WHAT: The American Chestnut Foundation’s 30th Annual Meeting
WHEN: Friday, October 18 - 20, 2013
WHERE: Hyatt Dulles, 2300 Dulles Corner Boulevard, Herndon, VA 20171

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The American Chestnut Foundation Celebrates 30 Years of Chestnut Restoration

Herndon, Virginia will host the 30th Annual Meeting of The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF®) October 18 through 20 at the Hyatt Dulles. Over the past 30 years, TACF has helped to revive and energize efforts to restore the American chestnut, bringing this restoration opportunity to the forefront of conservation. This historic conference will honor our past by looking back over the previous 30 years and look ahead to the immense undertaking of restoring this once-dominant tree species to the forest.

Presentations include a wide range of technical hands-on workshops and scientific talks. Throughout the weekend there will be presentations by various chestnut scientists exploring recent developments in creating a blight-resistant American chestnut and the Foundation's progress in restoring the tree to the wild. Saturday keynote speaker is Holly Shimizu, Executive Director of the United States Botanic Garden. Other noted speakers include Dr. Christopher Topik, Director of The Nature Conservancy’s Restoring Americans Forests Program and Dr. William Powell, Co-director of the American Chestnut Research and Restoration Program at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

A full schedule of events and registration information is available on the TACF website at www.acf.org/annualmeeting.php.

“We are very excited about the level of enthusiasm we have received from our speakers, partners, and attendees for this 30th anniversary conference,” said Bryan Burhans, TACF
President & CEO. “We look forward to bringing together the many advocates for American chestnut restoration to discuss how to further our restoration efforts.”

Once the mighty giants of the eastern forests, American chestnuts stood up to 100 feet tall, and numbered in the billions. They were a vital part of the forest ecology, a key food source for wildlife and an essential component of the human economy. In the beginning of the 20th century an Asian fungus, known as the chestnut blight, spread rapidly through the American chestnut population, and by 1950 it had killed an estimated four billion mature trees from Maine to Georgia. Several attempts to breed blight-resistant trees in the mid-1900s were unsuccessful.

In 1983, a dedicated group of scientists formed The American Chestnut Foundation with a mission to develop blight-resistant American chestnut trees. Now assisted by nearly 6,000 members, volunteers, and partners, the organization is undertaking the planting of potentially blight-resistant trees in select locations throughout the eastern US.

TACF is a 501 (c) 3 conservation organization headquartered in Asheville, NC, that has nearly 6,000 members and volunteers in 16 state chapters. For more information on TACF and their work to restore the American chestnut tree, contact TACF Director of Communications Mila Kirkland at (828) 281-0047, email: mila@acf.org. Or visit www.acf.org.