***Alaska Bee Initiative***

Meeting at Sleepy Dog, Eagle River on the 27th February, 2015

Present: Nathan Broumley, Tom Elliot, Keith Malone, Jim Newton, Wiggi Tozzi, Ian Williams.

**Main points discussed—I did not take great notes, but this is how I remember things.. Let me know if I made any glaring omissions or innacuracies!!**

1. Breeding Plan- Ian Williams will design and write a protocol to guide the breeding operation. Current plan based on the approach adopted by the Russian Bee Breeding Association. The methodology should be as simple as possible to allow for efficient tracking of queen and drone sources and matings

1. Keith discouraged the introduction of ‘novel’ genetic strains such as the Buckfast, recommending instead that we should select breeding lines from bees of either carniolan or Russian descent. It is likely that all lineages have valuable genetic traits. As long as we have access to sufficient diversity within each lineage (i.e., carniolans or Russian bees from a broad range of breeding backgrounds) then it should be possible to draw out, and concentrate through selection, qualities that allow for improved overwintering. I guess what we a trying to avoid here is out-breeding depression (which is the opposite of inbreeding depression), which results in breakdown of adaptive gene complexes due to breeding between too distantly related lines.
2. Nevertheless, there is interest among group members to work with different strains (e.g., *A.m.caucasica* and *A.m. mellifera*). Such strains should probably be monitored separately before being considered for introduction into the breeding environment. As noted by Keith and Tom, first generation Buckfast bees are known to be defensive when breed outside their immediate lineage. Tom works without a veil… so no defensive bees please!!

1. A number of possible locations were suggested for isolated mating
2. Keith suggested Eklutna Valley
3. Wiggi has researched two locations: Granite Creek and Mills Creek
4. Ian suggested Whittier

These locations will be needed next year (2016). Any survivor daughter colonies (raised from this years survivor queens) will be taken to a remote location and will serve as drone sources for 2016 queens. 2016 breeder colonies will then have survived a 2 winters.

1. Encourage beekeeper participation through the akbeekeepers forum and a SABBA meeting presentation.
2. There was support for Keith’s idea to organize a field trip to look at dead-outs and surviving hives at his apiary. In addition, Wiggi was interested in having queen rearing and overwintering workshops with ABC

**ACTION POINTS**— suggested by Wiggi

1. Contact people with successfully overwintered colonies. (*Nathan has eight colonies that have survived multiple winters and is to graft off them*).
2. Recruit people who are willing to try and overwinter novel bee strains
3. Create a list of people who are willing to try and overwinter our first generation queens (ones raised this summer from overwintered queens). Wiggi estimated that we could get 50 or so colonies. Target folks who normally kill the queen in July…
4. Workshops will need organizing