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Arbor Day Foundation Honors The American Chestnut Foundation with Public Awareness of Trees Award

Asheville, NC

This spring, The American Chestnut Foundation® (TACF) was presented the 2014 Public Awareness of Trees award from the Arbor Day Foundation. The award recognized TACF for elevating the public awareness and understanding of the importance of trees. For 31 years, TACF has worked with dedicated scientists and citizens to restore the American chestnut to the eastern forests, after the species was decimated by blight in the 20th century.

TACF is one of 13 individuals, organizations, and companies recognized by the Arbor Day Foundation during the annual Arbor Day Awards. The award was presented to TACF president and CEO, Bryan Burhans by John Rosenow, Arbor Day Foundation chief executive.

"TACF is deeply honored to receive this award," said Burhans. "The return of the chestnut to its former range will represent a historic restoration success story. We are honored that the Arbor Day Foundation would recognize the efforts of our state chapters, volunteers, and partners on creating a broad public understanding of the critical role our forests, and planting trees, play in our everyday lives."

“We applaud The American Chestnut Foundation for elevating the public awareness and understanding of the importance of trees as they work to restore the American chestnut,” said Dan Lambe, Arbor Day Foundation vice president of programs.

Once the mighty giants of the eastern forest, American chestnuts stood up to 100 feet tall, and numbered in the billions. From Maine to Georgia, the chestnut was a vital part of the
eastern forest, provided abundant food for wildlife, and was an essential component of the economy. In the beginning of the 20th century the fungal pathogen responsible for chestnut blight, accidentally imported from Asia, spread rapidly through the eastern forests and by 1950 the fungus had eliminated the chestnut as a mature forest tree.

In 1983, a dedicated group of scientists and laypersons formed The American Chestnut Foundation and began a special breeding process, which in 2005 produced the first potentially blight-resistant trees called Restoration Chestnuts 1.0. Now assisted by more than 5,000 members and volunteers in 23 states, the organization is undertaking the planting of Restoration Chestnuts 1.0 in select locations throughout the eastern US.

The Arbor Day Foundation is a million member nonprofit conservation and education organization with the mission to inspire people to plant, nurture, and celebrate trees. More information is available at www.arborday.org.

The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) is a 501 (c) 3 conservation organization headquartered in Asheville, NC. 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.