

WILDLIFE

BIODIVERSITY

REFORESTATION

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Asheville, NC 28801
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PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY BREEDING PROGRAM PARTNERSHIP SCHOOL OF FOREST RESOURCES

206 Forest Resources Lab
University Park, PA 16802
Tel: 814-863-3600 or 7192



YEAR IN REVIEW



2005

HIGHLIGHTS

- Year End Campaign that resulted in \$70,000 donated by February.
- USDA Forest Service Appropriations secured for \$250,000; National Forest Foundation awards \$65,000; Sudbury Foundation renews support for \$25,000; Norcross Wildlife Foundation provides \$5,000 to assist with the purchase of a new tractor for research farm operations; and a final payment of \$97,235 of the \$190,000 bequest was received from the estate of member Dr. Frances Holmes of Virginia. Federal appropriations increase to \$350,000.
- Membership tops 5,600.
- Charity Navigator rates TACF four stars.
- TACF attends Appalachian Reforestation Initiative on coal mined lands and participates in official signing at the University of Kentucky Arboretum.
- TACF plants an American chestnut at the White House for Arbor Day.
- TACF partners with Smithsonian Folklife Festival.
- TACF participates in "Friends of the Forest" campaign, the Forest Service's kickoff celebration for its 100th anniversary.
- TACF plants two American chestnuts at the Cradle of Forestry in North Carolina; a highlight of the International Conference of Forestry.
- TACF President Marshal Case participates in a White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation.



President George W. Bush, Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns, and TACF's Marshal Case plant a tree on the North Lawn of the White House in celebration of Arbor Day 2005

White House Photo by Eric Draper

PRIORITIES

- TACF officers, staff, and special guests journey to Atlanta to participate in dedication ceremony at The Carter Center.
- The first B₃-F₃ nuts produced at the Glenn C. Price Research Farms.
- TACF hires a Research Scientist, Dr. Robert Paris, for the Meadowview Research Farms.
- Alabama and Ohio become the 12th and 13th state chapters at the TACF Annual Meeting in October.
- Third research farm paid in full.

Former President Jimmy Carter met with representatives of The American Chestnut Foundation at the dedication of a chestnut exhibit at The Carter Center in Atlanta, GA, on September 21, 2005

L to R: Bill MacDonald, Chris Bolgiano, Don Willeke, Fred Hebard (back), Phil Pritchard, Meghan Jordan, Mark Stallings (back), Ray Hornback (back), President Carter, Dick Will (back), Marshal Case, Dr. Al Ellingboe, Liz Pritchard, and John Egerton



PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE

The following is a summary of the primary areas of focus for 2006 and the near future:

An external Science Review or "audit" for 2006. This is an external review of TACF science and method, the first of which occurred in 1999, with the aim of ensuring the TACF breeding program stays on track, with the best method and science possible;

TACF will publish an anthology of American chestnut edited by Chris Bolgiano, author of *Living in the Appalachian Forest*;

TACF will continue to support research that enhances our understanding of the American chestnut and chestnut blight, as well as the most effective means of deployment and reforestation;

Surface mined lands and American chestnut plantings will be considered as a high priority field test project;

Develop master plans for all state chapters coordinated with the TACF Strategic Plan;

Continue to increase corporate support;

Broaden a planned giving initiative with new literature and website placement;

Offer Board members and chapter leaders professional training in development and fundraising skills;

Expand Southern focus of regional breeding program to the North and West by adding a Northern, and then a Central, Science Coordinator position.

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Reflecting on the accomplishments of the past year, I look with gratitude to the strength and support of our leadership, our volunteers, our staff, and our membership.

As noted in our highlights, TACF had the opportunity to take part in several extraordinary events in 2005. The effective publicity garnered from events such as the plantings at the White House and Grey Towers National Historic Site; signage at The Carter Center and The Smithsonian Folklife Festival; and myriad newspaper and radio stories appearing in such news outlets as CNN Radio, National Geographic, National Public Radio, The New York Times, and The Washington Post, has brought the Foundation to a new level of public awareness, which is reflected in our ever-growing membership.

The sustained and increased support of several partners has resulted in a 2006 budget of \$1.4 million. The bipartisan support of President Bush, Congressman Charles Taylor (R-NC), former President Jimmy Carter (D), and Senators Robert C. Byrd (D-WV) and Mitch McConnell (R-KY) shows that our mission transcends political party lines. Without such collaborations, we could not hope to secure the level of federal funding--\$350,000 in 2006--that we have been allotted.

On Arbor Day, Dr. Fred Hebard and the Meadowview staff delivered two trees to Washington D.C. President Bush, assisted by Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns, planted one of the trees on the North Lawn of the White House, and the other was planted at the Department of Agriculture.

Representing TACF, I was invited to participate in what was only the fourth ever White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation. The conference was held at the convention center in St. Louis, MO, and focused on the linking of sound science with a practical approach to reach good solutions to challenging problems in a timely manner. This follows on the heels of the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding, and our partnership with the Forest Service, in 2004.

TACF was proud to be invited to take part in the 100th Anniversary celebration of the USDA Forest Service and, along with Congressmen from Pennsylvania and California, and Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth, I renewed our pledge to be a Friend of the Forest. In June, TACF's former Vice Chair of Development, Ray



Marshal Case (signing), Congressmen from Pennsylvania and California, and Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth, renewed the pledge to be a Friend of the Forest



An American chestnut tree is delivered to the White House for an Arbor Day planting ceremony.

Hornback, and I attended the official ceremony of the signing of the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative in Lexington, KY. Kentucky Governor Ernie Fletcher has shown his support of TACF's mission both in his inclusion of our Foundation in this initiative, and by providing the welcome address at our 22nd Annual Meeting.

President Carter's interest and support of the Foundation has been ongoing since 1992, when he first joined TACF. In addition to the ceremony held at The Carter Center in September, the former president has agreed to write the introduction for our much-anticipated anthology. Thank you to Phil Pritchard and to the many chapter leaders who played a pivotal role in these successes.

Our growth over the past year, in nearly all areas, has been phenomenal. Total membership grew 11%, beginning the year at 5,058 and closing at 5,604. The growth and dedication of our membership is reflected in our year-end campaign results--we raised over \$70,000! Key to continued support of our donors is proving sound financial management, and it is a great honor to have been awarded a four-star rating, the highest possible, from Charity Navigator, the largest independent charitable giving rating group in the Nation.

The October induction of Ohio and Alabama brings our state chapter program to 13, representing 14 states (North and South Carolina comprise one chapter). The chapter program is at its strongest point ever, and pollination and harvesting efforts have benefited from tremendous volunteer participation.

At Meadowview, we reached a milestone with the first B₃-F₃ nuts being produced, and the mortgage on the third farm was paid in full thanks to a generous member donation.

Some staffing changes have occurred over the past year, including the hiring of a full-time Research Scientist at Meadowview. Dr. Robert Paris comes to us from the USDA Agricultural Research Service with extensive background in executing breeding programs. Also new to TACF staff is Michael Dobos, Membership Director; Jeanne Coleman, Publications and Website Director, both at the Bennington Administrative Office; and Meghan Jordan, Director of Communications, joins us at the Southern Appalachian Regional Office. Finally, the Pennsylvania chapter has added a support position at Penn State, where Sue Oram joins them as part-time Administrative Assistant.

As I said in my June Board update, "In all my years in the conservation field, I have never worked with such an outstanding staff. They know how to express opinions, come to collective decisions using good judgment, and then put shoulders to the wheels and obtain excellent return on time spent."

Looking ahead, I can not say how we can possibly improve upon the efforts of 2005. Our extraordinary staff is dedicated to the task, and in the works are several significant high-profile plantings and events, including one at the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of American History, and TACF's first-ever Southern Regional Science meeting.



Marshal T. Case
TACF President and CEO



The October induction of Ohio and Alabama brings our state chapter program to 13.

Shown above are the Alabama Board of Directors; left to Right: Jerry Howard, Wayne Boldin (Secretary), Jimmy Maddox, David Morris (President), Ed Camp, Price Tarpley (Vice President), Mary Maples, Rhonda Tinsley (Treasurer), Jack Rist. Not shown: James L. Crook, and Fenny Dane

2005 MAJOR DONORS

\$250,000+

Brad Stanback & Shelli Lodge-Stanback
USDA Forest Service

\$100,000 - \$249,999

Anonymous
Estate of Mr. Douglas W. Hill, Jr.
The National Forest Foundation

\$50,000 - \$99,999

Richard S. Will

\$20,000 - \$49,999

Estate of Dr. Francis H. Holmes
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Estate of Barbara Steinwachs
The Sudbury Foundation

\$10,000 - \$19,999

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\$1,000 - \$1,999

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George F. Varsam
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Gregory Weaver
Fred Wilder

CHESTNUT HISTORY & FOUNDATION BACKGROUND

One hundred years ago, the American chestnut was the sovereign tree of eastern forests. The tree's consistently heavy nut crop was the single most important food source for a wide variety of wildlife from bears to birds. And rural economies depended on it. The annual nut harvest was a significant source of feed for livestock, as well as a food staple and cash crop for people. The tree was prized for its highly rot-resistant timber, making it suitable for everything from beams to railroad ties and musical instruments.

But then, the chestnut blight struck. First noticed in 1904 in the Bronx Zoological Park in New York City, the fungus, which kills by girdling tree stems, spread quickly. It moved through our forests at a rate of up to 50 miles a year, leaving in its wake only millions of acres of gray tree carcasses. By 1950, the keystone species had virtually disappeared.

Early efforts to breed a blight-resistant chestnut assumed resistance was created through the interaction of several genes. But in 1980, the late Dr. Charles Burnham, an eminent Minnesota plant geneticist who played an important role in the development of corn genetics, discovered that such an

assumption was incorrect. Burnham took his discovery to several other scientists. Agreeing with his findings, in 1983 these scientists established The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The mission of TACF is simple: to restore the American chestnut as an integral part of the eastern forest ecosystem.

TACF's Backcross Breeding

To develop a blight-resistant chestnut at TACF, we use the standard breeding method to transfer a single trait to a plant, called backcross breeding. It entails crossing Chinese and American trees to obtain a hybrid which is 1/2 American, 1/2 Chinese. The most resistant trees in that generation are backcrossed to another American chestnut to obtain trees which are 3/4 American, then crossed again to obtain 7/8 American trees, and so on. At each backcross, TACF selects only those trees which show the highest resistance and that display American form. The backcross-breeding program will eventually produce trees that are genetically and aesthetically American except for one characteristic: blight resistance.



Native Range of the American Chestnut Tree

The American chestnut ranged over an area of about 200 million acres and covered approximately 25% of the forested land within that area. It is estimated that 4 billion American chestnut trees towered over the landscape at the beginning of the 20th century.



TACF was selected in April 2005 as a *four-star charity* by Charity Navigator (www.charitynavigator.org), the largest, independent, non-profit rating organization for charities.



2005 Financial Figures were not available from TACF accountants at press time. These figures will be inserted here and distributed as soon as they are available. Please contact Daphne with any questions at 802-447-0110 or e-mail daphne@acf.org

The American Chestnut Foundation has an independent financial audit conducted annually. Copies can be obtained by contacting Daphne in the Bennington office at 802-447-0110.

Our tax returns are posted online at www.guidestar.org.

TACF was selected in April 2005 as a *four star charity* by Charity Navigator (www.charitynavigator.org), the largest, independent, non-profit rating organization for charities.



Meadowview Research Farms, Meadowview, VA

The American Chestnut Foundation is a not-for-profit organization funded by member-supporters, and dedicated to breeding a blight-resistant American chestnut tree for restoration within its native forests along the eastern US.

Non-profit Org.
U.S. Postage
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Bennington, VT
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