



Forest Focus



Summer 2003

The purpose of Forest Focus is to provide the private forest landowners of northwestern North Carolina with information about their forests and the practice of forestry.

The American Chestnut: Is there a chance we can get it back?

Chris Miller

The American Chestnut, *Castanea dentata* was once a major component of the Appalachian forests. The American chestnut's range stretched from northern Florida to southern Maine and from the Atlantic coast to the Mississippi river. The majority of what remains today are large stumps and small stump sprouts. Fortunately, there are a few remaining larger trees that continue to produce fruit.

Chestnut was valuable species for both lumber and food. The trees were very large, averaging 5 feet in diameter and a hundred feet tall. The wood was lighter and more easily milled than oak. It was sawed into high quality lumber, which was highly decay resistant. The wood was used to frame houses, fence livestock, make furniture, and build musical instruments to name a few uses. Chestnuts produced an annual nut crop that was an integral part of the diet of many species of wildlife.

Hillside farmers allowed their livestock to roam the woods and fatten themselves on the chestnuts. Not only did animals love the nuts, humans did as well! Locals would fill their attics with bushels of the nuts every winter. These nuts were sold to northern and eastern cities as a cash crop. Vendors on the city streets would roast and sell these delicious treats, especially around the holidays.

It was estimated in the early 1900's that one in every four hardwood trees in the Appalachian forest was a chestnut, then disaster struck. The chestnut blight, a lethal fungus of Asian origin was brought over on imported Chinese-chestnut nursery stock into New York. This deadly disease spread rapidly, moving through the forest at a rate of up to 50 miles per year. By 1950 only a few trees were left alive. The chestnuts were thought to be lost forever.



However, through the work of The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) there is hope the chestnut will play an important part in our forests again. TACF is an organization that is seeking to return a blight-resistant American chestnut to the Appalachian forests. The TACF is accomplishing this through back crossing the American chestnut with the blight resistant, Chinese chestnut. The process has presently gone through four backcrosses and the trees produced have at minimum 94% American chestnut genes and a maximum of 97%. These progeny are being

intercrossed to maximize characteristics in three areas. The first being American chestnut traits, they want the tree to be all American with only the blight resistance from its Chinese cousin. The second is, of course, blight resistance. The final is the ability for the trees produced to survive in the wild.

TACF continues to search for chestnut trees that have the ability to fight off the blight and grow to mature sizes. They are used as mother trees and are pollinated with pollen from the backcross trees. This work is going on in our backyards. Ed Harrison of Mountain Resource Company discovered a tree here in Wilkes County. This tree was pollinated and fruit recovered in 2001. This tree is still alive although it is infected with the blight. This process allows TACF to produce chestnut seed that is more adapted to specific areas, like Wilkes County.

TACF also has a number of state chapters. The Carolinas Chapter is very active with a membership of approximately 400 people. The Chapter usually has two meetings a year. Between meetings, members spend time

locating mother trees, pollinating trees and planting trees. While helping the TACF research farm in Meadowview, VA they also hope to develop their own line of disease resistance chestnuts.

By joining and supporting TACF we as landowners can do our part to help return the American chestnut to its former glory. For more information please click on The American Chestnut Foundation logo at www.caseyandcompany.com or <http://chestnut.acf.org>. You can also reach them by phone at 802-447-0110.

Did you know? North Carolina's forests support the state's second largest manufacturing industry, the forest products industry, which employs 145,000 people and has an annual payroll of \$3.5 billion.

Source: North Carolina Forestry Association www.ncforestry.org



Why hire Casey & Company to sell your timber? W. Andrew Casey, ACF, RF

The best reason to hire Casey & Company is that we will make you money. This is based on my personal experience and also a research report prepared at North Carolina State University. The research paper prepared in 1993 showed that North Carolina landowners received an average of 23 percent more gross income if they hired a consultant than if they sold the timber themselves. I think this is borne out in recent timber sales Casey & Company Forestry has handled. Sale results from recent sealed bid sales we conducted follow:

Bids	Sale #1	Sale #2	Sale #3
1	\$65,280	\$56,790	\$108,975
2	\$58,000	\$51,786	\$76,287
3	\$56,650	\$51,708	\$55,240
4	\$41,610	\$39,400	

There are at least two ways to interpret these bid results.

1. The difference between the first bid and second bid in each of these sales more than paid our fees.
2. If you as a private landowner sold the timber yourself and were able to obtain a price equal to the average bid price on these sales you would still be better off hiring Casey & Company to sell your timber. In Sale # 1 the average bid would have been \$55,385. The difference between the average and the high bid is \$9,895. In Sale # 2, the average bid would have been \$49,921. The difference between the average and the high bid is \$6,869. In Sale # 3 the average bid would have been \$80,167. The difference in the average bid and the high bid would have been \$28,808. The difference between the average bid and the high bid exceeds our fee for handling the sale in all three examples.

If the bid results alone are not enough reason, some additional advantages for hiring Casey & Company Forestry to sell your timber are:

1. Our technical competence. We use a resource grade global positioning satellite receiver (GPS) to map sale boundaries. The GPS we use is specified to be accurate within 1 to 5 meters at each point. We combine this data in a computer mapping program with aerial photographs and topographic maps to provide the most accurate map possible.
2. Accurate timber volume estimates. Any forester's timber inventory is an estimate, but we use sophisticated sampling methods that require the use of handheld computers in the woods to obtain the most accurate inventory of your timber possible.
3. Relationships with buyers. Over the years we have developed good working relationships with area timber buyers. They have dealt with us in the past and know what to expect from us. In some instances, buyers have relied entirely on our volume estimates when bidding.
4. We represent your best interests in looking after your property. When setting up a timber sale we mark streamside buffers with paint and flagging to ensure loggers protect the creeks on your property. For

some types of harvests we even mark the location of each skid road to be used in a harvesting operation. Before logging starts we will walk the tract with the logger and discuss how the tract is to be logged. We will monitor the logging operation and keep you informed of the progress being made and any problems that arise. Written and photographic records of our inspections will be provided to you by mail or through our website.

5. We will notify your adjoining landowners about the sale after the sale boundaries are marked and before the sale is advertised. I have found this is a good way to learn about boundary line problems so they can be straightened out before any trees are cut. The notification is also a simple courtesy to your neighbors.

Call 336-838-5766 if you want to make the most money out of your timber.

Web Watch

We have just completed revamping our entire site, www.caseyandcompany.com. The goal of our site is provide you with a source of information about forestry, through articles we write and links to other sites useful to forest landowners. Provide a secure place to share information with individual clients, such as photographs and updates on ongoing projects, and management plans. Absentee landowners particularly like this feature. Our website also provides a complete listing and description of the services we provide.



Check out the article on the Giant Lumber Company for a historical look at logging in Wilkes County.

There are also several new links that we think are very interesting. They can all be found at www.caseyandcompany.com in the links section.

- Digital Grove– www.digitalgrove.net - Good site for those of you interested in doing your own computer mapping or using a GPS.
- Forestry Encyclopedia - <http://forestryencyclopedia.net/> – This site is being developed by the USFS and it has a wide range of information about forestry in the Southern Appalachians.
- Forestry and Natural Resources Desktop Reference Library - www.ces.ncsu.edu/nreos/desktop - This site is hosted by the N.C. Extension Service and provides good information about forest management in North Carolina.

Please e-mail us if there are other sites you have found helpful in managing your forestland.

Since 1941, the **FOREST LANDOWNERS ASSOCIATION (FLA)** has provided its members a voice on national and regional issues affecting private forest landowners. Some of the benefits you receive with your membership in the **FOREST LANDOWNERS ASSOCIATION** include...

THE FOREST LANDOWNER MAGAZINE

SEMINARS, CONFERENCES, AND WORKSHOPS

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

For more information or to receive a membership application, contact:

P. O. Box 450209 - Atlanta, GA 31145 - **1-800-325-2954**





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Inside this newsletter:

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Who are we?

Casey & Company Forestry is a consulting forestry firm. We assist forest landowners with managing all aspects of their forests. We provide landowners with forest inventories and appraisals. We conduct timber sales. We help develop and implement forest management plans. We also provide technical support with computer mapping systems, global positioning satellite (GPS) systems, and assistance with forest taxation. We also assist clients with purchasing and selling forestland.

Andrew Casey, ACF, RF

Graduated from N.C. State University in 1987 with a Bachelor of Science in Forestry. Worked in Wilkes County with a forestry consultant immediately after graduation, then went to work for Georgia-Pacific Corporation in Wake County, N.C. Moved back to Wilkes County in 1995 to work for a privately owned sawmill. Established Casey & Company Forestry on February 17, 1996. Currently living in North Wilkesboro, N.C.

North Carolina Registered Forester #798
Member Society of American Foresters
North Carolina Real Estate Broker #141025
North Carolina Licensed Pesticide Applicator

Member Association of Consulting Foresters
Society of American Foresters Certified Forester
Tree Farm Inspector
Member North Carolina Forestry Association

Chris Miller

Graduated from N.C. State University in 2002 with a Bachelor of Science in Forest Management. Worked with the N.C. State University Hardwood Research Cooperative while attending N.C.S.U. Interned with National Forest in North Carolina in the Summer of 2001 working on the Grandfather District of the Pisgah National Forest. Began work with Casey and Company Forestry in July of 2002. Currently living in North Wilkesboro, North Carolina.

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Member North Carolina Forestry Association

North Carolina Licensed Pesticide Applicator