



# The Kentucky Railsplitter

Newsletter of the Kentucky Chapter  
of the American Chestnut Foundation

## *Working to Restore the American Chestnut*

*Volume 5, Number 1 Spring 2006*

### **The President's Corner**

Dear Members and Friends

As I near the end of my U.S. Forest Service career, I have been asked to take on a job with our Washington Office to focus on some of the challenges facing our fire fighting efforts. Since I've spent most of my career in that arena, I have accepted the job. Although I will remain in Kentucky, the job involves a lot of travel. In fairness to the Kentucky Chapter of TACF, I need to step down as president of our chapter.

I am extremely proud of what we have accomplished over the past five years in our efforts to restore the American Chestnut to Kentucky. None of it would have been possible without the support of you, the members.

I have appointed a nominating committee to come up with a slate of officers for our upcoming annual meeting on Saturday, May 6. This committee, consisting of Lynn Garrison, Dr. William Martin, Scott Friedhof and Mike French, has been approved by our board of directors and will submit the slate of candidates to the membership on May 6. Additional nominations will be accepted from the membership. In addition, we need to reconfirm our board of directors.

This past fall, we successfully hosted a great annual meeting in Lexington. Many of you deserve a special thank-you for helping in this effort. I especially want to thank Dr. Ray Hornback for securing Carl Hurley as our guest speaker, Ron Toler for helping get Governor Fletcher and Secretary of Natural Resources Wilcher to our meeting, Bob Cornett for arranging for the teachers

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### **The 2005 Annual Meeting of TACF**

By Ray Hornback

Several years ago at a state meeting of The American Chestnut Foundation in Kentucky, it was mentioned to Marshal Case that Kentucky would be a good central place to hold the annual meeting of the organization. Then, at a board meeting in Abingdon, Virginia, two members of that board—Rex Mann and Ray Hornback—were asked if they were serious about suggesting Kentucky as the location for the annual meeting.

When Mann and Hornback said yes, the board voted to come to Kentucky in 2005 and Lexington was selected as the site. The dates of October 28-30 were selected and the weatherman cooperated by providing a beautiful late fall for the 250 or so people who were in attendance.

A great deal of work went into planning the event by members of the Kentucky chapter and the national office staff and it was the general consensus of those in attendance that this was the best annual meeting in recent years.

Two of the real highlights of the meeting were the appearance of Governor Ernie Fletcher who spoke at the Friday evening banquet and the appearance of noted Kentucky humorist Carl Hurley who kept the crowd in stitches with his brand of down-home humor.

A typical response to the meeting came from Dr. Bill MacDonald, who served for the past 17 years as secretary of TACF. In a letter to Ray Hornback, he said, "I think the meeting was great and served the membership well. The meeting provided something for everyone from humor to science." He added, "As I departed I had the opportunity to

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**The American Chestnut  
Foundation  
Kentucky Chapter**

**Board of Directors  
Officers**

Rex Mann, *President*  
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Lynn Garrison,  
*Vice-President*  
(502)564-4338  
Anita Mann, *Treasurer*  
(859) 498-1724

**Board Members**

Bill Andrews  
Rollie Beers  
Bob Cornette  
Scott Freidhof  
Dr. Ray Hornback  
Faye King  
Dr. Bill Martin  
Bill Morton  
John Perry  
Dr. Lou Shain

**Newsletter**

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*Annual TACF meeting continued*

appreciate the environs in which you live. You have a great city to call home.”

Another highlight of the meeting was the Saturday afternoon trip to Berea where two chestnut planting areas were visited. Mike French coordinated the effort and did a splendid job.

One of the new features of the 2005 meeting was concurrent workshop meetings on Saturday morning which gave participants the opportunity to take in at least two different sessions. Another highlight was the keynote address by President Marshal Case at the awards banquet.

The annual meeting was concluded with an opportunity for the participants to attend one of three tours—the Kentucky Horse Park, Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill and the Woodford Reserve Distillery—all noted Kentucky landmarks.

Both Mann and Hornback were high in their praise of the members of the Kentucky chapter for their efforts in making the meeting so successful, saying “we heard nothing but complimentary remarks about the facility, program, entertainment and hospitality provided by the Kentucky chapter. We don’t want to do it again next year, but the goodwill it earned for Kentucky made it all worthwhile.”

Mann and Hornback were both presented with plaques at the awards banquet for their service to TACF—Hornback for serving the past three years as vice president and vice chairman of the board of directors and chairman of the Development Cabinet, and Mann as a member of the board of directors and president of the Kentucky chapter.

*President’s Corner continued*

and kids from Kingdom Come Elementary school, and Lynn Garrison, John Perry, Bill Morton and lovely wife Betty, Mike French and Terry Stamper for performing numerous tasks. A special thanks is also in order to our many friends in the timber industry, represented by Kentucky Forest Industry Association (KFIA), for hosting the social hour. Although the meeting was a great success, I am working with our national leadership to somehow make our national meetings more inclusive. The high registration fees kept many of our members from attending.

You need to know that the restoration of American Chestnut is a mission close to my heart. I will continue to support this effort with all the time and effort I can muster. I hope to see all of you at our annual meeting.

Rex B. Mann  
KY Chapter President



**KY Chapter Spring Meeting Planned**  
**Saturday, May 6th**

All members are invited to attend the Spring meeting which will be held on Saturday, May 6 in Frankfort at the Salato Wildlife Education Center (see directions on pg. 4). The meeting will start at 9:00 am and continue to 4:00 pm with a one hour break for lunch. Several short talks will be presented on the current American chestnut work in Kentucky, including the research on American chestnut survival on reclaimed strip mines in Eastern Kentucky. (See story on back page.)

Most importantly, a new slate of board members and officers will be presented during the business meeting, including the office of president. Please attend and cast your vote!

**Planned Agenda**

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|-----------------|--|
| <b>9:00 am</b>  | Welcome and orientation by Salato staff<br><br>Presentation: Importance of American chestnuts to wildlife by Lynn Garrison<br><br>Business Meeting - including presentation of new officers and board members for election.                        |
| <b>11:30 am</b> | Lunch on your own  |
| <b>12:30 pm</b> | Presentations Continue<br><br>Michael French, KY Chapter Intern-Strip Mine research<br><br>Bob Cornette-update on Line Fork Chestnut education Project.<br><br>Michael French and Scott Freidhof<br>Open Discussion on upcoming pollination season |



## Directions

The Salato Center is located on the grounds of the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Resources Game Farm Complex.

- From I-64 at Frankfort, take exit 53B to US 127 north and travel 1.5 miles to US 60.
- Turn left and drive 1.7 miles west on US 60 to the entrance of the KDFWR Game Farm on the right.
- Turn right into the complex and proceed ahead 0.5 miles to the Salato Wildlife Education Center



Information for the Salato Center can be found at [www.fw.ky.gov](http://www.fw.ky.gov) or by calling 800-858-1549.

Admission to the displays, trails and outdoor animal exhibits is free of charge. Picnic facilities and pop machines are available on site but there are no food concessions. You may also want to visit the Ky Afield Gift shop located inside the Salato Center and the native plant program greenhouses which are located at the main entrance.

## **Update On The Linefork Chestnut Education Project**

*By Bob Cornette*

Regular readers of “Railsplitter” may know, our Kentucky Chapter has worked closely with the Linefork community in Letcher County — and the community’s school, Kingdom Come Elementary — to bring back the American chestnut to that area.

That project was intended at the outset to produce learning by the children about an important part of their heritage; learning by the adults that the Chestnut can be brought back; and most of all, learning that the community — children and adults together — can make good things happen.

Good things have, indeed, happened on Linefork, beginning with students from the school plus volunteer firemen videotaping interviews with elderly people who remember when the Chestnut was abundant; those videos are now treasured parts of the community archives. Trees have been planted and are being cared for by the students. Three surviving trees have been located in the area, and some pollinating has been done. Two Linefork Chestnut Festivals have been held — both of them at the Kingdom Come School — to celebrate the return of the Chestnut. The students have written a beautiful song, “Welcome Back Chestnut”.

Berea College hosted a workshop, which was attended by representatives of six mountain communities (and schools), including Linefork. This workshop, the purpose of which was to share the Linefork experience with others, has helped to inspire another — larger — gathering at Berea College, scheduled the weekend of April 21, that focuses upon sustainable communities. The association with Berea College and its sustainable communities projects can be highly significant: Berea’s strong credibility throughout Southern Appalachia can influence additional communities and people to do what Linefork and Kingdom Come Elementary School are doing.

Although the Linefork project is a community

project, not a Chestnut Foundation project, our Chapter has helped in a number of ways, ranging from providing technical support to securing modest amounts of financial assistance. The U.S. Forest Service provided especially valuable assistance in the form of computers for the Kingdom Come School. Those computers were no longer needed by the Forest Service, but they are highly valuable to the students.

Two pieces of news about people. Betty Caudill, Principal of the Kingdom Come School, who played a crucial part in getting the project started, is recovering from her long illness (breast cancer) and is looking forward to being back at work before long. And Faye King, our Chapter’s expert on education (and a driving force in starting the Linefork project) just got married. We’ll get an accounting about this happening soon (maybe).

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## **Massachusetts’ Loss Is Kentucky’s Gain**

The Kentucky Chapter of TACF has gained a powerful advocate. Dr. Anne Myers, the former treasurer and active member of the Massachusetts Chapter of TACF has relocated to Louisville, Kentucky. Anne brings years of experience in American Chestnut work to our chapter. She is already doing great things for our chapter in the Louisville area. We are nominating Anne to our board of directors, and she will be on the slate of candidates for the position of treasurer.

Welcome to Kentucky, Anne!



## **KY Chapter Intern Begins Strip Mine Research**

This year, Michael French, the KACF intern will be working on a Master's degree in Forestry at the University of Kentucky under the instruction of Dr. Chris Barton. His work will involve examining the growth and survival American chestnuts, 15/16 TACF B3 hybrids, and other native hardwoods in mine spoils in eastern Kentucky. Three different studies will be installed to determine whether loose mine spoils in the Cumberland Plateau will allow for chestnut re-introduction.

The first study will compare the growth and survival of American chestnut, 2 lines of TACF B3s, white ash, green ash, chestnut oak, white oak, yellow poplar, pecan, and Eastern redbud in a formerly compacted site. The area, located in Knott County, was compacted and reclaimed for pasture approximately 4 years ago. This past winter the compaction was loosened with a triple-shank ripper pulled by a bulldozer. This created an area approximately 3 feet deep that will allow the roots to penetrate the spoil, and hopefully provide a medium suitable for vigorous tree growth. One hundred, one-year-old bare-root seedlings of each type of tree were planted and the perimeter of the planting site was also planted with trees to minimize edge effects. Fertilizer will be applied to half of the trees, and all species and varieties will be measured for height growth, diameter growth, survival, and biomass accumulation.

A second study will compare the growth of American chestnuts in three different loose-dumped spoil substrates. In Pike County, in 2003 and 2004, brown sandstone and gray sandstone were separated and dumped into 1-acre plots (2 each), and two 1-acre plots consisting of a mixture of sandstones and shale were also formed. 150 greenhouse-grown, containerized American chestnuts will be planted on the site later this spring. The goal of this study will be to determine which of the three geological substrates best suits American chestnut growth and survival.

A third study (also located in Pike County), will compare the growth and survival of direct-seeded American chestnuts vs. American chestnuts started in a greenhouse and transplanted to the site from containers. The seed and seedlings will be planted in a loose dumped spoil mixture consisting of brown sandstone, gray sandstone, and shale.

Hopefully, these studies will show that mined areas in the Cumberland Plateau are suitable for chestnut growth. If successful, we will learn how to grow and plant mined areas with chestnuts, and when the time comes to introduce The American Chestnut Foundation's hybrid chestnuts into eastern forests, surface mines may provide a springboard into existing forested areas.

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