

Mountain Empire Beekeepers Association

Minutes

April 28, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Tim Service; Mick Cunningham sold raffle tickets.

Pop Quiz for prizes

Guest: Andrew Rosenberger, Private Lands Biologist for southwest Virginia. His work mostly involves habitat. The position is funded by the U.S. National Resource Conservation Service (50%), and Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (50%). There are five biologists working as biologists to promote private lands habitat development with emphasis on declining habitats, especially quail. Their mission encompasses Soils, Water, Air, Plants, Animals, and Energy (SWAPAE). Most species that are in decline live in habitat that is no longer around, the early succession forest--the stage between pasture and forest, and hedge rows. These species need cover, shelter and food. Quail populations have declined over 75% in 40 years; however the population seems to have stabilized at a low level.

New Faces of Conservation: bee, Monarch butterflies. Pollinators include bees, butterflies, moths, wasps, flies, beetles, ants, bats, and hummingbirds. There are 4,000 species of native bees in U.S. Native plant habitat will attract beneficial insects that prey upon crop pests. Seventy percent of native bees are ground burrowing, 30% air nesting. To create a pollinator habitat, use conservation cover, hedgerow plants. For a conservation cover, get rid of non-native plants (fescue) and plant native plants and flowers. Check the EFOTG (Electronic Field Office Technical Guide); on the U.S. map, click in the southwestern corner of Virginia for our counties. However, there is little variation among Virginia locations. <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/technical/fotg/>

To create a conservation cover: kill fescue: (1) apply a fall herbicide after the first frost; (2) prescribed burn--sets back succession, controls hardwood regeneration (3) broadcast seed: sow on packed soil, use a billion seeder, drill or billion seed cultipacker.

For more information or assistance, contact Andy for a site visit. Email: quail@vt.edu; phone 540-381-4221 ext. 128.

Bee Biology

The hypopharyngeal gland is a long tube lined with small sacs that produce bee food. Young nurse bees produce brood food, aka "bee milk" or "royal jelly". This mixes with IDGF-4 from the post cerebral gland to enrich the royal jelly; a preservative from the mandibular gland is added which prevents spoilage of royal jelly. These bees switch to producing invertase after three weeks. They can switch back to producing brood food in emergencies.

Bees in the News:

- Beewatch.org tracks the Zombie Fly infection of honeybees. [See March 24, 2016 minutes for discussion of this latest threat to honeybees.]
- Paul Stamus' work with mushrooms is featured in an article, "Fungal Alliances Against Varroa and the Viruses They Vector" in the May 2016 issue of American Bee Journal, p. 541.

- Ortho currently uses neonicotinoids in its insecticides; it has started phasing them out of its products, to be completely neonicotinoid-free by 2020.
- Bayer is undertaking Healthy Hives 2020, a million-dollar, multi-year research effort. Project Apis M. will oversee various research projects concerning bees and beekeeping.

Minutes and Treasurer's Report: Motion to approve--Mick Cunningham, seconded by Connie Armentrout. Minutes approved. Mick presented the treasurers report.

Old business:

- Website help: Tim asked for someone to help relay information to the webmaster. [Secretary's note: since the meeting, three members have volunteered to help with website.]
- Pollinator Week is June 20-26. Tim would like a presence at local grocery stores, set up a table with information, put signs at products & produce pollinated by bees or containing honey. During the May meeting, we will make seed bombs.

New business:

- May 14th is the workshop at Mr. Clifford's bee yard. Gaynell will run a silent auction; bring any items to donate for the auction. Tina will send out invitations to the workshop this weekend.

What are we doing with our bees right now?

- Lots of swarms so far. To prevent swarms, divide into nucs.
- Don't pull all queen cells.
- Using black plastic foundation makes it easy to see brood.
- To get bees from an old house, bait a nuc with queen pheromone and a frame of drawn comb.
- Make sure your supers are ready--lots of things are blooming and bees are making honey.
- A few people don't have bees yet.

Raffle: frames for 2 nucs; deep hive body; black plastic deep foundation; inner hive cover; hive tools; menthol crystals; wax scratcher.

Adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Cunningham

Secretary, MEBA