



# ***Arbor Day Report*** ***Hoover, Alabama***

**Hoover City Schools Celebrations**  
*(February 17 - March 6, 2020)*

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**Hoover Community Celebration**  
*(March 7, 2020)*

*Presented by the Hoover Beautification Board  
Supported by the Hoover community and  
generous, local sponsors!*

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# **Hoover Arbor Day 2020 Planning & Administration**

## **2020 Hoover Beautification Board:**

Betty Daigle, Hoover Beautification Board Chair  
Dawn Azok & Rebecca Hassee, Arbor Day Co-Chairs

Roberta Atkinson	Ann Lusco
Louise Billings	Ann McAdams
Holly Fondots	Sara Perry
Jennifer Gregory	Mable Prescott
Robyn Henderson	Diane Ray
Christine Hoffman	Mary Ross Searcy
Jean Ingram	Donna Spencer
Sarah Johnson	Sheryl Stoffregen
Pat Lawley	

## **Hoover Elected Officials:**

Honorable Mayor Frank Brocato  
Councilman Dr. Casey Middlebrooks, City Council Liaison  
Councilman Derrick Murphy, City Council Liaison

## **Hoover City and City Schools Staff:**

Colin Conner, Sharon Nelson, Kim Marlin, Ken Rosser,  
Daniel Dozier, Melanie Posey, Erin Colbaugh, Brittany Toole  
Jason Gaston, Matt Wilson, Teachers, Counselors & Administrators

# Hoover Arbor Day 2020 Community Sponsors & Support

Alabama Power

ACE Tree Service

Landscape Workshop

Green Valley Farms, Aldridge Gardens

Baba Java Coffee, Bud's Best Cookies

First Watch, Hoover Climbing and Adventure

Hoover Belles, Hoover City Schools, Chick fil A

Jim 'N Nick's Bar-B-Q, Native Forest Nursery

Taziki's Mediterranean Café, Tip Top Grill

Whole Scoop Ice Cream, Costco

David Doggett

Fred Kapp

Josh Howard

Katie Wiswall

Wendy Conner

Rosemary Sargent

Traci Ingleright, Claire Larkin and Family

Rip Weaver, Michael Newton and Alex Brewer

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# Hoover Arbor Day Program Overview

Arbor Day is an important community tradition that celebrates the numerous benefits and uses of trees. Celebrating Arbor Day annually is one of four requirements of the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA program. This year, the Arbor Day Foundation recognized Hoover as a Tree City for the 21<sup>st</sup> consecutive year. Hoover's Arbor Day organizers promote tree preservation, as well as proper selection, planting and care of trees, with the hope that Hoover's community forest remains productive, safe and sustainable for residents, businesses and guests.

Each year, Hoover's Arbor Day celebration takes place over the course of three weeks, beginning in the Hoover City School System. School Arbor Day programs are educational and entertaining for students, and beneficial for campus landscapes. Organized by teachers and administrators, school Arbor Day programs feature a variety of tree-related activities, including recognizing winners of the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Arbor Day Essay Contest, a primary component of Hoover's Arbor Day programming. Ten schools organized Arbor Day celebrations this year which included a tree planting on each campus. Tree plantings were led by Hoover employees Colin Conner, Kim Marlin and Ken Rosser. [Nuttall oak](#), [baldcypress](#), [ginkgo](#), [crabapple](#), [blackgum](#), [river birch](#), and [crapemyrtle](#) were selected and planted for their specific growth characteristics and tolerances for various site conditions. Mayor Brocato and Beautification Board members attended each program to interact with students and create a record of programs that could be shared with the Hoover community.

On March 7, 2020, Hoover's community-wide Arbor Day celebration was held at Aldridge Gardens. The celebration featured the ever-popular tree giveaway, a formal ceremony honoring all ten winners of the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Arbor Day Essay Contest, a ceremonial tree planting, a native plants table, and a variety of craft activities for kids. 250 trees were given away to Hoover residents for planting into the city's community forest. The overall winner of the Essay Contest was Ruthie Jackson of Mrs. Neumann's class at Rocky Ridge Elementary. Her winning essay discussed the Longleaf Pine, which is a native yellow pine and Alabama's state tree. This year's essay topic was *Native Trees are Terrific Trees for Hoover*. Ruthie's essay can be found on page 18 of this Report.

A unique feature of this year's community-wide Arbor Day Celebration was the official measuring of what is believed to be a new Guinness World Record for "World's Largest Oak Leaf". The cherrybark oak (*quercus pagoda*) leaf was found at Camp Larkin in Sumter Co, Alabama. Camp Larkin is family farm property owned by Floyd and Claire Larkin, residents of the Shoal Creek community. Mrs. Larkin discovered the leaf during a morning walk at Camp Larkin. After weeks of research and preparation by Mrs. Larkin and several local professionals, the leaf was measured at Hoover's Arbor Day celebration per the Guinness guidelines. The measurement process served as an integral part of Mrs. Larkin's official application submittal to Guinness. A ruling from Guinness is expected in the coming weeks.

The following pages of pictures and program details summarize Hoover's 2020 Arbor Day activities. School Celebrations are listed in order of program date:

# Hoover City Schools Arbor Day Celebrations

(February 17 – March 6, 2020)

## Gwin Elementary School (February 21, 2020)

**Program Organizer(s):** Ms. Traci Ingleright, Enrichment Teacher, Mr. Carl Berryhill, Assistant Principal and Dr. Kimberly White, Principal

**School Groups, Classes or Grades Attending:** All 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Students and Teachers

**HBB Representative:** Mrs. Christine Hoffman      **Tree Species Planted:** River Birch

Gwin 4<sup>th</sup> grade students and teachers were treated to essay-readings, an interactive exercise about forest ecosystems, discussion about the value of urban trees, the planting of a large river birch and an energetic reciting of the Arbor Day Pledge! Gwin has been a very strong participant in Arbor Day programs, and the students there benefit greatly from incredible educators like Traci Ingleright who was named Alabama Project Learning Tree's 2020 Educator of the Year!



*Ms. Ingleright talks trees with her students*



*LEFT to RIGHT - School Essay Contest winners Paige Bowman, Sarah Kate Skellie and Leah Naftel*



*ABOVE and RIGHT - Students and Mayor Brocato learn about forest ecosystems and work together to plant a new tree*



**Trace Crossings Elementary School (March 24, 2020)**

**Program Organizer(s):** Ms. Becky Edwards, Assistant Principal

**School Groups, Classes or Grades Attending:** Pre-K, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

**HBB Representative:** Mrs. Betty Daigle      **Tree Species Planted:** Crapemyrtle

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Fourth and fifth grade students entertained pre-K children, parents, teachers and guests with Arbor Day essay readings and an original song about trees. Essay winners were 4<sup>th</sup> Graders Julia Paepcke, Siddhartha Nevrekar and Asher Schwaeachner. Fifth grader Ejutou Jallow sang her original song entitled, "Arbor Day Song". City staff planted a 'Sioux' variety crapemyrtle in an area to the rear of campus. After the program, participants gathered around the tree with Mayor Brocato for pictures.



*Pre-K students and guests await Arbor Day entertainment!*



*Ejutou Jallow sings to students and guests*



*ABOVE - Arbor Day artwork lined the hallways!*



*LEFT - Mayor Brocato, Ejutou Jallow and Colin Conner with school Essay Contest winners (from LEFT to RIGHT) Julia Paepcke, Asher Schwaeachner and Siddhartha Nevrekar.*

**Brock's Gap Intermediate School (February 25, 2020)**

**Program Organizer(s):** Mr. Scott Mitchell, Principal, Ms. Megan Denson, Assistant Principal

**School Groups, Classes or Grades Attending:** 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Science Club

**HBB Representative:** Mrs. Jennifer Gregory

**Tree Species Planted:** Nuttall Oak

The Brock's Intermediate Arbor Day Program featured winners of the school's 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Arbor Day Essay Contest, and winners of a Kahoot Learning Game about trees. Oliver Crowell, Katherine Snuggs and Rhayna Johnson read their Arbor Day essays to fellow students, Mayor Brocato and a number of parents in attendance. Colin Conner spoke to the group about the importance of trees, as well as proper planting and maintenance. Students planted a nuttall oak to cool a section of asphalt parking lot and support local wildlife. After the planting, the group recited the Arbor Day Pledge.



*ABOVE - Colin demonstrates proper tree planting*



*ABOVE, LEFT to RIGHT – School Essay Contest winners Oliver Crowell, Katherine Snuggs and Rhayna Johnson with Mayor Brocato*



*Brock's Gap Science Club with the school's new nuttall oak*

**Spain Park High School (February 26, 2020)**

**Program Organizer(s):** Ms. Donna Dothard and Ms. Jean Gillespie

**School Groups, Classes or Grades Attending:** Environmental Science (Junior & Senior Year)

**HBB Representative:** Mrs. Louise Billings

**Tree Species Planted:** Blackgum

Hoover employees Kim Marlin and Colin Conner braved the rain and cold to prepare a planting hole for Spain Park's new 2" caliper blackgum. Colin spoke to the students about the history of Arbor Day and gave them some basic information on tree benefits. He discussed the specific traits and characteristics of the blackgum tree and then invited the students to complete the planting. Afterward, the students were introduced to the Arbor Day Pledge.



*Spain Park students and faculty help plant their school's new blackgum tree, then gather for a group photo*



**Simmons Middle School (February 27, 2020)**

**Program Organizer(s):** Ms. Chris White

**School Groups, Classes or Grades Attending:** Simmons Middle Conservation Club

**HBB Representative:** Sarah Johnson      **Tree Species Planted:** Nuttall Oak

Student-members of the Simmons Middle School Conservation Club gathered near the school's softball field to celebrate Arbor Day and add a nuttall oak to the campus landscape. Akelsa Nelson recited some Arbor Day history then Julianna Acomb read an Arbor Day poem to the group. Following the poem, Colin Conner spoke to the students about the benefits of trees and provided information specific to the nuttall oak. Hoover employees Kim Marlin and Ken Rosser then assisted students with the planting of their new tree. In closing, students recited the Arbor Day Pledge and Abby Gobbels read the Conservation Club's Commitment to Action.



*Chris White gathers her students for the program*



*Students learn about the nuttall oak*



*Students help plant and mulch*



*Simmons Middle Conservation Club and guests gather around their school's new tree*

**Shades Mountain Elementary School (February 28, 2020)**

**Program Organizer(s):** Ms. Sara Thomas, Ms. Sandra Rolley and Mr. Al Dixon

**School Groups, Classes or Grades Attending:** All 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Students

**HBB Representative:** Mrs. Rebecca Hassee

**Tree Species Planted:** Baldcypress

The program began with the school's top three essays being read by their authors Addison Lee, Lucy Prince and Alexandria Mountz. Colin Conner did a small presentation about the different layers inside of a tree. Assisted by Hoover employees Kim Marlin and Ken Rosser, each of the 4<sup>th</sup> graders got to help plant the school's new baldcypress. Once the tree was planted, the students all recited the Arbor Day Pledge with their "limbs and leaves" waiving in the air. The program was attended by Mayor Brocato and Heath Naramore from the Hoover Schools Operations Division.



*ABOVE – Hoover Horticulturist Kim Marlin guides students on proper planting*



*School Essay Contest winners (from LEFT to RIGHT) Alexandria Mountz, Addison Lee and Lucy Prince with Mayor Brocato*



*Colin helps Shades Mountain students recite the Arbor Day Pledge to the school's new baldcypress!*

**Rocky Ridge Elementary School (March 2, 2020)**

**Program Organizer(s):** Ms. Kaitlin McPeake

**School Groups, Classes or Grades Attending:** All 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Students

**HBB Representative:** Mary Ross Searcy **Tree Species Planted:** Ginkgotree

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Principal, Dr. Dilhani Uswatte welcomed students and guests to the event which was held in the cafeteria due to wet weather. Students Hailey Nichols and Aiden Middlebrooks MC'd the event. Program participants were 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade National Elementary Honor students who wrote their own speeches and made posters that were displayed around the room. Students talked about the history of Arbor Day, environmental stewardship, the importance of trees, and some specifics about the school's new 'Autumn Gold' ginkgotree. Ruthie Jackson, the Overall Winner of the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Arbor Day essay contest, read her winning essay about the longleaf pine. At the end of the program Dr. Uswatte led all attendees in the Arbor Day Pledge.



*Rylee McCown and Ava Faircloth discuss the importance of trees*



*Hailey Nichols – one of several National Elementary Honor Society representatives*



*Reeva Patel & Berkley Bernard share the History of Arbor Day*



*A large crowd attended the Rocky Ridge program*



*Program organizers, participants and guests gather around a draft of the Arbor Day Pledge!*

**Riverchase Elementary School (March 3, 2020)**

**Program Organizer(s):** Ms. Patti Tanner, School Counselor

**School Groups, Classes or Grades Attending:** 1<sup>st</sup> and 4th Grade Students

**HBB Representatives:** Ms. Betty Daigle, Ms. Ann McAdams

**Tree Species Planted:** Crabapple

To begin the program, first grade students displayed pictures they'd drawn and sang a song. Brooklyn Jackson, a Honorable Mention winner, and Sadie Brown read their Arbor Day essays. Mayor Brocato spoke briefly about the important benefits and uses of trees. Colin Conner told students about native trees and specifically the Zumi crabapple that was planted for wildlife butterflies and birds. He also described how the tree's flowers will beautify campus in the spring. Due to rain the program was brought inside. The school's new 'Zumi' crabapple was planted by city staff a few days prior.



*ABOVE - First grade students read and sing songs as a well-behaved crowd looks on!*

*BELOW – School Essay Contest winners (from LEFT to RIGHT) Sadie Brown, Kyla Southall and Brooklyn Jackson with Patti Tamer, Dr. Alice Turney, Colin and Mayor Brocato*



**Bluff Park Elementary School (March 4, 2020)**

**Program Organizer(s):** Ms. Elizabeth Presley and Ms. Ami Weems, School Principal

**School Groups, Classes or Grades Attending:** All 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Students

**HBB Representatives:** Ms. Christine Hoffman      **Tree Species Planted:** Nuttall Oak

Ms. Presley spoke to the students about the Arbor Day essays and the many types of trees that grow in Alabama. Students shared their favorite native tree story and the focus of their Arbor Day essays. Lillie Mathis, Ellis Cooper and Madi Faucett read their essays aloud as fellow students and Mayor Brocato listened. Colin Conner spoke to the students about the new nuttall oak that was planted on campus over the weekend. The tree was planted in an open area by the walking track, with the goal of providing long-term shade and wildlife habitat. The tree was dedicated to Mrs. McGriff who will be retiring this year after teaching at Bluff Park for over 30 years. Students spoke directly to Mrs. McGriff about why they loved her as a teacher and why they would miss her after she retired. Mrs. McGriff was extremely grateful to the students for dedicating the tree to her.

*BELOW – Essay Contest winners read their work to Mayor Brocato and fellow students*



*RIGHT - Students dedicate the school's new Arbor Day tree to Ms. McGriff*



*BELOW - Colin Conner and School Principal Ami Weems speak with students*



**Greystone Elementary School (March 5, 2020)**

**Program Organizer(s):** Ms. Jenny Gilliland / Ms. Ariel Moore

**School Groups, Classes or Grades Attending:** All 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Students

**HBB Representatives:** Ms. Dawn Azok      **Tree Species Planted:** Nuttall Oak

Due again to rainy weather, students and guests at gathered indoors at Greystone Elementary for the tenth and final school program for 2020! Ms. Moore greeted students and guests, introducing Mayor Brocato, Melanie Posey, Dawn Azok and Colin Conner. Emilie Taylor then read about the history of Arbor Day to her classmates. Matthew Morris followed with information on the new nuttall oak that was planted on campus. The oak was one of four Arbor Day oaks planted on campus over the last four years, effectively completing the planting of a large parking lot island. Goals of the plantings include shade and food for wildlife. Jay Jacob, Brooklyn Wiggins and Natalie Bishop read their Arbor Day essays and Colin Conner spoke to the students about proper care and maintenance of trees. Then with one big gathering of 'limby arms and leafy fingers' the group recited the Arbor Day Pledge!



*Students (from LEFT to RIGHT) Matthew Morris, Jay Jacob, Natalie Bishop, Emilie Taylor and Brooklyn Wiggins with Mayor Brocato and Colin Conner*



*Greystone Elementary School's new nuttall oak!*



*ABOVE - Detailed tree info can be mesmerizing!*



*Mayor Brocato talks to students about the benefits of trees*

# Hoover Community Arbor Day Celebration

CITY OF HOOVER  
22ND ANNUAL

# ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION



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MARCH 7, 2020  
9:30-11:30AM  
ALDRIDGE GARDENS

Featuring FREE TREES for Hoover residents (one per household), coffee, kids craft and educational tables, a ceremony to recognize the Hoover Schools' 4th grade Arbor Day Essay Contest winners, a ceremonial tree planting, and the measuring of a Guinness World Record sized oak leaf!

Presented by The Hoover  
Beautification Board and



# Tree Giveaway



*Giveaway included 250 trees representing 17 different species*



*Local Arborists & other pros assisted with tree selection*



*MANY THANKS to Alabama Power!*



# Kids Crafts and Native Plant Tables

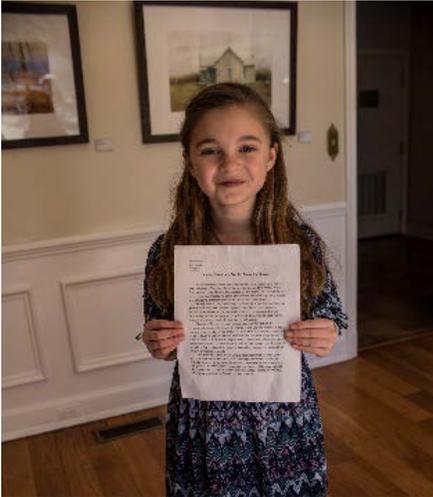


# 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Arbor Day Essay Contest

## Essay Theme: Native Trees are Terrific Trees for Hoover

### Overall Winner: Ruthie Jackson

Mrs. Neumann's Class, Rocky Ridge Elementary



A native tree is a tree that grows naturally in an area. I am a Native tree, a Longleaf Pine. I am the Alabama state tree and live mostly in the Southeastern United States. My needles are evergreen, so I stay pretty all year. I have the largest pine cones of any other pine tree. My many unique and interesting characteristics set me apart from other trees.

My life cycle is very fascinating. I start out as a seedling and begin to grow in what looks like bundles of grass. I stay in the grass stage for several years. However, the real work is going on underground where I have a taproot that can grow up to twelve feet deep. It helps keep me fire, drought, and insect resistant. I can live for 300 years.

My animal friends are extra special because they are on the endangered species list. One of my friends is the Gopher Tortoise. It digs burrows under me to provide shelter for more than 300 animal species. It is illegal to touch a Gopher Tortoise because they are federally protected. Another friend is the Eastern Indigo Snake. The eastern indigo snake eats poisonous snakes. It prefers to live in habitats like longleaf pine forests. My friend the Red cockaded woodpecker is another endangered species that lives in longleaf pine forests.

Longleaf Pines form a very unique ecosystem that provides year round shelter and shade for wildlife. I am helpful to Hoover because I provide clean air for humans and wildlife, provide shelter and shade, and I am good for the ecosystem. Restoring these forests will be very helpful to the environment in Hoover to help improve habitats, wildlife, and humans. So, plant more Longleaf Pines in Hoover like me!

# School Essay Contest Winners

**Bluff Park**  
Lillie Mathis



**Brock's Gap**  
Oliver Crowell



**Deer Valley**  
Asiya Malik



**Green Valley**  
Alexa Thuo



**Greystone**  
Jay Jacob



**Gwin**  
Paige Bowman



**Riverchase**  
Brooklyn Jackson



**Shades Mountain**  
Addison Lee



**Trace Crossings**  
Siddhartha Nevrekar



# Arbor Day Essay Contest Ceremony



# Measuring for a Guinness World Record!



*City Councilman John Green with Claire Larkin and Leaf!*



*ABOVE - Mayor Brocato, Dr. Brian Keener, Katie Wiswall, Colin Conner and Jenny Carpenter prepare to measure and record*



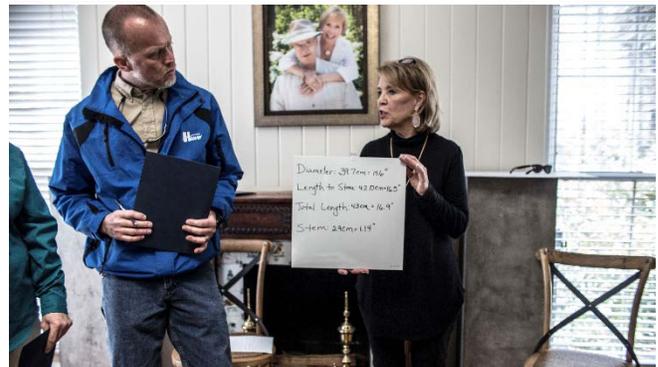
*ABOVE - Mrs. Larkin reviews Guinness' measuring guidelines*



*Jenny Carpenter measures as the entire process is witnessed and video-recorded*



*ABOVE - Alabama Forestry Commission's Katie Wiswall was a huge help during the entire event!*



*ABOVE - Claire Larkin displays the recorded measurements. She anticipates a response from Guinness within 3-4 months.*



## PROCLAMATION ARBOR DAY

**WHEREAS**, in 1872, Mr. J. Sterling Morton championed America's first Arbor Day celebration in Nebraska City, Nebraska where more than one million trees were planted; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1887, Alabama Governor Thomas Seay signed the state's first Arbor Day proclamation; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1975 the Alabama State Legislature adopted an Act designating the last full week in February as Alabama's Arbor Week; and

**WHEREAS**, it was the purpose of those and other Arbor Day events throughout our Nation's history to encourage the planting of urban and forest trees, to encourage sound tree-conservation and replacement practices where deforestation occurs, and to encourage the protection of forests and trees from destructive pests, wildfire, senseless vandalism, and cultural practices that degrade forest sustainability, health, and beauty; and

**WHEREAS**, through the cooperation of all residents, businesses and the governance of this city, the beneficial effects of healthy urban and forest trees, proper tree-conservation practices, and the protection of trees from their natural and unnatural enemies, Hoover can pass on the enduring and vital heritage of its urban forest resource to succeeding generations; and

**WHEREAS**, in appreciation for the exemplary leadership and dedication displayed by Hoover Beautification Board member, Michael L. Zarichnak, in organizing and administering Hoover's Arbor Day activities from 1999 to 2013, all future Hoover Arbor Day celebrations shall be conducted in a manner that will honor Mike's memory and his undeniable passion for trees.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Frank V. Brocato, Mayor of the City of Hoover do hereby proclaim Saturday, March 7, 2020 as ARBOR DAY in Hoover, Alabama. I urge everyone able to do so to observe this day through the planting of one or more trees and/or through participation in one or more programs that the sponsors of Arbor Day may provide.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Hoover to be affixed the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of March two thousand and twenty.

Frank V. Brocato, Mayor

Gene Smith, Council President

Attest:

Wendy Dickerson, City Clerk



# Arbor Day Pledge

I pledge my attention to this tree . . . its roots, its leaves and branches.

I promise I'll take care of it . . . on days Mother Nature passes.

I'll water it and feed it as time goes by . . . and watch it grow and be,

A Wonder of Nature I can one day call . . . my very own Arbor Day tree!

Colin Conner  
*Hoover City Forester*



*Hoover Beautification Board's 2020 Arbor Day Committee Members (Present and Future!) AFTER A JOB WELL DONE! Absent from this picture is HBB member and long-time Arbor Day supporter, Jennifer Gregory. Her help and dedication over the years is GREATLY APPRECIATED!!!*