

THE BUR

Volume 21, No. 1 Newsletter of the New York State Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation Fall 2015

President's Message

The NY chapter of TACF will be celebrating its 25th year and will be giving special recognition to past and present members at our annual meeting.

As president of TACF-NY it has been an extremely busy year for me and I am sure it has been the same for many other members. Being president and District 4 Director has been very time consuming, but rewarding.

It is great to announce on our 25th anniversary that SUNY-ESF will be applying for deregulation of a blight resistant American chestnut tree! But that is just one milestone.

With the ultimate goal of reforestation with blight resistant trees we need to prepare for the date when our blight resistant trees can be distributed to our members and the public. Therefore we are encouraging all members that want to get one of the blight resistant trees, when approved for deregulation, to plant a "mother" tree ASAP.

This is necessary for good genetic diversity, the health of the future trees, and so all those members can have their own trees producing blight resistant nuts.

Any members interested in getting involved with this program should contact their local director or me. We also have several other exciting items that are pending, that may be finalized by meeting time.

Thanks to everyone involved in this great program and I hope to see you at the meeting.

Allen Nichols
President, TACF-NY

TACF-NY, Science and Regulatory Director Observations, John Dougherty

I have been a volunteer with TACF-NY since 2002. I took on this position in the organization from the research visionary, Stan Wirsig, who believed TACF needed to place more than one scientific technology bet for the restoration of the American chestnut...he and Herb Darling added the biotechnology component at our chapter 26 years ago. Plant science biotechnology was at its infancy in annual crops and had not been tried with forestry. Truly theirs was a visionary commitment to an emerging science for an unmet need.

Likewise, the systematic scientific work of Dr. Charles Maynard and Dr. Bill Powell and their students and technicians to tackle the chestnut blight problem over 26 years has been a heroic effort of ingenuity and perseverance. Their program is a commitment to the rigors of science and, as first class educators, the transparency of information and transfer of knowledge to the world.

I am proud to be a member of an organization committed to the application of modern science to solve an ecological disaster. Ninety nine plus percent of the American chestnut population is gone from the world because of human activity of importing Asian chestnut trees to the United States loaded with the Asian fungal chestnut blight. Every time I see a container shipment train pass from Asia I wonder in what way as a consumer I may inadvertently bringing the next ecological calamity to our forest and North American ecosystem.

I know that this organization (TACF – NY) in collaboration with ESF is embarking on one of the most important ecological turns that USA will accomplish in the 21 st century. I know this from listening to the stories of my grandfather, uncles and father who remembered the forest and these magnificent trees in Pennsylvania. Adults normally do not get visibly sad when talking about a tree species.

The number one question I get from other TACF members is when will I be able to plant these blight resistant trees that I have seen on the plots, web sites or at the annual meeting presentations? We must first clear the federal deregulation process for biotechnology traits. So my role is to try to help Dr. Maynard and Dr. Powell through the labyrinth called the federal deregulation process. So let us talk about the process.

We are fortunate to live in the USA versus, say Europe. In the USA, we have a well- established (over 20 years) science based regulatory system. Whereas, Europe has a system where the scientific regulatory system recommends approvals to plants and the politicians, with no scientific training, choose to make no decisions. So plant science biotechnology languishes in a "Dark Age of Fear and Ignorance".

However, the USA system is very thorough, systematic and takes time. Three agencies are involved in the approval before we can plant; USDA/APHIS, EPA and FDA. For each agency, we must submit a dossier of studies that center on their area of expertise. The ESF data will be reviewed by very well qualified scientists at these agencies. The process takes 3-5 years. When we are done, we will have satisfied the agencies in order to have

the right to plant. The agencies will have concluded that our lead event transgenic American chestnut tree has the same characteristics as one of the few surviving pure American chestnut. That this blight resistant American chestnut has no increased risk adverse effects to humans, animals, insects invertebrate, flora and fauna in the forest eco system than the American chestnut that is susceptible to the blight.

As of this summer 2015, the ESF researchers have selected a lead event line to go through this process from several outstanding alternatives.

We have started the dialogue with EPA and USDA so that we understand the guidelines and apply those guidelines correctly to our chestnut dossier. Deregulation is a case by case science based gauntlet. Each gene, each pest problem, each crop system, each construct and each eco system is unique. Therefore it is an iterative process of making submissions to agencies. The data and studies are then reviewed. Questions are asked by the agencies. New studies are designed to answer those new questions. There will be in the late stages of the process, after all the data has been reviewed, a period for open comment from the general public, including TACF-NY members.

Therefore our goal is in each edition of the Bur, TACF Journal, ESF and TACF websites to keep you as current on our knowledge as possible. We will at our meetings tell all we know. We are about science and transparency. We welcome questions that can be addressed by scientific experiments with objectives and hypothesis. You will know about the same time frame the same information as the agencies receive the information. By your memberships over the decades, you have earned our respect for your commitment to learn the science and facts. Most importantly the time spent in the field becoming experts on growing and maintaining the biodiversity of the American chestnuts in our orchards and at your homes makes you the living experts on the American chestnut. Your chestnut and forestry insight and experience will far surpasses 95% of the general population that has never planted a chestnut tree or anti-biotechnology antagonist making obscure comments during these periods of open input. We will welcome your field restoration sweat and your historical experience being shared at these forums.

We are fortunate to have a volunteer group of PhD scientists that are familiar with the regulatory process from crops that are acting as advisors to ESF. These scientists represent a depth and breadth of knowledge that should help ESF and TACF-NY do the correct studies, in the correct order, with the correct design and level of statistical compliance. This team of advisors should take the naïve factor out of our dossier preparation effort.

Our master of science level project technician who many of you know, Andy Newhouse, has accepted to become a PhD candidate focused one hundred percent of the time on completing the dossier and be a focal writing

and science point person for this project. This will be the first time any university worldwide has ever attempted to run the regulatory gauntlet. This is also world first for a collaborative not-for-profit effort for a biotechnology deregulation and species restoration.

So our goal is to keep you informed. We know you are planting pure mother chestnut trees and maintaining these orchards for the day when we can cross the resistant tree pollen with those trees. With luck, when in your back yard and orchard about the time they are in full bloom in 3-5 years, we will have an approved source of pollen or father tree seedlings to start the restoration process.

We will put a question section on our website for you to enter your questions over the next 3-5 years. Each time the Bur is published in the future our goal will be to publish in this column our latest science based answer to those questions.

John Dougherty
Volunteer Science and Regulatory Directory TACF-NY

THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT FOUNDATION
NEW YORK STATE CHAPTER
OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS
2014-2015

OFFICERS (Terms End at Annual Meeting of 2017)

President - Allen Nichols
Vice President - Frank Munzer
Secretary - John Neumann
Treasurer - Fran Nichols
President Emeritus - Herbert F. Darling, Jr.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Executive Committee

CLASS II (1 Year) Directors (Terms End at Annual Meeting of 2015)

James Donowick	Correctional Officer at Juvenile Delinquent Center
Roy Hopke	Forester
Ted Kozlowski	Forester
Enrico Nardone	Seatuck Environmental Associates

T. Urling Walker	City Manager, Watertown, NY
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- Thomas Deacon Nurseryman
- Frank Munzer* Retired Architect
- Alec Newlands Science Professor
- John Neumann* Retired, "Fortune 500" Corporation
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- William Snyder* Arborist
- Dr. Richard Zander Botanist at Missouri Botanical Gardens

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- Herbert F. Darling, Jr.* Retired, Construction Company Owner
- Richard R. Radel* Retired, Vice President Construction Company
- Allen Nichols* Retired, Power Company Employee
- Fran Nichols* Retired, School Teacher
- Dale Travis Principle, Dale Travis Associates
- Arlene Wirsig Retired, Executive Secretary
- John Dougherty Retired Agricultural Biotechnology Consultant

District 4 News

As district 4 director I have kept busy all summer. The total count for the 2015 season so far is over 2,000 nuts and seedlings given out for mother trees, to over 270 individuals. I attended the Catskill Forest Festival in Margaretville, had a tour of my orchard with the Otsego County Conservation Association, and had a booth at both the Otsego county fair in Morris and the Delaware county fair in Walton. At all events I gave out seedlings to anyone

that wanted to join TACF-NY and start their "mother" tree orchard. There also was an article in the "New York Outdoor News" that got a good response and several new members.

I have presentations scheduled for the Hanford Mills Museum and with the New York Nut Growers Association, and three plantings scheduled to plant mother trees on public locations this fall.

Thanks, Allen Nichols

President, TACF-NY

District 5 News, We have a new director.

I would like to welcome our new District 5 Director, Mr. Emmett Hoops. Emmett is a school teacher and lives in Saranac Lake, NY. He is very interested in getting the American chestnut reintroduced into the forest and anyone from district 5 that finds a tree or with questions feel free to contact him.

His contact information is Emmett Hoops, 10 Payeville Ln., Saranac Lake, NY 12983-2580.

PH# 518-891-2296, and email emmett.hoops@gmail.com

He is willing to do programs on the American chestnut if anyone in the district is interested.

Emmett has already been doing a lot of outreach for us. While on vacation this summer he found American chestnuts in Ohio and West Virginia in state parks. These trees had been planted by the superintendents as blight resistant trees, but they both had the blight. The superintendents were disappointed to hear that their blight resistant trees had the blight. But, Emmett informed them about our tree and that we possibly could replace their blighted trees with our blight resistant trees when we get approval.

Great job Emmett!

New York State Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation, Inc. 25th Annual Meeting Agenda

Where: SUNY-ESF (www.esf.edu)
110 Moon Library
1 Forestry Drive, Syracuse, NY 13210

When: Friday, October 16, 2015
Saturday, October 17, 2015

Meeting Agenda

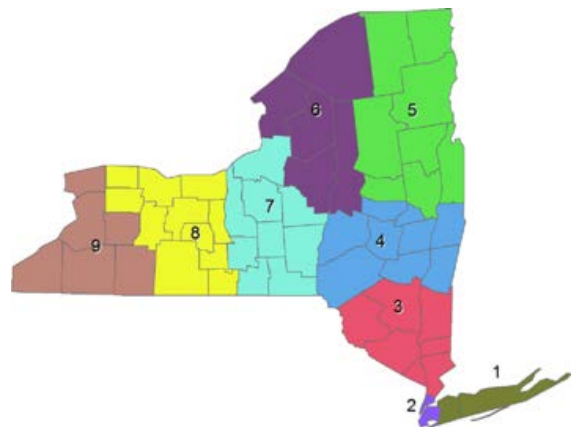
Friday (10/16) – Hotel Skyler

- 6:00 pm Dinner – On your own
Meet in hotel lobby to discuss dining options
- 7:30 – 10 pm Harvest Exchange
Informal gathering in the Hotel Skyler lobby



Saturday (10/17) – 110 Moon Library

- 8 am – 9 am Registration (Sign up to become a member or renew membership)
Coffee, tea, Danish
Silent Auction/50:50 (all day until 4:45 pm)
- 9:00 am Welcome & President's report by **Allen Nichols**
(Other reports on the trees at NY Botanical Garden, Zoar Valley, Lasdon Arboretum, Bellville, and the Camp Fire Club at Chappaqua, NY)
- 9:20 am Treasurer's Report by **Fran Nichols**
- 9:30 am Election of Board - **Richard R. Radel**
- 9:35 am District Director's Reports
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|------------|----------------|
| District 1 | Enrico Nardone |
| District 2 | Dale Travis |
| District 3 | Frank Munzer |
| District 4 | Allen Nichols |
| District 5 | Emmett Hoops |
| District 6 | Urling Walker |
| District 7 | Roy Hopke |
| District 8 | Alec Newlands |
| District 9 | William Snyder |
- 10:00 am Coffee Break



25th Annual Meeting Agenda (Continued)

10:30 am Science Reports – **Drs. Maynard & Powell and Staff**

12:00 pm Lunch (catered by American Food and Vending)

12:45 pm *25th Anniversary Candlelight Observance of Reflection and Rededication*

We will light symbolic candles to commemorate the American chestnut, the founding of TACF, the vision of our New York Chapter founders 25 years ago, memorialize dedicated members who have passed away by reciting their names individually, celebrate our productive partnership with SUNY-ESF and the success of our transgenic blight resistant American chestnut, and rededicate ourselves to the task ahead.



Afternoon Field Trips and Workshops

1 - 3 pm Field Trips – New Illick Hall Greenhouse
Tour of new chestnut lab in Central New York Biotech Accelerator (BAC)

3:15 – 3:55 pm - Session 1 (Choose A or B)

A – Oxalate Oxidase Assay – Dakota Matthews

Learn how to identify transgenic American chestnut trees containing the OxO gene by using this simple test. Easy to use in the field.

B – Options Beyond Two Tree Orchards – Allen Nichols

- Grafting onto large wild "mother" trees.
- Planting isolated blight resistant trees and pollinating them with pollen from multiple wild trees.
- Removing catkins/pollen from "mother" trees if more than one planted/orchard.
- The next step, planting the nuts.

4:05 – 4:45 pm - Session 2 (Choose A or B)

A – Site and Soil Prep – Tyler Desmarais

Learn how to prepare the site and soil before planting “mother” trees. This is also applicable for the eventual release of our transgenic trees.

B – Cooking with Chestnuts – Kristen Stewart

As the title suggests, you will learn different ways to cook with chestnuts.

4:45 pm Announce winners to silent auction/50:50

5:00 pm Afternoon session closes

6:00 pm The Rosamond Gifford Zoo – Visit the indoor areas of the zoo



7:00 pm Dinner at the Zoo, with "Birds of Prey" demonstration

After Dinner Closing Remarks

New York State Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation, Inc. 25th Annual Meeting

Where:

Hotel Skyler and
601 S. Crouse Ave.
Syracuse, NY 13210
(315) 476-4212

SUNY-ESF
110 Moon Library
1 Forestry Drive,
Syracuse, NY 13210

When:

Friday, October 16, 2015
Saturday, October 17, 2015

To make your room reservations, call the Hotel Skyler (<http://www.hotelskyler.com>) at (315) 476-4212 and ask for "American Chestnut Conference Room Block". Reservations must be made prior to September 28, 2015 to receive the rate of \$96 per night. This includes standard accommodations with either one king bed or two queen beds, as well as an upscale, hot artisanal style breakfast each morning. Meetings and facility touring will be at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. Check out the website <http://www.esf.edu/outreach/chestnut> for more details.

Registration Form

Name (s): _____ Address: _____

Phone: _____ City: _____

E-mail: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Brief Meeting Agenda:

Friday night includes the Harvest Exchange from 7:30 pm to 10:00 pm. Saturday morning begins early with coffee, tea and Danish at Moon Library with meetings lasting until 11:45 am. Lunch at noon followed by tours of the facilities and workshops from 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm. Saturday night dinner is at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo with time to tour the indoor facilities before dinner. Shuttle service will be provided for those who do not want to drive their own car.

	<u>Cost</u>	<u># Attending</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>
Friday			
Nut Exchange	Free	_____	Free
Saturday			
Registration Fee (before October 1, 2015)	\$25 each	_____	\$ _____
Dinner Reservation	\$40 each	_____	\$ _____
Total Registration:			\$ _____

_____ I desire shuttle service Hotel to/from ESF.
_____ I desire shuttle service Hotel to/from Zoo.

Make checks payable to:
TACFNY
Mail before October 1st to:
TACFNY C/O Fran Nichols
302 Bateman Road
Laurens, NY 13796

- _____ I expect to bring _____ nuts for Harvest Exchange.
- _____ I would like _____ nuts to plant.
- _____ I would be glad to help at the Annual Meeting.
- _____ I would be interested in the following
Member Sharing Topics _____ .



TACFNY C/O Fran Nichols
302 Bateman Road
Laurens, NY 13796

TACF-NY Annual Meeting To Mark Our 25th Anniversary

Our New York State Chapter was founded by Herb Darling, along with Stan and Arlene Wirsig and others in 1990. We are the first chapter to be formed in The American Chestnut Foundation. Our 25 year history is marked by innovation, the dedication of our members, directors and officers, and our productive partnership with the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and the chestnut research and restoration program directed by Professors Chuck Maynard and Bill Powell. Now, a quarter century of hard work has resulted in our first blight resistant transgenic American chestnut tree.

Many of our chapter members did not live to see the success of this 25 year effort, just as we will not live to see self sustaining, healthy, fully restored 100 year old American chestnut trees once again the keystone species in New York State forests and beyond. That is one reason why your dedication is so noble. With all of this in mind, our chapter meeting will be time for reflection. It will also be a time to rededicate ourselves to the tasks ahead. So, it is only fitting that we will have a special program on Saturday, October 17th: A 25th Anniversary Candlelight Observance of Reflection and Rededication.

We will light symbolic candles to commemorate the American chestnut, the founding of TACF, the vision of our New York Chapter founders 25 years ago, memorialize dedicated members who have passed away by reciting their names individually, celebrate our productive partnership with SUNY-ESF and the success of our transgenic blight resistant American chestnut. Every attendee will be holding a lighted candle as we pledge our dedication together to the vision and the mission of TACF and our New York State Chapter. We hope this will be a heartfelt and long remembered experience for you.

We are creating a list of dearly departed and dedicated chapter members to be remembered in the Observance. So far, the names are: Mr. Stan Wirsig, Mr. John Ellis, Mr. Robert Nowack, Mr. Craig Hibbons, Mr. John Gordon, Mr. Norman VanDusen, Mrs. Calvin Degolyers, and Mr. Michael Webb. We are certain there are more who should be memorialized. If you knew a member (or members) not listed, but whose name you would like to be recited, please contact our secretary, John Neumann. by e-mail: jneumann@frontiernet.net or phone: 607-865-6497.