



# Maine Chapter

## The American Chestnut Foundation



### A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Greetings Chest-nutters,

Much has happened since our last newsletter from Maine. *The Tree Urchinis* waking up after sleeping for a few issues, thanks to new Board member, Kate Briggs. THANK YOU Kate.

Those of you who receive the Chestnut magazine quarterly from national have seen some discussion on the major advances in genetic analysis and modification currently underway. The Board will have a special meeting at the end of June to discuss with our Regional Science Co-coordinator the Maine chapter's available options as the national organization proceeds with its 3Burr policy:

Breeding, Biototechnology, and Biocontrol United for Restoration.

National has scheduled a meeting in late July to present an update on these scientific advances and how they will be applied to our back-cross breeding program as well as to the New York Chapter/SUNY gene transfer tree. I believe we will also be updated on the progress this tree has made through the federal review process (USDA, EPA, and FDA). This meeting has been listed as invitation only due to space limitations. Up to four Maine Chapter directors will be going, and I will be one of them.

If you would like to learn more about what's going on or to express your opinion, please let us know through the website, by snail mail, or in person.

We have just planted 1,200 seedlings at Huff Hill in Hartland this past weekend. We plan to be at Viles Arboretum on July 7th, 9 to 11 AM, both the Common Ground and Fryeburg Fairs in September, and the Eastern

**Maine Sportsmen's Show at the UMO Field House in Orono in March, 2020.**

**In the meantime, planting and maintenance of both our back-cross and gene preservation orchards as well as our search for additional surviving American Chestnuts continue. We can always use help with these projects.**

**Al Faust**

---



**SUNY Chestnut Researcher Visits Maine**

**In mid-April, over several days, Dr. Allison Oakes, Ph. D., of the State University of New York's College of Environmental Science and Forestry visited with students and lectured at Unity College, the University of Maine Orono, and the University of New England. In addition, Dr. Oakes spent Saturday evening with METACF board members for a dinner in Brewer at the Piscataquis County Soil and Water Conservation District Association.**

**The focus of these presentations was research conducted by Dr. Oakes and her SUNY colleagues to create a blight-resistant American chestnut**

tree by inserting one gene from wheat, which is naturally blight tolerant, into the chestnut.

Oakes and her team are currently seeking approval from government agencies, including the United States Department of Agriculture, to make blight-tolerant chestnuts available for public dissemination.

---



## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

The Wild Chestnut Gene Preservation Committee needs volunteers this summer in the following two areas:

### **1. Germplasm Conservation Orchards**

If you live in the area of Dover-Foxcroft or Cape Elizabeth, we could use your help. We have 100 seedling orchards in these two towns in need of annual maintenance and planting. These seedlings are the offspring of wild Maine American chestnuts. We'll be working at these orchards soon.

If you can help our team, please contact Tom Klak:

Phone: 207-391-9496

Email: [tklak@une.edu](mailto:tklak@une.edu)

## 2. Finding Wild Chestnut Trees

We need your help in the Maine woods to follow up on some fifty wild chestnut tree location leads. We'll be bushwhacking, finding large chestnuts, recording data, cutting scion (fresh twig) samples for grafting, and putting these in a data bank reservoir of Maine chestnut DNA. Locating and marking the trees should be done this summer. Taking scion cuttings is done after the tree goes dormant. Next spring, we will graft these onto orchard root stock. If you would like to help out, please contact Roger Willby:

Email: [rwiredraw@aol.com](mailto:rwiredraw@aol.com)

Phone: 678-491-4515 (cell) or 207-647-3954 (home)



### SOME SAD NEWS TO SHARE

When Robert P. BaRoss passed away on April 8th, 2019, the Maine Chapter lost one of its oldest and most dedicated members. He joined in 1998, headed the wild chestnut tree location committee for our breeding program, and arranged for crews and bucket trucks to get up to tree tops, to pollinate them, and then to harvest nuts from these mother trees. He was right there at the beginning of our fledgling chapter and active right up thru 2018.

Bob's many friends and connections in Southern Maine furthered our capacity to locate wild trees. He arranged for us to have a booth at the Fryeburg Fair that

not only expanded the hunt for wild trees but also became a crucial springboard for getting new members. In addition, he graciously donated the use of their family retreat, the Christmas Tree Inn on Bridgton's Highland Lake, so we could work at the Fryeburg Fair and stay nearby. Recently he arranged for ceremonial chestnut plantings at Portland Head Light, Baxter City Park, Camp Pondicherry, and the Sprague Estate.

Bob's fuller [obituary](#) can be found in the Portland Press Herald. We will miss him and his love and enthusiasm for our Maine woods.



#### A PERSONAL REMEMBRANCE OF BOB FROM GLEN REA

I first met Bob BaRoss at the METACF year 2000 annual meeting in Poland Spring and was immediately taken "under his wing," as I knew of the Chadwick-BaRoss Company from my days as a forester at Great Northern Paper. Bob gently steered me through the ME chapter inner-workings and was always there to offer encouragement.

Bob not only had a special ability for working with people but also understood financial matters. He encouraged me to run for Chapter president in 2005. And when I was elected national TACF Chairman of the Board in 2009, he immediately got in touch to offer his support.

Bob advised me "to take care of the people and the finances"—and to let

the scientists do "their thing." While he never really understood the backcross breeding process, he explained, he did know how to run a company. Bob added a lot to the METACF, and I thank him for his guidance and mentoring. He will be missed.

---

## **MEET YOUR DIRECTORS Two New Members of Our Board!**

### **Hunter Manley**

I grew up in Southern Vermont and later Western Massachusetts as a teen but then attended the University of Maine Orono and decided that Maine is where I belong. While pursuing my Forestry degree, through Brian Roth, I started volunteering for the METACF, collecting wild seeds and planting orchards.

I now live in the Farmington on a little land of my own; after graduating in May, 2017, I started working for a consulting forester. I have worked for Peter Tracy of Maple Hill Forest-tree part time, serving small woodlot owners in Western Maine. As of the spring of 2018, I am now a fully licensed forester.

I have also branched out on my own: working for other foresters and landowners, as well as applying pesticides as a Certified Master Applicator. This work has included spraying our Maine Chapter chestnut orchards across the state to protect young trees from invasive insect pests. Hopefully I can help bring back chestnuts into the realm of forestry.

### **Kate Briggs**

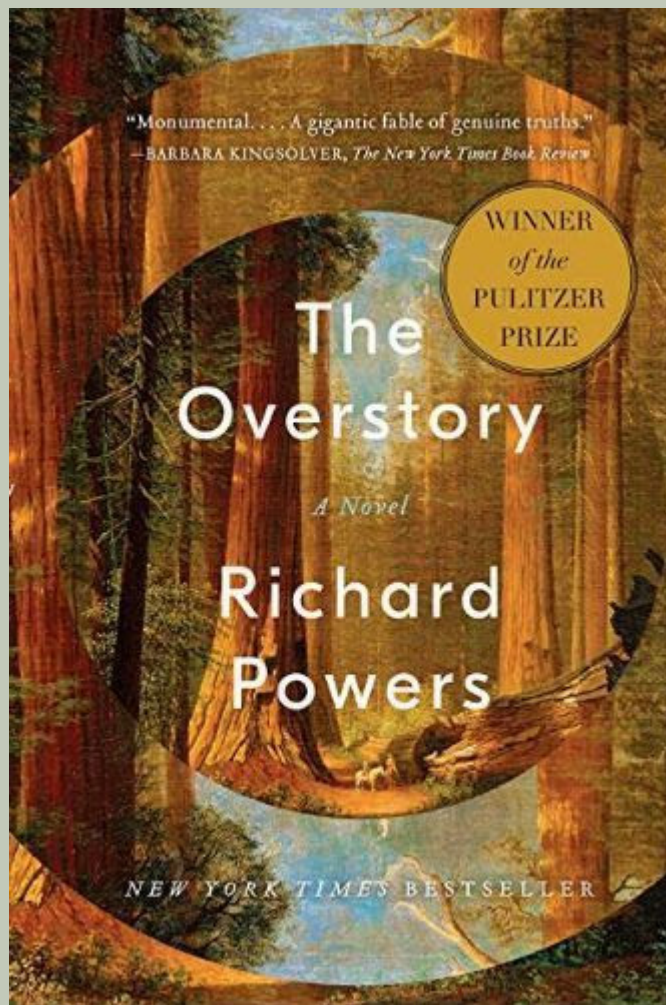
For the past twenty years, I have been an Associate Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Southern Maine, where I directed and supervised the undergraduate Honors Thesis research. My academic focus included Education as well as the Arts and Humanities with a particular focus on writing. If you would like to read some of my publications, they are available [online](#).

My love of trees comes directly from my father, who in the 1930s as a teenager worked for the Civilian Conservation Corps. Camping out in the Adirondacks, his job was to identify American elm trees that had to be eradicated because of the Dutch elm blight. Growing up in Connecticut,

weekend chores involved helping my father manage our woodlot, including two mammoth black walnut trees.

I first learned about American chestnuts fifteen years ago in a Portland Press Herald article. In the fall of 2017, I took Field Dendrology at the University of New Hampshire, joined TACF and attended the national conference in South Portland, then wrote an [article](#) about the Saturday chestnut restoration tour for the foundation.

I am really excited to be a member of the Maine Chapter Board. Please be patient while I master the intricacies of writing newsletters. I have a long way to go!



LOOKING FOR SUMMER READING?

Check out *The Overstory* by Richard Powers, which won the 2019 Pulitzer Prize

for Fiction. Thank you to Ann Rea for this suggestion.

"An ingeniously structured narrative that branches and canopies like the trees at the core of the story whose wonder and connectivity echo those of the humans living amongst them."