



COMMEMORATING THOSE FALLEN IN THE CIVIL WAR, ONE TREE AT TIME

Living Legacy Project may be right up TCIA's Tree Allee

By Tamsin Venn

One tree for each of the 620,000 soldiers killed in the Civil War. That is the mission of The Living Legacy Tree Planting Project to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the American Civil War, currently being celebrated.

The result will be the biggest grande allee of trees in the world, stretching 180 miles on the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Scenic Byway, which crosses the Mason Dixon line. It starts at Thomas Jefferson's homestead in Charlottesville, Virginia, and ends at the small town in Pennsylvania that changed the course of the war.

"As you turn out of Monticello's driveway, you turn onto the National Scenic Byway, and travel 180 miles north to

Gettysburg, along which most of the boys traveled and died. Why not recognize that we could plant one tree for each of the 620,000 soldiers killed, almost as if they were soldiers marching up from Monticello?" says Cate Magennis Wyatt, president of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership, a non-profit four-state partnership that has created the LLTPP.

Each tree will be geotagged with information about the individual soldier represented by the tree.

"I am so excited about this project," says Peter Hart, owner of TCIA member Hart Tree Preservation in Clear Brook, Va., and a certified arborist.

Hart's 20-year-old company has 12

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Countryside road at Oatlands Historic House and Gardens, near Leesburg, Virginia, which served as the pilot site for the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership's Living Legacy Tree Planting Project. Trees on the site include red oak, red bud, red maple and red cedar.

employees and specializes in tree preservation and hazardous tree removal for the Virginia Department of Transportation as well as hundreds of residential customers.

"Here's the thing, with TCIA over the years, one repeating goal you'll hear is how do we get the public involved in trees? And when I started learning about this project, I thought this is right up our alley. We're the tree people," says Hart, long-time TCIA member and an arborist since age 19. "TCIA's membership needs to know about this. This is the largest memorial planting of trees ever, and who should be involved with this but the tree people?" adds Hart.

Hart lives near Route 15, the scenic byway that traverses north/south right by many of the Civil War's most famous battlefields – Harpers Ferry, Manassas, Antietam, Gettysburg, and Appomattox. The byway also includes 30 historic communities. Many of the soldiers who died in

the Civil War did so on this corridor.

“We’ve already planted trees, and we have a ways to go. With 620,000 trees, it is very doable. But when you think of a \$100 donation per tree, it’s not that much to give, and I think if we break it down through different groups and organizations, it will work,” he says.

He notes by contrast that in the 1930s the federal government planted 220 million trees over seven years as part of the Great Plains Shelterbelt to control soil erosion and drought in response to the Dust Bowl. “That is 355 times bigger than this project,” Hart notes.

Individuals, businesses, schools and community groups from around the world can contribute to this project, from a \$100 online tree donation to a corporate sponsorship.

Organizers will geo-tag each tree to allow smartphone users to access information about the fallen soldier it was planted to commemorate. Also available via the tag is access to data about the type of tree, its source, age, and any disease history, soil requirements, etc.

“These landscape companies are working on an overall design. These aren’t just trees stuck on the side of the road, they are groups of trees. They’ve picked wonderful trees that are indigenous to the country. You’re almost going to be entering a 180-mile park. All of these counties have agreed to be completely behind this, so this isn’t just one little group doing it on its own. I’m really amazed at the synergy coming out of this,” Hart says.

Hart personally will dedicate trees in memory of his two great grandfathers, both of whom fought at Gettysburg in the 20th Infantry of Maine at Little Roundtop.

In a “witness tree” project, Hart has also identified and is keen to help preserve trees that were alive during the war in the years 1861-65.

The protocol for preservation is to redirect foot traffic, do soil aeration, root growth stimulus, and mulching to “help ensure the tree



TCIA member Peter Hart caring for one of Oatlands’ historic northern red oaks. The former Virginia estate has a beautiful pallet of trees and served as the pilot site for the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership’s Living Legacy Project.

will be here in a 100 years. Trees can live a lot longer if they’re not subject to artificial impact of man being around,” he says.

Hart likes to quote John Muir: “We all travel the Milky Way together, trees and men,” and notes enthusiastically that with

the Living Legacy Tree Planting Project, “we are actually doing this.”

The original vision behind LLTPP belongs to Wyatt, former Secretary of Commerce and Trade for the state of Virginia. It was Wyatt’s brainstorm to plant trees for the commemorative project to create a truly living legacy project on hallowed ground.

“Sadly, there’s still quite a lot of healing that has to happen,” she says, “in an area that houses the greatest concentration of Civil War battlefields in the country. Communities and families still need additional healing for the Civil War to be brought to a close.” Trees will be dedicated to Union, Confederate and African-American soldiers.

Response has been overwhelmingly enthusiastic, she says. All the mayors and county commissioners and others who have been invited to create the Living Legacy Project all responded with, “We don’t want another flagpole, we don’t want another monument. Can we do something bigger than any one of us together could do alone and truly create a legacy project?” says Wyatt.

“Every town council voted to be part of this,” she adds. The project raised funds, and brought in top



The Living Legacy Tree Planting Project will consist of an allee of trees stretching 180 miles on a National Scenic Byway from Monticello north to Gettysburg.



Students from Hartford Memorial Middle School in Hartford, Vermont, plant trees during the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership's Living Legacy Ceremony May 21, 2013, in Gettysburg, Pa. The students planted trees in memory of Civil War dead from Vermont. Photo courtesy of Shane Dunlap, The Evening Sun.

landscape architects, arborists and transportation engineers to do the hard part of designing and (planning) actual planting scenarios," she says. Estimated completion cost is \$65 million.

Rhodeside & Hartwell Company, a planning, urban design, and landscape architecture firm based in Alexandria, Va., won the national competition to create the master plan. Virginia's Department of Forestry's Terry Lasher helped select the right trees and soils, and Virginia's Department of Transportation's Bill Cutler oversaw transportation and tree safety concerns on the Route 15 corridor.

"While in theory it sounds like an elegant and appropriate way to commemorate those young boys, in practice this is a road

that changes – from heavily forested rural roads, to historic streets, to four lanes, to six lanes – so what are the plant materials? What is the plant design so, as you pass along this corridor, you can recognize growth of the plantings for the significance for which they represent?" says Wyatt.

"If you do the math, 620,000 trees means a tree every 10 feet. We realized from the very beginning, that we were not going to be taking down trees, that we would be planting groves. Our pilot project planting has done that, where people can sit and enjoy the beauty of the trees and contemplate what they represent," she says.

Phase One kicked off in November 2012 with 3,312 trees planted from Oatlands

Historic House and Gardens, near Leesburg, Va., to Gilbert's Corner, Va., five miles south. Officials dedicated the first tree planted, a 15-foot red October glory maple, in a pasture at Oatlands to an unknown soldier. Some 50 percent of those who died in the Civil War remain unknown. A brass disc hung from the trunk honored the soldier with Tree A-0001. Two other pilot programs are also underway, one in Gettysburg, and one in the town of Haymarket, Va., in Prince William County.

LLTPP also lends itself to a service learning project, Wyatt points out, where students can research those in their community who fought and died, and plant a tree in their honor. JTHG piloted a program in Hartford, Vermont, where students study the stories of boys and men from Hartford and throughout Vermont, who fought at the Battle of Gettysburg. Last May, the students went down to Gettysburg and visited Seminary Ridge where so many died and actually saw what is termed a "witness tree," in this case an elm, that was alive during the Civil War.

Wyatt notes the immensity of the project, but gives a great deal of credit to Denise Harris, director of the JTHG National Scenic Byway. Harris has more than 20 years of planning experience and is a certified planner with the Virginia Planning Association, and works with state foresters, arborists, etc.

"We are in a planning process where we're getting the master plan in place, pilot projects where planting is occurring, and working with special sites that keep popping up along the corridor. Each site is unique," says Harris.

Plantings will take place in a "context sensitive way," determined by site location and ownership.

Harris gives several examples. The overall idea is for travelers to be guided by a red color palette in each of the four seasons: redbud for spring, red oak for summer, red maple for fall, and red cedar and red twig dogwood for winter. A secondary palette, including canopy and understory trees, evergreens, shrubs, and ground coverings, will also feature red as a predominant color, with plantings including black gum trees, sassafras, and winterberry.

One project, in which LLTPP is working with the department of transportation, is

located where the National Scenic Byway crosses over the interstate, according to Harris. Another is in an area of historical significance, at Oatlands, where organizers planted trees to help shield the historical landscape from encroaching development. Streetscaping in historic downtown Leesburg, Va., is another example. Also, as part of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, all four partner states are required by the EPA to participate in nitrogen reduction, and planting trees is one way for states to receive credit for doing that, according to Harris.

“Some areas will have plantings all along the right of way, some will be allees, or in groves or copses, with a variation of plantings along the national scenic byway. Each location will have significance to a general area, but be specific to the individuals. It’s really about trying to honor each individual,” says Harris.

Another aim of the project is to restore a sense of a rural landscape to the increasing commercialization of the area.

“We would welcome the support of the tree care industry in any form that would



The first Living Legacy Medal, a brass disc with Tree A-0001, hangs from the trunk honoring an unknown soldier.

be possible, helping us with planting, securing the trees, planning,” says Wyatt, and she urges TCIA companies to contact her office.

“A lot of healing has to happen, 50 percent died anonymously, and the family had no way of grieving or honoring them,” she

adds. “This has to be done, and in doing this we beautify this historic area while we appropriately honor those people who gave ‘the last full measure’ without judgment. It’s a very tragic part of our history; we haven’t appropriately honored those people who have died,” she says, adding, “The tree is a healing way of moving forward for so many.”

LLTPP hopes to complete the plantings within in the next few years. The 150th Civil War commemoration runs through 2015.

“It’s very ambitious, I know,” Wyatt says. “But those boys fighting didn’t have a choice, they didn’t get to draw things out and reschedule, and I think we have to do this now.”

For more information, visit www.HallowedGround.org or call (540) 882-4929. The Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership and the Living Legacy Tree Planting Project will also have a booth on the show floor of this year’s TCI EXPO in Charlotte, North Carolina.

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