

11th Annual West Virginia Chestnut Festival

Rowelsburg, WV — Sunday, October 7, 2018

A full day of activities!**10:30 to Noon — Breakfast @ River City Café (\$\$)****12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. — Activities @ Scenic Rowlesburg Park;** Sample roasted chestnuts; browse crafts and more. (\$)**10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. — Activities @ Szilagyi Creative Arts Center** (Free and Open to the Public) Attractions include WW II Museum; Historic Centenary B & O Railroad Bridges Exhibit; Emporium;**Noon to 2:00 p.m. — Meeting of the W.V. Chapter of TACF @ Szilagyi Creative Arts Center****4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. — Chestnut Scientific Program @ Szilagyi Creative Arts Center****Featured speakers:****Dr. Jeffrey Skousen** is a Prof. of Soil Science and Extension Land Reclamation Specialist at Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design; at WV University.**Amy Metheny** is a graduate student in the Division of Division of Plant and Soil Sciences at WV University.**5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. — Gala Chestnut Dinner Banquet @ Szilagyi Creative Arts Center**
Keynote: Dr. Wm. MacDonald, Board of Directors, TACF.**Reserve your tickets for the Banquet: (\$\$)**
Email Shirley at shirley.hartley@yahoo.com
or call (304) 698-5305.*Volunteers at the 2017 WV Chestnut Festival***Can't Make to West Virginia? Join us for an American chestnut hunt!**

TACF Member and American chestnut hunter aficionado Mike Manes, will lead a walk at the Merrill Creek Reservoir in Warren County, NJ. This walk will be featured in the 2018 Walk in Penn's Wood. This is your opportunity to see the American chestnut featured in Mike's article "The Merry One", in the Journal of The American Chestnut Foundation — Winter 2018 (Issue 1 Vol. 32)

*Above: Kieu Manes, Mike's better half and his partner in all things including chestnuts.*

Hike Description: (Free and open to the public). Meet inside Visitors Center of the Merrill Creek Reservoir at 10:15 a.m. Hike starts at for a 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. approximately. This is a seven mile loop hike around a large New Jersey reservoir. Over half the trip will be on dirt roads or dikes near the reservoir. We plan to stop at an extremely large American chestnut tree (17 inch diameter in November 2017) with no visible blight. Bring lunch, water, and snacks. About 12:30 PM we will be at a counting station for migrating raptors, this will be our location for lunch. Expect wet and/or muddy trails, appropriate footwear recommended. Restrooms at Visitors Center. Please no dogs on this trip.

NOTE - Hiking pace will slow down at times for bird observation.*Good waterfowl sightings possible.*

President's Corner



As I sit here to write my final president's comments column, I'm amazed how quickly the two years have passed! It really feels like just yesterday that I started my first column. I want to thank all our members for their support and untiring efforts to help us achieve the goal of restoring the American chestnut to its native range. And I want to thank Jean who kept me on topic and focused throughout. She was indispensable. And Sara and Steve Hoy were always there for policy guidance or technical questions.

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Next I want you to know that I am leaving you in the very capable hands of our current vice president and next year's president, Mary Ayres. I wish her well and hope that her tenure flies as quickly as mine.

And I would like to thank our board of directors who run this organization. They travel many miles to volunteer time and talent keeping us moving forward. I have to mention John Wenderoth in particular for his liaison with national. He was our representative during his term as president and agreed to continue. In so doing he maintained continuity and gained a better appreciation of how our chapter and national work together towards our common goal. The job takes its toll in terms of multi day trips to meetings in places from North Carolina to Maine. John I truly appreciate all your efforts!

As my final act I urge each of you to consider joining a committee of the board. Get to know how we operate and what it takes. And then maybe consider becoming a board member yourself. We always welcome new blood!

On a personal note my wife and I have decided to sell our New Jersey home and move to the Phoenix area (which I realize is well outside the native range of the American chestnut). My wife does not like winter and wants to be closer to our daughter and son-in-law when grandkids arrive. If I become the first Arizona member of the PA-NJ chapter, I pledge that I will strive to increase that number over time!

Sincerely,
Clark Beebe,
President

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Attention Members: Your 2019—2020 ballots will be in the mail soon. Please be sure to return ballot and volunteer reporting postcards. Your annual reporting of volunteer hours and contributions is very important for our grant submissions. Every hour is important: the more hours reported, the more matching funds we can receive.



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Chapter News

Volunteer Spotlight: Mervyn Haines

By Jean Najjar, Chapter Administrator

One touch of nature makes the whole world kin...

Shakespeare
(Troilus and Cressida. Act 3. Scene 3. Ulysses speaking.)

Mervyn Haines was born in Livingston, NJ in 1933. He attended local schools, graduating from Grover Cleveland High School in Caldwell, New Jersey in 1951. After high school he took a 6 month course in Floriculture at Alfred Agriculture and Technology Institute of New York. After a 3-year stint in the Marine Corp, he returned to school to get a degree in Ornamental Horticulture. Here the story takes a surprising turn. While at school Merv discovered a new passion – acting.

Kind of like the plot of an old movie, the young man from New Jersey set out for New York City and the stage. Merv attended the American Academy of Dramatic Arts and pursued his acting career for 14 years with moderate success; before transitioning smoothly to behind the scenes. During this time he married and started a family. In those early years he and his family would escape the bustle of the city to small cabin near Schooley's Mountain, New Jersey. The rustic cabin was built in the early 40's and didn't have electricity. It was the perfect get away for this young family.

In 1977 they made the get-away permanent, purchasing the cabin and making it a year-round home with Merv com-

muting into the City for work. By this time Merv was working as the Technical Director for the New York Shakespeare Festival, taking care of special effects in Delacorte Theatre in Central Park and the famous Public Theatre on Lafayette Street. He stepped down from this position in 1994 and entered a phase of semi-retirement; continuing to advise the NY Shakespeare Festival and other groups on their pyrotechnical needs. This pyrotechnical expertise and license had been part of his job role as Technical Director.



From Left: John Kresbach, Bob Summerville, Bob's dog Chestnut, and Merv Haines at the Schooley's Mountain Orchard (Back in the Day)

It was during this transition that Merv took the opportunity to renew his passion for the woods and ecology. He read about the American chestnut and the restoration efforts of The American Chestnut Foundation and connected with Bob Summersgill, one of the founding members of our Chapter and a force in the New Jersey efforts. When Bob moved away, Merv helped to fill his shoes, especially with his dedication to maintaining the Schooley's Mountain orchard. Along with John Kresbach he has also helped maintain the now defunct Mount Paul Orchard. He has kept up the Chap-

ter collaboration with Morris County Parks and helped with outreach when he is able.

Merv continues to be a dedicated volunteer and is very interested in helping to find the next generation of volunteers to carry on in the coming years. If you are interested in getting more involved with our efforts in New Jersey please email Jean at mail@patacf.org

2018 Summer Intern: Eric Patterson



We want to take this opportunity to thank Eric Patterson, our 2018 Summer Intern. Eric began his internship this past June and has been working closely with Orchard Manager, Steve Hoy in all aspect of maintaining our research orchards at the Arboretum at Penn State. He has also assisted with our inoculation program, updating our chestnut database, and outreach education at Penn State's Ag Progress Days.

Eric is a Pennsylvania native, starting his Junior year at Penn State University. He is currently studying Forest Ecosystem Management and hopes to work for himself when he graduates. His interest in the American chestnut comes in part from his studies at Penn State.

Chapter News

PA/NJ Chapter Fundraiser Success Means a New Truck

By Stephen Hoy, Orchard Manager

Our 2017-18 fundraising drive raised \$43,247 to replace our orchard truck. Many thanks to the generous donors who made this possible — and a fund farewell to our faithful old Nissan Frontier.

Even before I accepted the orchard manager position with the PA Chapter in 2014, a 2004 Nissan Frontier had been the workhorse of field operations. It was purchased in 2007 with generous donations from our Chapter members to forward the Chapter's restoration mission. The Nissan has served us well. It has traveled from Cape May, NJ to Erie, PA, hauling hundreds of seedlings, planting equipment, and supplies. After 12 years, a hundred thousand miles, and maybe a few interns who were hard on equipment, our beloved Nissan has begun to show its age.

For all these reasons, the decision was made in 2016 to begin looking for funds to purchase a new truck. Thanks to your generous

donations to the truck fundraising campaign we began our search for new truck this summer. In mid-August word of a few potential trucks started to come into the office, but just one truck met all our requirements. With the help of our long-time member Lee Saufley and our friends at Wolfe's Volkswagen in Harrisburg, we got a great deal on a 2015 Ford F-150 4x4 with a 6 ½ foot bed, crew cab, and less than 35,000 miles... don't drool on your newsletter!

The new truck nearly doubles our seedling hauling capacity. It has a greater towing capacity, allowing us to haul the trailer and Ventrac to orchards, which we otherwise couldn't reach. And believe it or not, the full-sized F-150 gets better gas mileage than the Frontier as well. Over the past 4 years, we've averaged 15-18 miles per gallon with the Frontier. If the drive from the dealership to State College is any indication, we can expect a minimum of 20 to 25 miles per gallon from the F-150.



Right to left: Steve Hoy and Lee Saufley in front of the new Chapter truck.

Huddle with the Faculty

PSU Home Game / Saturday, November 10th

"Restoration of the American Chestnut Tree" Presentation

Join us Penn State for Huddle with the Faculty on Saturday, November 10th. The program will begin with an introduction by Dr. Kim Steiner, Director of the Arboretum at Penn State and a presentation by Sara Fitzsimmons, Director of Restoration for The American Chestnut Foundation

Sara will be giving a presentation to Penn State Alumni and other guests of the University preceding the Penn State vs. Wisconsin football game on November 10th. We are excited to have this opportunity to speak to this new audience.

If you are coming up for the game or want to volunteer to help with this event please call our office. We would love your help after the presentation, fielding questions and assisting with our chestnut tasting.

This event is free and open to the public. Audience limited to 175.



Results from 2017 Small Stem Assay Trials

Effect of spacing (competition) on chestnut blight canker length (blight-resistance)

By Sara Fern Fitzsimmons, TACF Director of Restoration

In 2014, Hoy and I established a small study to look at the effects of spacing on canker size. As a reminder from the article in the last issue of the newsletter, we planted 95 B3F3 (12 different families) and 5 Chinese seedlings across two spacing treatments of 1' x 3' and 3' x 3'. We surrounded the two treatments by a border of 96 trees. We inoculated the trees in the summer of 2017 and measured cankers last fall to approximate 6 months following inoculation and again this summer for a 12-month measurement.

A few take-homes:

- The tighter the spacing, the taller the tree (starting in 2017; was the opposite until 2017)
- The tighter the spacing, the smaller the root collar diameter of the tree.
- The tighter the spacing, the longer the canker at

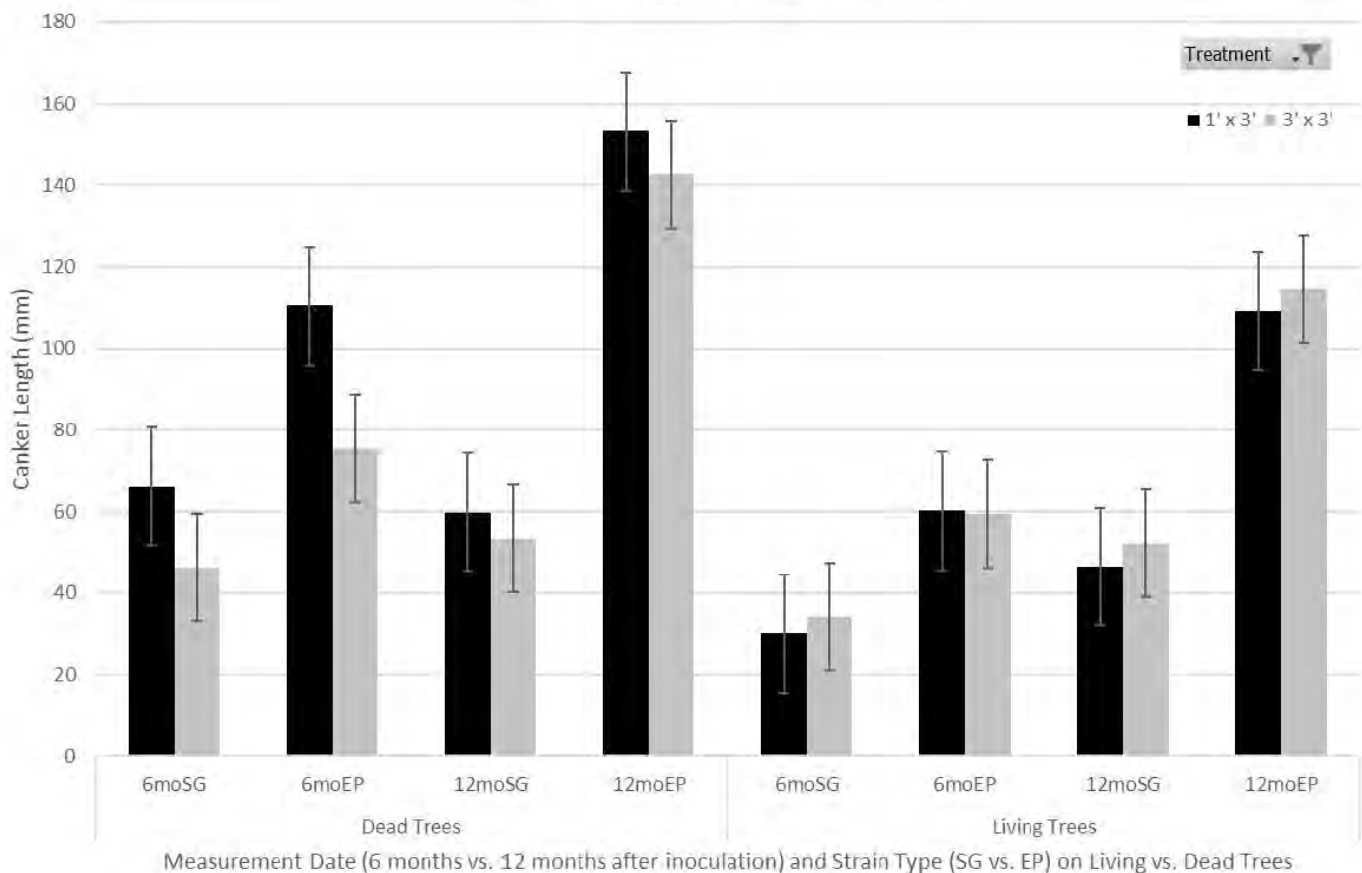
the 6month measurement.

- One year following the inoculation, the canker lengths were no longer significantly significant between the different spacing treatments, but the number of dead trees in each treatment was. Over half of the trees in the tighter spacing treatment were dead (56%) while only one quarter were dead in the wider spacing (24%).

For growers, the implications are that the effects of competition are significant. Dense plantings increases competition among the trees for various resources like water, light, etc. The increased competition reduces the fitness of the tree. The reduced fitness reduces the ability of the tree to fight off the fungal infection. The fungus can grow larger before the tree can fight off the infection, if at all.

6moSG 6moEP 12moSG 12moEP

Canker Length of Spacing Study Trees
(excludes border tree measurements)



Great American Chestnut Hunt

The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) is initiating a range-wide search for surviving American chestnuts. The PA/NJ Chapter of TACF is seeking to identify and conserve 250 unique sources — beyond the 200 already conserved in our Chapter of Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

The goal is to conserve unique sources of American chestnut genetics in our Germplasm Conservation Orchards (GCOs). And to create locally adapted and genetically diverse populations of blight-resistant chestnut trees for restoration.

Join the hunt!

STEP 1: Download the [Tree Locator Form](#) (TLF) from our website or call our office (814)863-7192; we'll mail one out to you.



STEP 2: (Optional) Download the **TreeSnap App** on your mobile phone treesnap.org

STEP 3: Take a hike in the woods (June thru September)

STEP 4: Document American chestnuts by completing the [TLF](#) or sub-



Granddaughter of members, Louise and Mike Aucott—hunting American chestnut in Allegheny State Park (2017)

mit information through the [TreeSnap App](#)

STEP 5: Mail a leaf sample with a completed TLF to the address indicated on the form. **Or** if you use TreeSnap, write the TreeSnap ID on the form to send it in with your sample. Don't have a TLF? Just write your TreeSnap ID on a piece of paper with your contact information.

Collecting a sample:

Late Spring or summer is the best time to collect samples for identification purposes. Collect a freshly-cut 4-6 inch twig with mature leaves attached. Leaves should be from sunny exposure, if possible. Press leaves between pieces of cardboard to flatten and prevent curling or crushing as they dry. To prevent mold, **do not** put the sample into a plastic bag. We are not likely to be able to ID solely from a picture, but photographs can add to the whole package of understanding your tree.

SUBMIT SAMPLE TO:

Dave Armstrong
691 Pumping Station Road
Hanover, PA 17331

If you already have already confirmed a pure American source, here is the next step!

Collection of Leaf Samples to Quantify Diversity of Wild American Chestnuts

By Sara Fern Fitzsimmons, TACF Director of Restoration



In an effort to better quantify the diversity of the American chestnut, TACF is working with its many volunteers and partners to collect leaf samples from at least 1000 trees across the range. These samples are sent to Virginia Tech for whole genome sequencing. The objectives of this study are to: 1) Quantify geographic patterns of genetic diversity in remnant American chestnut populations and 2) Test for associations between genetic variation in American chestnut trees and climate and soil variables across the historical *Castanea dentata* range.

Throughout the spring and summer of 2018, TACF collected 450 samples, so will aim to collect another 550 through the July of 2019(see map on page 7). We need your help! In Pennsylvania, we expect to collect samples from close 50-100 trees across the state. We need diverse locations, especially those in the SW, W, and extreme northern parts of the state.

If you have had a wild (not planted) American chestnut formally identified on your property by TACF, and would be willing to send a leaf sample to Virginia Tech as part of this work (TACF will send you a kit and pay for shipping), please email Sara Fitzsimmons with the location of your tree (City/State and Latitude/Longitude (if known)) as well as approximate date of identification by TACF.

Ceremonial Plantings Provide a Test Case

The Cape May Shade Tree Commissioners gathered for a ceremonial chestnut tree planting in Cape May NJ, on Arbor Day, April 27, 2018. This was one of three ceremonial plantings established this year through the PA/NJ Chapter.

These plantings are part of the testing process for advanced material of our backcross breeding program. The goal is to get material out into communities with different partners to test their resistance and viability. We are grateful to these groups for assisting with this early phase of testing.



Left to Right: Mark Pask, Shane Meier, Carol Sick, Sue Wichterman, John Wenderoth, and Jay Schatz.

SAVE the DATE!

October 18th and 19th, 2019

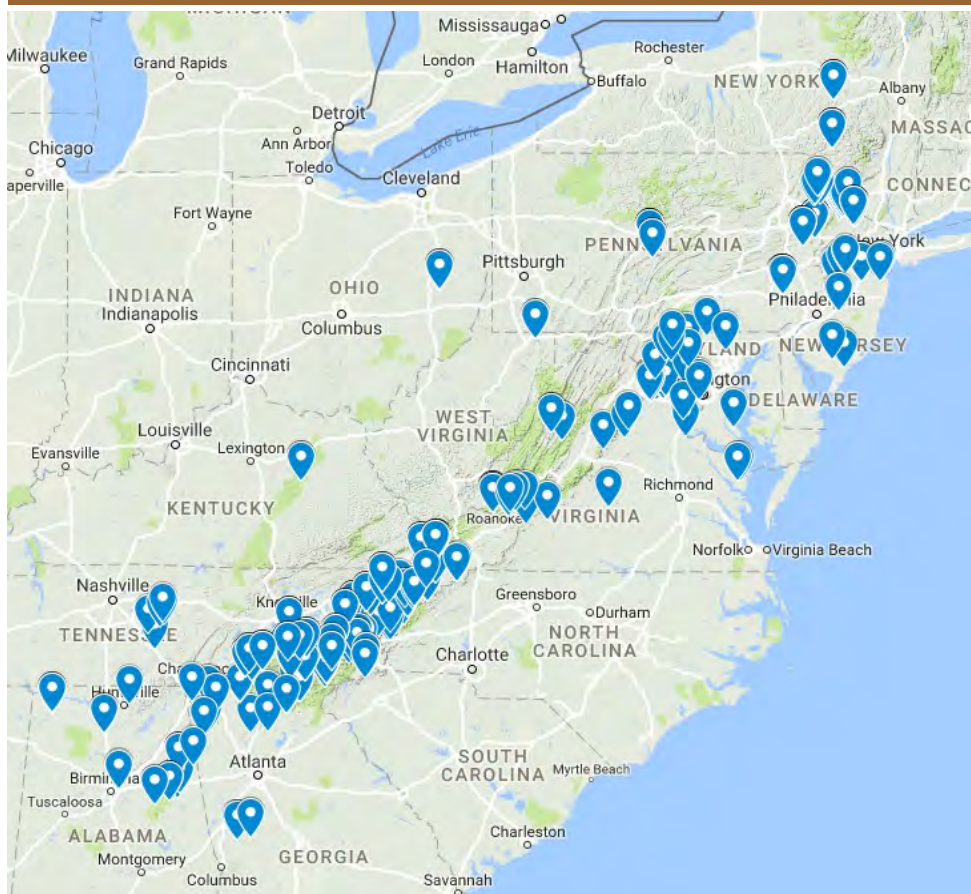
The American Chestnut Foundation will convene its Annual Meeting in Gettysburg, PA next year. Speakers are TBD, but below is a peek at the anticipated program: (including, but not limited to):

- A dramatic reenactment of Aldo Leopold's writing of the Sand County Almanac
- A review of ecology and reintroduction of American chestnut to US Forest Service Lands
- Effect of the Civil War on the surrounding landscape and plant life
- Efforts to restore Civil War era vegetation to the Gettysburg National Park
- Plant patent and legal protections for cultivar release and distribution

At the 2017 Meeting in Maine, Maine members wore the same black and red check shirts to demonstrate chapter pride and their strong sense of community. Following the lead of the Maine Chapter, we're planning to organize some displays of Chapter spirit. If you would like to help plan the member presence at the 2019 meeting please call Jean at (814)863-7192.



From left: Jean Najjar, Mary and Blair Carbaugh, and Tim Eck at the 2015 Annual Meeting in State College PA



As noted on page 6, This map highlights locations where leaf samples have been collected and sent to Virginia Tech for whole genome sequencing. We are targeting collection in Pennsylvania, New York, and Ohio in the coming year with a July 2019 deadline.



The Chestnut Newsletter

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Pennsylvania Chapter

The American Chestnut Foundation

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EVENT CALENDAR

October 7 — West Virginia Chestnut Festival,
Rowlesburg, WV

October 7 — 2018 Walk in the Penn's Wood , Merrill
Creek Reservoir in Warren County, NJ.

October 14 — West Milford Autumn Lights Festival,
West Milford, NJ

October 27th and 28th — TACF Annual Meeting —
Huntsville, Alabama — www.ACF.org

November 2-3 — PA Botany Symposium, The Penn Star-
ter Hotel and Conference Center • State College, Pennsyl-
vania

November 10th — Huddle with the Faculty at PSU, Uni-
versity Park, PA

January 5-12, 2019 — 2019 PA Farm Show

March 22—23, 2019 4th Biennial Forest Landowner's
Conference, State College, PA

October 18-19, 2019 — TACF Annual Meeting, Gettys-
burg, PA

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