THE YEAR OF THE TREE

2020 Year in Review
I've been in conservation for 30 years, and I've never seen as much excitement to restore our forests as I have in the last 12 months. A swelling movement to unleash the power of trees to help heal the environment and our economy has made 2020 truly The Year of the Tree.

It might be a surprising name, given the overwhelming challenges that have dominated the news and our lives this year.

And yet, thanks to you, the power of trees has resonated like never before.

Because of you, American Forests is leading this movement in diverse and powerful ways. We're using science to devise better ways to plant trees in a changing climate. Thanks to you, we're developing new career pathways into urban forestry for people in under-resourced communities, and leading robust partnerships to reforest cities and large forest landscapes. Your support has also helped enact sweeping public policies that invest in our forests.

And your values have inspired us to reach further. This summer, we embarked on a bold journey to create the most diverse and inclusive forest movement in American history. Our goal: to conserve, restore and grow 1 trillion trees worldwide by 2030.

Along with the World Economic Forum, we launched the U.S. Chapter of 1t.org, bringing together 28 partners who pledged 865 million trees and billions of dollars to support related innovation, such as climate financing and technology. Joining us are cities pursuing Tree Equity, companies partnering with nonprofits to reforest large landscapes, and civic leaders who are mobilizing individuals and communities to plant trees.

You helped build a tent big enough for everyone, no matter how large or small their contributions.

Thank you for your generous support for American Forests. With you, we head into 2021 confident we can create change on a scale never thought possible.

Jad Daley
President & CEO
FORESTS SCORE MAJOR WIN IN CONGRESS

Large forested landscapes received more love from Congress this year than they have in decades. In August, the Great American Outdoors Act was signed into law. The legislation fully and permanently funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the nation’s most important tool for providing access to our national forests and other public land. American Forests and its partners have been advocating for this legislation since 1965.

The law doubles, to $900 million annually, the money allocated to LWCF. Governments can use the money to maintain forests and expand the amount of protected forests, both on private and public land. The REPLANT Act was also introduced in the House and Senate and focuses on conserving and preserving our forests and other public land. American Forests and its partners have been advocating for this legislation since 2017.

These wins are a testament to the fact that large forest landscapes are a lifeline for many people. Among other things, forests help create needed jobs and are essential to our clean water supply.

THE POWER OF TREES

Trees are having their moment. It’s no wonder. They help address some of our most pressing problems, from climate change to social equity. Below are just a few of the benefits of trees:

- **Trees capture carbon.** One tree can capture an average of 21 tons of carbon dioxide per year. That’s equal to the carbon emissions from driving one car 1,500 miles.

- **Trees cool down neighborhoods.** In cities across the United States, demand for trees is on the rise. But without enough people to properly plant and maintain trees, we can’t meet this demand. That’s why, in 2018, American Forests launched the Tree Equity: Career Pathways Initiative. The focus of the initiative is training people in low-income urban neighborhoods where there are fewer jobs and trees and placing them in urban forestry jobs.

- **Trees clean our air.** In the U.S., trees absorb 1.9 million tons of air pollutants, preventing 670,000 cases of asthma and other acute respiratory symptoms annually.

- **Trees lower utility bills.** Large forested landscapes received more love from Congress this year than they have in decades. In August, the Great American Outdoors Act was signed into law. The legislation fully and permanently funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the nation’s most important tool for providing access to our national forests and other public land. American Forests and its partners have been advocating for this legislation since 1965.

The grants program was a win for people who need jobs. And a win for people who benefit from everything else that trees give us—like shade, clean air and lower utility bills.

GRANTS TAKE JOBS PROGRAM TO NEW LEVEL

In cities across the United States, demand for trees is on the rise. But without enough people to properly plant and maintain trees, we can’t meet this demand. That’s why, in 2018, American Forests launched the Tree Equity: Career Pathways Initiative. The focus of the initiative is training people in low-income urban neighborhoods where there are fewer jobs and trees and placing them in urban forestry jobs.

This year, American Forests took the program to a new level by awarding grants to five cities: Providence, RI; Syracuse, N.Y.; Milwaukee, Minneapolis and Detroit. The funding, combined with technical resources created by American Forests, was used by the cities to make their training programs bigger and better, placing more people in urban forestry jobs.

The grants program was a win for people who need jobs. And a win for people who benefit from everything else that trees give us—like shade, clean air and lower utility bills.
The REPLANT Act was also approved in May. President Biden signed the legislation into law in June. Since 1965, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has been providing federal grants to states and local partners to fund projects that will help keep public lands healthy for future generations. New advances in forest management and urban restoration are helping us plant and maintain trees. We can't bring back our forests without enough people to properly care for them.
LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

With the groundwork laid in 2020, we will advance forest solutions at unprecedented scale. In 2021, with your help, American Forests will:

- Reforest America’s forest landscapes for health and resilience, including vast areas devastated by the wildfires of 2020. We will do this by deepening our climate-informed reforestation techniques, expanding our on-the-ground reforestation partnerships and increasing funding opportunities from government programs, corporate partnerships and carbon financing.

- Lead the national movement for Tree Equity so people in all neighborhoods reap the benefits of trees, regardless of income or race. We will launch the methodology for calculating Tree Equity Scores in city neighborhoods across the country, gain national media attention, secure major public funding and expand our partnerships with cities.

- Grow the U.S. Chapter of 1t.org by securing new trillion trees pledges from governments, companies, nonprofits and civil society. We will create avenues for people with shared interests — such as climate-smart urban forestry and carbon finance — to share information and learn from each other.