

NORTH DAKOTA

North Dakota Forest Service

North Dakotans plant trees for beauty and for protection from the natural elements. The North Dakota Forest Service offers grant programs for tree planting and program development projects, guiding communities to build a forestry program that often leads to certification as a Tree City USA. Trees offer comfort and hope when people need it most.

In a state known for wide open spaces, finding solace and refuge in the canopy of trees became a premium activity for North Dakotans in the world of 2020. Individuals crave the healing absence of digital keyboards and virtual meetings. Families are retreating to backyards, parks, and campgrounds to soak in the sights and sounds of nature.

In the small community of Belfield, near the state's western border, a vacant lot was converted to a green space to honor local veterans. From families and friends to veterans themselves, Veteran's Park offers a place to pause and reflect. Trees help us heal.

While Mother Nature can offer solace, North Dakotans are also witness to her destruction. In August, the city of Northwood experienced an F-4 tornado that destroyed most of the city, including the school – an event that happened the night before the fall school season was scheduled to begin. In New Rockford,

a fierce July wind storm took down a thousand community trees, including many in the city's beloved cemetery. Devastation in both of these communities was followed one year later by tree planting celebrations of recovery and resilience. Planting trees gives us hope.

Tree City USA program participants look forward to the celebration of Arbor Day every year. In McVile, the celebration is marked with a tree planting at McVile Dam Recreation Area to pay tribute to someone who has generously contributed his or her time to the community's forestry program. The city park in Pekin grows with Memorial Trees for deceased community members. Trees help us remember.

While the Arbor Day Foundation has waived the Arbor Day requirement for 2020, the city of Dickinson distributed 2200 bur oak seedlings to students, and encouraged families to celebrate Arbor Day together. The city commemorated Arbor Day by planting a bur oak at Roosevelt

School, noting this 1907 Arbor Day quote from President Theodore Roosevelt: "A people without children would face a hopeless future; a country without trees is almost as helpless." Trees are powerful symbols of hope.



1. The simple act of planting a bur oak tree brings a smile to this young boy. Photo Credit: Sarah Smith Warren Photography. **2.** Once a vacant lot, the Veterans Memorial in Belfield offers a green space for reflection. Photo Credit: Beth Hill, NDFS. **3.** A storm in New Rockford destroyed hundreds of trees. Healing begins when people help one another recover from loss; replanting comes next. Photo Credit: Gerri Makay, NDFS.