

## Highlights of NAMSC 2022 Annual Meeting and International Maple Conference

The 2022 annual meeting of the North American Maple Syrup Council was held on October 27 as part of the annual International Maple Conference in La Crosse, Wisconsin. Meeting in person for the first time since 2019, delegates reviewed the past year's activities and planned for the next.

Highlights of activities for the Council in 2022 included the publication of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the North American Maple Syrup Producers Manual, and an extensive review and updating of the organization's bylaws and job and committee descriptions. The Council continues to maintain [mapleresearch.org](http://mapleresearch.org), and has been hosting online webinars for producers and discussions for association leaders. Executive Director Winton Pitcoff noted that his first year on the job also included the return of Vermont as a member of the Council, and significant increases in donations to the Research and Education Fund.

During the report on the Research Fund Fund Dr. Abby van den Berg reported on two ongoing studies at Proctor Research Center funded by NAMSC: Long-term Impacts of Tapping and Sap Collection on Tree Growth and Health, and Characterizing Profiles of Maple Syrup Flavors and Off-flavors. Detailed reports on the two projects will be published in upcoming issues of the Maple Syrup Digest.

Delegates approved funding for three grants recommended for support by the research and education committee:

- The Role of Lignin in Wound Healing of Maple Trees, Yaseen Mottiar.
- Developing the Maple Climate Network, Adam Wild and Aaron Wightman.
- Long-term Impacts of Tapping and Sap Collection on Tree Growth and Health, Abby van den Berg.

The Council also allocated an additional \$5,000 for a project to develop a curriculum for beginning sugarmakers for use by NAMSC members.

Finances for the Council remain sound, though it was noted that demand for research grants continues to outstrip available resources. Four new Research Alliance Partners joined to support the Fund in 2022, and two longtime Partners significantly increased their contributions, but more participants in the Alliance Partnership program are always welcome. Contact [mapledigest@gmail.com](mailto:mapledigest@gmail.com) for more information.

Stu Peterson received the Special Recognition Award for years of volunteer work for the maple industry and specifically for his work for NAMSC. Proctor Maple Research Center received the Richard G Haas Distinguished Service Award for 75 years of exemplary research in support of the maple industry. Maple Hall of Fame Committee chair Richard Norman announced that Simon Trepanier and Pam Green will be inducted into the Hall in May 2023.

Full minutes of the meeting are available upon request. Contact NAMSC secretary Joe Polak at [joe.maplehollow@frontier.com](mailto:joe.maplehollow@frontier.com).

Along with the business meeting, one of the highlights of the conference was a roundtable discussion with representatives from Wisconsin Native American tribes about the history of sugaring in their communities. Daniel Cornelius, Bruce Savage, Paul DeMain and Gary Besaw talked about the history of family sugarbushes, as well as tribal maple history. Records show significant production by the tribes more than 100 years ago, with the Menominee people producing 65,000 pounds of maple sugar in one year in the early 1900's, and a group of Chippewa villages sold 248,000 pounds of sugar to the east coast in 1880. The discussion touched on the goals of developing maple as a natural resource to strengthen family ties and increase income, and encouraging more cooperation between tribal organizations and maple producer organizations.

Historian and author Dr. Matthew Thomas offered an evening presentation on the history of maple syrup in Wisconsin, with a focus on Native American history as well as some of the maple families represented in the Maple Hall of Fame.

Rounding out the week's events were more than 25 workshops organized by the Wisconsin Maple Syrup Producers Association. Topics ranged from chainsaw safety to marketing to cooking with maple. A day of tours offered attendees an opportunity to visit nearby sugarhouses and other attractions. And an expansive trade show offered participants an opportunity to see the latest equipment from all of the major manufacturers, and to talk with representatives from dozens of vendors about their products and services.

The 2023 conference will be held in Sturbridge, MA, October 25-28. Watch for details in upcoming issues of the Maple Syrup Digest.