

Dedicated to restoring the American



**PA-TACF:**

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# Chestnut Tree

VOLUME 19, ISSUE 1

MARCH 2014

## Spring Growers Meeting Announcement



Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art

Millersburg, PA

### Join us Saturday, March 29, 2014



Matt Brinckman, TACF Mid-Atlantic Regional Science Coordinator, will be sharing updates and insights from their recent work in Virginia and other parts of our neighboring Mid-Atlantic region. Matt holds both BS and MS degrees in Forest Management from Virginia Tech and joined TACF in 2012.



Keith Atherholt, President of Lewis Lumber in Picture Rocks, PA, will speak about Red Oak and other popular species native to PA, and their value in the hardwood lumber industry. Keith received a degree in Forest Products from Penn State and formed Lewis Lumber, Inc. in 1995.



Robert Lingenfelter, PA-TACF membership committee chair, will join Susan Smith and other members of the board will fill everyone in on recent board changes and inform us about opportunities for greater participation. Robert is a Landscape Architect in State College, PA.



**Meeting Details:**

**Date:** Saturday, March 29, 2014

**Time:** 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

2 p.m. supply and nut distribution

**Cost:** \$10 at door for lunch

**Address:** 176 Water Company Road  
Millersburg, PA 17061

Please RSVP by **3/21/14**

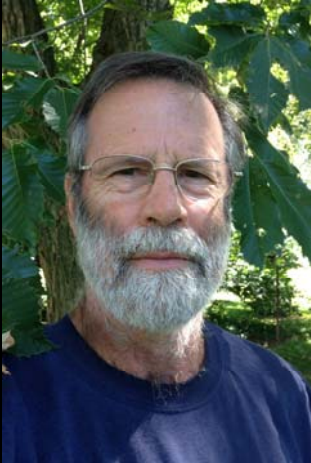
[mail@patacf.org](mailto:mail@patacf.org) or 814-863-7192

\*\*\*We will also hear from one of the staff at The Ned Smith Center, who will tell us about Ned Smith and his work in Pennsylvania. His artwork will also be on display.\*\*\*

**LEARN • SHARE • PICK UP SUPPLIES • TAKE HOME CHESTNUTS**

Directions on Page 8. More info at [www.patacf.org/spring-growers-meeting/](http://www.patacf.org/spring-growers-meeting/)

# President's Corner



PA-TACF President,  
Don McCann.

In my column in the September 2013 newsletter I addressed our Board of Director's work on developing our new 5 year Strategic Plan. The new Plan covering 2014 through 2018 was approved by the Board at our January 2014 meeting. It incorporates the work of the board committees with respect to each of the strategies to meet our goals. Restoring the American chestnut has many facets. This Plan will be used as our guiding document as we go about our work this year. And, since it is to be a working document, we must now begin again at the committee level to reassess the plan in preparation for next year when we will approve an updated plan for 2015- 2019. To accompany the plan a budget was approved for 2014. Happily it projects a surplus of revenue over expenses. I invite all members to take a look at these documents. Any questions, comments and suggestions are most welcome. To view the documents go to: [www.patacf.org/about/mission/](http://www.patacf.org/about/mission/)

## Gratitude

As a Chapter we have much for which to be grateful; at the top of the list our members in general, more specifically are those who have served on our board of directors, four of which are not continuing this year.

- **Alan Tumblin**, a board member since 2006, continues to manage his CMS F1 orchard and was always a constant presence at events, selling merchandise so we all have those great tee shirts, hats and note paper. Alan is now pouring all his energies into his recently opened **Castlerigg Wine Shop** at 110 S. Hanover St., in Carlisle. We wish him the best.
- **Alex Day**, retired Manager of the DCNR Penn Nursery on Seven Mountains, was PA-TACF's president from 2009-2010. Alex continued his service on the board until 2013 and has earned a breather from his service to the Chapter having served for over 10 years.
- Also hanging up his hat is **Blair Carbaugh**, a retired Professor of Biological Sciences at Lock Haven University, who has served in some function on the PA-TACF Board, and in the Chapter's formation, since 1992. Blair continues to grow advanced backcross chestnuts at his farm in Danville.. I have personally found Blair's counsel to be a great help in my on-the-job training as president.
- And finally, we are grateful for **Dave Armstrong**, who has been our vice president and has chosen to step aside this year. Dave goes way back. He, along with Bob and Ann Leffel, got the PA Chapter of TACF off the ground. He is a grower, and has done all manner of tasks for the chapter. Although stepping aside from his board duties, he continues to be a vital resource and a mighty influence for the organization.

**President's message** (continued from page 2)

Our revenue comes from memberships, donations and grants. At the beginning of this year, we received a most generous donation of \$50,000 from someone who wishes to remain anonymous. We are grateful that our work is valued so highly. This donation will enable us to hire a part-time orchard manager to tend to and monitor several of our orchards. Sara as you

know is an extremely busy person. Although her multi-tasking skills are legendary, with the expansion of our chapter activities and the growth of our orchards she needs assistance to make sure we stay current with our breeding program. This will be increasingly important as we go forward with developing restoration efforts in addition to the breeding activities, and this wonderful donation will make this possible.

## PA-TACF Raffle

### Last call for purchasing raffle tickets!

Drawing will take place at our Spring Growers Meeting on **March 29, 2014**.

You need not be present to win. Buy your tickets **NOW!** (\$2 for one, \$5 for three)



### Raffle Prizes:

- **First Prize:** Stihl MS180C-BE Chain-saw
- **Second Prize:** Historical American chestnut print framed in American chestnut by Chris Ditlow
- **Third Prize:** Turned American chestnut bowl by Jim Finley



Call or e-mail our office to purchase tickets by mail. 814-863-7192 or mail@patacf.org

## Save the Dates!

**March – May** – PLANTING SEASON! Join our email listserv<sup>1</sup> to know when an event will be near you!

**March 14** - PA Association of Environmental Educators Conference, Antioch Village, PA

**March 21-22** - TACF Spring Board and Cabinet Meetings, Abingdon, VA

**March 29** - PA Chapter Spring Growers Meeting, Millersburg, PA

**April 25** - American chestnut presentation, Kennett Square, PA

**April 27** - 60th Anniversary Marquand Park celebration, Princeton, NJ

**May 17** – Hike at Shaver's Creek Nature Center, Petersburg, PA

**August 12-14** - Penn State Ag Progress Days, Rock Springs, PA

**Be sure to keep track of PA-TACF events by regularly visiting our calendar at [www.patacf.org](http://www.patacf.org) or by calling the PSU office: 814-863-7192**

<sup>1</sup>Joining the listserv is easy! Write mail@patacf.org and we'll add you to the list!

# Volunteer Spotlight - Susan Smith



Susan is pictured above, in attendance at our Fall Meeting in Media, PA last November.

Susan Smith co-directs Longacre ([www.longacre.com](http://www.longacre.com)), a summer program for students ages 8-18, on a 200 acre organic farm outside of Newport, PA. They celebrate their 40th season this year. She has been a member of The American Chestnut Foundation since 2002 when the first pure American chestnuts were planted in what is now a 145 tree orchard. She also tends 4 restoration trees in a separate planting at Longacre Farm.

Each summer 100 members of the Longacre community hear the compelling story of the American chestnut: its grandeur, its utility, its devastation, and potential resurgence. Susan's husband Roger is a fine woodworker and prefers chestnut, which he has often found lying around in barns and outbuildings on their farm.

Susan has a BA in English from Skidmore College and is a Master Gardener in Perry County. Susan has served on the board of PA-TACF since 2010, and can always be counted on to lend a helping hand when needed.



Sara Fitzsimmons and Robert Lingenfelter, TACF Regional Science Coordinator and board member.



Blair and Mary Carbaugh, long-time members and board member (Blair)



Kieu and Mike Manes, long-time members and frequent hike leaders. See one of Mike's photos from a winter hike on Page 8.

## 2013 Fall Member Meeting Faces



Far left: Two of the PA Chapter founders, Violet and Chandis Klinger, with board member Jim Walizer  
Immediate left: Speaker Bob Moreau and his son, Jeff

# Picturing the past...

stories about grandmothers who used wild harvested chestnuts in recipes and grandfathers who used American chestnut in woodworking. We are inspired by these stories and we love to share them.

We recently learned about yet another participant in the story of the American chestnut, Mr. John Rick born in 1880 in Reading, PA. Thanks to his love for giving out seeds and encouraging others to grow chestnuts, Mr. Rick was known in his region as “Johnny Chestnutseed”, handing out over 1,000 seedlings each year. His grandson recalls that he enjoyed growing pretty much anything. He grew mostly apples and peaches at his State Hill Fruit Farm in Lower Heidelberg Township, but also enjoyed growing persimmon, quince, grapes, peonies and nuts, particularly chestnuts. An active member of the Northern Nut Growers Association, Mr. Rick was crowned the “Big Nut” at an annual meeting in Knoxville, TN in the 1950’s.

The PA Chapter would like to extend our deepest appreciation to the family of John Rick for a sizeable donation made in his honor. These funds will be used to establish an orchard in Mr. Rick’s memory in Berks County, and will also go far in helping many ongoing projects for the Chapter.



Mr. Rick is pictured on the far right, receiving a community improvement award. Photo from Reading Eagle newspaper.



2013 PA Chapter Fall Meeting attendees tour the American chestnut orchard at the Tyler Arboretum. Volunteer efforts at the orchard are coordinated by PA Chapter Vice President, John Wenderoth. To schedule a tour or to become a volunteer, contact: Julia Lo Ehrhardt: [jlo@tylerarboretum.org](mailto:jlo@tylerarboretum.org)

The Pennsylvania Chapter lost several key volunteers and members this year.

Our deepest gratitude to these members for their dedication to the mission of PA-TACF, and we thank their families for the recognition of our organization in memorial donations

**Joe Lankalis**

**Lloyd Lupfer**

**Robert Parsons**



## Native American Chestnut Conservation

### Current Status of the American chestnut in the Wild

A common misconception is that the native American chestnut is endangered, or even extinct. In actuality, neither is the case, as many of you who go hiking on the ridges of Penn's Woods may have noticed. In fact, using GIS (geographic information systems) software, John Scrivani of TACF's Virginia Chapter and the VA Geographic Informations Network, analyzed data compiled by the US Forest Service's Forest Inventory Analysis (FIA) program<sup>1</sup>. In doing so, he estimated that there are some 464 MILLION American chestnut trees. That's a lot of trees, but certainly much less than the estimated 4 billion that existed prior to introduction of the blight fungus.

While the American chestnut is not technically endangered or extinct, it is certainly under threat. In all but the very rare instances (Figure 1), the chestnut blight disease has virtually ceased reproduction of this species. For that reason, I like to term the status of the American chestnut as "effectively extinct", as the species no longer performs what a species is supposed to do—continue its survival through reproduction.

### TACF's Tree Locator Program

TACF uses a form call a Tree Locator Form to document trees submitted for identification. These forms are [available online](#) or by calling the office. If you or anyone you know has found a tree, we encourage them to submit a leaf and twig sample, along with this form for review. We then use those data to: 1) track locations of trees for the purpose of ecological modeling and 2) try to find volunteers who can harvest nuts from those trees, both American chestnuts and other species.



Figure 1. TACF's Kendra Gurney hugs the Berlin chestnut tree in north central Vermont. This tree measures over 30" diameter at breast height (dbh). This tree is located in a site where American chestnuts are naturally regenerating, one of only a handful of sites known to have this happen, and all of which are located north of the Mason-Dixon line.

In a 2004 analysis of FIA data, McWilliams et al<sup>2</sup> noted that Pennsylvania had the most FIA plots with American chestnuts over 1" dbh. The next most states were: Virginia, North Carolina, West Virginia, and Massachusetts. To date, we have had reports of over 500 locations with one or more American chestnuts in Pennsylvania (Figure 2), and we have collected seed from over 100 of those locations.

### PA-TACF Germplasm Conservation Orchards

The more trees we find out there, the more trees we have to use in our breeding program, and the more trees from which we can harvest open-pollinated seed. While a lot of people say "Why should I plant a tree that's just going to die from the blight", there are many reasons to plant what we call "Germplasm Conservation Orchards".

In preserving native germplasm, we can help to guarantee that the genetic background of what trees are currently living in our forests will be conserved for future generations. The trees can also be used for future breeding, primarily to increase the diversity of for future blight-resistant stock. In these orchards, you can plant several genetic backgrounds at a time, whereas it might take hours or even days to work with them in the forest.

PA-TACF has several examples of these plantings including the Tyler Ar-

# 18 Years at PA Farm Show

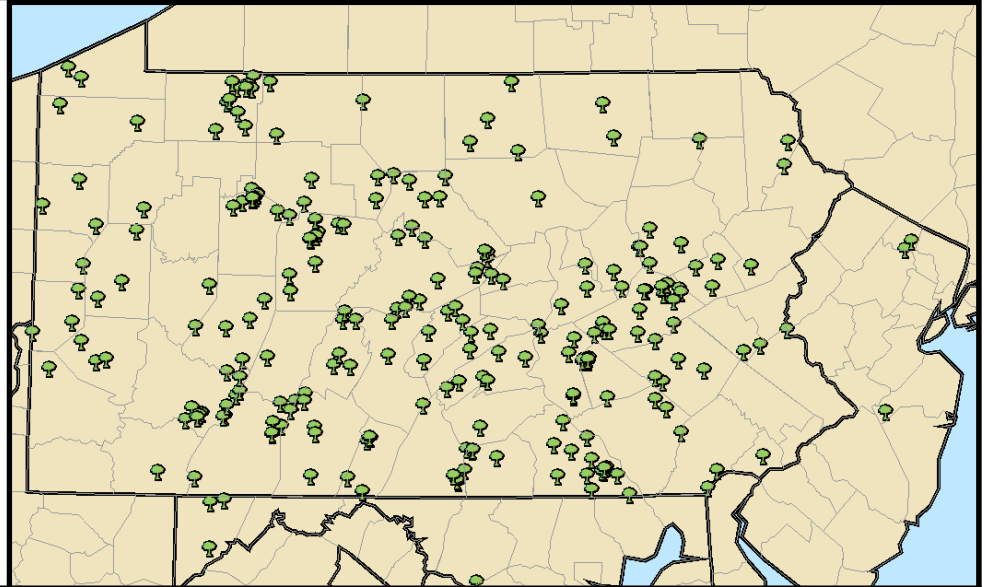
Once again, we couldn't have pulled off our **18th year** exhibiting at the Farm Show without our volunteers...  
**WE THANK YOU ALL!!!**



*Pictured: PA-TACF Volunteer Bob Meiser points out American chestnut wood on a demonstration board at the PA Farm Show. Photo submitted by PA-TACF Volunteer, Steve Schoonover.*

boretum orchard where we held our 2013 fall meeting, our new orchard at Edge of the Woods Native Plant Nursery, and, what will soon be the largest of its kind, the LCSWMA (Lancaster County Solid Waste Management Authority) planting being led by PA-TACF Board member Tim Eck.

While the trees will eventually die from the blight—that is guaranteed—the trees will re-sprout creating what I like to call a “perpetual orchard”. And, if you plant several trees, you can receive great crops of nuts



*Figure 2. American chestnut locations logged through PA-TACF's Tree Locator Program*

hat can further preserve the stock, give others an opportunity to plant and grow chestnuts, and provide a food source for wildlife and yourself. Many growers also use the wood for making things--most usually make walking sticks, but some can salvage the wood to complete other small projects.

<sup>1</sup> [Scrivani J. May-June 2011. Forest Inventory and Analysis. The Journal of the American Chestnut Foundation. 25\(3\): 17-18.](#)  
<sup>2</sup> [McWilliams WH, Lister TW, LaPoint EB, Rose AK, JS Vissage. Current Status of Chestnut in Eastern US Forests. In: Steiner, K. C. and Carlson, J. E. eds. 2006. Restoration of American Chestnut To Forest Lands - Proceedings of a Conference and Workshop, May 4-6, 2004, The North Carolina Arboretum. Natural Resources Report NPS/NCR/CUE/NRR - 2006/001. National Park Service, Washington, D.C.](#)

**Pennsylvania Chapter  
The American Chestnut Foundation**

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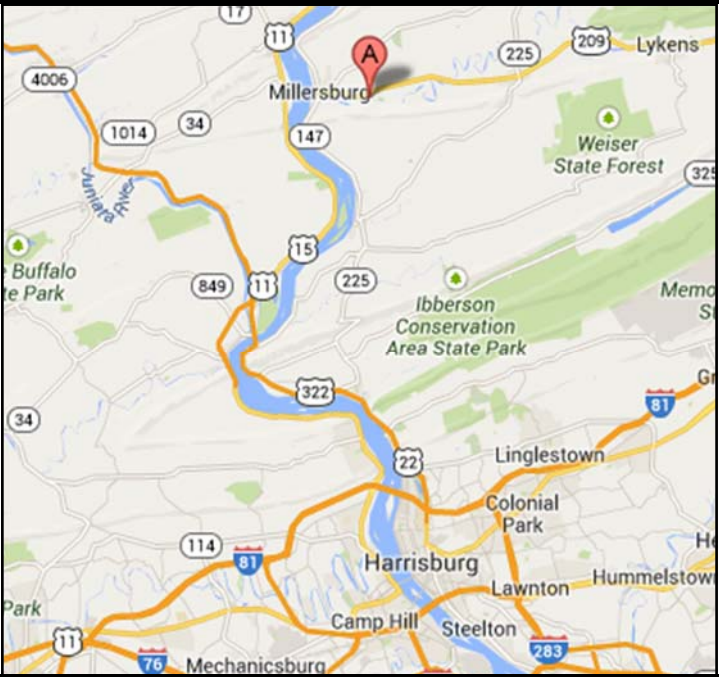
**The Chestnut Tree Newsletter**



PA-TACF Member photo

Photo by:  
Mike Manes, taken on  
Appalachian Trail in PA.

**PA-TACF Spring Growers Meeting**  
*March 29, 2014 in Millersburg, PA*



More info on directions at:  
[www.nedsmithcenter.org/directions/](http://www.nedsmithcenter.org/directions/)