



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**June 17, 2020**

## **VOLUNTEERS MARK BELATED ARBOR DAY AT FAYETTE COUNTY PARK**

**Uniontown, PA** – Fayette County officials and volunteers planted 42 trees at German-Masontown Park Friday, as part of the statewide TreeVitalize Initiative.

Fayette County Recycling Coordinator and Stormwater Manager Sheila Shea said the trees, which were planted just past the park entrance, will serve as a riparian buffer - a permanent area of trees and shrubs located adjacent to streams, lakes, ponds and other wetlands.

Riparian buffers are an extremely beneficial type of natural restoration, as they provide ecological and water quality enhancements.

“We originally scheduled this effort for April to celebrate Arbor Day, but we had to delay it because of the COVID-19 shutdown,” Shea said. “We still received a signed proclamation declaring April 24 our official Arbor Day celebration, and the county urges all citizens to continue celebrating all summer long.”

Fayette County Community Development Specialist Sue Martin said about 10 different tree species were selected for the initiative; all of which are native to the area.

“The trees will aid in preventing flooding problems that have occurred there in the past, provide food and shelter for animals, and help beautify the park,” Martin said.

In addition to Shea and Martin, the volunteer effort included German Township supervisors Steve Clark and LC Otto; German Township Municipal Employees; Master Gardener Mary Kaufman; Fayette County Conservation District Office members Heather Fowler and Terri Springer; and various other volunteers.

Martin said the project was part of Phase I of the riparian buffer project, with Phase II currently in the planning stage. The trees and supplies were purchased using a TreeVitalize grant.

A public/private partnership between the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and Tree Pennsylvania, TreeVitalize aims to help build capacity within communities to plan for, plant and care for trees.

“It also offers educational training to help citizens understand the diverse benefits of trees and the importance of properly planting and maintaining them,” Martin said.

For more information on stormwater management in Fayette County, visit [www.FayetteCountyPA.org](http://www.FayetteCountyPA.org). To learn more about TreeVitalize, visit [www.treepennsylvania.org](http://www.treepennsylvania.org).

To learn more about Fayette County, visit [www.FayetteCountyPA.org](http://www.FayetteCountyPA.org).

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*This communication is part of the Fayette County PR Initiative, which is funded through the Fayette County Local Share Account (LSA) and Hotel Tax Grants in cooperation with the Fayette County Board of Commissioners, Fayette Chamber of Commerce, The Redevelopment Authority of the County of Fayette, The Redstone Foundation and other partners. This funding has been designated for the continued promotion and marketing of Fayette County, PA.*

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