

# NORTH DAKOTA

## North Dakota Forest Service

Arbor Day Foundation programs provide a sound base for guiding local community forestry programs across the state of North Dakota. Fifty-three communities are certified in the Tree City USA program, with populations ranging from 20 in Sibley, which currently reigns as the smallest Tree City USA, to Fargo, the state's largest city at 125,000. The first Community Tree Recovery project assisted New Rockford residents to plant 500 trees following a windstorm that damaged the community in 2018.

When the Tree City USA program began in 1976, 42 communities were honored in 15 states, including three communities in North Dakota. The program has grown to include 53 communities across the state, including Sibley—the current smallest Tree City USA with a population of 20 people—as well as the state's largest city, Fargo. The program is truly designed to fit communities of all sizes, providing a base for sound forestry program management and resources to recognize the communities dedicated to the program.

The North Dakota Forest Service (NDFS) Community Forestry program offers an annual cost-share grant program to provide funding for public tree planting and program development projects. Extra points are awarded to applicants from Tree City USA communities as an additional incentive for cities to certify in the program. Grant project requirements align with Tree City USA standards, requiring the formation of a city tree ordinance if there is none in place. Implementation of a tree planting grant project is the perfect venue for an Arbor Day celebration, sometimes the first in the community. Through this process, small communities find it rewarding to attain Tree City USA status.

North Dakota State University was named the state's first Tree Campus USA and is home to the Woody Plant Improvement Program under the direction of Dr. Todd West. The campus arboretum features many of the more than 50 superior woody plants introduced through the program, plants with increased disease tolerance and winter hardiness for landscapes throughout the Northern Plains. United Tribes Technical College is also on the roster as a Tree Campus USA community, one of the first tribal colleges to earn the distinction.



**Arbor Day speakers seated at the gazebo in Centennial Park with American Legion Color Guard posting.** Photo Credit: Mary O'Neill



**New Rockford resident looks over the tree information sheets while holding his selection.** Photo Credit: Abby Makay



**Residents happy with the choice of trees at the tree distribution event on May 19.** Photo Credit: Abby Makay

The 2019 State Arbor Day celebration was hosted by the community of New Rockford, certified as a Tree City USA for 28 years. It was “a celebration of recovery and resiliency,” marking one year since a storm boasting 110 mph winds tore through the community, destroying more than one thousand trees. The Community Tree Recovery Program came to the rescue, providing 500 small trees in one-gallon pots to residents. Established by the Arbor Day Foundation in 2012 to help communities recover following natural disasters, there have been more than 775 distribution events in the U.S. However, this was the first Community Tree Recovery project in North Dakota, inspiring residents with hope and enabling them to re-green the landscape.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

North Dakota Forest Service  
Urban & Community Forestry Program  
<https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/ndfs/programs-and-services/community-forestry>