



Position Title: Chief Operating Officer

Location: Hybrid Remote in Asheville, NC and some travel required

The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) is a nonprofit conservation, education, and scientific organization with one of the most ambitious rescue missions in the natural world: return the iconic American chestnut to its native range. Founded in 1983 and based in Asheville, NC, TACF and its 16 state chapters are working to restore the American chestnut tree to eastern forests.

Our Mission is to return the iconic American chestnut to its native range

Our Vision is a robust eastern forest returned to its splendor

TACF's Values: Optimism, Patience, Science-Based Decisions, Integrity, Innovation, and Collaboration

Position Summary: The Chief Operating Officer (COO) serves as TACF's senior operational leader and strategic partner to the President & CEO, overseeing the organizational systems, infrastructure, governance, and operational coordination necessary to advance TACF's national restoration mission.

As TACF scales its restoration, research, and chapter engagement efforts across a distributed national network, the COO ensures the organization operates with clarity, accountability, continuity, and operational excellence. The COO translates organizational strategy into functional systems and execution across administrative operations, governance, human resources, technology, compliance, chapter operations support, and organizational planning.

This role is responsible for strengthening TACF's operational foundation so scientific, restoration, fundraising, and outreach teams can operate effectively at scale.

The COO serves as the senior leader for all non-science operational functions and acts as a key advisor and implementation partner to the President & CEO. This is a hybrid remote position with some on site and travel required.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Core Purpose of the Role

The COO ensures TACF's mission is supported by strong operational systems rather than dependent on institutional memory, informal processes, or individual heroic effort.

The role focuses on:

- building scalable operational infrastructure
- strengthening organizational accountability
- improving cross-functional coordination
- ensuring organizational compliance and continuity
- reducing operational friction
- supporting long-term organizational sustainability

Reporting Structure

Reports to:

- President & CEO

Direct Reports May Include:

- Administrative staff
- Chapter operations/support staff
- HR/vendor coordination functions
- IT and systems coordination
- Facilities/fleet coordination
- Operations and project support staff

Works Closely With:

- Chief Scientist and science leadership
- Communications and Development leadership
- Finance and accounting support
- National Board leadership
- Chapter leaders and volunteers
- External vendors and organizational partners

Primary Responsibilities

Organizational Operations & Execution

- Lead TACF's operational infrastructure across a distributed national organization
- Develop systems and workflows that improve organizational clarity, efficiency, accountability, and scalability
- Coordinate operational implementation of strategic priorities established by the President & CEO and Board
- Ensure effective cross-department coordination and communication
- Identify operational bottlenecks and implement process improvements
- Build operational continuity and succession systems to reduce institutional vulnerability

Governance & Organizational Compliance

- Serve as senior staff liaison to governance-related Board committees as assigned
- Oversee organizational compliance practices across nonprofit operations
- Support Board operations, annual meetings, elections, resolutions, and governance processes
- Maintain and improve governance documentation, policies, and operational procedures
- Coordinate organizational risk management efforts

- Ensure operational alignment with organizational bylaws, policies, agreements, and applicable regulations

Human Resources & Organizational Culture

- Serve as organizational lead coordinating with outsourced HR providers and legal support
- Oversee operational HR systems including:
 - onboarding
 - performance review systems
 - policy implementation
 - employee engagement processes
 - organizational training coordination
- Support development of organizational structure, staffing systems, and succession planning
- Strengthen operational consistency and accountability across remote staff environments
- Promote a healthy, collaborative, mission-driven organizational culture grounded in clarity and professionalism

Operational Systems & Technology

- Oversee organizational operational systems, technology planning, and administrative infrastructure
- Improve organizational visibility through reporting systems, dashboards, workflow management, and operational metrics
- Coordinate IT vendors, systems integration, and technology planning aligned with organizational needs
- Support development and implementation of organizational databases and operational information systems

- Promote efficient, scalable use of technology and process automation where appropriate

Facilities, Assets, & Risk Management

- Oversee operational coordination for TACF facilities, fleet assets, insurance coverage, and vendor relationships
- Ensure appropriate operational policies and safety procedures are maintained across staff and volunteer activities
- Coordinate contracts, procurement systems, and operational agreements
- Support long-term operational planning for organizational infrastructure and assets

Financial & Administrative Coordination

- Support operational budget planning and implementation in coordination with finance leadership and the President & CEO
- Improve alignment between operational priorities and organizational resources
- Strengthen operational accountability and reporting systems
- Support grant compliance and operational reporting requirements as needed

Leadership Expectations

The COO is expected to:

- operate with sound judgment and discretion
- maintain organizational trust and credibility
- lead with calm, steady professionalism
- build systems that support long-term mission success
- balance operational consistency with organizational adaptability
- foster collaboration across staff, chapters, volunteers, and leadership
- create clarity in complex environments

- support innovation while maintaining operational discipline

Desired Qualifications

Ideal candidates will demonstrate:

- Significant leadership experience in nonprofit operations, governance, or organizational management
- Experience working within distributed, chapter-based, membership, or volunteer-driven organizations
- Strong operational systems thinking and organizational design capability
- Demonstrated success managing organizational change and process improvement
- Experience supporting Boards, governance systems, and committee structures
- Knowledge of nonprofit compliance, risk management, HR coordination, and operational best practices
- Excellent communication, facilitation, and relationship management skills
- High emotional intelligence, professionalism, and discretion
- Ability to balance strategic thinking with practical implementation
- Familiarity with conservation, forestry, research, scientific, or mission-driven organizations preferred

Position Characteristics

This role is ideal for a leader who:

- enjoys building operational clarity from complexity
- values continuity, accountability, and mission alignment
- is highly organized and systems-oriented
- can lead collaboratively across diverse stakeholders
- is comfortable balancing strategy and execution
- understands how strong operations enable mission success

Strategic Importance of the Role

As TACF advances increasingly sophisticated restoration and scientific initiatives, the organization's long-term success depends upon operational systems capable of supporting national-scale coordination, distributed partnerships, volunteer engagement, and organizational continuity.

The COO plays a critical role in ensuring TACF's operational capacity evolves alongside its scientific and restoration ambitions.

Benefits

Benefits include health, vision, dental, short and long-term disability, and life insurance, as well as flexible spending account (FSA) options. Benefits begin the first day of the month following hire.

TACF also offers a 403(b)-retirement plan, including 5% company match contributions after two years of service to help your long-term financial plan grow quickly. In addition to at least 12 paid annual holidays, TACF offers ten paid sick days and two weeks of paid vacation which increases with tenure and performance.

Application Process

Interested candidates should apply by emailing a cover letter, resume, and references to tacfjobs@tacf.org. The application **deadline is Monday, June 15th at 5:00 pm Eastern**. Note that we do not accept phone inquiries regarding this position, so please do not contact TACF via phone.

TACF is an Equal Opportunity Employer and is committed to providing an equal opportunity to all qualified individuals who are seeking employment, and to all current employees. It is the policy of The American Chestnut Foundation to provide equal employment opportunity to all Team Members and applicants for employment and not to engage in discrimination against or harassment of any persons employed or seeking employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender, gender expression, gender identity, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, medical condition (e.g., cancer-related or genetic characteristics), genetic information (including family medical history), ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or service in the uniformed services (as defined by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994) as well as state military and naval service. All Team Members, regardless of the classification or position, are considered employed "at-will." This means employment may be terminated at

the will of the Team Member and/or the Company at any time; with or without cause and/or with or without notice. No officer, agent, representative, or Team Member has any authority to enter into any Agreement with any Team Member or applicant for employment on other than on an at-will basis.