

West Virginia Maple Syrup Producers Association

Meeting Description: Annual

Meeting Type: In-Person

Meeting Location: St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 206 E. Second Street, Weston, WV, 25452

Meeting Date: 04/18/2026

Call to Order: 9:30 am

Summary:

The 2026 WVMSPA Annual Meeting was a success, and featured excellent discussion of association business, great fellowship over lunch, and fascinating educational programming from visiting producer, Janet Wood, and WVMSPA's very own Brandon Daniels and Mel and Chris Grimes. A focus from the association for the upcoming year will be educational programming, and three new committees were formed to support this effort. Along with efforts to support existing members, the association would like to recruit new members in the coming year. Next year's WVMSPA Annual Meeting will be held on **April 17, 2027**. Please join the association for a special meeting via Zoom on **September 10, 2027** to discuss mid-year progress on association initiatives and the motion "to change the WVMSPA bylaws to vote for NAMSC delegates every two-years instead of every year."

New Committees and Elected Officials:

- **President:** Paul Ronk
- **Vice-President:** Kody Boone
- **Treasurer:** Keith Heasley
- **Secretary:** Kate Fotos
- **New Board Members:** Donnie Smith and Chris Grimes
- **Education Committee:** Rick McLaughlin (Chair), Michael Gray, (volunteer)
- **Audit Committee:** Kody Boone (Chair), Kate Fotos, Thomas Wood
- **State Fair Committee:** Brandon Daniels (Chair), Chris Grimes, Keith Heasley
- **Events & Programs Committee:** Kody Boone (Chair), Rick McLoughlin, Roy Ramey, Donnie Smith, Mel Grimes, Thomas Wood
- **Southern Syrup Research Symposium Committee:** Paul Ronk (Chair), Chris Grimes, Roy Ramey

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Meeting Organization & Attendance

Group	Invitee	In Attendance?
Executive Officers	Paul Ronk - President	X
	Kody Boone – Vice-President	X
	Keith Heasley - Treasurer	X
	Cathy Hervey - Secretary (Sub: Kate Fotos)	X
Board Members	Michael Gray (2023-2026?)	X
	Thomas Wood	X
	Kristopher Marsh	
	Roy Ramey	X
	Tina Barton	
	Bruce Mahin	X
	To Be Elected	
	To Be Elected	

Quorum Present? Yes/No

Meeting called to Order by President. Who/When

- Called to order by Paul Ronk (President)
- Called to Order at 9:32am.

Minutes of the following meeting were presented: Bruce Mahin will make available.

- Motion to accept 2025 annual meetings notes and March 2025 notes

Corrections to the minutes were requested as follows:

- None

Motion to approve the minutes as presented/corrected

- M/S: Donnie Smith (motion), Roy Ramey (second)
- Passed/Failed: Passed

New Members/Welcome

- None Present.

Wellness Report

- Keep the Hervey's in your thoughts.

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Treasurer's Report – Keith Heasley

1. Fiscal Year Income:

- a. Membership Fees – \$ 450
- b. Sign Sales – \$
- c. Fair Cotton Candy – \$ 3492 (on par with last 3 years)
 - i. Total Gross Receipts – \$3492

2. Fiscal Year Expenses:

- a. See financial statement presented by Treasurer: Total \$ 2625
 - i. Gaining approx. \$1000-\$2000 per year.
 - ii. \$1200 in donations for Mark Bowers
 - 1. How do we want to use it?

3. Checking Account Balance – \$ 18700

Motion to approve 2025-2026 Financial Statements as presented by the Treasurer

- M/S: Roy Ramey, Kody Boone (Second)
- Passed/Failed: Passed

Update For Current Year Production or Maple Days from Producers in Attendance

- **Brandon Daniels:** 90% production for about 3.5 weeks (Baseline: 0.3 gal/tap)
 - Worst year since 2010, but was still not terrible.
- **Rick McLoughlin:** Just tapped right before the first maple days
 - Did not have any syrup to sell at that event, but the Commissioner of Agriculture showed up, otherwise fairly slow.
 - Was able to sell value added products (cinnamon rolls, etc.)
 - Second Maple Days: Had approximately 50 people show up
 - Sold out of syrup
 - Had a lower production year, only had about 10 good days.
- **Paul Ronk:** Had 250 people at the February day, and had 100 at the March day.
 - Have a lot of school groups, but had to cancel groups due to ice
 - Had tree damage because of the ice this year.
 - Really sees a need to go into added value products to help with profitability
- **Chris Grimes:** Had the best Maple Day in February ever (150 people), March was good too.
 - Current Niche: it is a fund raiser for the non-profit.
 - People show up for the food, and it has become a tradition for people.
 - It's a party.
 - Focus on gathering people together, sales will come
 - Involved other small businesses to add value to the event overall.
- **Donnie Smith:** Bring new people into the fold.
- **Bruce Mahin:** How late did people run? And why did you stop?
 - **Kody Boone:** Hit 0.24/gal syrup per tap, stopped when it wasn't good.
 - Tap earlier, as soon as you think it is going to run. (First good run weather after January 1.)
- **Spruce Knob Maple:** No bulk for sale, and only made about 50% of what they normally make.

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Old Business:

1. State Fair (Brandon Daniels)

- a. Overall a decent year.
- b. First weekend was strange, no one seemed to be buying.
- c. Began to start selling mid-week to end of the fair
 - i. Second half was better than the first half.
- d. Volunteers: Paul, Brandon, Keith, others.

2. NAMSC (Kody Boone)

- a. Kody Boone: Primary delegate for WV.
- b. 3rd week in October in Michigan
 - i. Jamie Schueler was unable to make it as the alternate.
- c. What to look for in the conference to report to the WV producers?
 - i. General Business Meeting: First Half of the Conference
 - ii. 3/16ths Handbook: going to publication this summer, the presentation highlighted WV maple data to illustrate the effectiveness of 3/16ths tubing.
 - iii. Invasives: A huge deal regarding WV maple syrup. We are seeing more invasive and complications due to invasives.
 - 1. Research what is in your woods, be wary of vines and forest floor vegetations and their effect on your tree health.
 - 2. NRCS can help cover the cost of invasives management.
 - iv. NAMSC: providing funding for a few different programs that are looking at the effects of defoamer and its effect on product quality.
 - 1. Information is not published yet, but we will try to get it into your hands once it is.
- d. Highly encourage everyone to attend if you can.
- e. 2026: Will be in Ontario this year.
 - i. Passport, you are a tourist, and no criminal record.

3. Status of EQIP/Combustion Systems Improvement Grants & Opportunities (Joey Aloï)

- a. EQIP Update:
 - i. End of 2024, entered into an agreement between FGU and the NRCS to streamline the process for EQIP.
 - ii. Shrink the process from 16-18 months to 4-6 months.
 - iii. Less progress was made this year than one would have hoped.
 - iv. Did two trainings this year to train the NRCS on what it would take to go from 0 maple syrup production to commercial maple production
 - 1. Also ensuring that we are looking towards expansion.
 - v. I&E Sheet: inventory and evaluation checklist to allow local agents to assess a maple operation without the engineer.
 - 1. May not work with more complex operations.
 - 2. Will be looking to pilot the process at 5-6 new sites in the fall of 2026.
 - a. If you are interested email Joey Aloï, joey.aloï@future.edu
- b. EQIP: A NRCS program that helps through cost-share to reduce energy consumption in agricultural production.

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- i. For maple: RO's, pre-heaters, new pumps, etc.
- ii. Only 1 engineer in all of the Eastern Seaboard (literally phones it in)
- iii. Not ideal for us or the NRCS.
- iv. From approval date, you have one year to update your equipment and make sure it is in-service.

4. Walnut & Sycamore Syrup Research (Joey Aloï)

- a. Hoping to expand walnut research sites throughout WV and VA and maybe KY.
 - i. This is dependent on funding and capacity.
- b. No new best practice recommendations as of this year
- c. If you are interested in being a research site for black walnut or sycamore email, joey.aloi@future.edu
 - i. Especially if you have sloped sycamores.
- d. Sycamore: does appear you need to use at least some vacuum
 - i. It appears that 7/16ths tap, 5/16ths drop, and 3/16ths lateral is best
 - 1. Will have firm data next year hopefully.
- e. **Brandon Daniels:** Black Walnut: Use a 19/64ths bit on a 5/16ths polycarbonate tap.
 - i. Do not have to drill as deep. Tap at about 1" in depth.
 - ii. Do **NOT** over-tap, just until it seats.
 - iii. Making it after he is done with the maple season.
- f. Walnut: Joey Aloï, Scoop the "pectin" out of walnut syrup (not sure what exactly it is, but it is in the lab)
 - i. Every year is a little different
 - ii. About 1/2 the sap
 - iii. About the same in sugar content
 - iv. RO?: Appears to be okay running through the RO
 - 1. Flush your RO more often, more pre-filters
 - 2. Haven't seen it gum things up, but we expect that it might.
 - a. Might only work on smaller, lower pressure ROs
- g. Sycamore: Joey Aloï
 - i. Decent amount of sap
 - ii. Quarter the sugar content.
 - iii. Higher elevation appears to do better (Paul Ronk)

5. 3/16ths Manual: (Joey)

- a. It is being published this summer.
- b. Soft launching in the May, Out of the Woods Webinar.
 - i. Talk to Joey Aloï: joey.aloi@future.edu

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New Business

1. New Members for 2025-2026

- a. None present

2. 2026 State Fair: August 13th-22nd, 2026

- a. Only fundraiser for the WVMSPA each year
- b. We are always looking for volunteers, and our biggest issue has been having a place to stay for the State Fair.
 - i. Get a WVMSPA Air BnB this year.
 - ii. Chris Grimes: Can look at one connection.
- c. Can we get some help for Brandon Daniels to help coordinate?
 - i. Volunteers: Chris Grimes, Keith Heasley
 - ii. Making sure everything gets to the fair
 - iii. Committee to help request people to volunteer.
 - 1. Ensure "positive hand-offs." Person for the next day shows up at the end of the day for some training.
 - iv. Yearly training at the WVMSPA Meeting
 - v. **Paul Ronk**: Put together a video tutorial.

3. Committee Organization, Structure & Members' Involvement

- a. **Education (Institution) Committee**: Rick McLoughlin (Chair), Michael Gray,
 - i. Motion to Establish Education Committee: Donny Smith (first), Brandon Daniels (second)
 - ii. Passed: Yes
 - iii. Goal of Committee: create connections between schools and educational programs across the state and the association.
- b. **Audit Committee**: Kody Boone (Chair), Kate Fotos, Thomas Wood
 - i. Motion to Establish Audit Committee: Kody Boone (first), Kate Fotos (second)
 - ii. Passed: Yes
 - iii. Treasurer to provide necessary documentation.
 - iv. Goal of Committee: Ensure proper oversight for association finances.
- c. **State Fair Committee**: Brandon Daniels (Chair), Chris Grimes, Keith Heasley
- d. **Newsletter Committee**:
- e. **Events & Programs Committee**: Kody Boone (Chair), Rick McLoughlin, Roy Ramey, Donnie Smith, Mel Grimes, Thomas Wood
 - i. Motion to Establish an Events & Programs Committee: Michael Gray, Roy Ramey (second)
 - ii. Passed: Yes
 - iii. Goal of Committee: Coordinate across the state to help host more events and programs across the state and tie in with other entities.
 - 1. Both internal education and external education
 - 2. Maple Days falls under this committee.
- f. **Membership/Annual Meeting Committee**:
- g. **SSRS Committee**: Paul Ronk (Chair), Chris Grimes, Roy Ramey

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4. Ideas for membership involvement

- a. How do we increase membership?
 - i. Shift the prospective. What can I bring to the table?
 - 1. Do we have regions to help host?
 - 2. See something different each year and learn from each other.
 - 3. Open-houses biannually or quarterly and focus on folks in the region.
 - a. Create more touch points.
 - ii. Do we have physical recruiting material?
 - 1. Currently have a flyer.
 - a. Have a card with a QR or something. (Need to update)
 - b. Have some in terms of Appalachian syrup.
 - 2. What would it take to make some?
 - iii. What hesitancy do we see with people joining the association?
 - iv. Create an
- b. First year free for members who attend the annual meeting?
 - i. Push members to start bringing in new members
 - ii. **ONLY** if you come to the meeting. Encourage active members.
 - iii. Movement to Allow for free first year of membership after attending the annual meeting: Michael Gray, Kody Boone (second)
 - 1. Passed: Yes
 - iv. Motion that Dues are due on January 1, but are not considered in arrears until May 30: Donnie Smith, Roy Ramey (second)
 - 1. Passed: Yes
- c. What do producers want to see at the annual meetings?
 - i. Need to create a questionnaire for producers for annual meeting and symposium ideas

5. Southern Syrup Research Symposium (SSRS): Looking at the fall of 2027, Thursday thru Saturday in Lewisburg area.

- a. **Future Generations University:** will be lead financially and coordination-wise.
- b. Would like 5-7 producers to work with FGU to help with planning and direction?
 - i. What do we in WV want to see and learn?
 - ii. To volunteer: Get in touch with **Joey Aloï**: joey.aloi@future.edu
- c. **WVMSPA Responsibility:**
 - i. Get a grant to help subsidize attendance cost
 - ii. Provide input on agenda items and what researchers we want to see
 - 1. Gather information from the producers from across WV

6. Lake Erie Maple Expo: Janet Woods

- a. Always the second weekend of November in Erie, PA
- b. Mostly focused on PA, OH, NY
- c. A lot of equipment available and presentations spanning from production to value added.
 - i. Friday: Extensive hands-on all day workshops and tours.
 - ii. Saturday: Concurrent sessions (3 every hour or two) of research, production, etc.
- d. Paul Ronk: Looks to get grants to help cover peoples travel.

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- i. \$30 on Friday (includes lunch)
- ii. \$50 on Saturday (includes lunch)

7. 2027 Annual Meeting - Plan to bring syrup to share and experience from others

- a. Competition:
 - i. No competition this year because of lack of participation
 - ii. Move it to the State Fair
 - 1. Help get our names out there! PLEASE participate!
- b. Do we want to do something on Friday?
 - i. Educational event?
 - ii. Sugar Shack Tours?
 - iii. Move the meeting around the state?
 - iv. Do we have something on Friday and a shorter day on Saturday?
 - 1. Allow people to get home earlier.
- c. Dates for Next Year: **April 17, 2027.**
 - i. Start publicizing soon.
- d. Zoom Meeting on **September 10, 2026** as a biannual check point.

8. Mountain State Maple Days:

- a. Dates are concrete, third Saturday in February and March
- b. MUST be a member to be a listed participating farm
- c. Two maps on the WVMSPA website
 - i. One for all members
 - ii. One for Maple Days sites.

9. NAMSC Delegate(s) & Financial Support from WVMSPA

- a. Need of involved alternate. Paul Ronk proposal
- b. Do we want to send a delegate? (Supported financially with \$1,000 last year).
- c. Motion to send two delegates (Kody Boone, and Paul Ronk as alternate) at \$750 per person.
 - i. Change the bylaws to vote on delegates every-other-year
- d. Motion: Vote on a delegate and alternate, and if one can attend support with \$1,000 and if both can attend support each at \$750 a person
 - i. Delegate: Kody Boone, Alternate: Paul Ronk Motion: Michael Gray, Rick McLoughlin (second).
 - ii. Motion: Michael Gray, Rick McLoughlin (second).
 - iii. Passed: Yes
- e. Motion to change the WVMSPA bylaws to vote for NAMSC delegates every two-years instead of every year
 - i. To be voted on in September.

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10. Elections for Executive Officers & Board Members

- a. Volunteered:
 - i. President: Paul Ronk (17 yes)
 - ii. Vice President: Kody Boone (17 yes)
 - iii. Treasurer: Keith Heasley (17 yes)
 - iv. Secretary: Kate Fotos (17 yes)
 - v. New Board Members: Need 2 need ones.
 - 1. Nominees: Chris Grimes (16 yes), Donnie Smith (16 yes)
 - vi. All Passed

11. Web Master Report: Bruce Mahin, mahinmedia@gmail.com

- a. Ever-changing website
 - i. Please let me know if you have any feedback
- b. Can put up new information about the committees
- c. Want to provide added visibility to our individual farms
 - i. Please update your information and provide farm specific picture
 - 1. People pictures are great, show activity.
 - ii. Will have a brief description and a picture with a "Learn More" link to your website or other page
 - iii. Add a "Where to buy" list.
 - iv. This is separate from the Maple Days page.
- d. Submit information to Bruce Mahin directly.
- e. Do we have any state wide WV maple branding?
 - i. Can we use the WVMSPA logo on the bottles?
 - ii. Do some research on this and touch on it on Sept. meeting.
 - iii. What are the bylaws and BMPS for logo usage.

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Association Member(s)	Farm Name	In Attendance?
Rick McLaughlin		X
Chris and Mel Grimes		X
Thomas Wood		X
Jon Novak		X
Wes Lawson		X
Keith Heasley		X
Joey Aloï		X
Michael and Adrena Gray		X
Roy Ramey		X
Ryan and Heather Ward		X
Donnie Smith		X
Steve McClelland		X
Paul Ronk		X
Robin Kalog		X
Brandon Daniels		X
Gary Swartzentruber		X
Kate Fotos		X
Kody Boone		X
Bruce and Carrie Mahin		X