



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE ORDER #221

Relating to the Conservation and Restoration of Forestland in Wisconsin

WHEREAS, the practice of caring for the Earth is rooted in the cultural practices of Indigenous people, including the twelve Native Nations that call Wisconsin home, who are the original stewards of this land;

WHEREAS, founded in 1970 by former Wisconsin Governor and U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson to raise awareness about the environmental challenges facing our planet, including air and water pollution, Earth Day is now celebrated in Wisconsin and around the world each year on April 22;

WHEREAS, the first Earth Day saw nearly 20 million Americans participate in rallies, marches, and teach-ins for environmental education at high schools, colleges, and universities across our state and country, catalyzing a grassroots movement that led to the bipartisan passage of the Clean Air, Clean Water, Endangered Species, and Marine Mammal Protection Acts, as well as the founding of the Environmental Protection Agency;

WHEREAS, on the inaugural Earth Day, then-U.S. Senator Nelson stated, "our goal is not just an environment of clean air and water and scenic beauty," but "an environment of decency, quality, and mutual respect for all other human beings and all other living creatures,";

WHEREAS, today, pollution and climate change continue to pose serious threats to Wisconsin's water, fish, wildlife, livestock, crops, and other important natural resources, the health, safety, and economic well-being of all Wisconsinites, and exacerbate historic injustices and existing threats to lower-income communities and communities of color;

WHEREAS, the state of Wisconsin affirms that all people, regardless of race, gender, income, geography, or background, have the right to a healthy and sustainable environment, and that environmental justice must be kept at the forefront of all efforts to ensure and protect this right;

WHEREAS, Earth Day ignited a spirit of stewardship that has driven progress in Wisconsin and across our country for over five decades serving as an annual reminder of the constant need for environmental engagement and activism, cooperation and stewardship commitments, and sustainability efforts;

WHEREAS, this Earth Day, the state of Wisconsin reaffirms that conserving, restoring, and growing trees in both rural and urban areas remains one of the simplest yet most important and powerful tools for storing carbon and mitigating the effects of climate change;

WHEREAS, on Earth Day 2021, the state of Wisconsin joined the global Trillion Tree Initiative, pledging to conserve 125,000 acres of forestland and plant 75 million trees by the end of 2030, as required under Executive Order #112;

WHEREAS, in October 2023, the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers, of which Wisconsin is a leading member, also announced a new, complementary initiative to plant 250 million trees by 2033, and the state of Wisconsin stands ready to contribute to this ambitious goal as we continue to make significant progress toward our state tree-planting goal;

WHEREAS, since Wisconsin's 2021 pledge, more than 32 million trees have been planted in Wisconsin, including more than 9.8 million trees in 2023 alone, resulting in progress of over 42 percent towards the state's tree planting goal in just the first three years;

WHEREAS, given the state's demonstrated dedication and impressive capacity for planting trees in collaboration with public, private, and non-governmental partners, the state is committing to increase its pledge from planting 75 million trees by the end of 2030 to 100 million trees by the end of 2030; and

WHEREAS, according to the United States Department of Agriculture, a mature tree can store and exchange approximately 48 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere in one year, meaning Wisconsin's increased pledge will enable the state to store and exchange a total of 4.8 billion pounds of carbon dioxide per year in mature trees planted due to the state's Trillion Trees pledge alone.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, TONY EVERS, Governor of the State of Wisconsin, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the Laws of the State, hereby direct the Department of Natural Resources, in partnership with public, private, and non-governmental entities, to increase the state's tree-planting goal to plant 100 million trees by December 31, 2030.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great seal of the State of Wisconsin to be affixed. Done at Governor Nelson State Park in the Town of Westport this twenty-second day of April in the year of two thousand twenty-four.

TONY EVERS
Governor

By the Governor:

SARAH GODLEWSKI
Secretary of State