

**File Code:** 3400 (8892552)

**Date:** July 26, 2023

Mr. Tyler Schwartze  
Executive Director  
Conservation Federation of Missouri  
728 West Main  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Dear Director Schwartze:

Thank you for your letter of March 14, 2023, to U.S. Department of Agriculture Chief Randy Moore, regarding conservation interests in Missouri. Chief Moore has asked me to respond.

We appreciate your recognition and support for the restoration of the Ozark chinquapin. We are committed to support conservation efforts of various tree species to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

We agree that the Ozark chinquapin is an important tree. Our Forest Health Protection branch actively works with others on forest conservation and restoration. It may interest you to know a genetic conservation project has been approved this year that would collect American chinquapin and chestnut seeds for preservation. Additionally, we continue to support the development of resistance to white pine blister rust, Dutch elm disease, Port Orford cedar root disease, Koa wilt, and chestnut blight, to name a few. We acknowledge that success of these efforts depends on public support and collaboration from groups such as the Conservation Federation of Missouri. We appreciate your interest in working together toward conservation.

Again, thank you for writing. If you have further questions, please contact me at (703) 605-5332 or richard.cooksey@usda.gov.

Sincerely,



RICHARD A. COOKSEY  
Director, Forest Health Protection

