



THE REGISTERED FORESTER

Winter 2010

FORESTERS, FRIENDS, FAMILY

Ralph Waldo Emerson (Essay: First Series) said, "The only way to have a friend is to be one." While having dinner recently with Jerry Schwarzauer, my friend offered me the opportunity to share some of my thoughts and observations.

In 1974 after finishing my time in the United States Navy, I joined a group of people studying forestry at Auburn University. We came from different backgrounds and for different reasons. I had decided that after being at sea, I would never be that far away from solid ground or trees again!

I started teaming up with the likes of Geno, Brummy, Griz, Jelly Roll, and J.C. to name a few. We went to class, got wet during lab, sweated cutting wood, drove Suburbans during summer tours, slept at CCC camps, and even played Jungle Rules volleyball (in hiking boots) between classes. We formed friendships that would last throughout our lives.

I hope the new generation can appreciate each other as much as we did. We still form a core group that tries to meet a couple of times each year for a winter camp and a summer camp to regenerate our souls with the brotherhood of comradery. As Hugh Kingsmill said, "Friends are God's apology for relatives." We tell jokes and learn of family successes, trials and sorrows.

We have lost some good friends from our forestry family in our current stage of life and meet to console one another over the loss. In our advancing age, we realize that life itself does seem more precious, along with our friends.

I had a recent brush with death and it dramatically changes your prospective on life. I reach out and greatly appreciate these treasured friendships that

have lasted over 30 years. The American Heritage Dictionary identifies a friend as a person with whom one is allied in a struggle or cause, a comrade. We all started as Foresters, became Friends and have ultimately become Family.

James Jim A. Morris, Jr. (aka Nemo)
Ala. R.F. #1009

IN MEMORIAM

*We remember our fellow foresters
who passed away in 2009*

Thomas R. Scott (Inactive)
Scottie O. Smith (#1366)
Earl A. (Bud) Truett, III (#999)

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ASBORF Annual Meeting Hosted by Alabama

The Annual Association of Southeastern Boards of Registered Foresters (ASBORF) meeting was hosted by Alabama on September 17th and 18th, 2009 in Fairhope, Alabama.

ASBORF membership is composed of Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Oklahoma. Pennsylvania also participated as a guest (their 11th year coming).

Issues addressed and topics discussed included online courses and CFE's with all states sharing information concerning their licensing process and state exams. Considerable time was given to Louise Murgia (representing SAF National), who spoke on the continuing education policy along with the Certified Foresters Exam.

The meeting was attended by four of our five current board members. Darrell Gates is the Association's incoming chair.

New Registered Foresters

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Foresters Granted Reciprocity in Alabama

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Not In *Anyone's* Backyard: Cogongrass

Stephen Pecot, Communications Director, Alabama Cogongrass Control Center

Invasives wreak havoc on Alabama's lands and waterways every year, and the problem is getting worse. Apple snails, kudzu, fire ants, zebra mussels, and hundreds of other invasive species can be found on properties that we foresters manage. In many cases, we've learned to "get by" with them. Strangely, some have become part of our southern heritage and even become jelly for our sandwiches. Of the invasive species found in Alabama, most wind their way through our landscape, affecting relatively small portions of the ecosystem. Some, however, have such an intense impact on the region that it affects our everyday business.

Cogongrass [*Imperata cylindrica* (L.) Beauv.] is the prime example of this type of invasive. For those in north Alabama, you may not have heard of or dealt with this highly invasive pest. Ask a forester in south Alabama about cogongrass and you'll likely hear some stories that you won't soon forget. It is a very real and expensive problem that takes its toll on every type of site where it establishes itself.

Cogongrass was accidentally introduced from Japan through Grand Bay, AL in 1912. Similar to kudzu, it was used in erosion and forage studies in the 1920's. It provided little to no wildlife value because of its finely serrated leaves and high silica content. It stayed primarily in south Alabama and Mississippi during the first half of the twentieth century. It began to spread aggressively as the interstate and highway system came of age and as farming and logging technology evolved. Today it is documented in nearly half of Alabama's counties.

Found in at least 9 states across the US and in 73 countries on every continent except Antarctica, cogongrass is a pest on over 1.2 billion acres worldwide. It is listed in the top 10 of the world's worst weeds. With its biological desert, cogongrass has decimated entire agricultural areas in western Africa and Asia. The danger is that cogongrass, left unchecked, will spread to *every* state and require intensive economic input to control and eradicate.

Cogongrass spreads through its seed in the spring but also belowground through a vast, dense mat of rhizomes. The rhizome network that extends slightly beyond the circular growth pattern is so thick that native plants cannot acquire enough water and nutrients to compete with it. Seeds caught in vehicle grills, rhizomes caught in tire treads and a vehicle's belly, and even fragments spread through mowing and road construction are some examples of how cogongrass spreads. In Alabama cogongrass is found on xeric

sandhills, within standing and flowing water, and almost everything in between. Because of its ease of spread through its rhizomes and white, dandelion-like seeds, it is certainly in many more corners of the state.

Fire liability is a substantial risk in areas infested with cogongrass. A cogongrass fire burns 400 degrees hotter than any native plant, including those found in the longleaf pine ecosystem. Cogongrass (even the fresh, green leaves) ignites within seconds, burns at an extremely fast rate, and its flames can extend many times above the height of the leaves. Put another way, cogongrass can kill a mature longleaf pine forest through fire alone.

Currently the best way to control cogongrass is through a judicious use of the herbicides glyphosate and imazapyr. These are the only herbicides on the market known to adequately control it. Repeated tilling is sometimes used in some new infestations. And unlike many plants, multiple herbicide treatments are required due to the dense belowground mat. Considering one stem could make as many as 300 new plants, one can see why the danger of exponential spread across our entire region is a very real threat.

Now that I have your attention, you will be pleased to know that the state is doing something about it. A 3-year, \$6.28 million grant was funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (otherwise known as the "Stimulus Bill"). Through the leadership of the Alabama Forestry Commission and the Alabama Cogongrass State Task Force, Larson & McGowin, Inc. was selected as the project coordinator in September 2009. Larson & McGowin, a forestry-consulting firm with headquarters in Mobile, AL, created the Alabama Cogongrass Control Center (ACCC) to administer the statewide program.

The ACCC is going to use several strategies in an attempt to control, mitigate, and even eradicate cogongrass on private, non-industrial lands. With input from a consortium of cogongrass experts across the state, we have devised a series of 6 programs. These include: eradication of cogongrass in Alabama north of US Highway 80; control and mitigation along high-threat routes south of it; a band of protection along the state's borders and Highway 80; assistance for underserved and limited income landowners; and protection of G1/G2 species and habitats. While the demarcation line may change through time, our intention is to create a cogongrass-free zone in northern Alabama and along the state's borders to lower the probability of the weed spreading to other

MAKE WAY FOR THE KING: THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT

Bryan Burhans, President and CEO
The American Chestnut Foundation

It almost seems impossible: a native hardwood tree that grows 30 to 50 percent faster than an oak and produces a reliable crop of nuts every year. And this tree would grow to an enormous size—sometimes 80 to 100 feet tall with trunks that measured 10, 12, and even 14 feet in diameter. This is a description of the American chestnut. Its native range once covered an estimated 900 million acres and represented nearly 25 percent of all hardwoods within its range. This tree grew to an immense size and it was often referred to as the “Redwood of the East.” Once thought a lost cause due to the chestnut blight that wiped this tree out by the mid-20th century, the American chestnut hopefully is on the verge of a dramatic return to our eastern forests.

The impact of the blight on the American chestnut was swift and lethal. The blight was first observed in 1904 in New York, and by the 50s, these trees were reduced from the dominant hardwood tree species in many eastern forests to a population that hung on to survival as small seedlings that sprouted from the root collars of stumps of trees killed by the blight. Today, you will find the American chestnut as a sapling or small tree, and some of these remnant trees will even bear fruit. While there are still some large surviving American chestnut trees, most of the ones that grow from these stumps will eventually be attacked by blight and die off.

A closer look at what chestnut offered wildlife as a food source provides us a good idea of some of the impact of the loss of the tree. First, chestnuts were a

very dependable food source for wildlife and produced nuts every year; oaks produce a bumper crop every five to six years. No doubt, this dependable production of nuts benefited many species of wildlife, especially deer, turkeys, and squirrels. American chestnuts also had a built-in mechanism to protect them from damage from a late freeze. American chestnuts flower in May and June when late hard freezes are unlikely. The first crop of flowers in the spring is preformed in the bud and can be frozen by the last spring frosts. The tree can then set a second crop of flowers. In contrast, oaks, with their determinate growth, do not set another crop and are more vulnerable to a late freeze.

Second, the American chestnut provided a food source that is higher in sugars and protein as compared to oaks. Oak acorns, for example, provide about 6 percent protein while chestnuts provided almost double this at 11 percent. The chestnut also is approximately 40 percent carbohydrate (sugar), making the chestnut a superior source of nutrition compared to acorns.

Finally, the American chestnut produced an incredible quantity of nuts. A mature chestnut tree could produce over 6,000 nuts. Oaks, on the other hand, produce from 300 to 1,000 nuts during a good year depending on the species.

The sheer volume of food that this tree provided to wildlife and people was dramatic:

I remember a tree in New Jersey whose trunk was so large

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properties and states. In south Alabama, where cogongrass infestations are as common as pine plantations, we will enroll as many landowners as funding allows and treat up to a maximum acreage per landowner. Project enrollment will begin in spring 2010; treatments will begin during the summer and early fall 2010.

The long-term goal is to create a management system using GIS and spatial tools that will outlive the life of this initial grant. Six million dollars, while a lot of money, will not go far to eradicate this “perfect weed” from our state’s landscape. Some estimates of

full eradication are 10-15 times that amount. But it is a start.

For more information, contact Ernest Lovett, Project Coordinator, at (334) 240-9348 (elovett@alabamacogongrass.com) or Stephen Pecot, Communications Director, at (251) 438-4581 (specot@alabamacogongrass.com). You can also visit our website (www.alabamacogongrass.com) for the most up-to-date information.

Stephen Pecot is a Forester and Environmental Specialist with Larson & McGowin, Inc.

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that three persons by taking hold of hands and stretching their arms could barely reach around it. In bearing years it produced bushels of nuts. One day some young friends shook off more than a bushel. The dinner bell rang before all were gathered and about half a bushel was left on the ground. When the young people returned after dinner for the nuts not one could be found. A flock of turkeys had just finished the last of them.

The Congregationalist, October 1896.

No doubt that wildlife of all sorts relished the nuts from the American chestnut tree. Unfortunately, the science of wildlife management started about the time when most chestnut trees were dead. The true impact that the loss of chestnut mast had on wildlife populations is unknown, but logic suggests that the loss of the American chestnut was a major blow to wildlife populations. Entire species disappeared as the American chestnut quickly succumbed to the blight.

After I'd been at Emory for eighteen years, I moved back up here, and I do notice a lot of difference in the presence [then], and the absence [now], of chestnut. First in the game. We used to be able to get turkeys and squirrels everywhere. I'm not certain that we had as many deer then as we do now, as you know deer forage on other things as well. But there were a lot more squirrels, and a lot more other types of game. Turkeys in particular. I remember getting five turkeys on one hunt. You just don't see that these days. There has been a noticeable decrease in game.

Dr. John Brown, "Memories of the American Chestnut," *Foxfire* 6

The future looks bright for the American chestnut. Hopefully within 10 to 15 years we will all be planting blight-resistant American chestnut trees on our properties. That will be a great day. Once again, the king will return to its rightful place in our forests.

About the American Chestnut Foundation

The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) with its army of passionate volunteers and partners has been working to develop an American chestnut tree that is resistant to the blight. Using a well-established back-cross breeding program, the Foundation has recently produced its first crop of blight-resistant nuts that will be used in test plantings on federal forestland under an agreement with the U.S. Forest Service. Scientists are currently evaluating the first generation of blight-resistant trees and anticipate that it will take another decade of testing and evaluation before these nuts will be available to the general public for restoration efforts on private land. While not available to the

RENEWAL REMINDER

The grace period for 2010 license renewal ends December 31, 2009. If you submitted your renewal but have not received your new ID card, please contact Alexis London immediately at 334-240-9301 to make sure the renewal was received and processed. Licenses not renewed by December 31, 2009 will be revoked. The board is required by law to send revocation notices to all non-renewing licensees, including those who, for whatever reason, intentionally allowed their license to lapse.

general public, the American Chestnut Foundation offers its members the opportunity to purchase seeds and seedlings as a member benefit. For more information about purchasing 100 percent pure American chestnut seedlings, visit the American Chestnut Foundation website at www.acf.org.

The American Chestnut Foundation

We need your help to restore the American chestnut! Become a member today and become part of the most exciting conservation mission ever undertaken. Visit our website at www.acf.org or call (828) 253-5373.

Tips on Planting American Chestnuts

- Select site with full sunlight.
- Select site that will allow mowing between trees to control weeds.
- Do a soil test: soil pH between 4.5 and 6.5; amend soil if needed.
- Select well drained soils, especially in the South.
- Plant groups of trees together so they can pollinate.
- Plant trees on roughly a 7-foot by 15-foot up to 10-foot by 20-foot spacing.
- You can either plant bare-root seedlings or plant the actual nuts.
 - If planting nuts, plant in late winter or early spring as soon as you can work the soil.
 - Plant nut one-inch deep. The nuts may have sprouted. Plant the sprout (called a radical) down in the hole and do not break the radical.
 - If no radical is present, plant flat side down.
- Protect seedling or nuts using tree tubes or wire mesh.
- Remember to manage weeds during the summer. Weeds compete for sunlight, nutrients, and water. Mow or use herbicides to manage weeds.

For additional planting tips, visit www.acf.org.

UPDATE YOUR ROSTER INFORMATION

Please take a moment to review your current roster information online at <http://asbrf.alabama.gov/rosterofforesters.asp>. To submit changes, fax the form below to 334-353-3641 or submit the online Change of Address form at <http://asbrf.alabama.gov/vs2k5/changeofaddress.aspx>.

Change of Address Form

Full Name _____ License Number: _____

Title: _____

Company: _____

Business Address: _____

Business City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ County _____

Business Phone: _____ Business Fax: _____

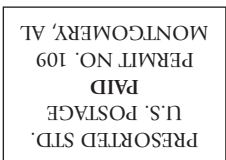
Business E-mail: _____

Home Address: _____

Home City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ County _____

Home Phone: _____ Home Fax: _____

Home E-mail: _____



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