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For Immediate Release

The American Chestnut Foundation co-hosts mined land conference with Virginia Tech and Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy







Abingdon, VA -- The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) is co-hosting the first ever conference on mined land reforestation efforts today and tomorrow in Abingdon, Virginia. The conference is being hosted by Virginia Tech's Powell River Project and by Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy.

TACF member and noted forest ecology researcher Dr. Fred Paillet is attending the conference. Paillet chairs TACF's Carbon Sequestration team which is focused on using American chestnut as part of an overall effort to help improve forest health and to help offset accelerated global warming through the uptake and storage of carbon. Fred's initial interest in chestnut was generated when he identified a link between chestnut fossil pollen and prehistoric climate. He has spent a number of years reconstructing in detail the role of chestnut in New England forests by mapping the distribution of blight-killed trees, and following the fortunes of the chestnut sprouts living today.

TACF is currently working with several organizations including Peabody Energy and the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative, to plant American chestnut trees on land formerly used for mining. Trees that are part of TACF's national breeding program are being planted on small tracts of land in the eastern United States affected by coal mining. The trees, with their fast growth rate, will help heal the land and reforest these areas.

The Mined Land Reforestation conference will call attention to advanced mine reforestation practices that are being developed through scientific research and adopted by the coal industry, and will present scientific research findings with the potential to further improve mine reforestation success. The conference is intended for personnel representing coal mining firms, mineral-bearing lands owners, mining consultants, natural resource agencies, scientists with mined land reforestation expertise, students, and interested members of the public.

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The American Chestnut Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)-3 organization with more than 5,800 members around the world and chapters in 13 states across the country. It received the coveted 2007 Charity Navigator award that recognizes non-profits for strong fiscal responsibility. Please visit www.acf.org for more information on national, state and local activities.

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