



FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

AUGUST 29, 2019

12th ANNUAL WEST VIRGINIA CHESTNUT FESTIVAL

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2019, 10:30 A.M. – 7:30 P.M.

The beauty of autumn will abound in Rowlesburg, WV on Sunday, October 13, 2019 at the 12th Annual West Virginia Chestnut Festival. You will be immersed in the sights, smells and tastes of delicious chestnuts and experience “chestnuts roasting over an open fire”. The hills surrounding this community and its lovely park will be abound with the fall colors as you drive along the Cheat River to historic Rowlesburg.

This West Virginia Festival honors the heritage and history of the great American Chestnut tree, a giant hardwood tree that once dominated the hills of 16 Appalachian States from Maine to Georgia. This event also celebrates the research scientists who are dedicated to restoring American chestnut trees to their former woodland habitat.

The festival kicks off with a full breakfast in the River City Café in the Szilagyi Center at 10:30 a.m. (\$8.00 donation requested). Attendees will have the opportunity to meet the Festival Director, Robert Sypolt and other distinguished guests such as Lisa Thomson, CEO and President of The American Chestnut Foundation, headquartered in Asheville, NC and Mark Double, President of the WV Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation.

Park Activities on the scenic bank of the Cheat River begin at noon and continue until 5:00 p.m. Activities include sampling and/or purchasing delicious chestnuts roasted on an open fire; chestnut vendors and other vendors selling their crafts and wares; purchasing of various chestnut sapling trees for planting; and networking with chestnut researchers. Food and beverages will be available at the Park Concession Stand, including Ox roast beef sandwiches.

Activities for the children include a climbing wall compliments of Camp Dawson National Guard and an exhibit from the Avian Conservation Center displaying birds, hawks and owls. Other activities will feature face painting and other exhibits of interest to children.

Other Chestnut activities will take place in the nearby Szilagyi Creative Arts Center. The public is invited to attend the West Virginia Chapter (TACF) meeting, noon-2:00 p.m. in the meeting room on the third tier. Mark Double, president and Dr. Don Kines, Vice President, will be presiding.

Another Chestnut program, always well attended by the public, is the scientific session, held 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The presenters will be hosted by Mark Double, Research Associate Emeritus, West Virginia University and he will be assisted by Dr. Joseph Nassif, Emeritus



Festival Director. Featured speakers are Dr. Sunshine Brosi, Professor Frostburg State University whose subject is “Raised on Chestnuts: The nut of my Appalachian grandparent’s childhoods.” Also speaking are Mr. Tom Saielli, TACF Regional Science Coordinator whose topic is “New advances in chestnut breeding pave the way for species restoration.

Visit the Szilagyi Center Exhibits, including the acclaimed World War II Museum with many life-size mannequins, visit the historic Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Bridge Exhibit and the Preston County Sports Museum. The River City Café will be open all day and will be serving lunch and delicious desserts.

The gala Chestnut Dinner will take place in the Szilagyi Center beginning at 5:30 p.m. At the dinner the 12th Annual Crowning of our Chestnut Royalty will take place by honoring “Mr. Chestnut and Ms. Chestnut, Rob Eckenrode and Amy Metheny, who will be assisted by Junior Prince and Princess to be selected prior to the event from East Preston School.

The Keynote Speaker this year will be Rex Mann, U.S. Forest Service, Retired. His topic: “An American Tragedy: How a Mass Extinction Can Help Save our Forest.”

As always, the attendees will be entertained by the delightful Madrigal Singers from Preston High School under the direction of Deborah Westbrook. The servers for the dinner will be cadets from the WVNG Challenge Academy.

The Chestnut Festival is hosted by the West Virginia Chapter of The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF), the Rowlesburg Revitalization Committee, the Tourism Commission and the Town of Rowlesburg.

For vendor space, email George at www.nassifgs@hotmail.com or 700-300-2554. For information and/or to reserve banquet dinner tickets, contact Shirley Hartley, 304-698-5305 or Shirley.hartley@yahoo.com ; Joseph Nassif, njn3@msn.com or Anna Nassif, 304-454-9786, annarnas@aol.com. Visit one of our websites at www.rowlesburg.info; www.rowlesburg.org; www.rowlesburgguide.com; www.acf.org (The American Chestnut Foundation.)