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The Newsletter of the Virginia Chapter of
The American Chestnut Foundation

Fall 2013

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Tour of DOF Chestnut Forest Highlights VA Chapter Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Virginia Chapter of The American Chestnut Foundation will be held October 5, 2013, at the Wintergreen Nature Foundation in Roseland, VA, southwest of Charlottesville in Nelson County.

The meeting start time is 10:30 a.m. This will be followed by a picnic lunch (bring your own chair) to honor volunteers at the Department of Forestry (DOF) chestnut research orchards at Lesesne State Forest (a contribution is requested if you haven't yet volunteered). A tour of DOF chestnut research orchards will begin immediately following lunch. A Board meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m. and is open to other attendees.

Directions to Wintergreen Resort: 39 Mountain Inn Loop, Roseland, VA, can be found at

<http://www.wintergreenresort.com/Location-and-Directions/>.

To the Nature Foundation from the Wintergreen Resort Entrance, turn right at



Lesesne State Forest, 2013

the gatehouse and go up the mountain on Wintergreen Drive. Follow Wintergreen Drive past the Mountain Inn. The Wintergreen Nature Foundation's driveway is located just past Blue Ridge Drive and Trillium Place, on the left, across from the Wintergarden Spa's parking lot and the Stoneridge Condominiums. For more information: <http://vachestnut.org/vatacf-annual-meeting-information/>.

The President's Message

Weather and cicadas hampered pollinations this year, but most notably in Fauquier County. However, volunteer efforts may pay off well in Fairfax and the central region near Charlottesville.

Through a cooperative agreement with Shenandoah National Park, we are hoping to increase genetic diversity and study environmental conditions affecting chestnut stands in burn areas.

Education and outreach continue to be a critical part of our mission. Thanks to all who planned and participated in pollination and Mega-transect training events.

The challenges encountered in the field have allowed us time to become a leaner organization and look for ways to become more effective and efficient. These efforts include planning for regional effectiveness and strengthening our organizational structure.

On recent visits to the property of Michael and Laura Granruth, we discovered many large accessible trees in a small area approximately five miles south of Marshall, including two 10.5" Diameter at Breast Height (4.5 feet) (DBH) trees within 20 feet named "Twin Towers" by Brian Smith (see photo). As many as 20 trees are 6" DBH or greater. Half of them are over 10" DBH.



Gratefully yours,

Jack LaMonica

Many Hands Needed to Support Chestnut Restoration Efforts

To achieve VATACF's goals, many skills are needed. While naturalists and persons eager for outdoors work are always needed, your skills in other areas can be just as valuable. We need web assistants, video producers, educators, office help, and people to staff booths at community events, among others. To see specific skills we are seeking, go to <http://vachestnut.org/contact-us/volunteering-opportunities/volunteer-now/>. Or fill out the online form at <http://vachestnut.org/contact-us/volunteer-form/>. Contact us at vachestnut@verizon.net or 540-364-1922 for more information.

TACF Annual Meeting in Herndon

The American Chestnut Foundation's 30th Annual Meeting in Herndon, VA, October 19 and 20, is a great opportunity for members in northern Virginia to connect and learn about the work being done in other chapters and at the national level to restore the American chestnut. Events of particular interest include:

- Keynote speech by Holly Shimizu, Executive Director, U.S. Botanic Garden
- Workshop on control of the Asian ambrosia beetle by Dr. Martin Cipolinni
- Poster session with an opportunity to interact with presenters
- Session with brief student presentations

Register and view the complete schedule at <http://www.acf.org/annualmeeting.php>. Be sure to look for the Virginia Chapter banner during the Saturday evening social hour and introduce yourself!

Creating Healthy Landscapes:

Holly Shimizu Headlines TACF Meeting

Holly Shimizu has been learning and teaching about plant communities for three decades at some of the most prestigious public gardens in the country. The Director of the US Botanic Garden, the nation's oldest public showcase of plants useful to man, she has been in the forefront of efforts in the U.S. and abroad to adapt how we site, assemble and care for collections so they continue to benefit us in an era of changing climate.

At TACF's Annual Meeting, Shimizu will share new initiatives for made landscapes that exemplify the best practices for conserving energy and water.

Her first job was as creator and curator of



Holly Shimizu at work

the National Herb Garden for the National Arboretum in Washington, where chestnut research to combat the blight was originally undertaken by the USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

Report of Nominations Committee

Officers and Directors of the Virginia Chapter of The American Chestnut Foundation will be elected at the Annual Meeting on October 5th, 2013.

The following Directors with expiring terms are nominated for another term: Cathy Mayes, Kathy Marmet, Brenda Clements Jones, Warren Laws. Neel Rich has resigned and Doug Levin is nominated to fill that Director position.

The following Officers are nominated to serve an additional term: Jack LaMonica as President, Kathy Marmet as Vice President for Education, Charles Mackall as Treasurer. Cathy Mayes is nominated to serve as Secretary. A nomination for the office of Vice President for Science is still being sought.

A Need for Seed

The VA chapter is making a statewide effort to collect American chestnut seeds this fall for breeding, research, and outreach purposes. Our goal is to collect 3,000 seeds. If you know of a seed-producing American chestnut, your efforts to get out and collect the seeds for the chapter this Fall will greatly help. Follow this link for instructions on how to harvest and store chestnut seeds: <http://ecosystems.psu.edu/research/chestnut/breeding/pollination/harvesting>.



Photo by Robert Strasser

We would like information about the tree you are harvesting from, so please fill out a Tree Locator Form (http://www.acf.org/pdfs/resources/TreeLocator_2012V3-2_fillable.pdf) for the tree or give as much information on the location as possible.

Contact Matt Brinckman to make arrangements for shipping the seeds – matt@acf.org or 434-906-9312. Matt is also happy to give information and assistance to those that wish to stratify the seeds and grow them themselves.

What is Restoration Chestnut 1.0 ?

Now that The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) is doing test plantings of Restoration Chestnut 1.0 seed produced by Legacy Trees at the Meadowview Research Farms, many TACF supporters are wondering exactly where this type of seed fits into the larger strategy of preparation to reintroduce American chestnut in our eastern forests. If you consult the TACF backcross breeding chart (http://www.acf.org/pdfs/pr/bckcross_chart_8_2012.pdf), Restoration Chestnut 1.0 is the final step labeled B3F3. B3 means that there have been three backcrosses with American parents to capture the characteristics of the American chestnut, and F3 means that there have been three crosses to capture the blight resistance characteristics of the Chinese source of resistance. F1 is the first cross between American and Chinese, F2 is the cross of one B3 with another B3 to produce seed for the seed orchard (the Legacy Tree orchard at Meadowview), and F3 is a the cross between two Legacy Trees to produce the Restoration Chestnut 1.0 seed that is now being tested.

The current testing process will first be used to further cull the Legacy Tree orchard based on the quality of the progeny grown from Restoration Chestnut 1.0 seed. The initial culling process was done conservatively to avoid inadvertently destroying desirable trees. The culling based on results of progeny testing is expected to increase the quality of seed produced in terms of blight resistance, American character and ability to survive in forest settings. This testing will take several years to yield results. The designation 1.0 has been used to indicate that further improvement is expected, so seed produced after further culling of the Legacy Tree orchard will likely be designated Restoration Chestnut 2.0.

Chapter Plan Draft on Web Site for Comment

The VA Chapter Board plans to update its Strategic Plan by the end of 2013. Almost all objectives of the initial 2006 VA Chapter have been met.

To develop its plan for the next seven years, the VA Chapter extended invitations to members, volunteers and partners to participate in a planning process on May 9 in Charlottesville. Six key questions were posed to address issues considered important to strengthening the VA Chapter. How can we:

1. Organize to maintain existing and new orchards?
2. Target VA science resources for restoration?
3. Have volunteers when and where needed and make their experience rewarding?
4. Energize future generations to continue the work we have begun?
5. Inspire others to contribute resources needed to carry out our work?
6. Communicate effectively to coordinate diverse efforts within VA and with national staff?

Participants selected two of the questions for in-depth discussion, participated in a general session and identified priorities with dot "votes." Follow-up conference call discussions fleshed out key ideas.

These ideas have been incorporated into a draft plan now available on the VATACF web site at <http://vachestnut.org/va-tacf-strategic-plan-draft-available/>. The VA Chapter welcomes your comments and suggestions. Please send them to kathy-marmet@gmail.com.

Special Opportunity for Educators at TACF Annual Meeting

The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) will hold its 30th Annual Meeting October 18-20 at the Hyatt Dulles in Herndon, Virginia. Over the past 30 years, TACF has helped to revive and energize efforts to restore the American chestnut, bringing this restoration opportunity to the forefront of conservation. The conference will include presentations and workshops by chestnut scientists exploring recent developments in creating a blight-resistant American chestnut and the Foundation's progress in restoring the tree to the wild.



Betty Gatewood, an experienced classroom educator and specialist in environment-based learning, will be joined by some of her students to share teaching and learning experiences focused on the science and history of the American chestnut. In addition to her own classroom teaching experience, Betty is a Shenandoah National Park education and interpretive guide. She has been actively involved in *A Trail to Every Classroom*, a project of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, and as Teacher-in-Residence for the Environment-based Learning Program at Mary Baldwin College's Graduate Teacher

Education program. Betty and her husband maintain a portion of the Appalachian Trail as volunteers for the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, and they have participated in TACF's A.T. MEGA-Transect Chestnut Project annually since its inception in 2008.

Special rates are available at the annual meeting for classroom teachers and students. If you are a classroom teacher, please call the number below and indicate that you are a teacher to get the special rate.

For a schedule of events and registration information, visit www.acf.org/annualmeeting.php, email chestnut@acf.org, or call 828-281-0047.

4th Annual Chestnut Restoration Celebration, Meadowview, VA

The 4th Annual Chestnut Restoration Celebration will be held on Saturday, October 12, 2:00-6:00 p.m. at the Glenn C. Price Research Laboratory in Meadowview, VA. It's opportunity for families to learn about the restoration of the American chestnut and enjoy an afternoon of food, live music and fun.

Events include:

- A tour of the Glenn C. Price Research Farm in Meadowview, VA starting at 2:30 p.m.
- Roasted chestnuts, light snacks, and locally brewed chestnut beer
- A raffle of potentially blight-resistant Restoration Chestnut 1.0 seedlings. Pairs of seedlings will be awarded to three winners of the raffle drawing

The Celebration is sponsored by the Southwest Virginia Restoration Branch of the Virginia Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation. For more information email SWVABranch@acf.org or call (276) 944-4631.

Asian Ambrosia Beetles Bring Need for Early Spring Monitoring

Asian ambrosia beetles, invasive wood-boring insects, have shown up in some of our Virginia orchards. The beetles bore into small trees and introduce a fungus that kills the tree within a few weeks.

The VA Chapter seeks volunteers to help set up a program for monitoring Asian ambrosia beetle traps in our orchards beginning early next year. There will be a workshop on this process at the TACF Annual Meeting in Herndon on Saturday, October 18th. If you're interested in helping, please contact Regional Science Coordinator Matt Brinkman (matt@acf.org).

Additional information on Asian ambrosia beetles can be found at <http://www.bugwood.org/factsheets/99-010.html> and in the May/June 2013 issue of *The Journal of the American Chestnut Foundation*.



Asian Ambrosia beetle larvae

How VATACF Communicates

In a diverse and far-flung organization like the Virginia Chapter of TACF, effective communication is both critical and challenging. The VATACF web site (www.vachestnut.org) has become the single most important way to stay in touch with what's happening and how you can help. There you'll find:

- Current news and announcements
- A calendar of coming events
- Notices of volunteer opportunities
- Progress reports
- Information on the science behind the breeding and restoration program
- Learning and teaching materials
- Future plans

And you'll be able to connect with nationwide efforts to restore the American chestnut to our forests through:

- Links to the national TACF web site and other states' web sites
- Facebook
- Twitter

Supplementing the web site are selected emails to members and volunteers on our mailing list with special alerts and targeted news.

The future holds even more promise:

- Using Google Groups and other opt in-opt out mailing lists for volunteers and members
- On-line videos for training and public education
- Feedback surveys

Check the web often for updates!

2013-14 Fall-Winter Activities

Check the web calendar for the latest information:

<http://vachestnut.org/events/calendar/>

Sept. 28	Seed harvest, Lesesne Forest
Sept.- Oct. TBD	Seed harvest and bur opening, Meadowview
Oct. 5	VATACF Annual Meeting and Lesesne Forest Tour
Oct. 12-13	Bur opening , Blandy Farm
Oct. 12	4th Annual Chestnut Restoration Celebration, Meadowview Farm
Oct. 17	Virginia Chapter Gathering, Middleburg, Virginia
Oct. 18-20	TACF National Conference, Dulles Hyatt Hotel
Oct. 22	Tree planting, Prince William Forest
Jan. TBD	Board meeting
Spring, TBD	Spring planting



Prescribed fire at Jarman's Gap
Photo by David Munn

Volunteer Profile —

Brenda Clements Jones

Brenda first started volunteering for The American Chestnut Foundation as a Virginia Master Naturalist. She volunteered to bag flowers, pollinate and harvest seeds of American chestnuts. She has also hiked portions of the Appalachian Trail to find American chestnut trees. She started in 2010, in the same year she became a Master Naturalist and took a natural history class at Piedmont Virginia Community College focused on winter tree identification, reflecting her passion for trees.

She reports that her volunteer work thrills her because she feels she's involved in the actual science of crossing the American chestnut with Chinese chestnuts and backcross breeding in order bring about trees that will be blight resistant.



While she now serves on the board of directors of the Virginia Chapter of The American Chestnut Foundation, she continues her volunteer work doing the activities listed above in the field as well as maintaining the database of the Appalachian Trail MEGA transect and the Large Tree database.

Thanks, Brenda, for your valuable contributions.



THE
AMERICAN
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FOUNDATION®

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