

CATS Membership Virtual Meeting
June 23, 2021 9:30 am
Attendance 41

President Barbara White welcomed all members.

Mary Spear, Education Committee Co-Chair, introduced today's speaker:

Dr. Christopher Barton is Professor of Forest Hydrology and Watershed Management in the Department of Forestry and Natural Resources at the University of Kentucky. He is also the founder and President of **Green Forests Work**, a program developed to improve the environment and economy of mined landscapes. Prof. Barton has been the recipient of several State and National awards and was recently awarded a Fulbright Distinguished Chair of Science, Technology and Innovation. For the Fulbright, he will spend 2022 in Queensland, Australia working on climate change mitigation through reforestation.

Dr Barton's presentation was titled "Bringing Back the Forest: Ecological Restoration in the Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia." He let us know that there are challenges for planting trees in Appalachia, an area with a history of disturbance. Coal mining has been going on in WVA for over a century, and more recently surface mining has included taking the tops off mountains. Over 1.7 million acres have been mined and then bond released and mining is still permitted on another .7 million acres. The soil has been altered and compacted so that water won't infiltrate and trees die. He calls it a state of "arrested natural succession" that won't recolonize without help.

He described the efforts of Green Forests Work to address the problems of low fertility, water and habitat issues, and the compaction of the soil. Various projects aimed to bring back streams and reforest. Through the Green Forests Work program, over 3 million trees have been planted on former coal mines in Appalachia and Australia and over 20,000 volunteers have participated. They have had projects in 8 states and Australia.

For the Monongahela National Forest project (Mower Tract Restoration, 2010-20) the volunteers left woody debris on the site, ripped up the soil with bulldozers, and created vernal pools. They planted a mix primarily of red spruce and a selection of other species. All this helped restore a habitat for brook trout and amphibians. By June 2021, they had planted over 600,000 native trees and shrubs and created over 1000 vernal pools and wetlands. Over 500 volunteers participated and the project has put \$4 million back into the local economy. His before and after photos clearly illustrated the progress that has been made. Financial help for GFW has come from the federal government, matched with donations from foundations, industry partners, and philanthropists. Prof. Barton emphasized the need for more tree seedlings and for support of the state-run nurseries, some of which are under threat of being closed down. For more information, see <https://www.greenforestswork.org/> and <https://www.1t.org/> for donation and volunteer opportunities.

Business Meeting

President's Report

Barbara White thanked Mary Spear for arranging this speaker so that we could hear about a success story. She reminded members that the CATS annual potluck picnic is scheduled for Saturday June 26 starting at 11:30 a.m. at Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Greenwood (7599 Rockfish Gap Turnpike). There is a 400-year-old White Oak on this property. There is ample parking and restrooms will be open. Kathy asked that member sign up in TIF.

Code of conduct: Barbara let members know that a brief code of conduct for CATS members has been developed from many sources: **CATS Members aspire to respect each other in words and deeds. Be responsible for your own actions. If misconduct occurs, please talk to the people involved directly to try to resolve the issues.**

Barbara reported that the Board had been working for some months on updating our organizational documents with the guidance of a past president Dorothy Smith. The revision of the Organizational Document has been completed, and two other past presidents, Jackie Vawter and Martha Orton, undertook to revise the Bylaws in accordance with the new document. The changes will be presented to the membership for approval at a future meeting.

She reminded members to get in their hours on TIF as they must be submitted by the end of June.

Treasurer's Report: Michelle Cormier

Checking Account	\$12,810.00
Money Market Account	\$20,132.00
Total Assets:	\$32,942.00

Communications: Penny Kaiserlian, Martha Orton

Fall Training Class: We have been promoting the class since May with registration opening on June 15. Class size has been limited to **32** so that the training team can manage the in-person sessions. A week after registration opened, we already have **25** people registered. So the class is nearly full after a week of registration, the fastest we have ever filled it. We promoted it through our monthly mailings to our public list of nearly 900 names. Also (thanks to Martha) Sean Tubbs has given us publicity through a public service announcement twice a month on his Charlottesville Community Engagement podcast. We continue to promote Tree Basics classes to our public mailing list.

Membership: Libby confirms we have **128** members. The revised membership list is now on the website in the Organization Library (requires password). We were not able to add any new

members in 2020 since the Training Class was cancelled, but we look forward to adding new members this year.

Projects: Kathy Nepote

Work projects this last month have been held at Ivy Creek, Greenleaf Park and Jackson Via Elementary School. There is so much work needed to remove invasives at Jackson Burley Middle School that goats were used. CATS has been asked to consult and advise at Jackson Burley. The CATS Grove in McIntire Park is getting quite a few visitors. A group of CATS have been taking inventory of the trees there and arranging a map by drone. As always, check TIF for any projects that could just pop up.

Education: Tim Maywalt, Mary Spear

The July membership speaker (7/28) will be Deborah Lawrence of UVA who will discuss the ways that trees alter climate at various scales from your backyard to the planet. Topic title: *The Role of Trees in Mitigating Climate Change.*"

Tim reports that he and Kathy Nepote will be the class coordinators for the new Training Class which will consist of a mix of virtual and in person field training sessions. He and Mary have sent out emails to members and an e-letter to the graduates of the recent 2018 and 2019 classes to ask for help with the small-group training sessions and other tasks to facilitate the fall class series.

Tree Basics: In September we will resume the live Tree Walks.

On July 20th Tom Wild will do his presentation to the public on restoring the American Chestnut
CATS members are welcome: sign up on the website at
<https://www.charlottesvilleareatreestewards.org/learn-about-trees/take-a-tree-steward-class/>.

Meeting adjourned 10:50 AM.