



SEASONAL INTERNS COMPLETE TREE INVENTORY

Identifying the Need

South Dakota had a notable need for street tree inventories with current pests such as Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) arriving and slowly spreading throughout the Southeastern corner of the state. South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Division of Resource Conservation and Forestry (RCF) utilized Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding to hire seasonal interns to assist with the completion of street tree inventories throughout the state to identify high-risk and priority areas.

EAB and Street Tree Inventory Data

In 2018, EAB was found and confirmed in South Dakota. At the time, most communities in South Dakota had no formal, complete street tree inventory. The inventories that had been completed indicated a high percentage of Ash trees in South Dakota communities, leading to a need for more inventory data.

Interns Build Capacity

In 2023, RCF hired five interns to meet that need: Mikayla Kolbeck, Jessalyn Anderson, Kira Faust, Marisa Wilks, and Sloan James. This initial intern team was based in Sioux Falls, SD to address the highest priority region of the state as it is where EAB has been confirmed.

Over the course of approximately 12 weeks, the intern team completed approximately 15 community street tree inventories and assisted in three community tree plantings. Their work was highly valuable in identifying at-risk communities for EAB infestations and the need for future street tree inventories in South Dakota.



Header: Drone photo of interns. **Above:** Mikayla Kolbeck (left), Sloan James (back left), Jessalyn Anderson (left middle), Kira Faust (right middle), John Hartland (back right), Marisa Wilks (right). Photos: John Hartland