



AMERICAN FORESTS

# An Inspirational Legacy

**2015 YEAR IN REVIEW**

**AMERICAN FORESTS CELEBRATED OUR 140TH ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR.**

In 1875, the year we were founded as the American Forestry Association, Ulysses S. Grant was president and Queen Victoria sat on the British throne. The period of Civil War Reconstruction was winding down. Timber barons were rapidly denuding the Midwest and West for profit, while homesteaders were just as quickly converting forests to farmland. John Muir, who would become one of America's greatest conservation leaders, was largely unknown. There were no national parks or national forests, and nature was largely seen as something to be used, not protected.

In the words of conservation historian Henry Clepper, the group of concerned citizens who founded American Forests "inaugurated the conservation movement." Early accomplishments included publishing one of the first national conservation journals, successfully advocating for the creation of the U.S. Forest Service, the passage of the Weeks Act — a bill that established national forests in the east to match those created in the west — and lobbying for the creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Our work also moved into cities, helping forge the modern standards for arboriculture in the early 20th century, pioneering the broader field of urban forestry beginning in the 1970s and spearheading creation of the U.S. Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry Program in 1990.

Since then, American Forests has been engaged in more than 1,000 forest restoration projects, in all 50 U.S. states and 45 countries.



# In 2015, the legacy continues. Here are just some of our accomplishments:



## Restoring Our Forests

- ▶ Planted our 50 millionth tree and completed our 1,000th wildland forests project in the 25th year of our flagship Global ReLeaf program.
- ▶ Partnered on more than 60 on-the-ground restoration projects, planting nearly 2 million trees.
- ▶ Reforested more than 7,000 acres damaged or destroyed by wildfires with more than a million trees.
- ▶ Marked the planting of more than 7 million longleaf pines in the last 25 years, restoring nearly 20,000 acres.
- ▶ Restored crucial habitats for rare wildlife species, including the critically endangered and strikingly beautiful Araripe manakin in Brazil, and the 'ālalā, also known as the Hawaiian crow, an endangered bird that is being reintroduced to the wild.

## Targeting Endangered Western Forests

- ▶ Planted more than 45,000 disease-resistant whitebark pine trees within the iconic Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA).
- ▶ Provided free pheromone patches to private land owners to help protect high-value mature whitebark pines from bark beetle infestation.
- ▶ Supported the collection of cones from naturally disease-resistant whitebark pines, which could produce up to 786,000 seedlings, reforesting as many as 3,500 acres.
- ▶ Partnered on the development of a model that will help identify how climate change will impact the whitebark pine throughout the GYA and beyond.



## Transforming Urban Spaces

- ▶ Completed scientific analysis, restoration and outreach efforts in five inaugural Community ReLeaf cities and added six more to the program, bringing the total to 11 cities.
- ▶ Worked collaboratively with local partners in cities around the country, providing scientific tree canopy analyses, developing catalytic restoration projects — such as a food forest in Austin, an outdoor education center on vacant land in Detroit, and an urban research farm and green community space in Washington, D.C. — and implementing outreach and policy initiatives for long-term improvement of the local urban forest.
- ▶ Received the ASAE Power of A Gold Award in recognition of our Community ReLeaf program's positive impact on communities throughout the nation.





## Celebrating Big Trees

- ▶ Crowned 781 Champion Trees in the national register, including 37 new champions and co-champions in the 75th year of the program.
- ▶ Published an 89-page technical tree-measuring guide to help Big Tree enthusiasts use the proper tools and state-of-the-art measurement techniques.
- ▶ Launched the National Cadre of Expert Tree Measurers, some of the most skilled tree-measurement professionals in the world, with the goal of creating a database of measurements precise enough to be used for research to better understand the greatest specimens of the forest.

## Driving Proactive Policy

- ▶ Advocated for the adequate funding, on Capitol Hill and in federal agencies, for priority programs, including Urban & Community Forestry, Forest Legacy and Conservation Forest Landscape Restoration, as well as permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund.
- ▶ Sought solutions to budgetary constraints of wildfire suppression funding, promoted legislation on forest carbon incentives for small private forest owners, the National Parks Centennial and ensured the inclusion of urban forests in the President's Climate Action Plan implementation.
- ▶ Sent thousands of letters, with our advocates in nearly every state, through our Action Center to House and Senate members regarding our conservation priorities.



## Engaging Volunteers Across the Nation

- ▶ Sponsored volunteer events for our members and corporate partners around the country.
- ▶ Enlisted volunteers to help plant trees in 39 of our forest restoration projects, engaging nearly 10,000 individuals.



# American Forests' plans for 2016 include:

- ▶ Launching American Forests' Critical Ecosystem Initiative, a program that will target threatened forests across the U.S. for additional investment and action, building on our long-term commitment to protecting and restoring vital ecosystems.
- ▶ Launching a new American Forests initiative on urban innovation that includes a resource-rich website and investments in exceptional urban forest pilot projects.
- ▶ Expanding our Community ReLeaf Program to 15 cities throughout the U.S. and developing more robust volunteer, green career training and youth-education opportunities.

All of this is made possible through the generous support of our members, donors and corporate partners. More than anything, we want you to know that you are making a real difference for places, wildlife and people across America and around the world. We are enormously grateful for your generosity and commitment.



# Thanks to all of you.

## Your support helps protect and restore forests!

The following members made gifts between October 1, 2014 and September 30, 2015.



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AMERICAN FORESTS

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[americanforests.org](http://americanforests.org)



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