

RESOLUTION NO. 08-___

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LEXINGTON, DAWSON COUNTY, NEBRASKA:

WHEREAS, the City of Lexington has been named a Tree City USA community for more than ten consecutive years; and

WHEREAS, trees reduce the erosion of our precious topsoil by wind and water, cut heating and cooling costs, moderate the temperature, clean the air, produce oxygen and provide habitat for wildlife; and

WHEREAS, trees in our city increase property values, enhance the economic vitality of business areas, and beautify our community; and

WHEREAS, the number of trees in Lexington has been declining over the last two decades; and

WHEREAS, a high percentage of existing trees in Lexington are near the end of their life spans; and

WHEREAS, Lexington's Tree Board has recommended that replanting trees be a priority for Lexington, and that the City take action to support ReTree Nebraska;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LEXINGTON, that the City of Lexington supports the goals of ReTree Nebraska and encourages residents to do their part to re-tree Lexington.

Passed and approved this ____ day of April 2008.

Mayor

ATTEST:

Deputy City Clerk

ReTree Nebraska

ReTree Nebraska is a 10-year cooperative initiative to raise public awareness of the value of trees, reverse the decline of Nebraska's community tree resource and improve the diversity and sustainability of trees in communities across the state for generations to come.

The primary goal of ReTree Nebraska is to work in partnership with people across the state to foster the planting and proper maintenance of one million new trees in cities and towns over the next decade.



Introduction and Resource Overview

Nebraska's community tree resources have steadily declined in recent years. A combination of severe weather events (1991 freeze, 1997 snow storm, 2007 ice storm, tornadoes and high winds), chronic drought, poor planting practices, poor species selection, the rapid spread of an aggressive, uniformly fatal disease known as pine wilt (attacking Scotch and Austrian pines) and a preponderance of older trees nearing or past their average life span have severely reduced the number of trees in our communities across the state. Trends gleaned from more than 200 community tree inventories conducted by the Nebraska Forest Service since 1977 show that the state has lost approximately one half of its community tree resource since the late 1970s. Fewer community trees mean fewer benefits and a reduced quality of life in our towns and cities.

In addition to the recent tree losses, an invasive pest called the emerald ash borer (EAB) has the very real potential to kill most of the state's ash trees, resulting in a potential loss of 25 percent of the existing community forest resource. This canopy loss equates to approximately 2.2 million trees with an estimated value of \$120.8 million annually. Ultimately, the total costs for urban tree removals and replacements due to EAB in Nebraska could reach \$1.65 billion! Most experts agree that it is not a matter of IF EAB will arrive in Nebraska, but WHEN. When it arrives, the state will endure catastrophic losses in community forests, conservation plantings and native forests.

A Call to Action

We must restore our community forests to retain the many important benefits that trees provide and to enable Nebraskans to continue living "The Good Life" in the Arbor Day State.

ReTree Nebraska is a cooperative effort currently led by the Nebraska Forest Service, Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, University of Nebraska Rural Initiative, University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension, University of Nebraska–Lincoln Department of Agronomy and Horticulture and the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Strong partnerships with the green industry, private businesses, non-profits, government agencies and other groups and individuals are already coalescing.



Ten Major Goals for ReTree Nebraska

1. Become a primary source of public information for the various tree planting and care programs that are already functioning across the state.
2. Significantly increase the planting of high-quality, large-growing, long-lived trees in communities across the state in order to plant more trees each year than are removed.
3. Significantly increase the diversity, quality and average canopy cover of most Nebraska community forests.
4. Strengthen the capacity of most Nebraska communities to develop and implement sustainable community tree management programs.
5. Work with the nursery industry to secure higher-quality trees and a wider variety of trees for local tree planting efforts.
6. Engage professional arborists and other green industry professionals to help improve and expand high-quality tree care.
7. Increase Nebraskans' knowledge and understanding of the value of trees and the importance of properly planting and caring for them.
8. Significantly raise Nebraskans' awareness of the threats of pine wilt disease, emerald ash borer, drought, weather and other events which could collectively kill millions of trees across the state in the coming years.
9. Correct poor planting and maintenance practices that have significantly reduced the health of many, if not most, community trees planted in the last 30 years.
10. Assist communities in the development of "Community Tree Recovery Action Plans" that will evaluate and quantify the local community tree resources, identify community goals for enhancing those resources and develop action plans for achieving those goals.

What Will ReTree Nebraska Accomplish?

- Properly plant and maintain at least 1,000,000 new community trees by 2017.
- Increase by at least 25 percent the average tree canopy cover in at least 200 communities by 2020.
- Provide direct assistance to at least 50 communities every year.
- Increase species diversity by at least 25 percent in at least 100 communities by 2017.
- Develop at least 100 "Community Tree Recovery Action Plans" by 2017.
- Increase the number of certified arborists (ISA or NAA) by 25 percent by 2017.
- Increase the number of nurseries selling bare-root trees by 25 percent by 2017.

**For more information about ReTree Nebraska,
visit www.retreenebraska.unl.edu.**

ReTree Nebraska - The Role of ReTree Ambassadors

Justin Evertson - January 4, 2008

We know (at least in a general sense) **what ReTree Nebraska is**. It is a 10-year cooperative effort to significantly improve Nebraska's community tree resources and increase the tree-related knowledge and skills of many more Nebraskans. ReTree Nebraska includes the goal of properly planting at least one million new, high-quality trees in cities and towns across the state.

We also know what **ReTree Nebraska is not**. It is not a top-down program of UNL forestry and horticulture professionals dispensing money and wisdom (although there will be some of that). Rather it is a grass-roots effort of people across the state working hard in their own communities and neighborhoods to plant trees and improve their tree resources. Nebraska is home to very knowledgeable tree-minded people in nearly every community. ReTree Nebraska will tap into that very valuable resource by recruiting volunteers to serve as local ReTree Ambassadors. These ambassadors will be the cornerstones of this grass-roots effort.

The Role of ReTree Ambassadors

Perhaps the most important role ambassadors will play is to serve as visible sources of timely and reliable information about trees and the ReTree initiative. It is hoped that ambassadors will also serve as vocal cheerleaders for trees and tree-related activities. Beyond that, roles will no-doubt vary from person to person and town to town, depending on local needs. Some of the things that ambassadors might do include:

1. Organize local tree planting projects and activities.
2. Help organize local volunteers.
3. Assist with fundraising activities.
4. Serve on or develop a local tree board.
5. Develop education and information materials.
6. Write articles for the local paper.
7. Update local ordinances that promote and benefit trees.
8. Work with government officials to increase the stature of trees.
9. Assist with a community tree inventory and evaluation.
10. Organize youth-related activities.
11. Develop a local tree-related awards/recognition program.
12. Grab a shovel and plant trees - lots and lots of trees.

Who can be a ReTree Ambassador? Anyone who desires to help improve the local tree resource can serve as an ambassador. Ambassadors will not be **REQUIRED** to do anything. **They are volunteers and are free to give the initiative as much or as little time as they desire.** Of course we hope that most ambassadors will be able to give significant time and energy to the cause.

If you value trees and wish to improve the tree resource in your community or neighborhood, we encourage you to volunteer to be a ReTree Ambassador today! To volunteer or for more information, please contact Justin Evertson at (402) 472-5045 or jeverson1@unl.edu.