

# The Bur

Newsletter of the Virginia chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation

FALL 2009

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## WEYERS CAVE IS SITE OF 3RD ANNUAL MEMBER MEETING ON HALLOWEEN JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY BIOLOGIST SPEAKS ON RESTORATION



Dr. Heather Peckham Griscom of James Madison University's Dept. of Biology will give the keynote address on Saturday, October 31st at the 3rd Annual Meeting of the Virginia

Chapter. A forest ecologist trained at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, Dr. Griscom will speak on Reintroduction of Blight Resistant American Chestnut. Also on the agenda are UVA doctoral candidate Katie Burke, and graduate and summer intern Scott Osborne, giving reports on the current range of the chestnut and the social impact of its decline in the Virginia highlands.

This year's member meeting will convene at 1:00 pm at the Weyers Cave Community Center at 682 Weyers Cave Rd., Weyers Cave, VA off Interstate-81 between Harrisonburg and Staunton on the western slope of the Blue Ridge.

The annual chapter meeting has rotated around the state in chestnut rich environments to energize local members interested in adding local surviving trees to the backcross breeding program. Members are needed to vote for Board members and chapter officers for the coming year. Admission to the meeting is free; but reservations are requested so we can ensure adequate seating.

Profiles of all standing for election will be posted on the website by October 15. If you cannot attend, please fax or send in the enclosed proxy to the state chapter office by October 24 to ensure that Board vacancies are filled by votes cast by at least 20 percent of the VATACF membership.

**Members who are present will be entered in a raffle to receive one of a limited number of pure American chestnut seedlings.**

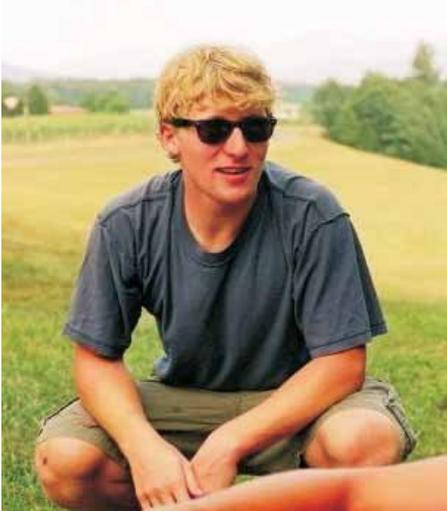


The Board of Directors will be meeting at Weyers Cave Community Center in the morning preceding the Annual Meeting at 9:30am. Members are welcome to attend. Nominee profiles appear on the website.

### **Count Our Chestnuts - Come to the Volunteer Picnic, October 4**

Burs will be opened at 10 am; but at 1 pm volunteers and their families will be honored at a Harvest Picnic at the VATACF chapter office at 8266 E. Main St. in Marshall. Badminton, bocce and croquet will help work off the picnic goodies. Call 540 364-1922 to RSVP

## VIRGINIA CHAPTER INTERNS VITAL TO EXPANDING PROGRAM



Two UVA students majoring in the intersects between human and environmental ecosystems shared this year's summer intern position, allowing us to expand our pollination program down Route 29 as far as Nelson County.

Recent graduate Scott Osborne arrived in time to help staff scientist Robert Strasser identify and pollinate American survivors in Greene and Nelson counties.

Scott, a Nelson County native, combined an Anthropology and Environmental Sciences major. His independent study project this year brought him in contact with the Department of Forestry, where Research Director John Scrivani recommended him for chestnut work.

It proved an ideal fit. Scott, who has experience with heights as a top ranked free style snowboarder in his teens, worked with TNC forester Jean Lorber to search for mother trees at Fortune's Cove, arranged for utility trucks to

pollinate survivors in Lydia and Wintergreen, and traveled 3 hours from his other job to assist Jack Lamonica's pollination team add 5 new trees in Fauquier County.

Before prior work commitments pulled him away in mid-July, he also monitored VATACF's four partner orchards, and began to pot up the rest of our sprouted seed stock at the Marshall office.

Scott volunteered for chestnut harvest this Fall, and will speak at the Annual Meeting before he leaves for Colorado. Long-term he would like to use his interests in human impacts on the environment and conservation to restore stream habitat or study ethnobotany.

We were fortunate to find a replacement for Scott in Rachel Baker, thanks to the Piedmont Environmental Council's intern program. Rachel, a rising UVA senior, pursues a double major in Biology and Environmental Sciences to pursue her main interest, ecology.

She did triple duty in the week she was with us, monitoring orchards, potting up the rest of 170 seedlings, and updating our records in the Marshall office. As she put it when she left, "The day I spent traveling with Robert was great; I learned so much about the blight and what TACF does as an organization. As far as favorite moments go, it was probably when I visited my first orchard with

Robert on my first day, which was at Blandy. To see so many chestnut trees planted there was wonderful, and gave me hope that the American Chestnut will survive, and there are a group of people fighting for it. While visiting all the orchards, observing live wild American Chestnuts, talking to people who had trees on their property, planting chestnuts behind the office, everyone just seemed hopeful, and focused on doing the work needed to preserve the chestnut."

This Fall Rachel is in Costa Rica, taking a course with 10 other college students that will take her all over the country to study the factors that contribute to enlightened land use policy. She hopes to do another internship there in agroforestry.

Our current internship expenses are funded by member and partner donations. As our orchards spread across the state, we urge you to recommend promising students and new graduates who would benefit our program. Your timely support could help grow a new and needed chestnut scientist for the future.



**3rd Annual Meeting of VA Chapter  
to be held  
October 31 at Weyers Cave Community Center,  
Weyers Cave, VA**

Dr. Heather Peckham Griscom  
James Madison University Department of Biology  
Keynote Speaker

Additional presenters:  
UVA PhD candidate Kathryn Burke and VA Chapter Intern Scott Osborne

Meeting starts at 1:00 pm

**Please Join Us** in a beautiful setting between Harrisonburg and Staunton to learn of this year's accomplishments, and our future plans in your area. **If you cannot attend**, or are unsure please access the profiles of Board of Directors' nominees and a more complete agenda on our website, [vatacf.org](http://vatacf.org), to print and **return your proxy ballot to us at VATACF PO Box 158, Marshall, VA, 20116 by October 24**. Otherwise you may cut and enclose this proxy form, choosing Board candidates from among those nominated.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Member since \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I cast my vote for the following candidates for the VATACF Board of Directors on October 31, 2009.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_ or, I authorize the presiding officer to cast my ballot \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

## VIRGINIA CHAPTER INTERNS VITAL TO EXPANDING PROGRAM

Foundation's desire to restore a classic tree have in common?

increasing artistic luster. High on a hilltop in rural Castleview, a few miles southeast of Sperryville, the family the Foundation .

operas by American composer Samuel Barber.. Since 1998, Maestro Maazel has taken time each year from his guest conduct the National Symphony October 15-17.

children. She retains an enduring interest in healthy ecosystems and was immediately intrigued by the Virginia

As a result, the two foundations will collaborate Saturday evening November 14 to present a Chestnut Gala

Before a musical performance in their tiny jewel of a theatre, guests will be treated to an offering of chestnut

performing artists will be chosen and announced shortly on the website.

the mail. Guests are welcome. For an invitation contact us at 540 364-1922 or at

## Pollinations Are Success More Trees in More Places

2009 is the Virginia Chapter's third year of pollinations. Following two training sessions in Marshall, and a field training/open house at Lesesne State Forest by Forester and Virginia Board Member Wayne Bowman, 14 trees were pollinated using 20 pollens throughout an expanded range of trees in Fairfax, Fauquier, Greene, and Nelson Counties.

The bagging target date in the Fauquier County area was June 10, but was carried out from June 13th to the 16th. Pollinations were made June 23rd to 27<sup>th</sup>, with the exception of a Nelson County tree at high elevation bagged on June 27th and pollinated July 11th.

There were a total of 727 pollinated bags placed, including 662 Backcross, 38 Am.-Am., and 27 F1. It is hoped that 8 new lines from 7 trees, two lines completed from past years, and 4 partial lines (some of which are sibling lines) can be added to our inventory. Time and resources were not enough to include 6 new large accessible trees within a few square miles between Little Cobbler Mountain and Freestate Road in Fauquier County alone. Keep the above dates on your calendars for next year.



Special thanks go out to Bartlett Tree Experts, Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative, the ABC Tree crews of Dominion Virginia Power and the Rappahannock Electric Cooperative for providing crews and equipment during one of their busiest times of the year.

The nuts collected after harvest on September 26th, and the vital contributions of owners, staff, volunteers, and corporations are equal gauges of success.

This year, unopened burs will be processed Sunday October 4, before a Volunteer Picnic held at the state chapter office in Marshall.

### Fall Piedmont Virginian Features Chestnut Restoration

*The Piedmont Virginian, a quarterly magazine of all things interesting and unique about rural life in the Virginia highlands, is featuring the work of The American Chestnut Foundation in their current Fall issue, due out the end of September.*

*The magazine is published in Warrenton; and its Editor, Walter Nicklin of Amissville, was the founding editor of Mid-Atlantic Country, a much loved periodical that showcased the customs and stories of the whole region for nearly 20 years.*

*He graciously allowed me to tell our story, which I hope you will read and enjoy.*

**Deborah Fialka, Editor**

We increasingly depend on our [vatacf.org](http://vatacf.org) website to reach all our members and interested supporters throughout the state, particularly when timely updates to our Schedule of Events arises. This Fall we hope that all members who are unsure if they can attend the Annual Meeting will access the website to read our Board nominee profiles in full and send in a proxy by October 24 so your votes count.

## Board of Director Profile

**Mark Ohrstrom** - Interim Director, nominated for 3- year term, 2008- 2011



Mark Ohrstrom was caught early by trees. By the time the Larkspur Management CEO was 3, he was living in England on a Gloucestershire estate whose 200 year-old trees had been planted by the first Governor- General of India. So it was not quite by accident that he and his wife settled across the road from the State Arboretum at Blandy when he returned permanently to Piedmont Virginia. Inspired by threats to native species, he began to learn about and plant more trees.

When his growing family moved to Old Whitewood outside The Plains, the pastures looked bare, so Mark created a fenced nursery site along a stream to start whips of various native trees, and a few divergent species that caught his interest. To date, over 150 have been dispersed on the farm, to friends, and around a local low income housing development Mark has helped build.

Since Mark became aware of TACF's restoration efforts, he has funded renewed chestnut research at the Arboretum, allowing them to establish two backcross orchard sites with TACF in 2009.

Already one of the Vice-Presidents on the Piedmont Environmental Council's Board , Mark was appointed an Interim Director by the VATACF Board, until he is confirmed at the Annual membership meeting. Other candidate profiles will appear on our website, [vatacf.org](http://vatacf.org) in October. Please review them there.



THE  
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