 See the inspiring images that earned top honors in our annual photo contest
We all want to be remembered as someone who made a difference in our world. **YOU CAN!** — by leaving a gift to American Forests in your will, trust or by beneficiary designation. It’s easy to do, and your gift costs you nothing today.

We can help you decide on a gift that’s right for you. To discuss the best gift option for you or to notify us of a gift you have made, please contact Sarah Mitchell, Director of Donor Experience and Engagement, at **202-737-1948** or **smitche@americanforest.org**.

**CLIMATE CHANGE IS THE PROBLEM. FORESTS ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE SOLUTION.**
The economic lifeblood of trees
Take a look at some of the unique jobs generated by, and reliant on, forests and trees.

Landowners key to restoring the native forests of the Lower Rio Grande Valley
By Katherine Gustafson
American Forests is partnering with rancher Betty Perez and other private landowners to restore native thornforest habitat in South Texas.

2021 Forests in Focus Photo Contest
See the stunning photography that earned top honors in this year’s contest.
IN TOUGH TIMES — like the COVID-19 pandemic — we often learn important lessons. One such lesson for me has been the close connection between my mental health and ability to connect with the outdoors. More than just an interesting “aha” moment, I believe that this realization calls me, American Forests and all of us to action.

You will note that I did not say a connection to “nature” or even “forests.” For me and, I believe, many others, our most frequent connection to the outdoors is a long way from the wildlands Aldo Leopold explored. It’s right outside our front door.

Just being able to walk under the leaves and hear birds on a tree-lined street, or have a shaded path for running and biking on a hot day, can make all the difference. In my own life, it has been incredibly valuable to be able to come out of my basement office and simply enjoy the trees in my backyard, as well as the small urban forest I am blessed to have at the end of my street.

But we also have a need, clearer now than ever, for big outdoor adventures. You have probably read about the record numbers of people visiting our national parks during the pandemic, in some cases pushing those places to their breaking point.

My wife and I love to visit Shenandoah National Park and the George Washington National Forest, both of which are less than two hours from our home. I used to wonder why we didn’t see more people in these places.

Not anymore. Now we have had to aim for “off hours” windows to visit our close-to-home parks because they are so heavily trafficked on the weekends it has not always felt possible to manage social distancing while on the trails. This difficulty has been seen across the nation, posing a huge challenge for...
One of the main reasons for this is that we have had fewer structured activities, like youth sports and concerts, competing for our time. But equally important is that the overwhelming intensity of sitting in just one place and having endless screen time day after day has prompted a raw physical need to balance our digital stimuli with the opposite — the sounds and experiences of being in nature.

To address this, American Forests is doubling down on its commitment to Tree Equity. Simply put, Tree Equity is about ensuring every neighborhood has enough trees so that every person can reap the benefits that trees have to offer — such as calming our minds on busy Zoom days. Soon we will roll out Tree Equity scores for every urbanized area in the United States. City government employees, community activists, urban foresters and others can use the scores to make the case for planting trees in the neighborhoods that need them most — notably, neighborhoods subjected to disinvestment and discrimination — and allocate the resources needed to do so.

We also need to create more “big nature” opportunities outside our communities, ideally reachable by large numbers of people in different ways, including public transit. American Forests has planted 65 million trees since 1990. We need to step this up in close-to-home places that can expand accessible outdoor experiences for all.

American Forests promotes Tree Equity and close-to-home natural areas as a focus for tree planting efforts through the 1t.org US Chapter, the trillion trees platform that includes entities ranging from governments and companies to Girl Scouts and faith groups.

Finally, we need to speak for time under the trees as life moves into a post-pandemic mode. Those happy faces I have seen on the bustling trails suggest to me that we have rediscovered something really important by taking away, temporarily, other things that have come to dominate our time. I hope we can help remind America of the healing power from mixing more outside time into our busy modern lives, and influence more people to do so.

Our forests have never needed us more, and we have never needed them more, too. Thank you for everything you help make possible at American Forests.

For more news and updates from Jad, follow him on Twitter @JadDaley
A place to call home

In fact, 80% of all land-based species live in forests.

But it’s far from a one-sided relationship. While forests provide habitat and food for wildlife, many wildlife species return the favor, nourishing their forest homes by dispersing and germinating seeds, controlling threatening pests and more.

This dynamic partnership benefits forests in other ways as well. Often, the vibrancy and anticipation of spotting wildlife is what draws people to forests. While there, they can find adventure and emotionally connect with nature, which, ultimately, creates a desire to protect it.

When that happens, we help ensure these creatures have a place to call home — forever.

Bears make their dens in the depths of the forest, but it is their diet that returns the favor. They help fertilize the forest floor by dragging fish carcasses throughout the forest, and even their own scat enriches the soil. Additionally, bears’ love of fruit helps distribute undigested seed in different parts of forest ecosystems, generating new plant growth.
Top: Some animals bite off more than they can chew. And, in the case of the puma, which can take down big game much larger than themselves, their leftovers can feed a wide range of smaller scavengers.

Left: Some trees are incredibly dependent on wildlife for species survival. Clark’s nutcrackers crack open whitebark pine cones, extract their seeds and bury them for future consumption. However, many of those seeds remain in the ground, uneaten. The Clark’s nutcracker is the only animal that buries the seeds in such a way that they can germinate and, ultimately, become full grown whitebark pines.

Above: Owls nest high in the tree tops, but their forest presence is far more important than one might think. Some species, such as the northern spotted owl, prefer dense old-growth forests. When present, these owls serve as indicators of forest health and play a role in land management aimed at protecting these remaining old-growth forests.
Above: More than half of America’s drinking water originates in forests — mainly from the rivers and streams that run through them. 

Right: Every 10% increase in forest cover in a watershed leads to a 20% decrease in costs for water treatment downstream. Filtration provided by Wayne National Forest in Ohio is valued at more than $3 million annually.

WATER IS LIFE. Clean water is essential to our food supply, wildlife, our economy and so much more. But do you know what’s essential to having a dependable, clean water supply? Healthy forests.

Healthy forests act like a sponge. Their trees and soil soak up rainwater and snow melt, slowly replenishing streams and rivers while reducing the risk of flooding downstream. Through this process, they also filter and clean the water of soil, chemicals and other contaminants that can harm our drinking water supply and water ecosystems.

Just as water is life, healthy forests are as well.
Family Tree Strings

Graphic designer Carla Delgado recently created a project she had long dreamed of.

**The inspiration**
Two of my favorite creative outlets are woodworking and infographics (the visual translation of an objective set of data that conveys the information in an accessible and interesting way). Trees have also been a special symbol in our family since the first time our first born smiled at something other than his family. Leaves on a tree blowing in the wind caught his eye and prompted a big grin during one of our walks. Our unofficial family mantra is "sometimes you have to stop and watch the leaves blow."

**About the project**
Titled “Family Tree Strings,” a series of threads are strung on a ring of hooks, spelling out the names of family members.

Within a hollowed-out circle at the center of a tree slice (or end-grain disk), a series of 26 hooks are screwed into the wood, each representing a sequential letter of the alphabet, beginning with the letter “A” at the top of the circle.

Names are “spelled out” using colored cotton string, threading one letter at a time around the ring of hooks. Each name is spelled out in a different color, and names are added by birth order.

This inaugural Family Tree represents my family:
- Carla (myself)
- Alejandro (my husband)
- Brodie (our dog)
- Daniel (son, age 6)
- Xavier (son, age 3)

"In the same way that a tree’s concentric rings are a picture of its life and growth, the colored strings, layered on top of one another, are a picture of a family’s lineage."

Carla Delgado, creative director at Page 33 Studio in Austin

This end-grain disk is from an eastern red cedar tree, harvested by local sustainable lumber company, Harvest Lumber Co. The company sells lumber harvested from Austin city trees that might otherwise be disposed of through chipping.
My favorite tree is the aspen. Probably I should say my favorite trees, for never can I remember seeing an aspen standing alone. Here in our Rocky Mountains, they are both prolific and sociable. They spring up from seed broadcast by the wind, grow quickly and, before you know it, an entire mountain slope is covered with a grove of these slender trees. There they stand offering protection to the slower growing conifers and when that purpose is achieved either their heavy winds crack their soft wood or they die a natural death. It is a brief but useful life.

But while they live they are both beautiful and gay. Smooth pale green bark covers their slender youthful trunks and what gives them their other name, “the quaking asp,” is that even the slightest breeze flutters their delicate leaves. To me they do not quake. Rather they whisper and dance all day long, a joy to see.

Their real beauty is attained in the fall when these same dancing leaves turn a golden yellow and light up the dark green of the firs on the mountain slope. Yes, our aspens are beautiful and they are gay. That is why I like them.

Helen H. Means

HISTORY

A century-long legacy reignited

THIS APRIL, Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) and American Forests announced a new initiative called the Tree Promise — together, planting and protecting 5 million trees in five years across the United States. But American Forests’ work with GSUSA dates back a century, to 1921, when First Lady Florence Harding simultaneously served as honorary president of the Girl Scouts and vice president of American Forests.

GSUSA, with 2.5 million members, helps encourage and inspire girls to make a difference in the world, including for the environment, making their new initiative with American Forests a perfect fit.

Top left: First Lady Florence Harding joins Girl Scouts of the USA on Earth Day in 1922.
Lower left: Harding, a vice president of American Forests, helps kick off a 1921 memorial tree planting initiative focused on trees in cities.
Right: A letter from Girl Scouts President Helen H. Means that was published in an American Forests publication from the mid-1900s.
How many trees do our cities need?

**The Problem**

In U.S. urban areas, we are losing one tree for every two trees established. *(established means planted or naturally regenerated)*

Tree loss is a problem, given the role trees play in advancing Tree Equity and slowing climate change.

The loss is mainly due to:

- Natural disasters, such as hurricanes, tornados, fires, insects and diseases
- Difficulty of growing trees in urban areas
- Tree removal for development
- Improper planting practices

And it’s not a problem that’s going away.

The projected loss of tree canopy in urban areas is **8.3%** by 2060.

**The Solution**

Annually plant **31.4 million** trees in the U.S., which will cost **$8.9 billion**.

Doing so would mean that, on average, the tree canopy cover in urban areas would be **43.3%**.

That’s a **10%** relative increase over current tree canopy cover.

**The Benefits**

of planting 31.4 million trees annually

- **Tree Equity**: We will advance Tree Equity by planting these trees where they are needed most.
- **Jobs**: At least **228,000** jobs would be created or supported every year.
- **Climate Change**: Nearly 1 billion metric tons of carbon would be stored in the trees.
- **Health**: Nearly **$1.6 billion** a year would be saved from things like avoided asthma-related emergency room visits.
IN 2013, THE NEW online lending company LightStream was looking for a way to do good in the world that also felt like part of the company’s DNA. LightStream’s loans were already paperless, which had a direct positive impact on trees and forests. But the company wanted to pour more energy and resources into forest conservation and decided to partner with American Forests to help restore fire-damaged wilderness areas by donating a tree for every loan it funded.

“The idea was to find a partner or cause that would allow us to give back in a greater way that was related to our story,” says Kristin Shuff, LightStream’s senior vice president of marketing. “What better way to give back than to do even more to support trees.”

What began as a focus on post-wildfire recovery in Montana has blossomed over eight years into a robust long-term slate of coast-to-coast projects, from restoring degraded watersheds in California, to supporting urban tree planting efforts in Miami and Houston, to helping educate the public about the value of trees.

And soon, the company expects to celebrate a major milestone — 1 million trees.

“It is an incredible accomplishment to have supported the restoration of so many essential forests,” says Jad Daley, president and chief executive officer of American Forests. “With projects in 23 states, LightStream has helped bring back to life forests that we rely on to purify our air and water, slow climate change and provide habitat for wildlife and recreational areas for people.”

Each time LightStream funds a loan, the company sends its customers a notification that a tree has been planted on their behalf.

“Our American Forests partnership is a reflection of LightStream’s culture and purpose,” Shuff says. “Supporting the environmental and educational efforts of American Forests fits closely with the values we support for our company, our teammates and our customers.”

LightStream’s support for forest restoration has spanned 23 states and several critical ecosystems, including the Lower Rio Grande Valley, home to the endangered ocelot.
Your annual leadership gift of $1,000 or more makes you a giant for American Forests.

Forests rely on keystone tree species — such as the giant sequoia — to stay healthy and resilient. In the same way, American Forests relies on our keystone supporters — Sequoia Circle members — to advance our mission with leadership-level gifts.

Become a Sequoia Circle member today at americanforests.org/sequoiacircle
Questions? Contact Emily Russell, director of major gifts, at erussell@americanforests.org or 202-370-4522.
THE ECONOMIC LIFEBLOOD OF TREES

Suzanne Radford knows the power of forests to help heal the sick and stressed. Those incredible capabilities enabled her to turn a passion for nature into a career. She now guides and coaches people in ways to use the sights, sounds and smells of the woods to create a sense of calm — something referred to as “forest bathing.”

Radford is one of many people starting to realize that trees and, more broadly, forests are an engine for job creation. More than 106,000 people in the United States work directly with forests in jobs, such as conservation scientist, forest manager and logger, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

But many more have jobs that are linked to forests in less obvious ways. From science teachers to whiskey barrel makers to artists, people in myriad professions need forests and trees. In cities, park planners design urban oases that revolve around trees and the benefits they provide people. Sculptors carve wood reclaimed from old buildings into beautiful items that can be sold. And what would wildlife photographers do without forests that provide habitat for countless animals and birds?

Forests aren’t just something pretty to look at or walk through. They are the economic lifeblood for an increasing number of people in the U.S.

Forest Bathing Guide

Left: Suzanne Radford is a certified forest bathing guide and forest therapy practitioner. She helps people connect to nature through excursions in the Serra de Monchique mountain range of the Iberian Peninsula in Southern Portugal. Years ago, Radford discovered a secret waterfall in a forest she frequently visits. Now she offers her clients a chance to sit beside water, watch its movement and flow and listen as it cascades over the rocks. She encourages forest bathers to imagine the role the waterfall plays in feeding the mountain and surrounding forest, and to let the water wash over their hands and feet.
Above: Lying on the trunk of an oak tree, Radford listens to a soundscape of birdsong and insects humming. A growing body of research shows that time spent in nature helps boost people’s moods and reduces anxiety and stress. Companies hire her as a nature coach to help their employees manage stress through time spent outdoors.

Park Planner
Right: As a park planner for the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, Clement Lau analyzes data, such as demographics, existing parkland, trees and transportation, to determine which unincorporated areas need parks the most. In places like Los Angeles County, parks are considered key infrastructure for quality of life, and trees are a major component of park planning. Here, Lau enjoys an afternoon at Arcadia County Park, which he frequents with his family. Above: Once they have identified a site for a park, planners like Lau create a vision for the space. Here is his rendering of a pocket park proposed for Walnut Park, a community in Los Angeles County with very few trees and parks compared to other communities. Once grown, the trees included here will help improve air quality and cool down the neighborhood on hot days.
Wood Sculptor

Right: Inspired by a fox family that scurried about late at night in the woods behind her house, Canadian-based sculptor Patricia Aitkenhead created this wall display of a fox face using Sapele and maple wood.

Below and above: Aitkenhead’s carved animals make popular pendants and totems. But her business started with a classic debate: cats or dogs? As a way to settle the issue, she crafted a chess set comprised of a team of cats and a team of dogs. She chose breeds with traits she thought might fit their position on the board. Here, these pugs are the pawns.
Barrel Makers

Above: Oak barrels being charred at Kentucky Cooperage in Lebanon, Ky. The charred American oak barrel is a cornerstone of American whiskey, and white oaks specifically are used in the aging of bourbon. Barrel makers char spirit barrels to create flavor, color, aroma, a char layer that acts as a filter, and to break down the wood cell walls so the spirit can extract flavors from the oak.

Below: Securing top and bottom barrel heads is one of the last touches in barrel production. Here, an employee at Kentucky Cooperage is placing the head hoop on a barrel.
Production Arborist

Left: Benyah Andressohn was 6 when he started climbing trees. Little did he know he would find his calling up in those branches. In high school he wanted a job that would pose a daily challenge, change the environment and allow him to use his brain. Becoming an arborist made perfect sense.

Above: Andressohn works for True Tree Service in Miami, where he is a production arborist, trained to safely ascend and descend trees in order to care for them. Our cities need many more like him. Urban forestry is expected to see a 10% increase in job openings for entry-level positions by 2028.
Wildlife Photographer

Top Right: Richard Cronberg has been photographing wildlife for 40 years and is perhaps best known for his bird photos. Here, he has photographed a northern pygmy owl, which make their homes in dense forests near streams in Canada, the United States and Mexico. Songbirds are the northern pygmy owl’s favorite meal, so it can often be found near a group of agitated songbirds that gather to scold it.

Center right: The tree swallow, found throughout much of North America, makes its nests in the cavities of trees. But when it emerges, this beautiful acrobatic bird chases flying insects through fields and wetlands.

Below: Cronberg sells his photos commercially in art shows, fundraising events, retail stores and online. Here, he is capturing a group of snow and Ross’s geese taking flight at Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge in California.
LANDOWNERS KEY TO RESTORING NATIVE FORESTS OF THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY  

BY KATHERINE GUSTAFSON

IN TEXAS’S LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY, Betty Perez leans over a tender catclaw acacia in the nursery on her family’s cattle ranch. She’s pleased with the progress of the native plant that she’s growing to help restore her generational family land. The ranch’s future is increasingly threatened by the shifts in temperature and rainfall brought on by climate change.

Betty Perez runs a ranch in La Joya, Texas, that has been in her family for generations. She is helping restore wild areas of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Here, Perez and Kim Wahl-Villarreal, formerly with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the Valley, are picking seeds on the Perez Ranch.
Mike Heep, a private nursery owner, delivers seedlings to a USFWS site in the Valley.

“It doesn’t bring a lot of money, but it brings a lot of gratification,” she says, referring to her revegetation work. She learned how to grow and plant these native species during her time with Friends of the Wildlife Corridor, a nonprofit group dedicated to protecting and restoring the Santa Ana and Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuges. She was previously the organization’s president and now serves as a board member.

Perez studied botany at the University of Texas before returning to reclaim this piece of family heritage and “to get to know the land,” as she puts it. She sells her native plants, such as yucca, catclaw acacia and wolfberry, to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), which uses them to restore swaths of farmland back to this dynamic, but threatened, native habitat.

Less than 10% of the Rio Grande Valley’s native forest ecosystem, Tamaulipan thornforest, remains. Many of Perez’s neighbors have completely removed this habitat from their
land, and there are huge pressures to sell what remains to developers who want to put in subdivisions — the most lucrative option. There’s also a movement to industrialize the nearby Gulf Coast to mine liquefied natural gas. And beyond these threats to the native habitat, there is the looming challenge of climate change.

The upshot of all of this? Many native animals dependent on these forests will eventually run out of space and resources. There also won’t be enough trees to help purify the air people in the

“It doesn’t bring a lot of money, but it brings a lot of gratification.”

— BETTY PEREZ, OWNER OF PEREZ RANCH
This photo of Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge clearly depicts how thornforest habitat has to compete with other land uses like farming and shows the value of protected lands in providing water resources and forest cover for wildlife — needs that will be magnified under climate change scenarios for the region.
Valley breathe and the water they drink. Flood risks will be higher. And a major part of the Valley’s natural heritage will be lost.

To address this situation, American Forests founded the Thornforest Conservation Partnership in 2018 to bring together communities, researchers, industry representatives, agencies and private landowners — like Perez. The group develops science-based plans and goals for conserving the region’s thornforest ecosystem in places that make the most sense for both wildlife and people. Reforesting public land is a major component, and Perez and other local nursery owners provide trees for that effort.

The hope is to preserve this unique corner of the U.S., which supports 1,200 plant species, 300 butterflies and more than 700 vertebrates, including the endangered ocelot.

Nearly all “of the original habitat is gone, and yet this is a very biodiverse area, an important area,” Perez notes. One reason it’s important is that several flyways for bird and butterfly
migration traverse the Valley, which sits between wintering zones in Central and South America and summer homes in the U.S. and Canada.

Perez is concerned by the pressures the area faces, but she sees many of her neighbors starting to make changes in their land management practices due to a growing awareness of environmental issues and concern with the effects of climate change.

“They’re not clearing the whole land,” she says. “A lot of them are doing really good work.”

Katherine Gustafson is a freelance writer specializing in helping mission-driven changemakers like tech disruptors and dynamic nonprofits tell their stories.
RESTORING NATIVE FORESTS OF THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY

Perez finds great satisfaction in knowing her work is helping to restore crucial habitat to the region.

Dale, Rene Ruiz (USFWS), Erica Leiserowitz (SCA) and William Rechin (SCA) walk through Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge in Alamo, Texas.
2021 FORESTS IN FOCUS PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS
AMERICAN FORESTS’ ANNUAL PHOTO CONTEST IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHOWCASE a wide array of forest scenes — from large wilderness areas to city parks — that are just as beautiful and diverse as the people who live among, enjoy and depend on them. A panel of six judges, including professional photographers, adventure seekers and individuals with an eye for nature, assessed photos on the criteria of originality, technical quality and artistic merit. After nearly 1,500 total submissions, these are the incredible photos that took home the top honors.

WINNER, FOREST LANDSCAPES
“Endurance in the Kenai Fjords”
PHOTOGRAPHER: Patricia Gilhooly (N.J.)
PHOTOGRAPHER’S PROSPECTIVE: “On a stormy day, my husband and I took a Kenai Fjords National Park Cruise, which brought us close to the coastal fjords and tidewater glaciers of the Hatfield Icefield. As we headed back to Seward, Alaska, the fog finally began to lift, revealing the stunning scope of the landscape at Resurrection Bay on the Kenai Peninsula.”
ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER: Gilhooly is an amateur photographer whose work can be viewed at www.PGimages.com.

WINNER, GRAND PRIZE
“Kindred Spirit”
PHOTOGRAPHER: Dave Shaffer (Wis.)
PHOTOGRAPHER’S PROSPECTIVE: “This beautiful bear quietly observed as I exited a darkening forest in Wisconsin. There was an indescribable connection. Her gentle gaze showed no fear or anxiety. It was simply two souls sharing a special moment.”
ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER: Shaffer is a photographer whose work can be viewed at www.bearwitnessimages.com.
WINNER, BIG, BEAUTIFUL TREES

“The Faerie Tree”

PHOTOGRAPHER: Bradley Joyce (Texas)
PHOTOGRAPHER’S PERSPECTIVE: “There is something special about this tree, found in Hillsboro, Ore., that even this photo doesn’t capture. After many failed attempts over several days, this composition finally worked. The tree itself radiates a prescient wisdom that compels you to sit below it and wait for some kind of revelation.”

ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER: Joyce is a landscape photographer whose work can be viewed at www.bradleyjoyce.com.
WINNER, FORESTS AND PEOPLE

“Mama Maple”

PHOTOGRAPHER: Josh Clague (N.Y.)
PHOTOGRAPHER’S PERSPECTIVE: “We heard about Mama Maple from the proprietor of the Bark Eater Inn, in Keene, N.Y., where we were staying. Even from a distance, its presence, both inviting and protective, immediately drew the children under its canopy, where they continued to play for quite some time.”

ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER: Clague is a natural resources planner for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.
WINNER, ASPIRING PHOTOGRAPHERS

“Blue Heron”

PHOTOGRAPHER: Kaiden Deck (Ohio)
PHOTOGRAPHER’S PERSPECTIVE: “I was walking down a trail in Mohican State Park in Ohio when I spotted a blue heron through the trees. I quietly crept closer to get the shot. The heron went on with its business, dipping its head in the freezing water. When he looked up at me, I snapped the picture.”
ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER: Deck, 14, is an upcoming sophomore in high school and aspiring photographer who is intrigued and inspired by nature.

WINNER, FOREST CLOSE-UPS

“Mossy Mushrooms”

PHOTOGRAPHER: Kathleen O’Neil (Mass.)
PHOTOGRAPHER’S PERSPECTIVE: “Rain poured onto the forest floor while moss crawled up the sides of trees and down onto their limbs on the Tonsina Point Trail in Seward, Alaska. Mushrooms and lichen peeked out of rocks and stumps. Surrounded by dynamic life in the rainforest, time stood still, and these mossy mushrooms posed for a close-up.”
ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER: O’Neil is an adventure seeker and amateur photographer.
PHOTOGRAPHER: Amanda Siedschlag (Ore.)
PHOTOGRAPHER’S PERSPECTIVE: “On my day off, I visited Cathedral Park in Portland, Ore., and decided to bring my camera. It was a rainy day, but during a moment of sunshine, this willow under St. John’s Bridge was illuminated bright gold in all its autumn glory.”
ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER: Siedschlag is an amateur photographer who enjoys capturing nature.

WINNER, CITYSCAPES SPLENDOR

“A Willow in the Cathedral”

PHOTOGRAPHER: Robyn Wilson (Wash.)
PHOTOGRAPHER’S PERSPECTIVE: “The location of this tree, nestled in Seattle, Wash., felt magical to me, with so much bright golden color and a space within it where it felt as though I could step away into another world.”
ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER: Wilson has spent 15 years passionately pursuing landscape and nature photography.
WINNER, FOREST WILDLIFE

“Pensive Woodpecker”

PHOTOGRAPHER: Michele Walfred (Del.)

PHOTOGRAPHER’S PERSPECTIVE: “With a major Nor’easter in the forecast, I set out some seed and suet in my wooded front yard, which this red-bellied woodpecker enjoyed. After a good meal, it seemed to anticipate the impending storm and stayed quiet, in this position for some time!”

ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER: Walfred is a communications specialist for the University of Delaware, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Honorable Mentions

“Sawtooth Sunset” by Douglas Keder

“From the Outside In” by Kinley Bollinger
“Looking Up” by Ruth Gitto

“Marvelous Marbled Orb Weaver” by Peggy Yaeger
Check out what our social media followers had to say about this year’s Forests in Focus People’s Choice nominees and winner!

1. **“Caught in Ice” by Minnie C. Gallman**
   “Love this; it’s easy to take a beautiful photo of nature, but this one was an artful and thoughtful capture of nature at its fleeting best!”
   — Linnea H., Facebook

2. **“Blowing Willow” by Autumn Bradley**
   “I love ‘Blowing Willow’ because of the elegant almost ethereal flow and the fact that this is such a one-in-a-thousand chance shot.”
   — @ISeiferheld, Twitter

3. **“Squirrel Jumping” by Carol McCullough**
   “What a beautiful image of nature in motion.”
   — @aaa_remodeling_dev, Instagram

4. **“Strive to Stand Out” by Tarra Suppes**
   “Love ‘Strive to Stand Out.’ It’s a sign of hope and tenacity that this tree overcame whatever caused it to grow this way, and it’s celebrating its ability to still reach for the sky, by dancing and twirling its skirt of branches and leaves. Just beautiful. ❤️”
   — @yochica66, Instagram

For more amazing photography, follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
PUT STOCK IN FORESTS:
A LIVING INVESTMENT
And find a wealth of benefits for the short and long term

Your gift of stocks, bonds or mutual funds can plant a living investment of trees to ensure forests thrive far into the future and provide the benefits of clean air and water to future generations.

With an outright gift of appreciated securities to American Forests, you may save on capital gains and income taxes, while protecting and restoring critical forest ecosystems.

In 2018, the IRS declared that charitable donations from your tax-deferred IRA or 401(k) will be exempt from taxation up to $100,000. Speak to your financial advisor about how you can generously support forest restoration, while minimizing or avoiding tax on distributions from those accounts.

Questions? Contact Sarah Mitchell, Director of Donor Experience and Engagement, smitchell@americanforest.org, 202-737-1948.

American Forests cannot offer legal or tax advice. Please consult your lawyer or tax advisor about the advantages of making a charitable gift of appreciated assets.
With a membership gift of $25 or more, you’ll receive the following benefits:

- **Satisfaction and Pride.** Know your gift will be used wisely to restore America’s forests to health and resiliency.
- **Annual Membership Card.** Carry this with you to signify your commitment to American Forests.
- **Magazine Subscription.** Read and share our award-winning, colorful and informative publication.
- **Merchandise Discounts.** Shop with periodic members-only discounts from our Corporate Partners.
- **Invitations to Special Events.** Be the first to be notified about special events and volunteer opportunities in your area.
- **Insider Updates on Our Work.** Stay informed about the impact your gifts are having on our critical work and progress.

Make a difference for forests and the world.
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