



Friends of the Chestnut

From Staff Reports

Cumberland Times-News

Wed, May 21 2008

— Cumberland resident Joe Freno, left, watches as park naturalist Jen Miller and biologist Robert Strasser plant a chestnut tree at Rocky Gap State Park campground last week. Freno shared information from his days working for the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Rocky Gap is being used as a site to test backcross breeding of the chestnut in an effort to find a blight-proof strain that can be replanted across the state.

Park staff and representatives of the Maryland Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation planted several species outside the Nature Center.

The American Chestnut was once a dominant tree in Maryland but was virtually wiped out by a blight fungus in the early part of the last century. The foundation has worked for 25 years to restore the American Chestnut to its natural range.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources has formed a partnership with TACF to promote the survival and restoration of disease-resistant chestnut.

Plans are being considered to include a larger scale research orchard at Rocky Gap in the future.

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Photos



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