

# Florida *Torreya* Relocation Project

Along the *Universe Story Walk*  
At  
Stovers' Sèjour  
in Greensboro, North Carolina



For further questions about this project, contact Nelson Stover  
[NStover@EmergingEcology.org](mailto:NStover@EmergingEcology.org)  
phone (336) 605-0143

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An initial planting of 30 Florida *Torreya* seeds was completed in mid-November 2013 along the ½-mile Universe Story Walk trail in 5 acres of upland woodland across I-73 from the Piedmont Triad International Airport in Greensboro, NC. The first autumn photographs (with **brown borders**) in each section of this report were taken during the original planting. cursory examinations during 2014 showed no indication that any seeds had germinated. During an inspection tour in November 2015, six plants were noted and reported to Connie Barlow.

In May 2016, Nelson Stover and Michael Dowd conducted an in-depth examination of all planting locations. Three documentable plants were photographed – these are included in this report with **light green borders**. The following day, in brighter sunlight, Nelson returned to the two sites in the valley. There he discovered the nubs of three additional plants. These are the ones found in November 2015 but not the following May. It appears that the leaves of these three plants were eaten by deer or other small animals which are prevalent in the woods.

In November 2016, Nelson and Elaine Stover revisited all the planting sites. This report has been updated to include their findings; the photos have **yellow borders**. Ten of the 30 seeds had sprouts that remained visible; a germination rate of 1 in 3. During this audit, a grid was placed behind each seedling to show its size. The boxes on the grid are 2" wide and 3" tall.

During the May 2017 survey of the plantings, the same grid was used to photograph the trees (shown here with **dark green borders**). One of the valley plantings was re-found. Thus, the total of visible growing trees has increased to 11 out of the original 30 seeds. In addition, during this inspection, any vines and overhanging trees were removed and wood chips were put around each seedling. Finally, a marking stake was installed near each tree to mark its exact location and to prevent accidental damage by people using the trail.

This report includes photos from November 2013, May 2016, November 2016 and May 2017. Some notes about specific disturbances to particular sites are also noted where applicable. In each of the original planting photos, Elaine Stover is holding a small trowel which shows the exact location of the planted seed. The Universe Story Walk at Stover's Sèjour consists of 20 markers spaced at 100' intervals through a wooded area – these represent the billion-year history periods of the history of the Universe with six additional signs in the final billion years.

The marker for 14¾ billion years lies at the bottom of a small valley. The tree canopy covering this valley was decimated by a tornado in 2008. The stream which had its headwaters at a spring near the marker has been dry since the cut was made for the nearby highway (I-73) in 1994. However, the fertile ground in the valley does collect water from the neighboring higher ground. In this area, two clusters of 5 *Torreya* seeds each were planted. Some of the initial sprouts in these clusters can no longer be found. The photos of these areas are shown in the following pages after the 14½-year marker and are labeled "Valley South of the Trail" and "Valley North of the Trail".

In late 2015, an additional 20 seeds were planted on the same property. No photos were taken during the planting of these seeds. Periodic general observations have concluded that none had germinated by May 2017.



**Marker 0** – located near the front of the Stover’s house.

Three large pine trees just to the left of this planting became infected with pine bark beetles in the fall of 2015. The trees had to be cut down. The area was repurposed as a sitting area and fire pit after the trees were removed and the yard was fenced in for the dog. The exact location where the *Torreya* seed was planted is still visible (see photo below right), but is not well protected.



Photo left: original planting, Nov. 2013.  
Photo below: repurposed area, May 2016 (note, 6x6 off-cuts at right are the center of the original photo).



Below: May 2017 photo showing fully planted “Anniversary Garden”. *Torreya* seed is in the approximate center of the photo under about 6” of dirt.



Marker 0 has been relocated and no *Torreya* seed is located near this new marker.



## Marker 1



Note: due to a realignment of the trail this marker was moved 10' south; the tree seed was not adjusted.

## Marker 2

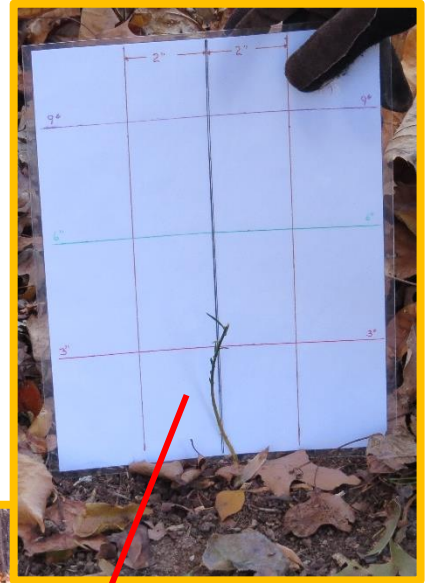






**Marker 3**

This seedling had become visible by November 2016.



Additional small branches appeared by May 2017.





## Marker 4



Left: Nov. 2013

Below: Sprouting, Nov. 2015,  
hands of Elaine Stover.



Note: This marker is located just to the west of the driveway into the Stover Sèjour. This is at the lower end of a sloping property with trees to the south and an open area to the east and north.





Photo above: Michael Dowd with tree at Marker 4, May, 2016.

Photo right: Tree enlarged, hands of Michael Dowd.





Below: Tree at Marker 4 stands about 6" tall by Nov. 2016



Below left: Tree with sizing grid (May 2017)

Below right: Tree from above showing branching and new growth





## Marker 5

Right: Original planting

Below: Visible seedling, Nov. 2016.



Bottom: Growth by May 2016

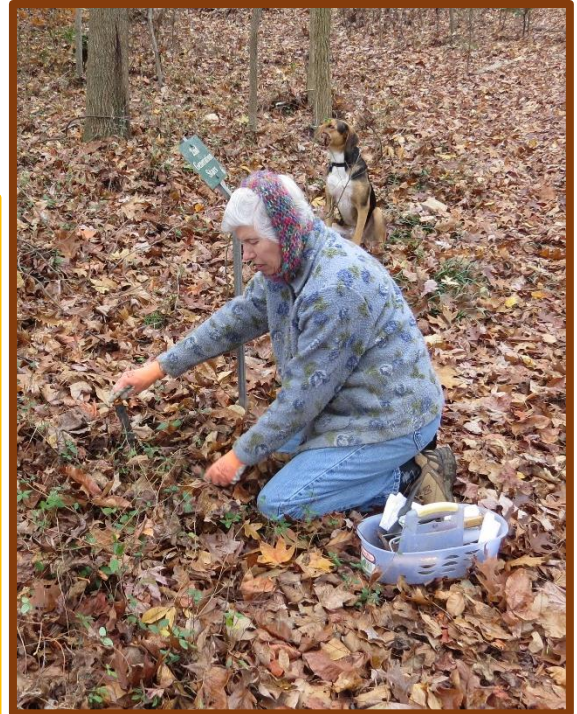




## Marker 6

Right: Original planting location.

Below: Seedling in Nov. 2016.



Bottom: Growth by May 2017





**Marker 7**



**Marker 8-9**





**Marker 10**



**Marker 11**





## Marker 12



## Marker 13





## Marker 14



Note: Relative to the other markers, numbers 10 – 14 are on the highest ground, these seeds are mostly among hardwoods.



**Marker 14¼**

Right: Original planting

Below: Seedling in Nov. 2016



Below: May 2017





## Marker 14½



Note: Behind Elaine the ground slopes into the valley which was hit by a tornado in 2008. The “valley plantings” are down and to her right.



## Valley, North of Trail



Above: Planting area for 5 seedlings in 2013

Below: Same location in May 2017; red line connects the pole at the center of the five plantings, green stakes to left of pole indicate seedlings





Two trees were found in May 2016. During the survey of November 2016, three trees were found in the cluster of seeds planted north of the trail. All three trees had grown further by May 2017, as shown in photos groups that follow

Left: Michael Dowd with larger of two trees, May 2016

Right: Same tree in November 2016



Below: This is the front tree in the cluster shown in group photo – May 2017





Left: Second tree in this cluster, May 2016

Right: November 2016

Below: May 2017 – this seedling is at the back of the group photo





Top: Third tree growing north of the trail in the valley

Bottom: Same tree in May 2017, this tree is on the side of the cluster shown in group photo





## Valley, South of Trail

Above: Planting area for cluster of 5 seeds south of main trail in the valley. Rocks were placed near each seed location around a central pole.



Below left: Possible nub of tree, apparently eaten between November 2015 and May 2016. No signs of these trees were observed in Nov. 2016 (this may be a favorite deer sleeping place).

Below right: Revitalized seedling May 2017





## Marker 14¾



Above: Original planting site.

Below left: Seedling in Nov. 2016.

Below right: May 2017





**Marker 14.9**



**Marker 14.99**





## Final Marker

Right: Original planting.  
(The Stover's house is  
20' in front of Elaine at  
this point in the trail.)

Center: Seedling during  
November 2016

Bottom right: Growth  
by May 2017

