200 -Tree Planting Underway

The Chestnut STUMP

by Barney Hart

It's not a political stump; it's a chestnut stump, as it says. But you can climb up on it and let go anyhow. The column is all yours. I'll get it started and you can take over.

Somebody better take over. I'm pushing 75, and already my woodworking (chestnut, of course) and golf are suffering, and on retirement these are the two pursuits I promised myself for whatever time I had left, and while chestnuts are a pleasant sidetrack, I shudder to think that I might leave here without breaking 100. Let the word go forth that I am a temp here. I am stump ing for a replacement, you might say.

But while I'm here I'll tell you how I see it. First off, we have too many nut gatherers and planters, and not enough people like me, who vaguely remembers the tree, who absolutely loves the quality of the wood, and who believes in and is excited by the restoration of the chestnut. But I'm not a nut person. I'm not a scientist. At the annual meeting they had two groups: Science and Development. I'm the latter. Development is administration, publicity, public-relations, officers slate to be presented on March 25

The steering committee has nominated Ann Leffel to stand for president at the election of officers at the March 25th meeting.

Ann lives in Brogue, York County, with her husband Bob, who was nominated board member. Ann is a graduate of the University of Maryland and taught high school math and while rearing a family spent much time as a volunteer for church and community. She likes hiking and camping, and all her life has loved forests, plants, wildlife and wood products.

Bob also graduated from Maryland U. and earned his doctorate in crop breeding at Iowa State University. He had a 42-year career with the U.S. Department of Agri-

Reineman's in Perry Co. Is Site

Organized in November, the new Pennsylvania chapter took on a 200-tree planting project in December. If that isn't impressive enough, consider the chapter members are already screening trees that were planted at the Reineman Wildlife Sanctuary in Perry County by the American Chestnut Foundation when it held its annual meeting there back in 1988.

Chandis Klinger, of Middleburg, and Dan Heacock, of Marysville (Perry County) visited Reineman's in January to report on the condition of 52 trees planted there by ACF founder and past president Phil Rutter. More than half of the trees were backcrosses, and the intent was to determine if the trees were ready for screening for blight resistance in June. A full report on the Reineman planting was sent to Dr. Fred Hefbard at the Virginia farm and those involved will await his direction as to how to proceed in June. Help will be needed, of course, and volunteers should get in touch with Dan Heacock, whose address and phone number appears at the end of this story.

Ann and Bob Leffel of Brogue (York County) followed Chandis and Dan to Reineman's. The mission was a little more ambitious — the planting and care of 200 backcross chestnut trees at the sanctuary.
Reineman's
(Continued from Page 1)

Among many other things, Ann is the nominee for president of the new state chapter, and Bob, a retired biologist, is a nominee for director.

At the Reineman Sanctuary, Ann and Bob worked out the details for the early spring planting of the 200 nuts. Reineman's is a preserve of the National Lands Trust, and David Steckel, the director of the Trust, and Lee Shull, preserve manager, met with the Leffels and committed to a cooperative planting effort.

Reineman's will provide the planting site and the planting tubes, and Mr. Shull will assist with the planting, provide weed control and do the mowing. A call will go out for chapter members to help with the planting, fertilizing, monitoring and record-keeping.

The backcross nuts and the planting plan will be provided by Dr. Fred Hebard at the Virginia farm.

Mrs. Leffel points out that while it is exciting to be joining the chestnut research program in such a hands-on way, the work can be demanding, at times, and members must be ready to give it their undivided attention when required. The monitoring, screening and record-keeping, along with the field work, can take a good bit of time.

The planting at Reineman is expected to be on Saturday, March 18, or April 1 or 8. The weather will determine which Saturday it will be.

Chapter members and other interested people from Harrisburg and Carlisle and Perry and Cumberland Counties are needed to get the 200 seeds into the ground. Make your intentions known by calling:

Dan Heacock
1870 New Valley Road
Marysville, PA 17050
717-957-2733 (H)

or

Ann Leffel
P.O. Box 7
Brogue, PA 17309
717-927-9557

Field Guidelines Being Compiled and Printed

There is an immediate need for a comprehensive field guideline — or growers’ handbook.

One exists, but it is not available in the quantities needed. The handbook is "Growing Chestnut Trees" by none other than long-time ACF president Dr. Phillip A. Rutter. One of these handbooks comes when one purchases a $50 seed packet from the ACF.

What is available is a series of planting and growing guidelines from the Vermont office. They include identification of the tree, some history of the blight, recent progress, growing trees, pollinations, storing, planting, harvesting and mud-packing.

The need now is to get all of this information together and copy it and put it under one staple. A supply of these guidelines will be required for the general chapter membership. It probably can be assumed that most members will not be growers, but they will volunteer their services to do the many kinds of field and forest work that has to be done. What an advantage if they could read and study the guidelines before they volunteered. And since the chapter's first project will be early spring, the sooner, the better for guidelines for everyone.

It's another crash program. It will be done. At least 100 copies will be assembled and stapled and will be made available to the membership. Ann will have these copies.

In the meantime, some bright, know-it-all member should consider revising, condensing and editing these guidelines, including some of Dr. Rutter's handbook, into a handbook compiled under the name of the Pennsylvania Chapter. The leadership seems to have access to bargain printing prices, so that will be a help.

Support Needed for this Publication

The total cost of getting out this first edition was $1890.00. To assume a second edition, the chapter's Development Committee (yet to be named) will have to address fund-raising projects.

Only a publication such as this will keep members focused and informed. It costs money. Even though some of the services were donated, costs were still high. Printing and mailing were the big items, of course.

But there were others. Consider establishing a mailing data-base. Not only for members, but for all the allies we want to reach to enlist their help in the Chestnut restoration project. There are phone and travel bills.

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Who’s Who in Chestnuts . . .

The new chapter is attracting some interesting people. And action people, too. A sampling of the talent should impress anyone with the importance of molding a diverse and distant membership into a cohesive unit to move the chestnut work forward.

Pennsylvania is lucky to have one ACF director. He is Bill Lord, of Pittsburgh. Bill has a degree in wildlife management and has been a park ranger and naturalist at the Blue Ridge Parkway, National Park Service. Bill also has a veterinary degree. He’s 73 and has had a lifelong interest in the American Chestnut.

ACF PA Coordinator Pat Chamberlain and wife Audrey, and four kids, of Erie County, have been working chestnut hybrids since 1982. They have planted 2,000 trees, and there’ll be a lot of focus on this extensive project. Pat and Audrey will both be chapter officers.

(Bob and Ann Leffel are also mentioned here. Their story is elsewhere in this issue. Credit these two with revitalizing the chapter. Their home in Brogue, York Co., has been the nerve center for putting the show on the road — working with the Vermont office and the Virginia farm, launching a planting project, investigating others, dealing with a statewide membership — you name it and Bob and Ann have done it.)

Dan Heacock is already an active member, and he’s a nominee for board member. Dan’s a potato broker (12 years) in Harrisburg. He also has a small Christmas tree farm in Marysville in Perry Co. He’s driven, though, by the restoration of the American chestnut.

Chandis Klinger, of Middleburg, is an enthusiast. He writes, “Keep us going! Keep us organized; lead us to a successful, blight-resistant American future.” Chandis is a pulpwood supplier and devotes much time to tree planting. He’s planted several hundred Chinese chestnuts. His big interest is in finding an “effective way to have the seeds germinate and grow without being destroyed by wildlife.” He is speaking of forest plantings.

Doris Goldman, of Waynesboro, is a biologist and teaches at a historical park and environmental center. She plans to teach children about Chestnut Trees and help them plant nuts at an Earth Day observance in April.

Eugene Dougherty, of Delano, Schuylkill Co., is an area coordinator for the state chapter and monitors and cares for a large stand of American Chestnut Trees on Bear’s Head Mt. All of his nuts are aimed at the backcross breeding program. Gene says that “what encourages him most is finding a stem that escaped injury towering above the others. Once into the sunlight all sorts of good things happen, and the beauty belongs to the beholder. So do the chestnuts!”

Jan F. Dudt is a PhD from Pittsburgh and he’s interested in “designing experiments to study effects of canopy destruction by gypsy moth on the growth of understory chestnut sprouts.” He’s looking forward to the chapter’s “statewide ecological activity.”

Charles H. Neff Jr., of Kempton, is working with Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and on his own farm to get a Chestnut program going.

James and Evelyn Koenig, win — ing in Florida, operate out of South Park. They don’t give the scope of their work but they do “provide American Chestnut seeds to Fred Hebard at the Virginia farm for the seed kits.”

Robert Ackerman, of New Alexandria, writes, “I have planted nine (living) genetically crossed American Chestnuts (via the ACF) on my property. Also, I planted 25 Chinese Chestnut seedlings last spring.”

Tom Fugel, of Riegelsville, Bucks Co., grew up in Somerset Co., where he planted chestnut seed from 1972 to 1974. From these trees, he writes, “at this time I have only 3 trees from a second generation . . . In 1994 I got Chinese chestnut pollen and crossed successfully to one of my Americans.”

“Here you have it. Just a sampling, but enough to know that it is happening all across the state, the sylvan state and heartland of the Chestnut range. It is time for a concerted effort of support and encouragement for those who believe in the restoration of the American Chestnut.

Acknowledgments

We’d be negligent without an acknowledgement. The state chapter start-up wasn’t all that easy, and although Rod Clapper gave us a good push, we still needed help.

And we got it, especially from Arlene Wining of the New York Chapter and Phil Gordon of the Connecticut chapter. Both gave us the benefit of their experience in organizing a state chapter, and by golly this new Pennsylvania chapter is evidence that it works.

Mark Double is another who got us going. Mark, assistant treasurer to the ACF, drove all the way from Morgantown, WV to Central Pennsylvania and gave an inspirational talk at the organizational meeting. He’s a plant pathologist at West Virginia U. and has been involved with chestnuts and the Foundation from the beginning.

Then there is Paul Ritter, a longtime member of ACF, who gave a good talk on history and blight-conquering progress. Paul is 78, and since the meeting announced quietly he had to ease up in his chestnut work. Paul has got to stay with us as much as he can. Meanwhile, we had better be thinking who will take up the slack.

Last, but not least, there is Charlotte Barnhart. She put together this entire publication, and with little computer and no desktop publishing experience. And if the typesetting wasn’t enough, she also compiled the complete mailing list for the distribution of this newsletter. That kind of volunteer service is hard to come by.
There’s a Need For Slides

The chapter has an immediate need for slide presentations.

Those who attended the ACF annual meeting in October know the value of slides illustrating the chestnut work being done. Slides were widely used. Those same slides are available for copying and the chapter is making an effort to borrow the slides. ACF Director Bill MacDonald has a set; there are slides at the Vermont office and Dr. Fred Hebard uses slides at the Virginia farm.

The chapter plan is to select slides from the available sources so that the chapter has the slides for its own presentation.

Chapter members are reminded to document their own work with slides to facilitate the exchange of information on their own Chestnut projects.

The slides also can be used for publicity and talks in spreading the word on chestnut research.

PA Chapter Considers ’96 Farm Show

Coming soon at a Chapter meeting will be the consideration of a booth at the 1996 Pennsylvania Farm Show. Ann and Bob Leffel with Dan Heacock, who as a potato broker and knows farm show procedures, picked up all the details on buying space at the mid-winter event.

The chapter’s presentation would center on displays and slide projections with chapter members manning the booth to answer the questions of the thousands attending.

Again, it will require chapter member participation. Funds will have to be raised for the space — $240 for the space and probably that much again for displays, exhibits, etc.

Word is getting around . . .

Word is getting around on the problems of the American Chestnut Tree and what’s being done about it. Gradually the story is being told — from blight to cross-breeding — and a good example was the Oct 22 article in the home section of the Washington Post.

It was titled “Saving the Chestnut” and it quoted Bill MacDonald, ACF director and leading chestnut researcher. The article touched on everything that interests those reading this newsletter.

Also in December, the Pittsburgh Post Gazette devoted its food page to the American chestnut. The emphasis was on food and recipes, and some mention of the work being done to restore the American chestnut tree.

BUT . . . and it’s a big but . . . neither story mentioned the American Chestnut Foundation. That’s too bad. From the start the Foundation has been working in the dark, and it doesn’t get the public recognition and support that it needs to move forward. Our state chapter must resolve at the beginning to tell the chestnut story, realizing that the publicity is important to the chapter’s development.

We asked a friend to punch some keys on his Internet service, and we admit surprise that the chestnut story was there. There was information stored, and it was relevant to what we are all talking about. Before we restore the chestnut, we must restore the interest in the Chestnut Tree. And that’s not a hard sell. We insiders know that while a tragic loss, it’s still a fascinating story. We all must tell it.

Chapter Newsletter

Copies Available

This chapter newsletter will circulate to more than the membership.

The mailing list will include prospective members in related fields and professions, groups who have similar interests, and the ACF home office and Foundation board members.

Limited quantities will be available at the PA Chapter office, P.O. Box 7, Brogue, PA 17309.

Letters

Welcome

Letters are welcome. Keep them short and informative. There are space limitations. Ask your questions and we’ll try to get the answers from the experts. Tell us what you know about Chestnuts and we’ll pass it along to other members. It’s your publication.

THANKS

Rod Clapper

The ACF has its Burnhams and its Rutters, the state chapter has Rod Clapper, of Buffalo Mills (Bedford County). Rod is 85 and with the encouragement of Phil Rutter, the ACF’s first president, actually put together the Pennsylvania chapter. That was in 1990. Rod did all the heavy stuff — constitution and by-laws, incorporation, etc. — and he paid for it all out of his own pocket. Then his wife took ill, and at 83 he couldn’t manage his chestnut work. Rod passed everything along to the new chapter. Well, not everything! He kept his interest and his passion for the American Chestnut. Thanks Rod! Try to make it to the meetings. Rod Clapper’s address:

R.D. 1, P.O. Box 57
Buffalo Mills, PA 15534
PA Chapter – What Can We Do?

by Ann Leffel

Have you ever stood in an old growth redwood forest? Or a virgin hemlock stand in our own Pennsylvania forests? Awesome, wouldn't you say? Words can't describe it. And words can't describe the forests of the Eastern U.S. looking back to the 1800's. Then there were 200 million acres of forest, and, would you believe, two billion Chestnut Trees. One of every four hardwoods was a Chestnut, and think of it, a mature Chestnut Tree was 500 years old, six feet in diameter, and stood 100-ft. tall, or taller. The Earth has the capability of giving so much from seemingly so little. Yes, awesome!

As we all know, though, the American Chestnut is hardly a memory as slowly it fades into history. All that remains are a few trees and numerous remnant sprouts due to the devastation caused by an introduced blight. There is something missing from our forests — the American Chestnut Tree. Not only is the tree missing, but an important link in a healthy and ecologically balanced forest is missing, along with much of the wildlife that depended on chestnuts for food. The American Chestnut Foundation is working toward that end — restoration of the tree; restoration of an important missing link.

There are many aspects to the ACF efforts to restore the American Chestnut Tree. At the Nov. 1994, reorganizational meeting of the PA Chapter we chose our first emphasis. We chose to support the backcrossing breeding program led by Dr. Fred Hebard at the Meadowview Research Farm in Virginia.

Perhaps this direction was selected because the members present have vision for the future and are not afraid of long term commitments. It takes six generations of trees to get from the blight susceptible American Chestnut Tree to a blight resistant American Chestnut Tree. Fred is already up to the fourth generation, but in limited numbers. Thousands of trees need to be grown and pass through selection processes to obtain enough families or lines to avoid inbreeding problems and to amass large enough populations of nuts to begin planting forests. But Pennsylvanians have never shrunk away from the difficult. Back in 1912 they even undertook miles of mile-wide firebreaks in the forests to attempt to stop the spread of the rampaging blight which killed the trees. So we undertake a project that most of us will not see to completion, but if we can inspire our youth to keep it going, we will pass on a precious gift to generations to come. You can be an important link in that future. Join us as we plan together at our March meeting. We plan and plant with hope.

Planning in March . . .

Planning in March, planting in April; pollinating in June; and working like the devil the rest of the year to get the chapter off the ground and functioning to attain the immediate goal of quality support of Dr. Fred Hebard’s backcross breeding program and the long-range goal of restoration of the American Chestnut Tree.

Pennsylvania can lead the way. All it takes is people. Good people. Workers. Outdoor types. We need foresters, hunters, hikers, naturalists, loggers, woodsmen and the like to locate American Chestnuts and report those locations and to send samples for verification. We need botanists, nut growers and other knowledgeable sorts to verify the samples.

Who’s going to pollinate the flowers? The young and the agile. The climbers who are not afraid of heights. Then there are the arborists, firemen, utility workers — people with access to cherry pickers to reach the flowers, and later to harvest the backcrossed nuts.

And the planters. Who has the nuts and good records on them? Or flowering Chestnut Trees? A working membership is needed for all of this.

Then, too, there is education and a good Chestnut library and a network of some kind to exchange information. Also public relations people and public speakers, and fund-raisers. Writers, artists, photographers — to keep the newsletter going and expand communications.

The emphasis is on people. A successful organization is not its officers; it’s interested people merging their talent, their expertise, their knowledge and their financial support to get a job done. In this case, the restoration of the American Chestnut Tree.

. . . Planting in April
Stump
(Continued from Page 1)

fund-raising — stuff like that. We’re the support for the research.

I may be wrong, but we look short in building a development group. Ann Leffel has been great in this organizational period, and no one doubts she’ll be even better as the president, but my concern is that too many will want to put nuts into the ground and there won’t be enough to do the vital support work.

If my concerns are justified, and it comes out lopsided, and it ends up top-heavy with scientists and field people, the new chapter will not be nearly as effective as it ought to be. I have spoken. Now excuse me. Doctor’s orders. I have to go practice my golf swing.

It’s too bad we don’t all have a FAX. Or a computer with a modem. (That’ll come about the time of the last backcross.) So the next best thing is a telephone directory. The people working on this ongoing, complicated problem need to be linked together. The mail is undependable, and UPS and FedEx are too expensive. A small project is to list all interested chapter members’ telephone numbers and disseminate a copy.

Please, out of respect — yeah, reverence — for the American Chestnut Tree, let us at all times capitalize the three words. Actually, I have no problem with just chestnut Tree, and you’ll see it here in these pages. My English teacher will turn over, but so be it. In my book, Chestnut Tree has become a proper name.

I refer to a “tree planting project.” Actually, it isn’t, is it? We plant nuts; not trees. It should be a nut planting project. I like tree better than nut. Maybe that’s because I’m more interested in the wood than in the seed.

What’s a Seed Kit?

An ACF seed kit is a “piece of the rock,” so to speak. It’s an investment in Meadowview Research Farm.

Any money realized above the costs of the kits (gathering, stratification, packaging, labeling, storing, and shipping of nuts plus nut grower's handbook and ensuing entry and analysis of records), goes into the research program. Last year $3000 was realized from the kits.

It also is a source of American Chestnut seeds selected for your geographical area, so you can get your hands on some chestnuts and seeds and you can participate in the backcross breeding program in a very valuable way. The trees you grow are susceptible to blight and will eventually die, but some of your trees will begin producing flowers and can serve as mother trees for the backcross program. That will help in increasing the geographic and genetic diversity needed for a successful program. It helps to avoid the hazards of inbreeding.

The cost of a kit is $50 for about 25 selected nuts. You can order them from ACF in Vermont. Order early for 1996 planting.

There may still be kits available for this spring. Check with ACF headquarters in Vermont.

support
(Continued from Page 2)

And UPS and FedEx expenses, not to mention computer services for desktop publishing, composition, makeup, photography, etc. Chestnut Tree is the glue that will hold us together once the chapter is organized. We’ll soon become unstick without financial support for a regular publication.

Officers Slate
(Continued from Page 1)

culture which centered on plant improvement programs in soybeans and other oilseed crops.

Bob and Ann purchased a small farm in York County where they grow a multitude of different crops, including American Chestnut Trees.

The Leffels have been in the forefront of the organization of the state chapter since the October annual meeting of the ACF.

Both consider it a privilege to work in the chestnut restoration movement and see “great success in the endeavor to reforest Pennsylvania with the beautiful, mighty and blight-resistant American Chestnut Tree.”

Other officers nominated were Pat and Audrey Chamberlain, of Edinboro, Erie Co. Pat is presented for vice president and Audrey for treasurer.

Bill Lord, an ACF director from Pittsburgh, is listed for secretary, and Dan Heacock, of Marysville, Perry Co., for board member.

Nominations, with prior approval of the candidate, will be accepted at the March meeting. Term of office will be for one year.

1988 Reineman Planting Monitoring will Continue

The latest word on the survey taken of the 52 trees planted at the Reineman Sanctuary in 1988 is from Dr. Fred Hebard at the Virginia Farm.

He advised the chapter to delay testing or inoculating the trees until sometime in 1996. There is a need for further monitoring, care and fertilizing. This will continue as a chapter project.

Record Keeping

Remember, your trees will be of no real use to anyone — yourself or researchers — if you don’t keep good records. Detail every tree — where your trees originated and how they are cared for from year to year.

See you March 25th
AGENDA
9:30 A.M.
Registration
Browse thru Barney Barnhart's Chestnut Museum
Coffee and donut social

10:30 AM
Business Meeting
Reports: Minutes, Treasurer's, Nominating committee
Election of Officers and Board Members
Schedule for future meetings

11:00 AM
Planning Groups of your choice
Science, Public Relations, Newsletter, Finances,
Programs, Area Coordinators and Activities

12:10 P.Y.
Reports of Planning Groups

12:30 P.M.
LUNCH (provided by the Barnharts)

1:15 P.M.
Demonstrations and Discussion Groups
A. Identifying American Chestnut Trees
B. Planting and care of Chestnut Trees
C. Identifying chestnut blight and mudpacking blight
cankers to arrest disease.
D. Grafting Chestnut Trees — how and why
E. Understanding the backcross breeding program
F. Designing the 1996 PA Farm Show display booth.
G. Other (write in your interest)
(Please indicate your 1st & 2nd choice on registration form)

2:30 ADJOURNMENT

REGISTRATION
Name(s) ____________________________________________
Address ___________________________________________
City ________________________ Zip ________
County ___________________________________________
Phone No(s) ____________________________ home
_________________________________________ office
_________________________________________ fax

Demonstration & Discussion Groups
Circle First Choice — A B C D E F G
Circle Second Choice — A B C D E F G
Write in G __________________________

Please RETURN the registration form by March 17 to:
Ann Leffel, P.O. Box 7, Brogue, PA 17309
Or CALL
Ann 717-927-9557; Pat Chamberlain 814-756-3197
(or Bill Lord 412-793-0255)

If you are unable to attend but have comments about what
you can contribute to the chapter or what the chapter can do
to help you to advance the restoration of the American
Chestnut, please return your comments to Ann Leffel. We
are interested in getting to know our members.

YES! I want to help bring back the American Chestnut

Enclosed is my membership support of:
     — Gold Leaf, $1,000 or more; Silver Leaf, $500;
     — Bronze Leaf, $250; Green Leaf, $100;
     — Regular, $40; Student, $15; Other

Please make check payable to: The American Chestnut Foundation
460 Main Street, P.O. Box 4044
Bennington, VT 05201-4044

Name ____________________________________________ Telephone ____________ (home)
Telephone _________________________________________ (office)
Address __________________________________________
City ________________________ State _______ Zip ________ County __________

Membership includes subscription to TheBark and TheJournal.
The ACF is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.
Plan to Attend the March 25th meeting...

**REMEMBER...** It's not just the restoration of the American Chestnut Tree alone that is the pursuit of ACF. It is the restoration of healthy and ecologically balanced forests in the future of Pennsylvania that is involved here. YOU are an important link in that future. As this young chapter develops its direction and emphasis, each of you has an opportunity to be involved in the way it develops. All talents are needed. If you cannot attend, give us the benefit of your thoughts by mailing your comments and questions to us.

Your ACF Membership includes membership in the Pennsylvania Chapter. If you are still thinking of membership but meanwhile would like to receive the PA Chapter Newsletter, please send your name and address and if possible a donation to cover the cost of printing and mailing to:

Pennsylvania Chapter - ACF
P.O. Box 7,
Brogue, PA 17309.

**Motel Information**

We try to schedule the meeting so most people can drive to and from it on the same day. The Haven Rest Motel (Phone 814-695-4401 or 1-800-932-6834) is an economical option for anyone who wishes to stay overnight. Ask for ACF discount. Directions to motel: Leave Rt. 220 at Roaring Spring exit. Travel east, turn left at the first traffic light. Travel 1 mile south on Business Rt. 220 to motel.

Pennsylvania Society for the American Chestnut Foundation
P.O. Box 7
Brogue, PA 17309

**Working to restore the American Chestnut**

- Lumber Tree
- Ecological Link
- Abundant Food for Wildlife
- Forest in good health & balance