

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Miami Valley TREEcovery Campaign to Replant Trees Lost During Memorial Day 2019 Tornadoes

Today, the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (MVRPC) and RETREET launched the Miami Valley TREEcovery Campaign, a multi-year effort to heal the landscape devastated by the Memorial Day 2019 tornadoes.

“MVRPC is the designated leader of the Long-Term Community Disaster Recovery Network, helping the counties, cities, townships and villages impacted by the devastating 2019 Memorial Day tornadoes create a plan for recovery and resiliency,” said MVRPC Executive Director Brian O. Martin. “The next step in the recovery process is restoring the tree canopy in our disaster impacted neighborhoods.”

“The Miami Valley TREEcovery Campaign will address an often-overlooked part of the recovery process. Trees are destroyed alongside infrastructure and housing in every natural disaster,” said Grady McGahan, Director of RETREET. “Planting new trees brings life back to an area and produces an immense psychological impact by making unfamiliar, decimated landscapes feel like home again.”

These trees, which will serve as powerful symbols of hope, also will reestablish the environmental identity of the Miami Valley, providing shade, energy savings, and a myriad of other environmental and economic benefits for residents, as well as habitat for wildlife. The Miami Valley TREEcovery Campaign will be a major environmental and infrastructural investment that will leave a legacy for generations to come.

How Tornado Survivors Can Request Trees

Owners of residential properties in the Miami Valley that were impacted by the tornadoes now can visit www.retreet.org/mvvc to complete a simple online form to request that free, native trees be planted for them.

Representatives of RETREET and its partners will work with those who submit requests to determine the best planting locations at each home site. The trees will be planted by volunteers during events held throughout the next two years. Events will occur during optimal planting seasons, and are currently planned to follow the path of the tornadoes moving west to east, with the first planting events taking place in Trotwood, Brookville, Perry Township, and Vandalia this fall. All owners of tornado impacted properties, regardless of where they live along the path of the storm, can complete their tree requests now. Representatives from RETREET will contact property owners as the planting events near for each community.

How You Can Support the Miami Valley TREEcovery Campaign

The projected investment necessary to plant 1,000 or more large native trees in targeted neighborhoods in the Miami Valley over the next 2 years is projected to be at least \$300,000. Tornado survivors and local communities need your support to make the Miami Valley TREEcovery Campaign possible.

“There typically are very few resources available to do this unique work within the community,” acknowledged McGahan. “Most people struggling through the disaster recovery process do not have time, energy, or funds required to replace their lost trees and, furthermore, do not know which trees should be planted where, or when is best to do so. Yet, of everything lost, mature trees are what will take the longest to replace.”

The Dayton Foundation recently established the [Miami Valley TREEcovery Campaign Fund](#) to accept contributions for the campaign, as well as awarded a leadership gift of \$50,000.

“The Dayton Foundation is so pleased to award this grant to assist in restoring the tree canopy devastated by the 2019 tornadoes,” said Michael M. Parks, president of The Dayton Foundation. “Within hours of the storms, the Foundation joined with other organizations and local governments to help with immediate relief efforts. Today, our commitment to the community’s recovery continues through this gift to support the Miami Valley TREEcovery Campaign. These plantings will be a tribute to the resiliency of our community.”

AES Ohio joins in support of the Miami Valley TREEcovery Campaign, pledging a matching grant for all contributions of \$500 or more to the campaign fund at The Dayton Foundation, up to \$50,000.

“Despite the devastation caused by the 2019 Memorial Day tornadoes, this community has shown its resilience, and community partnerships like this one are helping to accelerate efforts to rebuild,” said AES Ohio president and CEO Kristina Lund. “AES Ohio will remain committed to sustainability efforts in the Miami Valley and with this \$50,000 matching grant, we will restore tree canopies in impacted neighborhoods and continue to foster the preservation and protection of natural resources.”

To make a contribution online, please visit the [Miami Valley TREEcovery Campaign Fund page](#). Contributions by check should be made payable to The Dayton Foundation, 1401 S. Main Street, Suite 100, Dayton, Ohio 45409. Please indicate that it is for the “8647 Miami Valley TREEcovery Campaign Fund”.

Inquiries about the Miami Valley TREEcovery Campaign can be submitted through the RETREET website (www.retreet.org).

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