



Planting Forests of the Future

North America, Greenville SC

“The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.” ~ Chinese Proverb

When it comes to following this proverb, David Laursen, Director of Operations for Stork North America, has done both. When asked by his fellow Directors for Sustainability project ideas, he suggested planting trees, for several reasons.

As part of an Eagle Scout project back in 1990, David planted 75 trees in his hometown of Dunedin, Florida. Jump forward 31 years later and David’s son, Jack decided he also wanted to plant trees for his Eagle Scout project, this time in their hometown of Greenville, South Carolina.

Jack started his research by reaching out to TreesUpstate, a local non-profit that has planted and donated over 20,000 trees in the Greenville area. As part of their mission, they educate the public how to correctly plant a tree and planters are encouraged to create a personal connection by giving their tree a name.

Jack learned about several flood prone properties owned by Greenville County that were in need of reforestation projects to help manage the flooding. After visiting several sites, Jack chose a site where he could lead his project to plant 100 trees – 25 more than his dad’s endeavours

With guidance from experts at TreesUpstate, Jack chose several tree species that will thrive in flood areas, including Swamp White Oak, River Birch, Sycamore, and Bald Cypress.

After several months of planning, fundraising, and sourcing nearly 50 volunteers, under Jack’s leadership the project was successfully completed. In the next 25 years, the 100 newly planted trees will filter 124,468 gallons of storm water, store 217,881 pounds of carbon, and at maturity will remove 1,100,000 miles of car emissions per year.

It turns out, however, that Jack was not the only one working with TreesUpstate - Fluor Cares was also planning a volunteer project to plant trees in Greenville. By complete coincidence, the site ultimately chosen was a popular walking, running and biking path, adjacent to Jack’s project site.

Early 2022, and David was amongst many Fluor Cares volunteers who planted an additional 42 large trees in the area. After significant rainfall, it was clear to see how badly the trees were needed. Chris Johnston, TreesUpstate Community Forester, asked which volunteers wanted to help at the most challenging tree planting location. David joined several other volunteers, bailing enough flood water to plant a young Swamp White Oak. Having just returned from a recent business trip to New Orleans, and inspired by the city’s resilience in the face of storms and flooding amongst other challenges, David suggested naming the young tree “Louis” in honor of musician Louis Armstrong. “Louis” and the other 41 trees planted by Fluor volunteers will filter 33,521 gallons of storm water, store 91,510 pounds of carbon, and at maturity will remove 462,000 miles of car emissions per year.

The positive impact of these projects will go well beyond the statistics of flood and carbon management. A whole new forest will be created providing habitats for an abundance of wildlife and beautiful recreation spots. All of which strengthens local communities and our planet.



We are ‘Sustainability at Stork’!