

Dept. of Natural Resources: Celebrating Wisconsin's vital rural and urban forests this Arbor Day

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) encourages the public to celebrate Friday, April 28 as Arbor Day in Wisconsin and April 22-28 as Forest Appreciation Week.

Arbor Day, an annual observance promoting tree planting and care, has been celebrated in Wisconsin on the last Friday of April since 1883. Forest Appreciation Week, which spans Earth Day on April 22 through Arbor Day, is a time to reflect on the importance of trees and forests in our lives.

“Forests are deeply ingrained into the culture of Wisconsin,” said Heather Berklund, DNR Chief State Forester. “Wisconsin’s rural and urban forests serve a vital role in our local and statewide economy and environmental health.”

The 17 million acres of forests covering nearly half of Wisconsin and the millions of urban trees across the state safeguard water resources, provide wildlife habitat and support our forest industry, while providing myriad outdoor recreation opportunities, supporting human health and mitigating impacts of the changing climate.

Investments in tree planting and forest stewardship by communities, homeowners and forest landowners are key to ensuring that Wisconsin continues to have healthy and sustainable urban and rural forests that support stronger and more resilient communities.

Students across the state also have held a stewardship role over the years as the DNR donates tree seedlings each year to fourth-grade classrooms to commemorate

Arbor Day. More than 35,000 seedlings were shipped to schools this week to help students learn about the importance of trees in their lives. Additionally, the DNR's reforestation program has supplied Wisconsin landowners with more than 1.6 billion seedlings since 1911.

In 2021, the State of Wisconsin made [a tree planting and forest conservation pledge](#) focusing on the stewardship of forests and trees in both rural and urban areas, addressing the equitable distribution of the urban tree canopy, and committing to safeguarding our working forest lands from development. Conserving and growing Wisconsin's forests is critical to supporting Wisconsin's forest products industry which provides 61,000 jobs and contributes \$24.4 billion annually to the state's economy.

Two years into the pledge, progress towards the goal of planting 74 million rural trees by the year 2030 is at 30%. Progress towards the urban tree planting goal of 1 million trees is at 8.8%. Finally, progress towards the goal of conserving 125,000 acres of forestland is at 13.1%.

Learn more about [Wisconsin forestry programs](#) on the DNR's website.