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TREE Fund awards seventeen new grants in 2017

Funding empowers wide array of tree research and education projects across the globe

Naperville, IL, February 26, 2018 – TREE Fund is pleased to announce nearly $225,000 in new awards for urban tree research and education in 2017. With these grants, the 501(c)3 charity has provided over $3.4 million in funding since its inception in 2002.

Two of the 2017 awards are centered on improving worker safety in tree care, a critical focus in a perilous industry. The new Safe Arborist Techniques Fund grant line is looking at current safety standards, and the Frank E. Gamma, Sr. Arboriculture Education Fund supports Tree Care Industry Association's Arborist Safety Training Institute, which brings high quality, local and affordable safety training to working arborists.

"The wide array of grants that TREE Fund awarded in 2017 demonstrates the extensive impact that we and our research partners can have on communities within and beyond the tree care industry," notes TREE Fund President and CEO J. Eric Smith. "From the broad quantification of human health benefits gained from city trees to approaches for battling tree disease on a microbial level, we are seeking to empower tree care professionals at all levels, and to educate lay people and policy makers alike on the economic, health and aesthetic benefits of healthy urban canopies around the world."

2017 TREE Fund Hyland R. Johns Research Grant recipients:

Richard Hauer, PhD (University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point) is creating an easy-to-use tool to evaluate and track progress within urban forestry programs. Ultimately the "Sustainable urban forestry planning models and decision making dashboard" project will help urban forest planners create a story of the current state of their urban forestry program and identify areas to improve, thus leading to a sustainable urban forest program and tree population.

Kathleen Wolf, PhD (University of Washington) seeks to extract research about human health benefits specific to city trees and forests and conduct an economic valuation of such benefits. The "Urban forests for human health: a focused economic valuation" project will provide professionals in arboriculture, urban forestry, landscape design, etc. with additional data for justifying the costs of tree planning, planting and management.

2017 Safe Arborist Techniques Fund Grant recipient:

Brian Kane, PhD (University of Massachusetts Amherst) is collecting and analyzing safety standards from around the world in the "Arboricultural safety around the world" project. It will serve as a foundation for future studies into safe working practices in arboriculture.

2017 Directed Research Grant recipients:

Eric Wiseman, PhD (Virginia Tech) and Co-Investigator Sarah Gugercin (Virginia Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation) is cataloging organizations involved with arboriculture/urban forestry educational grant-making programs in recent years. The "Education Review Program" project will provide a thorough analysis on such programs to guide decision-making on future TREE Fund Arboriculture Education grants.

Andrew Koeser, PhD (University of Florida - Gulf Coast REC) and Co-Investigator Rich Hauer, PhD (University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point) aims to conduct a comprehensive review of all past TREE Fund-supported research in their study "Research Review Program." Their work will gauge direct and indirect outcomes, outputs, and impacts of the funded projects.

2017 John Z. Duling Grant recipient:

Nina Bassuk, PhD (Cornell University) seeks to improve tree transplant success and ultimately provide greater tree species diversity in the nursery industry via root manipulation. In the "Enhancing Tree Transplant Success through the Manipulation of Root Hydraulic Conductance" project, Dr. Bassuk will manipulate root growth to increase the rate and efficiency of water uptake, resulting in a production practice that can improve a tree's ability to respond to transplant shock.

2017 Jack Kimmel International Grant recipients:

Kimmel grants are supported by Canadian TREE Fund and its riders in the Tour des Trees outreach and fundraising event.

Rachael Antwis, PhD and Co-Investigator Stephen Parnell, PhD (both University of Salford, U.K.) are exploring natural microbial communities of trees as a way to address emerging infectious diseases such as the chalara fungus infecting ash. The "Fighting microbes with microbes to protect our native trees" study aims to identify microbial signatures of ash resistance to chalara and markers of host gene expression to identify resistant trees for cultivation and reforestation.

Liliana Franco-Lara, PhD and Co-Investigator Helena Brochero, PhD (both Universidad Militar Nueva Granada) aim to better understand the diseases caused by phytoplasma (a type of bacteria) that are affecting urban trees in Bogotá, including the strategically important Andean oak (Q. humboldtii). The "Identification of possible insect vectors of phytoplasmas in Quercus humboldtii Bonpla in Bogotá, Colombia" project will detect the insects associated with the Andean oak and identify the species that may be transmitting the bacteria. Findings will serve to define strategies to manage and reduce the spread of phytoplasmal diseases.

2017 Arboriculture Education Grant recipients:

Friends of the Urban Forest (San Francisco, CA) – The "Green Teens – Vocational Skills Job Training" initiative provides practical job skills training to low-income, high school aged youth. It is an integral part of the organization's plans to expand and preserve San Francisco's tree canopy, while empowering at-risk youth.

TreeFolks (Del Valle, TX) – With the "Youth Tree Climbing Initiative" TreeFolks will expand its active and educational urban forestry activities for underserved youth in Austin to include tree climbing.

2017 Ohio Chapter ISA Education Grant recipient:

Columbus State Community College (Columbus, OH) – The "Columbus State Arboriculture Education Expansion and Tree Care Academy Project" seeks to increase awareness of the field of arboriculture and create an entry point for the college's new Arboriculture Technician Certificate. The weeklong Youth Tree Care Academy for students age 16+ provides a hands-on introduction to arboriculture as well as the certificate program.

2017 Frank E. Gamma, Sr. Arboriculture Education Fund recipient:

Tree Care Industry Association Foundation (Londonderry, NH) – This grant supports the Arborist Safety Training Institute which works to bring high quality, local and affordable safety training to working arborists. ASTI provides grants for job and safety training to minimize injury and promote overall workforce safety.

2017 Scholarship recipients:

Robert Felix Memorial Scholarship

- Laura Mantin, Humber College, ON, Canada
- Conor Smith, University of New Hampshire

Horace M. Thayer Scholarship
Timothy Lentz, University of Delaware

John Wright Memorial Scholarship
Savannah Haines, University of Maine

Fran Ward Women in Arboriculture Scholarship
Jennifer Halterman, Pennsylvania State University

View all past recipients of TREE Fund grants at treefund.org/researcharchive.

About TREE Fund

Tree Research and Education Endowment (TREE) Fund is a 501(c)3 charity dedicated to the discovery and international dissemination of new knowledge in urban forestry and arboriculture (the science of caring for trees in a landscape). TREE Fund awards scholarships and education grants to engage and support the next generation of tree stewards, and multiple research grants to improve the science, safety and practice of arboriculture.

With support from individual donors and Partners, TREE Fund research has contributed to:

- Improving conditions for tree growth in difficult sites
- Developing strategies to manage diseases and pests that affect urban trees
- Improving utility line clearing practices
- Understanding air pollution reduction and carbon sequestration by trees
- Determining the costs and benefits of urban trees

For more information, visit treefund.org.

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