



## Guidelines for JoinTrees Grants

God calls us to be good stewards to serve and protect the Earth (Genesis 2.15). As climate change increasingly harms God's creation and threatens the abundant life of shalom God intends on Earth, it is imperative that we act. As a response to God's call, JoinTrees is the campaign of Mennonite Men to plant one million trees by 2030 to help restore the Earth.

Tending trees is essential in our stewardship so they may play their important part in the ecology of God's creation. The importance of trees is seen in the fact that they are featured in the very first and last chapters of the Bible. In Genesis, we read that God created trees for the Earth and placed the "tree of life" in the garden. This woodland garden represents what God intended: beauty, biodiversity and abundance where trees give life for all on Earth. In the last chapter of the Bible, we see the "tree of life" again producing fruit and leaves for healing the world.

Trees are the best and most cost-efficient means for capturing climate-warming carbon dioxide. Trees not only capture carbon, cool the planet, and slow climate change, but also sustain biodiversity and provide other valuable ecosystem services. By increasing tree and forest cover with our JoinTrees campaign, our goals are to help (1) mitigate global warming, (2) support vulnerable communities, (3) promote climate justice, and (4) sustain biodiversity. As we pursue these goals, we also seek to witness our faith, invite people to seek God's shalom,\* and provide practical ways to be engaged in conservation action. Our vision is a healthy, thriving planet where God's abundant life of shalom is enjoyed by all from generation to generation.

The JoinTrees campaign intends to establish trees in various settings, such as:

- Private, business, and church properties,
- Marginal land devoted to afforestation,\*
- Public rights-of-ways along highways,
- City, county, and state parks,
- Mennonite institutions,
- Agroforestry\* projects.

Many trees planted in human-built landscapes will be paid for by individuals, churches, and businesses. To support these projects in human-built environments, we provide guidance, online resources, and limited JoinTrees grants. For larger scale afforestation and reforestation projects, we provide financial assistance with JoinTrees grants. We are especially interested in funding domestic and international projects to establish trees in naturalized landscapes\* and agroforestry plantings.

### Grant Guidelines

1. Priority funding is given to projects involving Mennonite or Anabaptist groups and partners. Other groups who seek to apply are invited to contact the director of Mennonite Men before completing an application. Funding is contingent upon board approval and available resources.
2. Priority funding is for projects planting at least 1 hectare (2.5 acres) to establish trees in naturalized landscapes\* and to assist with agroforestry plantings. JoinTrees grants provide \$1.00 per tree in the project, up to \$20,000, to assist with cost of seedlings and initial maintenance for establishing trees. Additional funding in subsequent years may be provided, contingent on the successful establishment of the trees as determined by a professional forester or natural resources agent.

3. JoinTrees grants may fund reforestation\* projects for working forests that apply best management practices for sustainable forestry, following, for example, models practiced by The Nature Conservancy. For these projects, a description of sustainable forestry practices needs to be included in the application.
4. Priority is given to applications involving partnerships with other agencies and organizations to help ensure the project's success. We especially invite applicants to work with state/provincial forestry agency staff who provide guidance for making your tree planting plans and assist in securing potential government cost-share funding to help pay for tree planting expenses. In the United States this includes the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and in Canada, Natural Resources Canada (NRC). In other countries, check with government forest agencies for equivalent resources. JoinTrees grants are in addition to such funding.
5. Funded projects are expected to be preserved long-term as forested land in keeping with the goals of this campaign, except for trees sustainably managed for fuel production or wood products to reduce harvesting trees from intact forests and savannahs. If the planted land is cleared or developed, we request that the grant money be returned so it may be applied to another project.
6. Where permitted, we request that approved applicants post signs that communicate a message like "Trees planted with support from JoinTrees, a Mennonite Men campaign" to invite others to participate in this campaign. Custom signs may be provided by the applicant or premade signs are available from Mennonite Men.
7. Approved applicants will agree to provide reports, photos, and satellite images at the time of the planting and at years five and ten so Mennonite Men may monitor projects and use these to promote JoinTrees. We also welcome photos of mature trees in the future to show their growth and place in the landscape.

To apply for JoinTrees funding, individuals or groups are to complete the *JoinTrees Grant Application*. To complete the application for large projects, assistance from a professional forester or natural resources agent is required. For this, contact your local/state/provincial forestry or natural resources agency who may develop a stewardship plan for you as part of their public service, or they can direct you to consulting professional foresters who provide this service for a fee to private landowners. Stewardship plans are designed to best meet the applicant's objectives. For small projects, consulting with a professional arborist may suffice.

Grant applications are reviewed by a committee and approved by the board of Mennonite Men twice each year. Deadlines for grant applications are February 1 for action in March and August 1 for action in September. Applicants will be notified through email by the end of March and September about whether the funding request is granted or denied. Approval is given to applications that best meet these guidelines and priorities. Funding will be made only after money is available.

For more information about the JoinTrees program or grant process, contact Steve Thomas, the US Director for Mennonite Men, at [SteveT@MennoniteMen.org](mailto:SteveT@MennoniteMen.org) or 574.202.0048.

**\*Terms**

*Afforestation*: the establishment of a forest or stand in an area where the preceding land use or vegetation was not a forest.

*Agroforestry*: the integration of trees, plants, and animals to make maximum use of the land in sustainable, long-term, productive systems.

*Naturalized landscapes*: Land use that helps restore native plant communities in ecosystems that have been degraded, damaged, or destroyed.

*Reforestation*: the reestablishment of forest cover (naturally or artificially) that usually maintains the same forest type and is done soon after the previous forest or stand was removed.

*Shalom*: God's peaceable order with abundance, security, and justice for all, and well-being throughout creation.