



Rooted in Restoration

*Strategic Plan
2025-2027*



More Information
www.tacf.org

More than a century ago, the American chestnut tree flourished throughout the eastern U.S. Its branches were heavy with nuts that fed generations of families and wildlife, and its wood formed the bones of homes, barns, and railroads.

This once-dominant species in the Appalachian ecosystem was nearly decimated by a fungal blight, accidentally introduced in the late 1800s. Within 50 years, an estimated four billion trees were lost, rendering the tree functionally extinct.

Since 1983, The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) has led a science-powered movement to bring this tree back, driven by a multi-faceted and collaborative research and breeding program.

Today, we stand at a turning point: TACF's 2025-2027 Strategic Plan outlines a bold path forward, grounded in science, imbued with hope, and powered by community.

Our strategic focus centers on restoring the American chestnut through three key areas:

- Using **advanced science** to develop a resilient tree
- Broadening **engagement** through increased visibility
- Strengthening funding through **new partnerships**

With decades of innovation and collaboration behind us, TACF is entering a bold new chapter – bringing the American chestnut home.

Our mission is to return the iconic American chestnut to its native range. Our vision is a robust eastern forest returned to its splendor.

SCIENCE

Strategic Priority #1

Create disease-resistant American chestnut trees and test their suitability through reintroduction trials as a first step toward introducing ever-improving populations of these trees into the American chestnut's suitable habitat.

- Measurably improve disease resistance of the American chestnut and predominantly American hybrid trees in our breeding population.
 - Create a network of researchers working to improve disease resistance in American chestnut using biotechnology.
 - Maintain and enhance American chestnut genetic diversity.
- Establish chestnut plantings of variable size, diversity, and purpose toward incremental reintroduction.



A young boy with brown hair, wearing a grey and blue baseball-style shirt and dark pants, stands on a dirt path. He is looking out over a calm lake that reflects the surrounding green trees and a cloudy sky. The path is covered with fallen leaves, and there are some green plants in the foreground. The background shows a dense forest of trees, some with yellowing leaves, suggesting an autumn setting.

STORY

Strategic Priority #2

Improve public awareness of the American chestnut story and TACF's vital role in restoring this iconic species to its native range.

- Develop and implement targeted messaging that resonates with key audiences and aligns with our brand.
- Use TACF's rebranding to enhance engagement and cohesion.
- Engage specific stakeholders with targeted outreach.
- Ensure consistent messaging and public engagement.
- Update public relations strategies to include a broader range of media.
- Strengthen chapter storytelling and educational programs.

FUNDING

Strategic Priority #3

Identify and welcome new funding partners; prioritize and professionalize development efforts to increase and diversify fundraising and ensure the long-term sustainability of restoration efforts.

- Increase annual revenues through increased engagement with member-donors, foundation grants, and major donors.
- Diversify funding sources and reduce our dependence on foundation grants and restricted funding by attracting major gifts, increasing chapter fundraising, and obtaining corporate grants and sponsorships.
- Improve long-term financial stability through increased revenues and improved supervision of organization finances.

