continuance and a new ‘By-law 1’ for presentation to the membership at the July 2014 annual meeting.

Technical Enquiries

The technical director responds to technical enquiries, most of which are received as a result of contact through the website to the Secretariat and are dealt with by E-mail. The vast majority of such enquiries come from non-members, including from outside Canada. However, the number of individual enquiries has greatly declined in recent years.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Barb Thomas and the Executive Committee for their continued support and confidence throughout the year. It is a pleasure to work under Barb’s leadership of the Executive. I also appreciate very much the efficiency and hard work of Deb Brenton, the Council’s Executive Assistant.

Welcome to the New Chair of the Poplar and Willow Council of Canada

At the 2014 AGM in Vancouver, British Columbia, Raju Soolanayakanahally was elected as the new Chair of the newly named Poplar and Willow Council of Canada.



Figure 1. Raju Soolanayakanahally (Photo: Jim Richardson)

Save the Date:

International Symposium on Forest Biotechnologies for Smallholders

Foz do Iguacu, Parana, Brazil

20-22 May 2015

Organized by EMBRAPA, FETRAF-SUL and FAO

Information: www.fbs2015.com.br

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all!!

