

Across Nebraska, there are approximately 470,000 acres of community forests. These trees were planted by previous generations who understood the long-term benefits they would provide.

ReTree Nebraska urges Nebraskans to plant it forward this fall in celebration of ReTree Week Sept. 18-24.

Jessica Kelling, ReTree Nebraska coordinator, said that fall's cooler temperatures and reduced humidity mean newly planted trees can focus on establishing their root system and getting a jump start on spring growth.

Collectively, Nebraska's community forests contain almost 13.3 million trees that provide \$9.7 billion in environmental, social and economic benefits to Nebraskans.

But the picture isn't all rosy.

"In the last 30 years, we've lost nearly half our state's community forest resources," Kelling said. "Planting a tree –or trees–is a simple act, but it's our chance to do something really big for our state and for future generations."

"Beyond the simple need to plant trees, ReTree Nebraska also strives to teach people about the important benefits trees provide and how to plant trees properly and in the right location," said Eric Berg, Nebraska Forest Service community forestry and sustainable landscapes program leader. "Long-term social, environmental and economic benefits can only be fully realized by properly planting the right tree, in the right place, in the right way."

ReTree Nebraska is a 10-year cooperative initiative to promote the proper planting and care of 1 million trees in communities across Nebraska by 2017.

Trees planted on public and private property within city limits, as well as trees planted in certain rural areas, can count toward ReTree Nebraska's 1 million tree goal.

ReTree Nebraska organizers work closely with a volunteer network of more than 200 ReTree ambassadors in 80 communities across Nebraska. These ambassadors lend local energy to the initiative by organizing and promoting tree planting and tree-related educational activities within their communities.