

# Orange County Beekeepers Association

## Minutes

July 8, 2021

7:00 - 8:00 pm via Zoom

Carrie Donley, OCBA president, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. The meeting was attended by 28 people.

### **Drones and Drone Congregation Areas**

Tim Struttman, OCBA vice president, introduced our speaker, Julia MaHood, a Master Beekeeper in Georgia who teaches beekeeping at the largest women's prison in Georgia. She also runs a citizen science project that aims to map drone congregation areas (DCAs). Her talk - "Game of Drones" - began with a description of drones. She said a hive with 60,000 workers will have about 2,000 - 6,000 drones. They have blunt-tipped abdomens, no stinger or pollen baskets, and very large eyes, which are usually black but can be white, tan, red, or green. Drones live for about 22-23 days. She explained the concept of "drone right" - hives that are doing well and have the resources to produce drones, which are necessary for reproduction. Julia also discussed "diploid drones," which are a product of inbreeding. Their larvae give off an odor that causes nurse bees to uncap and eat them, creating the shotgun brood pattern.

Drones fly to DCAs between 1- 4 pm. In warmer climates, they often visit DCAs later in the day, between 3-7 pm. The locations of DCAs are constant year after year. After failing to locate DCAs in the Atlanta area using the helium balloon method, Julia devised a method using drones, or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), as she likes to call them to avoid confusion. She said drones generally fly towards depressions in the landscape at the intersection of visual cues, like tree lines, roads, and rivers. They also like areas that provide a windbreak and have magnetic abnormalities. Drones fly 85 feet up in the air and stay close to home, while queens fly 8 feet up and fly longer distances.

Julia suggested using green drone foundation to give your hives a place to lay drone brood. She also mentioned that she believes pesticides are a problem for bees, and urged people to visit [www.pollinatorstewardship.org](http://www.pollinatorstewardship.org).

To learn more about drones, Julia's efforts to map DCAs, and how you can contribute to her citizen science project, visit her website: <https://mapmydca.com/>.

### **State Fair**

Carrie noted that a State Fair committee has been formed, and Celeste Meyer will be sending out an email soon asking for volunteers with specific talents to help create the booth.

### **OCBA Educational Videos**

Carrie said we plan to create educational videos for our new YouTube channel, which will be linked to our website. To start, the videos will focus on helping new beekeepers with tasks like lighting a smoker and distinguishing between swarming and orientation behavior. Carrie asked people to get in touch with her if they are interested in shooting and editing the videos and/or being in the videos.

### **Blackwood Farm Update**

Carrie reported that Blackwood Farms is now closed to begin a new construction project. OCBA can continue to store equipment and keep hives there. Tim Struttman said we might need to move the hives at some point during the construction project.

### **State Bee Lab**

Carrie said that Charles Heatherly, NCSBA Apiculture Science Initiative chairman, said that funding (\$4 million) for the state bee lab is in the NC Senate budget. Next the budget moves to the NC House of Representatives and then to the NC Governor for signature.

### **Technology in the Hive**

Carrie said OCBA will host a forum on technology use in the hive on Monday, July 26, at 7 pm on Zoom. Join in if you have experiences to share or want to learn what others are doing. Watch for more information on the OCBA listserv.

### **Door Prize Winners**

Chris Richmond - painting of bee skep

Erika Wittchen - agritourism sign

Walter Starks - t-shirt

*Next month's meeting will be held on Thursday, August 12, at 7 pm. We will have a hybrid meeting with the option to attend in person at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Hillsborough or via Zoom. In-person attendees will need to wear a mask. We will not have refreshments during the meeting or dinner before the meeting. Our speaker will be Bridget Gross, the state bee inspector for Area 2, which runs from the Virginia border to the South Carolina border and includes Davidson and Mecklenburg Counties.*