



**November 2020**

*"The oak's distinction is its insistence and its flexibility...  
It specializes in not specializing."*

Logan, William Bryant in *Oak: The Frame of Civilization*

[Visit our Website](#)

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## **Building Sustainability: The 2020 Year-End Appeal**

As a Vice President for Bartlett Tree Experts, I'm keenly aware of the importance of both containing and covering the costs of doing business. I'm equally aware of the importance of reinvesting in the business, so it has the capacity to perform well, respond to the market, and grow.

As a member of the TREE Fund Board of Trustees, I apply that same awareness to a nonprofit business. Nonprofits are businesses, and the principles of good business apply: We must contain and cover our costs of doing business, invest in good people, and build for the immediate and long-term future.

The TREE Fund is launching its annual year-end appeal, and I'm asking you to give. This year, we're working to build our capacity to achieve sustainability.

The TREE Fund is an effective nonprofit business. We're exploring and sharing the science of trees to contribute to the lives of people, communities, economies, and the environment. The more than \$4.5 million it's given in grants and scholarships since 2002 has acted as seed money--every \$1 given brought in an average of \$2.63--resulting in nearly \$12 million of support for the research that supports trees and our work among them.

The TREE Fund is an efficient nonprofit business. By cutting its already lean operating budget by more than 25%, reallocating resources, and quickly adapting, the TREE Fund survived the 2020 pandemic.

Our analysis of how to sustain this nonprofit business into the future revealed that our greatest strengths are our dedicated staff, our reputation for applicable research, and our endowed grants. We need, however, to strengthen our capacity to cover the full cost of our programs, respond to the emerging economy, and build for a sustainable future. When the TREE Fund can cover its full costs and maintain a reserve for crises, it will be a healthy, resilient

nonprofit business on which we can depend for decades to come.

That's where you come in. The variety of events on which we have relied for capacity funding have been eliminated or dramatically altered by the pandemic, so we are relying on you to meet the need. We are exploring new ways to cover our full costs in the years to come, but we need your help in that process.

Please visit [treefund.org](https://treefund.org) today and help us help you. Thank you.

Paul Fletcher, BCMA, RCA, Vice President  
Bartlett Tree Experts  
Member, TREE Fund Board of Trustees

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## TREE Fund After Hours at ISA Conference

Please join us for a virtual TREE Fund After Hours during the ISA virtual conference on Wednesday, Dec. 9, at 4 PM Central Time. The TREE Fund will provide an update on our activities, announce this year's Volunteer of the Year, recognize the success of this year's Tour des Trees riders, and celebrate the importance of our mission with special messages from our most recent grant recipients who will give us a sneak peak into their current research projects. All attendees will be eligible for a raffle of KASK Super Plasma climbing helmets. Watch your inbox for registration information.

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## Tour des Trees 2020 Report

The 2020 virtual Tour des Trees: *Rollin' in Place* to benefit the TREE Fund campaign has concluded with \$156,002 (exceeding its \$150,000 fundraising goal)! These dollars will go a long way in furthering tree research and education, and we are truly grateful to all our participants and partners for making this achievement possible. Congratulations and thank you.



For the first time ever, the Tour des Trees campaign took place in an entirely virtual format. When the difficult decision was made to postpone the in-person 2020 Tour and pivot to a virtual event, we were entering unknown territory. With the announcement of this new format we expected disappointment, but instead we were flooded by support, enthusiasm, and immediate growth. Our participation reached a total of 86 individuals who collectively covered 46,149 virtual miles. The distance and fundraising leaderboards remained competitive throughout the entire campaign, and we are eager to announce and celebrate our winners below.

### Top Individual Fundraisers

1. James Urban, \$14,369
2. Dick Rideout, \$12,548
3. Randy Miller, \$6,475

4. Tom Ordway, \$5,600
5. Joe Lentz, \$5,500
6. Ray Henning, \$5,144
7. Sam Van Maanen, \$4,609
8. Jeff Iles, \$4,084
9. Phil Graham, \$3,847
10. Pete Smith, \$3,501

#### Top Distance Individuals

1. John Harthoorn, 5,000 mi
2. Doreen Crenshaw, 3,293 mi
3. Doug Schoch, 2,650 mi
4. Paul Wood, 2,360 mi
5. Laurie Skul, 2,328 mi
6. Gordon Matassa, 2,156 mi
7. Dave Staats, 1,752 mi
8. Randy Miller, 1,473 mi
9. Kristina Bezanson, 1,416 mi
10. Jeff McMullen, 1,312 mi

#### Top Fundraising Teams

1. Team Ohio, \$15,615
2. Team ASLA, 15,294
3. Team Wisconsin, \$14,686
4. Team Southern, \$12,148
5. Team Canada, \$10,514
6. Team Rocky Mountain, \$9,917
7. Team Indiana, \$6,613
8. Team Midwestern, \$3,501
9. Team New England, \$3,201
10. Team Mid-Atlantic, \$2,805

#### Top Distance Teams

1. Team Ohio, 7,546 mi
2. Team Hungry Wolves, 5,998 mi
3. Team Rocky Mountain, 3,165 mi
4. Team New England, 2,818 mi
5. Team Southern, 2,454 mi
6. Team Schwab Roppolo, 2,181 mi
7. Team Penn Del, 1,008 mi
8. Team Canada, 886 mi
9. Team Texas, 725 mi
10. Team ASLA, 681 mi

Finally, a long-standing Tour des Trees tradition is to honor the “Best of Tour” awards. These participants went above and beyond in displaying the tour spirit throughout their entire campaigns.

1. Drain the Swamp Award: Deb Hilbert
2. Best Social Ambassador Award: Kristina Bezanson
3. Most Creative Fundraiser Award: Jim Urban
4. Ultra-Distance Award: John Harthoorn
5. Most Consistent Award: Doug Schoch
6. Above and Beyond Award: Laurie Skul
7. Best Fundraising Photo Award: Paul Wood

8. Indoor Warrior Award: Gordon Matassa
9. Best Leader Award: Jeff Iles
10. Top Virtual Engagement Award: Hallie Dozier, Lisa Meranti, and Kevin Jones

Thank you to the Tour des Trees Planning and Welcoming Task Force members – we couldn't have done it without you:

- Planning Task Force: Dana Coelho, Donna Davis, Jon Elliott, Steve Geist, Maggie Harthoorn, Brett Heinrich, Warren Hoselton, Jeff Iles, Jason Jones, Ben Rickenbacker, Don Roppolo, Laurie Skul, Dave Staats, Tom Wolf, Paul Wood
- Welcoming Task Force: Warren Hoselton, Jeff Iles, Don Roppolo, Cindy Schwab, Laurie Skul, Dave Staats, Tom Wolf, Paul Wood

And thank you to ALL of our Rollin' in Place participants for your efforts to make 2020 one for the books. See you next year!

**TOP FUNDRAISER PRIZES**

Top fundraisers will receive prizes provided by **Arborwear** and **Tailwind Nutrition** - and the #1 fundraiser will receive one free month of **Select Level Coaching** from **Carmichael Training Systems!**

Logos for sponsors: Arborwear, ds, tailwind NUTRITION, KASK, ACRT, Black Bear Adventures, Denny Lumber, MINDFULLY MIXED.

### Crown Partners



### Platinum Partners



### Gold Partners



### Silver Partners



### Bronze Partners

Iowa Arborist Association, Michael Grimm Landscape & Tree Service, Minnesota Society of Arboriculture, Penn Del ISA, Urban Trees + Soils, Vermeer, Western Chapter ISA

## Earning a Tree Badge

Girl Scout Troop 45266, led by Kristin Costello and Marilyn Kross, hosted a November meeting for their troop with the opportunity for each troop member



to earn a tree badge. The group met with Billy Volchko (TREE Fund volunteer and Davey Tree foreman), and Maggie Harthoorn (TREE Fund community engagement manager) via a Zoom meeting.

Billy and Maggie eagerly spoke with the group, covering several topics, including tree careers, products produced by trees, the science of trees, connections between people and trees, planting the right tree in the right place, and caring for trees of any age. They also used the time to present a “show and tell” of common tools used by arborists, tree worker safety, and even counted the growth rings on an ash tree cookie.

Trees are a valuable resource, and it is uplifting to engage with groups interested in the betterment of our community forests at such a young age. The group pledged to “plant the right tree in the right place”, and their participation was more than worthy of earning each troop member their very own tree badge.

Thank you, Troop 45266, for letting the TREE Fund spend this time with you!

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## Volunteer Spotlight

The Tour des Trees has traditionally been the TREE Fund’s main community engagement event. Traditionally, community engagement was a simple concept: engage with local communities along the Tour des Trees route to share our mission and love of trees.

A virtual campaign made this goal more challenging, and this challenge was met with several generous individuals who shared with us their time and gifts to create engagement opportunities during livestream virtual sessions:

- Hallie Dozier, who led us through multiple guided meditation sessions;
- Lisa Meranti, who instructed multiple yoga sessions;
- Professor Elwood Pricklethorn (managed by Warren Hoselton), who met with us to talk about the importance of trees and his new book *True Tree Crimes*;
- Tour Director Paul Wood, Tour Mechanic Billy Volchko, and Mindfully Mixed’s Renee Volchko, who all met with our participants to discuss training, nutrition, and bike tune-up tips; and
- ACRT’s Renee Bissett and Kevin Jones, who hosted our participants for a Halloween themed Trivia Night.

Thank you for helping to make this campaign a success! Recordings of all livestream sessions are available [here](#).

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## Lead Donors

We are deeply grateful to the following people and organizations who contributed \$2,500 or more to the TREE Fund in October 2020:

**Anonymous**  
**Canadian TREE Fund**  
**Wright Tree Service**

See the full list of lead donors who make our vital tree research and education work possible on our [website](#).

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## Leading Thoughts

*by Russell K. King*  
*TREE Fund President and CEO*

With Thanksgiving just days away, and having just finished my first year with the TREE Fund, I'm feeling particularly contemplative.

It was a year marked by tragedy, change, and challenge. The pandemic has, as of this writing, taken from us more than 1.3 million people--of which a quarter million were fellow Americans. In the US, we experienced prolonged economic, social, and political upheaval on top of personal isolation and loss. Daily life felt like Toynbee's history: "...one damned thing after another." The TREE Fund's very existence was threatened. Uncertainty ruled.



Despite all that, I am feeling profound gratitude.

I almost feel guilty for my gratitude and the joy it inspires. That's no mere treacle, the practice of gratitude is part of staying strong and resilient. I try every day to find a reason to be grateful: a walk in the trees, the food on my table, the light in my wife's eyes. Life is full of both sorrow and joy, but we humans are wired to focus on what seems unsafe, so we sometimes miss the joy. Practicing gratitude helps me regain my balance.

Science says being grateful makes us happier, and right now we could all use more of that.

The TREE Fund's year offers much for which I give thanks. Being asked to lead an organization with such a worthy mission is a profound reason; being able to successfully respond to that request in a year like 2020 is another. Among the achievements of my career in nonprofit leadership, keeping the TREE Fund alive when so many other nonprofits succumbed stands alone and evokes a deep gratitude.

That I shared pursuit of the TREE Fund mission with Barb, Monika, and Maggie, along with the Board of Trustees and our many volunteers, partners, and donors is still another reason to give thanks. It's great to work with good people. That we are still here and building our capacity for sustainability is nothing short of a miracle to me. The future is now ours to create—a true gift, if we will accept it.

A fuller and more sustainable gratitude expands toward others.

Lest I am lost in my own inner fog, I stop to feel grateful:

- that our staff proved dedicated, industrious, and innovative;
- that arboriculture is doing comparatively well;

- that our Tour des Trees participants are people of resolve, skill, and generosity; and
- that our volunteers are faithful, flexible, and creative.

But even beyond the TREE Fund family, I look for moments of happiness, pleasure, or success in the lives of others for which I can be thankful. I seek to rejoice in their joy.

Thank you for this past year; may the next make us our gratitude all the richer.

## TREE Fund Achieves Highest Rating Again

For the second consecutive year, the TREE Fund has reached Guidestar's highest level of achievement for nonprofit transparency--the platinum award. GuideStar is the world's largest and most authoritative source of information on nonprofit organizations. Major donors tend to look to GuideStar as the "seal of approval" before making donations.



## THANK YOU TREE Fund Crown Partners!



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[www.treefund.org](http://www.treefund.org)

[Donate now](#)

TREE Fund is a 501(C)3 nonprofit with a mission to support scientific discovery and dissemination of new knowledge in the fields of arboriculture and urban forestry.