



Maryland Chapter

Newsletter – May 2006

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The Maryland Chapter supports the efforts of The American Chestnut Foundation to restore the American chestnut tree, identifies and preserves American chestnut survivors in Maryland and promotes educational and scientific research efforts directed at restoring American chestnut trees in Maryland.



YOU'RE INVITED!

Please join us for two special events:

- **May 20 Picnic and membership meeting at the Dickey Orchard in Davidsonville, MD (details below)**
- **May 26 Ceremony at Green Ridge State Park Headquarters near Flintstone Maryland (details on page 2)**

Picnic at Dickey Orchard

Saturday May 20 at 12:00 Noon

- Bring a sandwich – chips, drinks and cookies will be provided
- Presentation on controlled pollination by Sara Fitzsimmons, Tree Breeding Program Coordinator for The American Chestnut Foundation – beautifully illustrated with color photos
- Gary Carver will present his map of potential Maryland mother trees and description of the Chapter's American chestnut locator database
- Tour of the Dickey backcross orchard – a beautiful place for a picnic!

Directions to Dickey Orchard

3960 Birdsville Road, Davidsonville, MD 21035
(443) 203-0366

Take Route 50 East from the Washington Beltway. Take Exit 16 South (Route 424, Davidsonville Road) off of Route 50. Proceed for several miles until you reach a traffic light at the intersection with Route 214. Proceed across Route 214, at which point Davidsonville Road becomes Birdsville Road. Drive for 2.6 miles on Birdsville Road and take a right into driveway at 3960.

Robert Strasser and Paul Eriksson collect blight samples from the Green Ridge Tree. Blight samples will be used by Dr. William McDonald of West Virginia University to create a "hypo-virus soup" to treat the blight cankers on this beautiful tree. (Learn more about this Green Ridge high water adventure on page 3.)

DNR and Chestnut Foundation Sign Agreement

**Ceremony at Green Ridge State Park Headquarters
May 26 at 9:00 a.m.**

As a symbol of hope for the restoration of a nearly lost icon of America's forests, representatives of Maryland Department of Natural Resources and The American Chestnut Foundation will plant an American chestnut seedling in a ceremony at Green Ridge State Forest. Francis Zumbrun, Manager of the Green Ridge State Forest, invites Maryland Chapter members to join Maryland State Forester Steven W. Koehn and Marshal T. Case, President and CEO of The American Chestnut Foundation on May 26th with representatives of DNR at this State Forest in eastern Allegany County to celebrate the signing of an historic agreement between the two organizations that will promote cooperation in research and eventual restoration of the species in Maryland.

Although The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) cooperates under a similar agreement with the US Forest Service, this is its first agreement at the state level. Maryland is in the heart of the natural range of the American chestnut, and has no national forest land. The agreement with Maryland's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) opens possibilities for research and growing blight-resistant American chestnut trees on some of the thousands of acres of Maryland State Forest land. MD TACF Board Member and Western Maryland Resource Conservation And Development Council, Inc. Watershed Forester Paul Eriksson played a key role in initiating and facilitating this historic memorandum of understanding.

This year marks Maryland DNR's one hundred year anniversary of caring for Maryland's forests. Maryland's first state forester, Fred W. Besley, was witness to the loss of American chestnut in Maryland to the chestnut blight. The blight fungus, *Cryphonectria parasitica*, was first identified in the United States in 1902. At that time, the American chestnut dominated the Appalachian mountaintops from Maine to Georgia. A fast growing tree with straight-grained, rot-resistant wood, the American chestnut grew trunks as much as nineteen feet in diameter. Both wood and nuts were economically important. In less than thirty years, these forest giants had virtually disappeared, leaving forests of standing dead wood skeletons. The historic agreement between DNR and TACF opens new possibilities for the return the American chestnut in Maryland forests during the next century.

Directions to Green Ridge State Forest Headquarters: Take exit 64 from Interstate Highway 68 near Flintstone, Maryland. Signs will direct you to State Forest Headquarters.



Above, from left to right, Barbara Knapp, Burnie Burnworth, Francis Zumbrun, Robert Strasser, Essie Burnworth, and Gary Carver pause above the flood after taking canker samples from the Green Ridge Tree. Green Ridge State Forest Manager Zumbrun and MD TACF Board Member and DNR employee Paul Eriksson guided the expedition on back roads around the floodwaters. See story on page 3.

AGREEMENT SIGNED WITH WSSC

The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) signed an agreement with the American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) this April that will make 4,200 acres of buffer zone around its Rocky Gorge and Triadelphia Reservoirs on the Patuxent River available for American chestnut restoration efforts. Burnie Burnworth contacted WSSC after Jim Plaskowitz spotted two American chestnut trees beside the Rocky Gorge Reservoir and took Robert Strasser by canoe to identify and tag them.

Below, DNR employees and Maryland Chapter volunteers after planting 78 backcross and control nuts in the newly established orchard at the Monocacy Natural Resource Management Area in Frederick County, Maryland. The Maryland State Forest Service truck pictured was used to give the emerging seedlings a much-needed drink, as 2006 has had an unusually dry spring.



Allegheny College of MD Hosts Maryland Chapter Meeting in Cumberland

Steven F. Resh, Allegheny College of Maryland Associate Professor and Coordinator of Forestry Program helped the Maryland Chapter hold its first meeting in Cumberland April 22nd. After an introduction to the Chapter and its activities by President Essie Burnworth, Robert Strasser, American Chestnut Project Research Associate at Hood College, presented "Regional Efforts to Restore American Chestnut." Strasser's slide show featured many beautiful photographs depicting work by Maryland volunteers in support of the twenty-five-year-old backcross breeding program of The American Chestnut Foundation.

Dr. Gary Carver, Maryland Chapter Chair of American Chestnut Identification, presented a summary of efforts to find American chestnuts trees in Maryland, including a map showing locations of known potential Mother Trees.

Attendees were enthusiastic about the potential for future Chapter activities in western Maryland. Possible orchard sites in western Maryland were discussed.



From left, Forestry Program Coordinator Steve Resh with Chapter President Essie Burnworth, Gary Carver, Green Ridge Forest Manager Francis Zumbrun and Robert Strasser at Allegheny College of Maryland



Melissa Stevens of Frostburg checks out the MDTACF display. She plans to enroll in the Allegheny College Forestry Program next fall.

Through Mountains and High Water To Save the Green Ridge Tree

A quick stop by the Green Ridge tree on the way home from the April 22 meeting in Cumberland became an adventure when heavy rains in the mountains caused flooding along Fifteen Mile Creek. Fortunately Francis Zumbrun and Paul Eriksson were able to lead the group to a third route when the first two attempted were under fast moving water.



At left, Gary Carver contemplates the unattainable road ahead at the end of the second attempted route. Burnworths had stopped for gas and were across the creek to the right at a similar point on the first route. Zumbrun and Eriksson conferred about the third route across the roaring water.

Above, looking back after reaching the road ahead via the third route.



Above – Burnie takes a blight sample.
Below – a minor high water crossing on the way to the Green Ridge tree.



Sosnowski Presents Research Project



Poolesville High School senior Raquel Sosnowski in the greenhouse with some of the 240 American chestnut trees she planted for her research. Sosnowski's research results suggest that forest soils produce better germination and growth than those derived from fields, potting mix, or 50:50 mixtures of these soils. Raquel entered her project in the Maryland Junior Science and Humanities Symposium, where she presented in March. Her final paper will be submitted for publication in the Journal of the American Chestnut Foundation.

Beall Research Suggests Nut Size May Not Impact Seedling Growth



Hood College Masters Degree candidate Colleen Beall has completed her research project in the Fox Haven orchard. She measured chestnuts planted in 2005 during their first growing season to test the effect of nut size, tree shelter size, and vegetative competition on the growth of the seedlings. Growth was measured as final seedling height and diameter, stem emergence date and the peak number of leaves on the seedling. The seeds were comprised mostly of third generation backcrossed (15/16) American chestnuts. Chinese chestnuts, F1 chestnuts, and American

Spring Planting Summary:

Dickey Orchard --1 new Maryland line planted March 18

Corrigan clone pollinated with GL 403 -- 216 B3 nuts
Total plantings -- 246 positions

Fox Haven Orchard -- 3 new Maryland lines planted April 1

Sugarloaf West 805/901/902 pollinated with GL 104 -- 189 B3 nuts
Yater pollinated with VA 307 -- 101 B3 nuts
ThorpeWood 155/156 pollinated with IL 940 -- 90 B4 nuts
Total plantings -- 460 positions

Izaak Walton League Mother Tree Orchard planted April 8

Corrigan clones -- 20 nuts
Knapp 39 -- 20 nuts
Sugarloaf Mountain 830 -- 20 nuts
Sugarloaf West 902 -- 20 nuts
Total plantings: 80 positions

Monocacy Natural Resource Area Orchard April 11

Brogue (Br96-106) pollinated with Hill 4565 -- 16 B4 nuts
Green 1A pollinated with GL 28 -- 6 B3 nuts
Total plantings -- 78 positions

Hashawa --American chestnuts planted in containers

Knapp 39 -- 100 nuts



Above in foreground, Robert Strasser, John Hanson, Kay Schultz and Paul Eriksson planting at Fox Haven. Left, Colleen Beall measuring 2005 seedlings last summer. Approximately 78% of the nuts planted in 2006 were showing above ground meristems by May 1.

chestnuts were also planted. Nut size, tree shelter size and vegetative competition had no significant effect on the growth of the seedlings. The first year seedlings exhibited characteristic differences typical of adult trees of the two species. Chinese seedlings were shorter and wider than the taller and thinner American seedlings, while the BC3s fell in between the two extremes.



Above and below, Ron Kuipers takes the lead as Isaak Walton League volunteers complete deer fence around their newly planted orchard.



ThorpeWood Hosts HELP Event

In early April the Highlands Educational Leadership Program (HELP), organized by Paul Kazyak of Maryland's Department of Natural Resources, held its inaugural sessions at ThorpeWood. The program give high school students with an interest in nature and the environment an opportunity to learn more about environmental issues affecting the Chesapeake Bay watershed and its ecosystems. The goal of HELP is to inspire participants to pursue higher education and careers that will lead to better protection, restoration and revitalization of the Chesapeake Bay watershed and beyond.

Hood College Research Associate Robert Strasser and the American chestnut blight were among the many experts and topics included in this exciting outdoor education program.

Participants are pictured below:

