



HOME

ABOUT ME

WHERE I'VE...

Legacy and Inheritance on National Land

March 29, 2009

The March-April 2009 issue of *AT Journeys* includes a great article by Wendy K. Probst entitled "*A Remarkable Inheritance*". It's about Dayton Duncan and his work with Ken Burns on the upcoming PBS documentary *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*.

In 1959, nine year old Dayton Duncan visited his first national park with his parents. When he was grown with a family of his own, he revisited the parks. His children were able to take in identical views and share the same experiences their father had as a boy. Meanwhile, Dayton Duncan found himself awed by the consistency of the parks.

But sometimes, we don't want national lands to stay the same. Take the case of the *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Philpott Lake* in Bassett, Virginia. By the time Congress approved the construction of Philpott Dam in 1944, Virginia's American Chestnuts had already been ravished by the blight. Patrick County had lost its main cash crop. Gone were the days when wagons were loaded full of nuts and shipped from Bassett. Philpott Dam was completed in 1952 and a new recreation area was born. But it was a recreation area that couldn't reflect what the forest once was.

On March 18th, *Ryan Somma* and I joined forest rangers, biologists, Friends of Philpott members, teachers, high school students, and two professional RVers at the Philpott Lake Overlook. We were there to witness the planting of one of the *American Chestnut Foundation's* backcrossed trees, a sapling bred to be blight resistant.

Feeds

 [Subscribe \(Posts\)](#)

 [Subscribe \(Comments\)](#)

iNaturalist Observations

[Black Vulture \(Coragyps atratus\)](#)

[Turkey Vulture \(Cathartes aura\)](#)

[Brown Thrasher \(Toxostoma rufum\)](#)

[Ardea herodias subsp. herodias](#)

[Acer rubrum](#)

Recent Comments



scienceguy288

on

[Sinking Creek Mountain and Fir...](#)



Lynn Pritchett

on

[About Me](#)



Virginia Hiker

on

[Sinking Creek Mountain and Fir...](#)



Sinking Creek Mouna...

on

[Furthering the Case for Sinkin...](#)

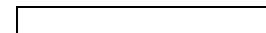


Sinking Creek Mouna...

on

[Virgin Islands: The Baths at V...](#)

Flickr Photos





Restoration Biologist Robert Strasser tends to the tree



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Park Ranger Susan Martin digs



[More Photos](#)

Carnivals/Swarms



VA TACF President Cathy Mayes and Robert Strasser plant the tree



Blogroll

- [An American Expat in Deutschland](#)
- [Brett's Blog](#)
- [Carolyn's Blog](#)
- [Clint's Blog](#)
- [Dave Nelson](#)
- [Derek Pinkerton](#)
- [Georgia Grogins Blog](#)
- [Goat of Death](#)
- [Ideonex](#)
- [James' Blog](#)
- [LazyBackpacker](#)
- [Mandy Wilson](#)
- [Mark Duncan's Blog](#)
- [Mike Newman's Blog](#)
- [My Thru Hike of the Appalachian Trail](#)
- [PVSawyer](#)
- [Roanoke House Hunter](#)
- [Science](#)
- [Sheer Panic](#)



VA TACF Board Member Dr. John Scrivani fills in the hole

In the AT Journeys article, Dayton Duncan spoke about the value of national parks:

I was able to show my children the exact same scenes — unchanged — 50 years later because we, as a people, had decided to preserved them unimpaired for future generations. That's a remarkable inheritance[.]

American Chestnut Foundation President Bryan Burhans also thinks about future park visitors, but a little differently.

Your grandchildren someday may sit here at this spot, and the forest may look much different. That is a huge legacy to leave.

The American Chestnut Foundation strives to return the species to the forests in its native range, including Philpott Lake. This little sapling was the first of its kind to be planted in Bassett, Virginia, but it is the hope of all involved that one day it will be far from alone. When we gathered at Philpott Lake that Wednesday morning, we weren't there just to watch the planting of a tree. We were there to celebrate a coming change to the landscape.

Dayton Duncan described national parks as “one of the last refuges where precious memories can be safely stored from one generation to the next.” Indeed, the American Chestnut Foundation and the staff of Philpott Lake aspire to safeguard

- [SourSwinger](#)
- [Stacy's Blog \(Personal\)](#)
- [The \(Single\) GeekHiker](#)
- [The Adventures of Chriggy](#)
- [The Cookie Sheet](#)
- [The Penngwyn](#)
- [Vandervorts](#)
- [Visual Thoughts](#)
- [What Katie Did](#)

Archives

- [March 2009](#)
- [February 2009](#)
- [January 2009](#)
- [December 2008](#)
- [November 2008](#)
- [October 2008](#)
- [September 2008](#)
- [August 2008](#)
- [July 2008](#)
- [June 2008](#)
- [May 2008](#)
- [April 2008](#)
- [March 2008](#)
- [February 2008](#)
- [January 2008](#)
- [December 2007](#)
- [November 2007](#)

memories. It's just not the memories of *adjacent* generations.

They don't want to show my children the small, stunted, black-barked chestnut trees I can find in the forest today. Nor what my father could see when he was he was boy. Not even my grandfather was born into a blight-free world.

It's my great grandfather. Those are the memories they want to share.

More pictures of the Philpott Lake American Chestnut Planting can be found on my Flickr site.



More information about the American Chestnut and its restoration efforts can be found at the American Chestnut Foundation site.

Possibly related posts: (automatically generated)

- [iNaturalists of 1805](#)



Entry Filed under: [American Chestnut](#), [American Chestnut Foundation](#), [trees](#). .

2 Comments | [Add your own](#) →

 **1. geekhiker** | March 30, 2009 at 2:22 pm 

Sounds like how we've been feeling as the Oak Disease has been ravishing the west coast.

You should start a Chestnut Tree Blog!

 **2. tgaw** | March 31, 2009 at 6:38 am 

@geekhiker - It is an exciting time to blog about the American Chestnut as so much progress has been made and there area lot of events going on at the moment!

Leave a Comment

Name	Required
Email	Required, hidden
Url	
Comment	

[October 2007](#)

[September 2007](#)

[August 2007](#)

[July 2007](#)

[June 2007](#)

[May 2007](#)

[April 2007](#)

[March 2007](#)

[February 2007](#)

[January 2007](#)

[December 2006](#)

[November 2006](#)

[October 2006](#)

[September 2006](#)

[August 2006](#)

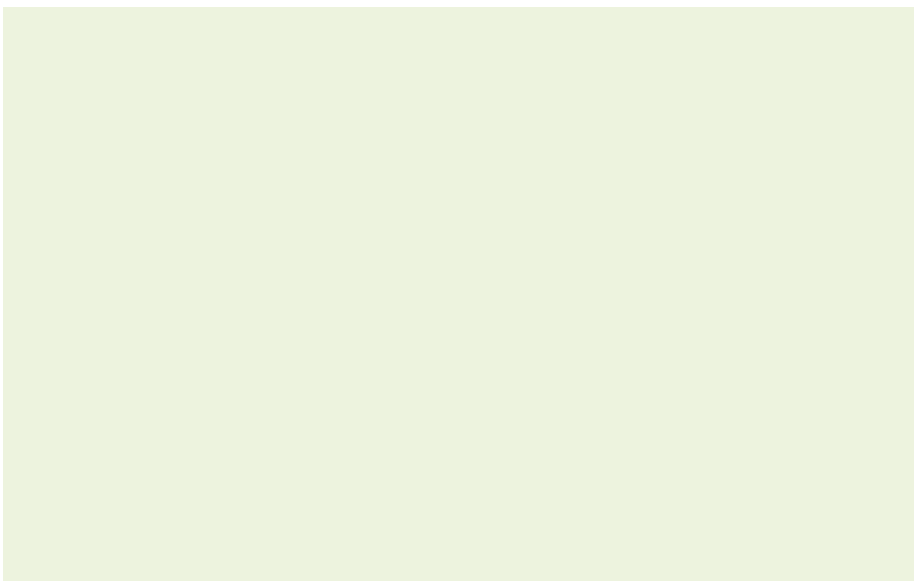
[July 2006](#)

[June 2006](#)

[May 2006](#)

[April 2006](#)

[March 2006](#)



Notify me of follow-up comments via email.

Some HTML allowed:

 <abbr title=""> <acronym title=""> <blockquote cite=""> <cite>
<code> <del datetime=""> <i> <q cite=""> <strike>

[Trackback this post](#) | [Subscribe to the comments via RSS Feed](#)

Theme: Blix by Sebastian Schmiegl . Blog at WordPress.com.

