

was begun in 1995 by Dr. Jimmy Maddox, a former employee of the Tennessee Valley Authority, on 4 acres of TVA land with TVA support. The TVA is now pursuing a goal of divesting itself of the 1344 acres that make up the TVA Muscle Shoals Reservation which includes the chestnut orchard. There is a real and present danger that this orchard could be lost to commercial/industrial development and with it the heart of chestnut restoration in Alabama.

It is our belief that no one at TVA really wants to see the orchard lost, but the feelings of individuals do not seem to rule on this. The reality appears to be that the momentum is not in our favor and the process underway may well overrule logic.

The TVA has recently produced an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that lists options A, B, C, D and E for the future of the Muscle Shoals Reservation and our orchard. Options A and B keep the orchard. Option C, D and E treat the orchard as an "interim" use which can only mean its elimination once a suitable development or "higher use" is found. Option E is favored by the TVA.

The EIS invites public comment on the proposed options. Although we obviously prefer Option A or B we are not pressing for a particular

plan. We do want to bring to bear the influence of all those individuals and organizations supportive of chestnut restoration in Alabama to help the TVA see the way to preserve the orchard. It is our belief that they need to see a concerted effort to give momentum towards the decision we think they would like to be able to make.

—Mac Phillippi, former president of the Alabama Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation, 12/17/12

Those individuals who deserve a word of appreciation for their efforts in informing TVA officials of our orchard efforts and goals so our endeavors can continue are Forrest Bailey, Steven Barnett, Jim Bennett, Linda Casey, Charles Rose, Paul Sisco, and Stephen A. Smith. Additionally, it has come to light that a quiet friend in Cartter Patten, Chattanooga, was instrumental in guiding the TVA's decision, and for this a special word of thanks is due this fine chestnut enthusiast. -Jack



workday@
TVA orchard:
Dr. Jimmy
oversees bed
preparation for
seed planting
(oldest orchard
trees are
behind Jack)

TACF® – Alabama Chapter
4 Office Park Circle, Suite 314
Birmingham, AL 35223

President
Jack Agricola
agprop@bellsouth.net

Vice-President
Steve Forehand
sforehand@russellands.com

Secretary
Tim Chesnut
tim@chestnutforestry.com

Treasurer
Edwin Camp
edwincamp308@earthlink.net

Newsletter
Marty Schulman
mschulman@juno.com

Our Goal: To restore the American chestnut tree to its native range within the woodlands of the eastern United States.



THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT
FOUNDATION®

Alabama Chapter

www.acf.org/ChapterNews_al.php

Chestnut Restoration – the environment, the future

spring 2013

Forthcoming Chestnut Events

June 1-14: Meadowview Farms, VA All yrly work week **call for volunteers:** 256/478-1786 for sign up information

October 19-20: TACF's 2013 Annual Meeting Hyatt Dulles, Herndon, VA Details TBA

For more TACF events, visit <http://www.acf.org/calendar.php>

TVA Orchard Status

Two years ago I sent an appeal to you and/or your organization for help with a challenge the Alabama Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation was faced with. Many of you responded and I want to let you know of the results (finally!) of that effort.

As I hope you will recall, the heart of the effort to restore the American chestnut tree to our state lay in the original chestnut breeding orchard site on the Tennessee Valley Authority Muscle Shoals Reservation. At the time I contacted you, the TVA was to sell off the entire 1344 acre reservation and had shown little interest in preserving the orchard site. The momentum was definitely against us. The Alabama Chapter of TACF is not exactly a household name in our state (yet) and consequently our voice did not appear to be carrying the weight it should have with the decision makers at TVA. So, we appealed to you.

At my request, many of you sent letters and emails expressing support for the mission to restore the American chestnut tree and urged the TVA to support our continued presence at the Muscle Shoals site. Recently, we attended a public meeting of the Board of Directors of the TVA where the final development plan for the Muscle Shoals Reservation was presented. It is my great pleasure to tell you that the Board has decided to retain our orchard site and support our continued presence there.

It is clear to all of us involved in the work to return the American chestnut to Alabama that your efforts were a turning point in our effort to save this orchard and with it the heart of chestnut restoration in our state. Your support of our mission is something that was noticed at the highest levels of TVA management. In fact, during the presentation of the MSR Development Plan, one of the Board members interrupted to address the Alabama Chapter of TACF members present and assure us of their support. That speaks volumes on the difference that you made.

So, on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Alabama Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation, I want to express our lasting gratitude for the effort you made on our behalf. **IT WORKED!**

Each year, at the national level and in our own state, our work takes us closer to the reality of restoring this important tree species to our eastern forest. The effort of actual restoration, getting the trees "out there", will eventually prove too large a task for any single group.

It will be an effort involving many people from many organizations who care about the health of our forest and wildlife. The journey to that time has been long and is still some years away but, it's getting closer and it will happen. Thank you for being a part of it.

This letter is an appeal for help in the effort to restore the American chestnut tree to the forests of Alabama. Our hope is that you will take the time to read the following, take it to heart and respond. We have no need of anything other than your expressed desire to see the American chestnut back in our state and the time it takes to put it in writing.

The American Chestnut Foundation has been at work since 1983 to produce an American chestnut capable of resisting and surviving an attack of the "chestnut blight" that virtually eliminated this important species from our eastern U.S. forests. In the fall of 2010 our national orchard at Meadowview, Virginia produced approximately 17,000 of the blight-resistant seed. Next fall we expect to produce 44,000 seed. This is wonderful news but, the seed produced at Meadowview is not the long term answer to chestnut restoration in Alabama.

Most of the 16 state chapters of TACF have breeding orchards working in concert with Meadowview. The chestnut trees being developed at our own state orchard in Muscle Shoals, Alabama are, as is the case for each state, regionally adapted and are therefore key to the restoration effort here. This orchard

Continued on back page

Message from the President

As a non-science person, I am easily overwhelmed by the science supporting our efforts to restore the American chestnut to its native range. Usually this occurs only moments after Dr. Maddox embarks on any topic relating to the chestnut. But like a devoted student at the feet of an eminent mentor, I have attempted to mask my ignorance with an occasional attentive nod of affirmation (as if I was really capable of following) and a heavy dose of eye contact. So it was when I lost my focus at our Annual Meeting, when Dr. Jimmy's discussion digressed into some realm of science beyond my comprehension. Under discussion, through the modern-day marvel of Skype, he and Tom Sailli, our Regional Science Coordinator, unmoored my mental vessel, and I began to drift. I was much later startled out of this fog over

lunch when Dr. Jimmy professed "I am NOT interested so much in the science behind the chestnut as the PEOPLE involved in its restoration." I believe scientists refer to this type of startle as an aha-moment.

It suddenly became clear to me that it is, indeed, the people that bind us as one; joined as we are in a scientific cause in which we know of no one—even the best informed of our national scientists—who knows more than the next. We are devoted to one Big Guess and are partnered with some hard-working folks of a similar ilk. We act in faith that this science is, in fact, progressing even if science is not foremost in what binds us to the ploughshare. Its a thrill to chip away at ignorance together with so many good people. What a school of thought this makes!

Welcome all into our fold: we offer a real benefit that is spiritual in the manner of Jimmy's remark.

Dr Jimmy's well-deserved Volunteer Service Award, presented during our annual meeting



after preparing the beds (including replenishing topsoil), we planted almost 400 hybrid chestnut seeds in the TVA orchard during the 4/13 workday; here's Jack Rist placing sprouting chestnut seeds evenly spaced



Cleft Grafts of Wild Trees onto Morris Stanford Field Trees						
W - E	Grafts			Graft Survival		
Morris Stanford	Wild Tree	Wild Tree	No.	Position	No/ attempt	Graft Growth (in)
Tree	No.	Tree	Scions		5/2/2012	
1	1	Ruff IE 1	5		1/5	12
2	2	Ruff 3 CN	4		2/4	4
3	3	Ruff MS 33	2	South	0/2	0
4	4	Ruff MS 42	4	North	4/4	15 - 3
4	5	Ruff 7 CN	7	South	2/7	12.5
5	6	Ruff MS 18	6	North	0/6	0
5	7	Ruff 5	7		6/7	12
6	8	T3	6		5/6	13.5
7	9	T2	9		5/9	16
8	10	Ruff MS 38	4		3/4	3
9	11	Lacon 10	5		3/5	12

Dr. Jimmy's chart of successful grafts of American chestnuts



Marty & Edwin inspecting a graft in the TVA orchard

2/22/13 workday @ the Lanning Orchard on Chandler Mt

Don't know what you've heard yet about today, but . . .

There are 128 (or some number) of chestnut seedlings growing out in Alabama that weren't there yesterday. Crisp and windy when we arrived, it was pure balmy compared to 2012 planting day.

Actually, the thing that jacked me up most was seeing that every single chestnut that was alive on our workday last summer is still kicking—twigs red on the ends and buds itching to pop. I cannot remember whether the number was 72 or 76 or what—I gave Mac the count when we finished that day. Jimmy knows. It was easy to tell today what was alive last summer by our mats and metal cylinders. In the middle of every mat, an apparent live chestnut. After a mortality of about 50% in the first 4 months they were in the ground, 100% survival for 6 months is happy.

The climactic and final event was getting Jimmy's truck out of the hole he backed it into fresh on arrival. It happened over by the scene of Schulman's Shag, the Dance of the Yellow Jacket. All the King's horses and all the King's men and Edwin's Ford diesel pulling on a chain couldn't get Jimmy out of the hole he was in. Until with their tires spinning, I went over behind the truck and pushed and out she came.

Maybe I should mention in passing that Ronald Brothers and Marty came over with me to give a heave, but I must modestly report that I'm the one that did it. I know—I pushed and it went. Oh, and Zack, the young strongback with FWLT, was pushing with us, heh heh.

-Hartwell Davis, Jr

Late breaking news: Debra Stults, Univ. of S Al, has found fossil evidence of American chestnut, *Castanea dentata*, in the Citronelle formation (c. 3 million years old) in the Mobile area. -ed

Become a Member Today

As a member of The American Chestnut Foundation, you will be part of an extraordinary journey that began in 1983 when a small group of prominent scientists established the premier organization dedicated to restoring the American chestnut.

As a member, you will receive the following:

- All TACF publications
- A special TACF car decal
- Membership in one of our state chapters: AL, CT, GA, IN, KY, MA, MD, ME, NC/SC, NY, OH, PA, TN, VA, VT/NH & WV
- Access to expert advice on growing and caring for American chestnut trees
- Opportunities to participate in local breeding and research activities
- And much, much more

TACF does not sell or otherwise disclose member information outside the organization and its chapters. This policy has no exceptions. We do not sell or exchange your information with any other organization, public, private, or non-profit.

Join the Crusade

Invite others to become TACF members

I want to help restore the American Chestnut tree!

- Chestnut Leaf (\$5,000+) Bronze Leaf (\$250-\$499)
 Gold Leaf (\$1,000-\$4,999) Green Leaf (\$100-\$249)
 Silver Leaf (\$500-\$999) Regular Member (\$40-\$99)
 Student (\$15) Additional Gift to Alabama State Chapter: \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

City St Zip: _____

email: _____

phone: _____ alt ph: _____

Please make check payable to **The American Chestnut Foundation**

or Please bill my credit card (*Visa/Mastercard only*)\$ _____

Name on Card _____

Card # _____ - _____ - _____ - _____ Exp ___/___ CCV _____

Signature _____

Please mail this form to: TACF
160 Zillicoa St, Ste D Asheville, NC 28801

TACF is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. The non-deductible membership services portion of your TACF membership is \$15.
828/281-0047 phone chestnut@acf.org 828/253-5373 fax
www.acf.org (apply online - MC & Visa accepted)