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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**American Chestnut Research and Restoration
Tug Hill Winter Wildlife Webinar Series, Part 3: March 12, 6 p.m.**

WATERTOWN, NEW YORK – The Tug Hill Commission and the American Chestnut Research and Restoration Project invites the public to join a webinar on Wednesday, March 12, at 6 p.m. to learn about ongoing conservation efforts of the American chestnut tree (*Castanea dentata*), which once accounted for nearly one in four trees in the Appalachian corridor. Register at tinyurl.com/tughillchestnut and a Zoom link will be sent along with your registration confirmation email.

Today, American Chestnuts are considered functionally extinct... but perhaps not for much longer? This session, part of the Tug Hill Winter Wildlife Webinar Series, will feature speaker Dakota Matthews, a Molecular Biology Lab Manager for nine years with the American Chestnut Research and Restoration Project at State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY ESF). This webinar will highlight the ecological and economic importance of the American chestnut tree, the history of its decline due to a non-native fungal blight and the resulting impact on forests, breakthroughs in genetic research and development of a blight-resistant transgenic chestnut trees, and updates on chestnut breeding program and field trials. Don't miss the chance to learn more about these "Redwoods of the East" and the hope for their resurgence!

The mission of the American Chestnut Research and Restoration Project at SUNY ESF is to conduct basic and applied research that will lead to the development of blight-tolerant American chestnut trees. The goal is to reintroduce a population of these tolerant trees back into forest ecosystems of the eastern United States. The project applies a multifaceted approach, including identifying plant pathogen tolerance-enhancing genes,

Helping local governments and citizens shape the future of the Tug Hill region.

developing American chestnut tissue culture, field testing chestnut trees, encouraging public participation through the identification of rare remnant surviving chestnut trees, collecting and exchanging viable nuts, and establishing large restoration plantations throughout New York State.

This webinar is part of the Tug Hill Winter Wildlife Webinar Series, which explores the region's diverse wildlife and conservation efforts. The final webinar in April 2025 will focus on raptors.

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The New York State Tug Hill Commission is a non-regulatory state agency charged with helping local governments, organizations, and citizens shape the future of the region, especially its environment and economy. The commission uses a grassroots approach to build local capacity and provide technical assistance in land use planning, community development, and natural resource management.