

THE BUR

Newsletter of the New York State Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation, Inc.

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Fall/Winter 2008

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is time to pick American Chestnuts again. TACF-NY has no more important job to do now than get the nuts from proven American Chestnuts that are not already in our gene pool collections for the TACF-NY orchards across New York State. Each new confirmed tree found during 2008 should be collected and taken to the harvest exchange at the annual meeting and will be distributed at that time.

We have a target of eighty different lines for redistribution with the trees being returned to their native range to prevent problems created by changing areas. One known problem is, cold the southern New York seedling will not survive in Watertown, NY. We have proven this. The Watertown trees do very well in southern New York on the other hand.

We will have to patiently wait for our resistance reports from ESF Syracuse next fall, 2009. This will be our first official indication of how the program is going.

Long Live the American Chestnut,

Herbert F. Darling
President. TACF-NY

ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

THE OWEGO TREADWAY INN, OWEGO, NY OCTOBER 13, 2007

Opening remarks from Herb Darling began with a remembrance of John Ellis. He sent a picture of a good specimen. Presented Jim Donawick a memorial plaque. Chuck Maynard will hang the plaque in the NEW lab at Syracuse.

John Dougherty received the Board of Directors' award. John came into the group originally because of his son's involvement in the chapter in Maine. Treasurer's Report was read and is on record. Dale Travis put up the initial seed money for the acclimatization chamber.

Fran Nichols was absent but her husband Allen reported that the education project is going through BOCES in their areas. Scouts are working on an award through John Neumann for a badge.

Thanks were said for Stan and Arlene Wirsig for their many contributions in their absence. Arlene was still very instrumental in our location and events and Stan continues to be instrumental in the scientific aspects of our work.

Nominating committee presented the slate of officers which was unanimously approved.

District 3 Report-Lasden Orchard produced over 8000 nuts. Weathersfield is losing to blight battle. It will be cleaned out. Will need a grant this winter to help us get our Transgenic American Chestnut. There is a draft for the funding (handed out) John Dougherty talked about the legal implications of planting in the public. We have 4 sites for research plantings. USDA permit is required. An e-mail master list is needed (a page went round the room for those present to sign up with their e-mail).

District 4-Allen Nichols created a nifty chestnut picker. If interested, please contact him. He tried some grafting. Nat grafting. Iceland tree-activity reported that the tree is not viable there due to the cold. Membership call works to get members back. Be interested in them and they will be interested in us.

District 7-Display set up for information. 5 Trees.

Board of Directors' Meeting: Election of officers. Rick Radel moved Bethany Ruane seconded that the slate of officers be elected as slated.

Fencing-\$10,000 already and \$10,000 to come and \$20,000 more needed.

Tentative Transgenic Breeding Plan - one parent tree will get approved and then be bred with as many native trees as possible then test the gene expression and resistance to blight. Then it can go out (still in controlled seed orchards). It will have two pedigrees (one from transgenic and one from the native tree). Then after that step it can go out and cross openly with release permit.

Growth Chambers-Room being prepared. new control panel. tested at manufacturer, Mid-November expected.

Orchard information is needed-Slope, Aspect, Site Description, Soil. Etc.

2009 Goals-Put additional section with Transgenic on DVD. Positive PR once we have permits.

It was voted that TACFNY members would be paid by the chapter for meeting expenses, travel, etc while on TACFNY business approved by the officers.

36 TACFNY members were present.

In the afternoon we went to a nature tour to Wilderness Way. Michael S. Head put on a great show on ancient skills for earth living. He was invited to next year's meeting at Syracuse, NY with his family and their choir to sing at the meeting.

Lasdon Seed Orchard Progress Report
2008

Craig R. Hibben

1. Most of the remaining original (planted 1963) American chestnut trees have been removed because of blight. The seed orchard has reverted to mostly young trees, consisting of rapidly growing sprout clusters plus replacement seedlings. The current tree count is 262, representing ca. 45 genetic lines originating from nuts harvested throughout New York State.

2. Despite tree attrition from blight over the years, loss of genetic lines has been minimized because sprout trees are saved for replacements. Blighted older chestnuts produce basal epicormic sprouts. These are thinned to the best 3 or 4 and allowed to grow along with the blighted mother tree, which is finally removed, leaving the fast growing sprout clusters. To protect from wind damage, the older sprout clusters are cinched together with rope or bungee cords.

3. Efforts continue to remove branches and trunks with sporulating cankers, thereby reducing the spread of *Cryphonectria parasitica* spores which produce new infections of young trees.

4. A sudden frost in late April severely scorched emerging young leaves of most chestnuts in the seed orchard. The injured chestnuts produced a new crop of leaves and no trees were lost. Notable were 14 chestnuts (ID 90005) that were uninjured by the April frost because their buds did not open until early May.

5. In an attempt to replace mud-packing to control blight cankers, excised cankers and large pruning wounds were painted with fungicide followed by coverage with tree wound compound. So far this treatment appears to be effective in minimizing additional infection.

6. Three guided tours of Lasdon chestnuts by visiting groups were conducted during the summer and fall.

Weathersfield Seed Orchard
Report 2008 Kevin Malloy

Last year this time we had two 20 foot trees with the remainder of our seedlings from sprouts from 1964 and later plantings. When the trees were in good condition we had a harvest of 2,000 + nuts. This past year we did remove all the old dead and wood much of which was loaded with cankers. Learning from Lasdon that blighted trees and branches must be removed from the orchard as soon as possible to keep the spread of the

blight down. At his Septembers inspection we found one of the two 20' trees alive but with a good spread of blight. All sprouting and young trees had blight on them and there so not one chestnut to be harvested. It was a sad site compared to other years when we had over 200 trees producing seeds.

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TACFNY 2007 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS OFFICERS 2007

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Membership includes subscriptions to The Bark and Journal of the American Chestnut Foundation and enrollment in the New York State Chapter. The Chapter publishes the BUR, helps guide research at CESF, and includes nine Districts for local involvement in maintaining the American chestnut gene pool. Please make check payable to The American Chestnut Foundation, PO Box 4044, Bennington, VT 05201-4044. TACF is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization. Except for the member services portion of your contribution (valued at \$15), your gift is tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.