

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Tennessee Environmental Council Launches the American Chestnut Project Public Invited to Attend**

NASHVILLE—Tennessee residents are invited to attend local American Chestnut grove planting events taking place at our State Parks in November. Tennessee Environmental Council is hosting five Chestnut grove planting events in five Tennessee State Parks; Nathan Bedford Forrest State Park, Bledsoe Creek State Park, Panther Creek State Park, Cumberland Mountain State Park, and Montgomery Bell State Park. The goal is to bring awareness of The American Chestnut Foundation's restoration efforts to integrate a blight-resistant American Chestnut. Each grove will consist of two pure American Chestnuts, two Chinese Chestnuts, and two Restoration Chestnuts (backcrossed hybrids). These groves will serve as a visual example of the integration of the blight-resistant Chinese Chestnut and the efforts to restore the American Chestnut tree.

American Chestnuts were once the mighty giants of the eastern forests, standing up to 100 feet tall and covering approximately 180 million acres. They were a vital part of the forest ecology, an essential component of the economy, and a key food source for people, wildlife, and livestock. In the late 1800's, *Cryphonectria parasitica*, the fungal pathogen that causes the chestnut blight was imported from Asia. By 1950, it had killed an estimated four million trees from Maine to Mississippi.

Dates/times/locations of American Chestnut grove plantings:

November 15th at 1 pm at Nathan Bedford Forrest State Park (Eva, TN)

November 16th at 11 am at Bledsoe Creek State Park (Gallatin, TN)

November 19th at 1 pm at Panther Creek State Park (Morristown, TN)

November 20th at 1 pm at Cumberland Mountain State Park (Crossville, TN)

November 21st at 1 pm at Montgomery Bell State Park (Burns, TN)

This project is brought to you through a partnership between the American Chestnut Foundation, Tennessee State Parks, Tennessee Environmental Council and funded in part by support from the Bonnaroo Works Fund, Friends of groups, Vicki Turner, and an anonymous private donor.