

AN ACT concerning conservation.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,  
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Legacy Tree Program Task Force Act.

Section 5. Findings; purpose.

(a) The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Trees are essential to ecological, cultural, and economic life on Earth.

(2) Trees support species diversity, food webs, habitats, and numerous ecological processes, such as water and air purification.

(3) Trees assist in regulating climate and soil fertility.

(4) The State must commit to preserving and celebrating our legacy and heritage trees and must develop pathways for the public to advocate for the preservation of trees in communities.

(b) The General Assembly intends this Act to help create a Statewide legacy tree program to promote the identification, awareness, commemoration, and preservation of significant trees within the State.

Section 10. Legacy Tree Program Task Force.

(a) The Legacy Tree Program Task Force is created, shall meet on a quarterly basis for 4 years after the effective date of this Act, and shall, by no later than June 30, 2028, submit to the General Assembly, in accordance with Section 3.1 of the General Assembly Organization Act, a report that contains the final recommendations developed under subsection (b).

(b) The Legacy Tree Program Task Force shall establish recommendations for the creation of a statewide legacy tree recognition program to promote the identification, awareness, commemoration, and preservation of significant trees in the State.

(c) The Task Force shall consist of the following members:

(1) one representative of an environmental organization, appointed by the Governor;

(2) one representative of the Morton Arboretum, appointed by the Governor;

(3) the director of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency or a representative of their choosing;

(4) one representative of the Illinois Forestry Development Council, appointed by the Governor;

(5) one representative of the Shawnee National Forest, appointed by the Governor;

(6) one representative of the Southern Illinois University Department of Forestry, appointed by the Governor;

(7) one representative of the University of Illinois Extension forestry program, appointed by the Governor;

(8) one representative of an association that represents Illinois arborists, appointed by the Governor;

(9) two representatives of the Department of Natural Resources, appointed by the Governor;

(10) one representative of an environmental organization that is different than the organization in paragraph (1), appointed by the Governor;

(11) one representative of the Chicago Urban Forestry Board, appointed by the Governor;

(12) one representative of a forest preserve district in a county that is adjacent to Cook County, appointed by the Governor;

(13) one representative of a forest preserve district located south of Interstate 80, appointed by the Governor;

(14) one representative of a statewide organization representing park districts, appointed by the Governor;

(15) one member of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

(16) one member of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives;

(17) one member of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate; and

(18) one member of the Senate, appointed by the

Minority Leader of the Senate.

(d) Members of the Task Force shall serve without compensation.

(e) The Department of Natural Resources shall provide staff and administrative support services to the Task Force and serve as the lead and chair agency of the Task Force.

Section 15. Responsibilities. The Task Force shall establish recommendations for the following:

(1) criteria for a definition of legacy tree and legacy tree standards that can be used on a variety of trees;

(2) criteria for which the historical and cultural significance of a tree could be measured;

(3) procedures for nominating trees on public and private property;

(4) exploring partnership opportunities with units of local government for oversight of the legacy tree program and participation in the program;

(5) creating a public awareness program, including digital media, a website, a legacy tree tool kit and educational materials to be made available by the Department of Natural Resources for use by units of local government;

(6) exploring funding sources for the operation and maintenance of the statewide legacy tree program,

including grant funding opportunities to facilitate participation in the program by units of local government;

(7) procedures for withdrawing trees from the program;

(8) procedures for legacy tree assessment;

(9) procedures for how a tree would be designated or honored physically;

(10) procedures for mapping trees on a searchable website; and

(11) procedures for delisting a healthy designated legacy tree.

Section 90. Repeal. This Act is repealed on June 30, 2034.