



Edwardsville Recognized Again As "Tree City USA," Invites Volunteers To Plant Trees At Watershed

by Cathy A. Hensley
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EDWARDSVILLE – The City of Edwardsville took a moment at the Tuesday, April 19, City Council meeting to celebrate once again being named a “Tree City USA,” an honor bestowed on the City by the National Arbor Day Foundation for more than two decades.

Officials then got right back to earning the honor, announcing an upcoming tree-planting project at Watershed Nature Center.

“We’re celebrating by growing our urban forest,” said Sarah Cundiff, a resident and chairman of the Edwardsville Environmental Commission, a City body that focuses on environmental sustainability and beautification efforts.

On Saturday, April 27, 14 trees native to this region will be planted at the City’s Watershed Nature Center, 1591 Tower Avenue, as replacements for trees felled by beavers last fall. A mixture of elm, bald cypress, pecan and oak trees will be planted beginning at 9 a.m.

Volunteers are invited to take part in the effort, which will be led by Parks and Recreation staff and Edwardsville Environmental Commission members.

The trees were purchased with an approximately \$1,650 grant from Trees Forever, a nonprofit that works with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Forest Service to help support community forests and tree health. The trees will be planted just one day after Arbor Day, which is observed on the last Friday in April, and less than a week after Earth Day, which falls on Monday, April 22.

To be named a Tree City USA, Edwardsville has to meet numerous requirements, including establishing a commission to oversee the care of the City’s urban forest, conducting related activities and spending at least \$2 per capita on trees. Cundiff said the City spent \$5.23 per capita on its tree population over the past year.

Mayor Art Risavy praised the efforts that led to the Tree City USA designation, noting the enthusiastic commitment by City officials and the community to natural surroundings in Edwardsville. Last fall City officials launched the Edwardsville Enhancement Fund, which utilizes a quarter-percent sales tax increase to support greenspace purchases, park improvements, public safety pensions and capital improvement projects.

Those interested in assisting with the tree planting at Watershed should bring sturdy shoes and gloves; a shovel or rake would be helpful, too, but isn’t required, said Marc Miller, the City’s horticulture coordinator. Anyone with questions can reach out to Miller by email:

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