

PREFACE

The papers in this document were presented at a conference and workshop that was held at The North Carolina Arboretum in Asheville, NC, May 4-6, 2004. The purpose of the conference was to discuss issues surrounding the restoration of American chestnut to forest lands. The audience members were primarily employees of USDI National Park Service (NPS), and interest focused on the question of restoring chestnut to NPS lands, but most presentations were selected to address restoration from the broadest perspective possible. The organizers of the conference were Drs. Kim Steiner and John Carlson of the School of Forest Resources at The Pennsylvania State University, and the sponsors were the Chesapeake Watershed Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) (NPS), the Southern Appalachian Mountains CESU (NPS), and The Pennsylvania State University.

The conference covered the current status of chestnut blight research and objectives, opportunities, and potential directions for American chestnut restoration programs on NPS lands. Topics discussed at the meeting included policy issues, the current status of chestnut, chestnut ecology, breeding programs, blight resistance technologies, genetic issues, potential impacts on forest ecology, design of restoration programs, and knowledge gaps related to restoration within the National Park System. The conference ended with half-day workshop facilitated by Dr. James Finley of the School of Forest Resources at The Pennsylvania State University. Attendees remarked that the scope and quality of presentations established the meeting as a benchmark event in the history of chestnut restoration. As a result of the meeting, a summary of issues and recommendations for National Park Service administrators is being prepared. This collection of papers represents the most comprehensive and current information available at this time on the biology of American chestnut and the blight fungus and the potential for restoring chestnut to its native range.

John E. Carlson and Kim C. Steiner, August 4, 2005