



FREDERICK CHAPTER NO. 1
THE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

Chapter Web Site: <http://www.frederickiwa.org>
Like Us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/frederickiwa>
Chapter Calendar: <http://www.frederickiwa.org/calendar.html>

NEWSLETTER

March 2025

President Michael Morgan	Vice President Tracy Hickman	Secretary Ronald Colbert	Treasurer Jim Stewart	Membership Secretary Ron Colbert
Board Member Hiram Escabi	Board Member Michael Money Penny	Board Member Preston Wood	Board Member Ben Kelkye	Board Member Vineet Kewalramani
Recording Secretary David Carlson				

Send submissions or articles for the newsletter to newsletter@frederickiwa.org. Let us know if you are not receiving the newsletter.

Important Dates

03 Mar – Conservation Committee Meeting, 6pm	17 Mar – St. Patrick’s Day
04 Mar – Conservation/Recreation Tuesday	18 Mar – Conservation/Recreation Tuesday
09 Mar – Youth Group Practice, 12:30pm	23 Mar – Youth Group Practice, 12:30pm
11 Mar – Conservation/Recreation Tuesday	25 Mar – Conservation/Recreation Tuesday
11 Mar – Social Committee Meeting, 5:15pm	25 Mar – Frederick County Sportsman Council Mtg 7pm
11 Mar – Board Meeting, 6:30pm	28 Mar – Range Prioritized for Clay Target Shooting
11 Mar – Membership Meeting, 7pm	29 Mar – SOS Stream Water Testing @ Ballenger 10am
14 Mar – Range Prioritized for Clay Target Shooting	31 Mar – SOS Stream Water Testing @ Bush Creek 10am



The award-winning Frederick #1 Chapter Youth Group discussing shooting techniques on a beautiful day at the Chapter range.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS NEWS

Conservation/Recreation Tuesdays

The Board would like to remind members of a rule change regarding use of the gun range to prioritize use of Chapter property for conservation and outdoor recreation purposes on Tuesdays:

Use of the IWLA Frederick #1 Chapter property on Tuesdays for conservation and outdoors recreation will have priority over use of the gun range. The gun range may be used on Tuesday if the property is not currently being used for conservation or outdoor recreational use, but the gun range must be closed when members wish to use the property for conservation or outdoor recreational purposes.

Board Meetings

The Frederick Chapter Board of Directors meets the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm just prior to the regular Membership Meeting. Members are welcome and encouraged to observe these open meetings which address the business of the Chapter but take care not to disrupt the meeting. Members may bring up any issues they may have during the Membership Meeting directly after the Board meeting.

CONSERVATION NEWS

['America's tree' is missing. Will we do what it takes to bring it back?](#)

Genetic modification is the only credible path to restoring the blight-wracked American chestnut.

Bruce Beehler
February 18, 2025
Washington Post, Op/Ed



Largest chestnut in Greenbrier, 1935. (Courtesy of Great Smoky Mountains National Park Archives)

This fall, I went hiking on [Sugarloaf Mountain](#), about 30 miles northwest of the District. Parking near the base, I came upon an experimental planting of American chestnut trees. Then, hiking up the mountain, I found an American chestnut sapling in the forest proper. This was a sprout sent up from old chestnut rootstock that survived underground after the parent tree was felled many decades earlier by the chestnut blight fungus: [Cryphonectria parasitica](#).

The sapling I encountered looked healthy and sported a full complement of handsome serrated leaves that were just beginning to turn their glowing autumnal yellow. But this treelet was too small to produce the delicious nuts memorialized in Nat King Cole's "Christmas Song." Such regrowth saplings are killed by the blight before they reach reproductive age.



A ghost forest of blighted chestnut in Virginia's Shenandoah National Park. (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division)

Encountering this young chestnut made me wonder about science's effort to bring back "[America's tree.](#)" The world's nine species of chestnuts range from Europe and North America to East Asia. The pathogen that killed off the American chestnut [arrived in New York City](#) before 1900, carried on Japanese chestnut saplings imported by horticulturalists for commercial sale. The blight spread inexorably through America's eastern

forests, a natural catastrophe peaking during the Great Depression, when nothing seemed to be going America's way. By mid-century, nearly every one of the 4 billion mature American chestnut trees in existence had fallen to the ground. Their rootstock, hiding underground, lingered, like unseen ghosts, but the species was functionally extinct.

The United States had lost its most valuable deciduous forest tree. Before the blight, the American chestnut was the dominant tree in hardwood forests from Maine to Missouri and Mississippi. A mature tree in a favorable location in a well-watered upland valley of the southern Appalachians could grow over 100 feet tall, with a handsome, thick-barked trunk four or more feet in diameter and a spreading crown of rich green leaves that in spring displayed an abundance of male catkins, bearing fragrant white flowers. Every autumn, such a mature tree would produce a crop of several thousand tasty nuts. The species also offered timber for house construction, furniture, flooring, paneling, shingles, fence rails, boxes and barrels. Unlike oak, the wood was light and easy to work. It was also rot-resistant and thus long-lasting. Moreover, the timber made good paper pulp, and its bark possessed a valuable extract used to tan leather.

[Historically](#), the chestnut's abundant nut crop was an important source of nutrition for rural families throughout the east (as it had been for the eastern woodland Native Americans). Hogs and cattle were fattened on nuts in autumn. Even today, thousands of local places' names include the word chestnut to remind us of the overwhelming importance of this species to our culture. The chestnut also was fundamental to the

eastern forest ecosystem, its autumn mast feeding white-tailed deer, black bears, eastern gray squirrels, fox squirrels, passenger pigeons and wild turkeys. The loss of the chestnut meant fewer game-rich meals for rural subsistence communities.



Caroline Shelton Walker and children pose with a large chestnut tree sometime around 1915 in Tennessee's Great Smoky Mountains National Park. (Courtesy of Great Smoky Mountains National Park Archives)

oxalate oxidase, which denatures the main biochemical threat from the blight: oxalic acid. In a world of blight, no American chestnut can survive without the help of one or more foreign genes.

Genetically modified organisms are controversial in a way that selective breeding — which is a kind of analog genetic modification — is not. Groups that oppose the release into nature of GMOs say such lineages might pose a threat to our forests, via the uncontrolled spread of introduced genes, and prevent the world from ever having an “authentic” or

From almost the moment the blight began, efforts were made to defeat it — first to save [those billions of standing American chestnuts under dire threat, then to restore the species](#) to its rightful place in our forest lands. Arborists and plant scientists have been carrying out selective breeding and hybridization using various chestnut species since the 1920s to create a blight-resistant American chestnut. The [American Chestnut Foundation](#) was founded in 1983 to expand this effort. And yet, a century of effort to breed a disease-resistant chestnut using traditional methods has stubbornly remained a work in progress. Enter the cutting-edge science of [genetic modification](#). Molecular [research teams have devoted decades](#) to creating a transgenic American chestnut. This required first identifying how the fungus attacks the chestnut's biochemistry and then searching for genes from other plants that might block that biochemical attack. Their latest creation, [Darling 58](#), includes a wheat gene that encodes for



*A young American chestnut tree grows in a field in Syracuse, New York, in 2022.
(Lauren Petracca for The Washington Post)*

“pure” American chestnut. The debate between the pro- and anti-GMO camps is long-standing. However, whatever tools are used to create a blight-resistant chestnut — GMO or traditional — the new lineage will include genes from other species and will not be a “pure” American chestnut. Moreover, traditional breeding can produce its own unwanted genetic outcomes that harm a lineage’s long-term viability.

Molecular biologists at the Smithsonian Institution tell me that [GMO technology](#) is the credible route to getting the American chestnut, or something that looks and tastes like an American chestnut, back into our woodlands. (One colleague rhetorically asked: “Would naysayers object to a GM fix for a deadly disease in humans?”). A genetically modified chestnut offers us a rare opportunity to repair a terrible environmental loss.

Approval for experimental release of a GMO chestnut into the wild must be granted by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Agriculture Department. Progress toward that end, however, has [recently been roiled](#) by a lab error that led to the distribution of an inferior GMO lineage, which caused the American Chestnut Foundation to [withdraw its support](#) of the gene-modifying effort involving the Darling strain, currently the most promising genotype. Scientists supportive of the molecular effort say the Darling 58 chestnut is a good start but that more genetic modification, crossing, planting and field-testing will be required to produce a diverse suite of chestnut genotypes that can prosper in the varying environmental conditions across the species’ wide range.

Regardless, once a series of disease-resistant and hearty genetically modified American chestnut lines has been cleared for release, the real challenge will be to [get these trees onto the landscape](#). Decades will be required to reseed our forests. But, no doubt, the GMO route will be substantially faster than that offered by the traditional methodology.

We may think we know what a “natural” eastern forest looks like, but the woodlands we see today are shaped by the population declines of the chestnut, American elm, white ash, eastern hemlock and American beech — all the result of exotic pathogens introduced unwittingly by humans. As an important first step to restoring our eastern forests, bringing the American chestnut back — or something as close to it as we can — is a task worth undertaking. Federal agencies should expand their investment in this groundbreaking enterprise. A successful reintroduction will pay rich dividends. I hope my

granddaughter Zadie will be able to collect and roast chestnuts from Sugarloaf Mountain's forest by the time she has grandchildren of her own.

CHAPTER CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Our Chapter is dedicated to supporting the Izaak Walton League's [Mission Statement](#): "To conserve, restore, and promote the sustainable use and enjoyment of our natural resources, including soil, air, woods, waters, and wildlife."

Our monthly Conservation Committee meetings are normally held the first Monday of the month; all Chapter members are welcome to attend. Our next meeting is Monday April 7, 2025, at 6pm.

Save Our Streams (SOS) Water Testing



Our Frederick #1 Chapter Save Our Streams program now has two separate teams monitoring streams monthly on Saturdays and Mondays. If interested in participating, contact Stephen Meyer at stephen.meyer7@gmail.com. Conservation credit is given for working on either team. You can find SOS test dates, and other events, and locations on our [Chapter calendar](#).

The 2025 [Save Our Streams](#) (SOS) season will begin with chemical water testing conducted at Ballenger Creek, Saturday March 29th and Bush Creek on the [Gambrills Mill section of Monocacy Battlefield](#), Monday March 31st.

If you have ideas for conservation projects or would like to participate in our conservation programs, please contact the Conservation Committee at iwlafred1conservation@gmail.com.

If you would like to participate in Chapter Conservation Committee activities, please attend our monthly Conservation meeting at the Chapter. Our next meeting is Monday April 7, 2025, at 6pm.

CHAPTER EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

The [full schedule of courses](#) conducted at the Chapter Clubhouse is posted on the Chapter website. Proceeds from training classes support the Frederick#1 Chapter Youth Program. Contact Ben Kelkye (ben@kelkye.com) if you have any questions about the schedule or courses.

Below are Hunter Safety courses offered at the Frederick #1 Chapter for 2025 as of this posting.

March 13, 14 and 15	Classroom
April 5	Online
May 3	Online
June 5, 6 and 7	Classroom
July 5	Online
August 2	Online
August 23	Bow hunter
September 25, 26 and 27	Classroom
October 4	ML
October 18	Online
December 1	Online

Date	Start Time	End Time	Course	Cost
Contact Ben Kelkye to schedule an appointment. Cell: 301-401-6262 Email: ben@kelkye.com				
<i>By Request Only</i>	<i>Appointment</i>	<i>Only</i>	<i>Wear and Carry - 16 Hour Class for new applicant - MD or DC</i>	<i>\$275.00</i>
<i>By Request Only</i>	<i>Appointment</i>	<i>Only</i>	<i>Renewal - 10 Hour Class - MD or DC</i>	<i>\$225.00</i>
<i>By Request Only</i>	<i>Appointment</i>	<i>Only</i>	<i>MD & DC - Wear and Carry - 16 Hour Class for new applicant</i>	<i>\$415.00</i>

AROUND THE CHAPTER

Let us know what you are doing. Send any submissions to newsletter@frederickiwla.org

IWLA Frederick #1 Weather Station

Our Frederick #1 Chapter has a new weather station resource installed by Brian Algots on our Chapter Clubhouse. The data display is located inside the Clubhouse in the classroom. There is an application members can use to access this weather information which is handy to have before heading to the Chapter Clubhouse. The app, Ambient Weather Network, can be downloaded on your phone from any app store. Once downloaded, search for our Chapter weather station:

IWLA#1, Frederick, MD

This weather app will also allow you to download weather feeds from other sources.



Heavy Arms and Final Round Incentive Drive Youth Group Practice, February 23, 2025



After a spell of cold weather weeks, the sun finally broke through on February 23, 2025, and the Frederick YHEC youth team was able to move their Sunday practice outside.



Twelve youth team members participated and practiced off-hand rifle shooting with 22LR caliber firearms at a 25 yard distance. Head coaches Ben Kelkye and Michael Moneyppenny and assistant coaches Brian Algots, Jesse Benton, David Cruzan, Vineet KewalRamani, and Duane Ausherman provided oversight.



Coach Benton also prepared a delicious meatball and spaghetti lunch using the club kitchen during the team's break period.

Arms were getting heavy near the end of the 4-hour practice, so Coach Kelkye incentivized the final rounds of rifle shooting challenging the youth team members to put the majority of their shots in different selected diamonds on their paper targets.



Suddenly arms no longer felt like jelly, and students renewed focus on their mechanics and execution.



While no youth team member walked away with the grand prize of \$5, five youth team members shot well enough to earn \$1 from Coach Kelkye placing ten rounds in a racquetball sized area. Making money off Coach Kelkye is no easy chore, so students might hang on to their prizes as a memento.



New youth team members are always welcome to join the chapter's YHEC team. Their guardians can get in touch with Coach Kelkye, often called Coach Ben by the youth team members. The club will provide needed equipment for new youth team members, and they do not need to have a guardian that is a member of the club to join. Guardians must be present during practices, and youth participants need to demonstrate safe handling of archery equipment and firearms after training.



Practice season runs from late August to mid-June. Other than a holiday break in December, practices are typically held on the second and fourth Sundays of the month from 12:30 to 4:30pm. Practices are now held weekly in preparation for the annual Maryland Youth Hunter Education Challenge held in the later part of June.

Lunch is provided midway during the practices by participating families on a rotation. The next practice will be on Sunday, March 9, and will also be a rifle practice, weather permitting, focusing on sitting and prone shooting positions. Current team members are

reminded to bring shooting mats, foam sleeping bag mats, yoga mats, or sections of tarp to use in case the grounds are wet.

CLASSIFIEDS / WANT ADS / NEEDS AT THE CHAPTER

Send any submissions to newsletter@frederickiwla.org

Newsletter Requesting Photos and Chapter News



Photos wanted of Chapter clubhouse and grounds, Chapter activities, shooting sports, and conservation programs to be used for marketing and recruitment. The newsletter is looking for content. Please send to newsletter@frederickiwla.org.

Get Your Chapter T-Shirt



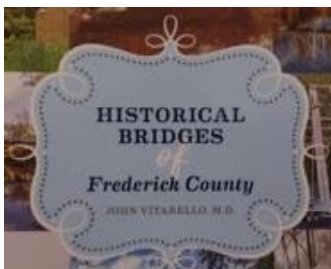
Get your new IWLA Frederick Chapter 100th Anniversary shirts, official swag and uniform for Frederick Chapter events. These heavy cotton quality shirts are \$15. Shirts are currently sold at the Clubhouse and Membership meetings.

Nature Outings



Please let us know what you are doing in the outdoors, enjoying nature, and being a champion and defender of the nation's soil, air, woods, water, and wildlife. If you would like to participate in nature outings, please let us know at newsletter@frederickiwla.org.

Historical Bridges Book For Sale



On sale at the Clubhouse is the book *Historical Bridges of Frederick County*, written by Frederick Chapter member Dr. John Vitarello containing 99 pages of photographs coupled with information about each of the bridges and their connection to Frederick County's history. There are also driving, bicycle and fishing tour routes included to aid readers who will be inspired to seek out the bridges themselves. Each book is \$20. Purchase

of each book helps fund the Frederick Chapter's conservation programs. According to Dr. Vitarello, "Individuals, service groups and charitable organizations alike have made an everlasting favorable impression on me to the point that I want to dedicate this book to local Frederick charities." Books can be purchased at the Frederick Chapter clubhouse. Please see Ben Kelkye.