

MOUNTAIN EMPIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

MAY 28, 2015 MEETING

MINUTES

President Mickey Cunningham called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, Thursday, May 28, 2015, in Room 201, Galax Hall, Wytheville Community College.

Old Business:

Mickey congratulated the workshop team leaders for the spring workshop training, and great food. He thanked Eural Clippard for allowing us to use his bee yard. Only two stings were reported. Five nucs were made during the workshop; the fifth nuc was raffled for new beekeepers.

Bee loss survey: reported winter loss in Virginia was 23.7%, with an annual loss of 42.1%. 6,100 responses represented 400,000 colonies. Current hive count in U.S. is 2.7 million; before colony collapse disorder, there were 12.1 million hives in U.S.

New Business:

- **Grayson LandCare.** GLC has requested that MEBA pay a \$100 showing fee for "Vanishing Bees" to be shown at their First Friday Film Series. The film series is held at the Church of the Good Shepherd in the Baywood area. A donation at entry is asked. Charlie Vanover moved, and Connie Armentrout seconded that MEBA pay the fee to sponsor the August 7 film. Motion passed.

Presentations:

- Suzanne Slack, Carroll County Extension Agent for Horticulture, presented a program on Native Plants for Bees. She defined native plants as indigenous.
 - Herbaceous native plants include wild indigo, Eastern purple coneflower, golden alexander, bee balm, anise hyssop, sunflowers, milkweed, Appalachian mountain mint, and goldenrod.
 - Woody plants--trees, shrubs, or grapevines--includes tulip tree, sumac, black locust, willow, sourwood, and holly. For honey to be labeled "sourwood", it must contain 51% sourwood by lab testing.
 - Invasive plants to avoid: viper's bugloss, multiflora rose, dandelions, Japanese honeysuckles, and autumn olive.
- Tina Cunningham presented a roundtable on "Marketing Your Bee Products", concentrating on selling at farmer's markets. Major points included pricing, labeling, sales techniques, signage, etc. Several members shared their techniques and sales tactics. [Did you know that Brushy Mountain will design and print your jar labels? I didn't. TC]

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Cunningham

Secretary, MEBA