

Dear Friends,

The WV chapter of TACF has had a moderately busy year to date. We began with our annual spring meeting at Glenville State College with about 30 members in attendance. We discussed how to handle Randolph County property donated to the chapter by the Bolgiano family. Jimmy Jenkins surveyed the property and provided the chapter with valuable information. Rick Sypolt began the leg work to identify a hunt club that might be willing to help plant and maintain chestnut trees. Also discussed was seedling distribution to chapter members.

In early April, Robert Sypolt and Mark Double represented the WV chapter at the spring board meeting in Abingdon, VA. Mark serves as the current president of the WV chapter and Robert serves on the national education subcommittee.

In April, a dozen chapter members gathered at the greenhouse on the campus of West Virginia University to pot about 300 nuts that were shipped from TACF's farm in Meadowview. Working in three teams, the nuts were successfully potted in less than 2 hours.

The nuts were watered as needed and in about a month, seedlings emerged. The seedlings were then transferred outdoors behind the greenhouse so the tender shoots could acclimatize to the weather. In late May/early June, the seedlings were distributed to sites around the state. Robert Sypolt delivered many of the seedlings and Joe Golden and Peggy Burkhart picked up seedlings, packed diligently into their Subaru for distribution to members in southern WV.

Five volunteers gathered at the University Forest in Preston County in early May to transplant new seedlings into voids, weed the existing trees and spray herbicide to keep down grass and weeds.

In mid-June, a dozen volunteers gathered in Mason County at the Clements Tree nursery. The state tree nursery has two chestnut orchards that are used to produce seed that are grown into seedlings and sold to the general public. The orchards have many dead trees and invasive species and the volunteers, using chain saws and pruning tools, removed many dead chestnut trees along with invasive Hawthorne, Sumac and multiflora rose. Hopefully, the work of the volunteers will promote greater seed production in both chestnut groves.

A number of educational offerings were made this year. Presentations were made to the Harrison County Master Gardeners, Central Preston Middle School students, the WV Master Naturalist annual meeting, and to inmates at the Federal Corrections Institute in Morgantown.

Mark Double puts out newsletters about every 2-3 months to members of the WV chapter.

Finally, Dr. William MacDonald, Amy Metheny and Mark Double represented the WV chapter at TACF chapter's science meeting in Abingdon, VA. The biggest contribution that citizen scientists can do to aid in the breeding program is to locate and document native American chestnut trees. Native trees are needed to establish germplasm conservation orchards—simply put, orchards of native chestnut trees.

The WV chapter is thrilled to host its fall meeting at the Szilagyi Center in Rowlesburg. The Rowlesburg Revitalization Committee has been a great partner for the WV chapter, and we hope this relationship continues for many years. Please visit our website at: www.acf.org/wv. from Mark Double