



THE
AMERICAN
CHESTNUT
FOUNDATION

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Hike a Mile on the Appalachian Trail for the American Chestnut

Damascus, Virginia – The Appalachian Trail (A.T.) has long been a source of beauty, challenges and enjoyment for the thousands of folks, who hike some or, all of it each year. From Georgia, all the way through to Maine, the A.T. inspires families, friends and neighbors to take a break and see some of the best the eastern half of the United States has to offer. Abundant wildlife, trees and flowers draw young and old, rich and poor, strong and some not so strong, not only to test themselves but also to be part of something bigger than themselves. As an ancient Chinese philosopher once said, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step."

In celebration of the 25th anniversary of The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF), is introducing the "Hike a Mile for the American Chestnut" project along the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) to bring attention to the importance of restoring the American chestnut tree to its native range along the A.T.

Thru-hikers, trail groups, community groups such as Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and plain old A.T. aficionados are encouraged to hike on the trail anytime between March 1 - October 15, 2008 and enter your miles on TACF's website <http://acf.org/apprail/index.php>. TACF's A.T. journey won't be hiked in a "linear" fashion, and folks can start at any point on the trail. Hikers can count their miles by noting mile marker start and end points or by using an Appalachian Trail hiker's guide which outlines the various mile points along the trail. If any of those methods don't work for you, just give us your best estimate! Once you've hiked your miles, you can then enter them on TACF's website.

In addition, since the A.T. runs through the heart of the American chestnut's natural range, it seems fitting that TACF join with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy while they monitor the health of the

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trail in a Mega-Transect project, with the goal of identifying surviving American chestnut trees along the trail. The last count of American chestnuts visible from the A.T. itself was done in 1999 and more than 40,000 trees were identified.

For the last 25 years, TACF's sole mission has been to restore some, if not all, of the nearly four billion trees destroyed by chestnut blight in the first half of the 20th century. By completing as much of the 2,174-mile A.T. as possible, we will bring focused attention to the importance of restoring this giant, known as the "Redwood of the East" to its native forests as well as to the ongoing work of TACF, its state chapters and its volunteer community.

For more information about The American Chestnut Foundation and our "Hike a Mile for the American Chestnut" program, please visit www.acf.org

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