

## **\$20 Million social media campaign started right here in Oregon to plant millions of trees - and it's not over yet!**

The #TeamTrees campaign initiated by Mr. Beast in partnership with the Arbor Day Foundation to plant 20 million trees by January 2020 is off to a roaring start and crossed the \$11,000,000 mark in less than a week. And the effort started with a planting event in Oregon.

Are you one of the 28 million people who has seen You Tube influencer Jimmy Donaldson - a.k.a. Mr. Beast's – [Team Trees](#) video since it dropped last Friday? Did you know that much of it was filmed right here in the Willamette Valley, together with Oregon-based non-profits at Elijah Bristow State Park in Dexter, Oregon?

On October 29, innovator Elon Musk announced his \$1 million commitment via a simple tweet: "Ok, sounds legit, will donate 1M trees" and has since changed his profile to include the moniker "Treelon" Musk.

Another less famous and presumably young donor named Adam donated his \$1 from the Tooth Fairy to plant a tree.

"When the Arbor Day Foundation reached out in search of a local partner to support this work we knew that the Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council could deliver. This is a group of knowledgeable and dynamic women with a passion for place. They are advancing innovative projects to benefit the Willamette River and are also a lot of fun." Says Bonneville Environmental Foundation Watershed Director Kas Guillozet.

### **How and why was the Willamette involved?**

The Arbor Day Foundation has funded the tree planting efforts of 20+ local Oregon Watershed Councils, Land trusts, agencies and other nonprofits since 2015. Last year, Arbor Day recognized "Team Willamette" as its Headwaters award winner, in recognition of the group's work to support water quality improvements through forestry activities.

Since 2013, Willamette partners have planted over 5 million native trees and shrubs through a coordinated program supported by Meyer Memorial Trust's Willamette River Initiative. This effort invested in the capacity of local groups to serve their communities and make a difference for water.

While these plant numbers may sound large, the work is far from complete. This coming winter Willamette partners will plant hundreds of thousands of trees as part of work to improve habitats and water quality, with millions more in the queue in the coming decade.

"Working with the Mr. Beast Team and Arbor Day Foundation to pull off this big planting effort was awesome. With Jimmy's team and a bunch of his followers, we transformed an empty grassy field to what will be a future forest that park visitors can enjoy for generations to come. The scale of this tree planting effort is unlike anything I've ever seen before. It really is a movement and so inspiring to watch! Planting trees is so approachable, and a great way that anyone can help to make the planet a better place.", said Sarah Dyrdaahl, planting partner with the Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council.

### **Can tree planting really save the world?**

While not a silver bullet, tree planting can address a host of challenges, from warming water temperatures that kill fish and degrade our water quality, to helping farmers prevent property loss from erosion.

A growing body of research links trees to human health, and we have long known that trees are associated with higher property values and vibrant communities.

“We recently started working with researchers at the US Forest Service to better understand how changing rainfall and temperature patterns will affect our planting” says Tori Yoder who runs Bonneville Environmental Foundation’s Collaborative Grow program that centralizes native plant procurement for dozens of regional groups. “We are seeing culturally and economically important species like Western Red Cedar start to show signs that they are struggling. We are working together to plan for the future”, she states.

In recognition of the important role that tree planting and related actions play for our regional economy, more businesses are stepping up to the plate to fund this work. Intel, Coca-Cola, and Swire bottling company, along with funders Meyer Memorial Trust and Bonneville Power Administration were honored last spring for their commitments, and restoration groups are increasingly seeing businesses as key to their success.

“We usually think of our role as serving farmers and local community members, but now we are being called upon by businesses because a vibrant economy depends on a healthy place, and that means safe and reliable water”, says Rebecca McCoun from the North Santiam Watershed Council, another Team Willamette partner.

### **What can you do?**

- The campaign is still live and will be through the end of 2019. Give what you can and be part of a growing movement.
- Join a local stewardship effort to plant trees, tend sites and care for your watershed.
- Reach out to your local watershed group and find out how you can plug in and get involved.

### **Interview Opportunities:**

Sarah Dyrda, Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council; [sarah@middleforkwillamette.org](mailto:sarah@middleforkwillamette.org); 503-277-3223

Kathleen “Kas” Guillozet, Bonneville Environmental Foundation; [kquillozet@b-e-f.org](mailto:kquillozet@b-e-f.org); 971-678-2605 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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