

News Release

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For Immediate Release

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Planting of American Chestnut on the Wayne National Forest Ironton Ranger District

Pedro, OH – (May 1, 2008) The Wayne National Forest (WNF) Ironton Ranger District, in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service Northern Research Station (NRS) in Delaware Ohio, has recently completed the planting of 376 American chestnut tree seedlings.

American chestnut trees were very common in eastern hardwood forests prior to the onset of the chestnut blight. The few trees that have demonstrated resistance to the disease are now the genetic stock that makes up the 15/16 American chestnut. The remaining 1/16 is Chinese chestnut. As a result, the seedlings have the qualities of the American chestnut but with the disease resistance of the Chinese variety.

The trees were planted on approximately one acre of reclaimed strip mine located on the Ironton ranger district in Lawrence County. The road crew from the Allegheny National Forest removed the fescue layer from the planting site with an excavator. Forest Service employees used a tractor equipped with an auger to create the holes for the seedlings. Several inmates from the Federal Corrections Institute in Ashland, Kentucky assisted in planting the trees.

Boy Scout Troop #38 from Proctorville, Ohio came out on the weekend to stake the trees, place matting around them to prevent vegetation spread and to position tree tubes to add support and inhibit deer browsing.

The district is very excited to be involved in planting a disease resistant species on the Forest. The loosening of the sub-soil and the site preparation performed by all of the hardworking people involved provide every confidence that the trees will do well. With all hope, perhaps later this century, the American chestnut will once again be prolific on our landscape.

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