



EDITORIAL

**DEBORAH GANGLOFF
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

History + Change = Future

By knowing our history we can successfully move into the future.

**AMERICAN FORESTS
is an organization
with a unique
history,
now entering its
135th year of
policy advocacy
and conservation
action.**

It is said that the more things change, the more they stay the same. But I never believed it. History is past. Change looks forward, rearranging things for a new order. There's a lot about change in this issue of AMERICAN FORESTS. Thanks partly to the recent United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, our changing climate is the focus of debate and media coverage everywhere one looks. AMERICAN FORESTS has been a leading advocate of the role of trees and forests in helping counteract the effects of climate change. Astute members have already started calling AMERICAN FORESTS to ask what trees to plant in light of a warming environment. In these pages, Cristina Santiestevan begins the dialogue to answer this tricky question as she details the changes to our forests that climate change will bring.

Change can be good or bad. The loss of the iconic American chestnut tree, once estimated to have made up three-quarters of the eastern forests, was bad; its rebirth is very good. Tom Horton heralds the return of the mighty chestnut to the American landscape with a triumphant call to action for each of us to do our part in saving this most valuable and symbolic species by planting new chestnuts for today and for tomorrow.

Like the chestnut, many ancient tree species - some of which remain with us today, like the graceful ginkgo and the recently discovered Wollemi pine - survived massive change along with other flora and fauna. Whit Bronaugh takes us back millennia to witness change on a grand scale. It's fascinating to hypothesize how the megafauna of North America exploited the vegetation of the time, and how that vegetation survives today with its unique adaptations intact.

AMERICAN FORESTS is an organization with a unique history, now entering its 135th year of policy advocacy and conservation action. Over our many decades of existence, we have also experienced change, both good and bad. The science of forests is better understood with each passing year, and our programs and policy outreach have been

tuned and refined to reflect our growing understanding of the emerging science of trees and forests. For instance, while we've done well to remember the vital role of forests in protecting and cleaning drinking water, we have also learned about forests' role in cleaning our air. And we've changed our forest fire strategies to recognize the role of fire in maintaining healthy forests.

When I arrived at AMERICAN FORESTS in 1982, I worked on our new program area, Urban Forests. Eminent forest historian and Gifford Pinchot colleague Henry Clepper, who was volunteering for AMERICAN FORESTS at the time, had identified urban forests as the newest emerging issue in the forestry arena. AMERICAN FORESTS assumed leadership of the urban forest movement, and today continues to contribute to the evolution of the science and practice of urban forestry. In the 1980s I was fortunate enough to be a part of the design and implementation of what has become our flagship program: Global ReLeaf. Helping people improve the environment by planting and caring for trees, Global ReLeaf has grown so much that we were able to support the planting of over 4 million native trees in 2009 to restore damaged forest ecosystems.

People change too. After nearly three decades at AMERICAN FORESTS, the last dozen or more as executive director, I recently told our Board of Directors of my intent to move on to the next phase of my career. I've enjoyed every triumph and challenge of my many years here, but look forward to new adventures. Many years of hard work by our staff have improved our standing in the conservation community, as well as our financial stability. AMERICAN FORESTS is poised to mark its 135th birthday with new leadership and new commitment from its Board of Directors and staff. I want to thank every one of our readers, members, sponsors, and partners who have helped to make my tenure here the wonderful experience it has been. I know that this new change, together with AMERICAN FORESTS' long and prestigious history, promises a bright new future for America's oldest conservation group and the people it serves.