

4-H MILLION TREES PROJECT
BELMONT 4-H CLUB
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March 11, 2009

TO: All U.S. 4-H County Program Representatives / Agents
All U.S. 4-H Club Presidents
All U.S. 4-H Club Community Leaders

NETWORKING: County Reps: Please forward this letter to all your Club Presidents & Community Leaders, and Unit Leaders

Dear 4-H County Program Representatives / Agents, Club Presidents, and Community Leaders:

What is the 4-H Million Trees Project?

In March, 2008, members of the Belmont (California) 4-H Club launched the 4-H Million Trees (4HMT) Project, a large-scale service-learning project with the goal to plant 1,000,000 trees across the United States to beautify America, absorb atmospheric carbon dioxide, and combat global climate change. Given the nature of the 6 million 4-H members, which is summed up in the 4-H Pledge, it is our hope that every one of the approximately 90,000 4-H clubs and units in the U.S. will unite with us as participants in this community service, and plant native trees in their areas during the current 4-H year. We hope everyone will stay with the project every year until we reach our ultimate goal in 2011. It is easy to make this one of your monthly community service projects this year. We hope clubs will accept this invitation and adopt the project so members can enjoy the satisfaction of joining with millions of fellow 4-Hers to make a big difference in the world.

How many trees have been planted so far?

Over 26,000 trees have been planted by over 9,800 4-H youth in 35 states and Canadian provinces. Check the map on the Participants page to see your club's virtual "push pin."

Is this project approved by 4-H?

The 4-H Million Trees project is supported at the national level and a partnership agreement with the Arbor Day Foundation was approved and signed by Dr. Cathann Kress, former Director, Youth Development, National 4-H Headquarters.

How does my club register for the project?

To successfully complete this project, it is critical for 4HMT to build a nationwide network of participating 4-H clubs, 4-H Afterschool programs, 4-H military, and other 4-H units. Please join us **now** by filling out the online registration form on the project website at www.4hmilliontrees.org. Your club or unit will be added to the secure project database, and the trees you planted will help reach the goal. To avoid registration problems, please remember to fill out all the lines on the form. Later, when more trees have been planted, clubs and units can click on their club name, enter the “Adult Leader Name” and “Adult Leader E-mail,” and easily update their database records.

Where do participating clubs/units get the trees, and what is the cost?

Working on a local level, we hope that each club/unit can budget the modest cost of saplings for this community service project. To simplify the acquisition of trees and to minimize the cost, 4HMT has partnered with The Arbor Day Foundation (www.arborday.org), so clubs/units can obtain 12 small trees, delivered, with a \$12 annual membership. Click the link on the project website at www.4hmilliontrees.org, or go directly to the ADF’s 4HMT link at www.arborday.org/4h. The easiest way to proceed is for an adult to use their credit card to obtain the membership using the secure site, and obtain reimbursement from the club/unit. ADF will also accept checks made out to “The Arbor Day Foundation” and sent to Member Services, 211 N. 12th St., Lincoln, NE 68508, but that may delay the delivery of the trees. If sending a check, please specify that it is for the “4-H Million Trees” project. Additional trees can be purchased from ADF at a reasonable cost, or multiple \$12 memberships can be ordered by other parents.

Alternatively, each club/unit can obtain donations of trees, tree supports, and planting materials from partners in their communities. Individual 4-H families who want to participate are also invited to join the project, and can use the ADF/4HMT membership link.

Where should 4-Hers plant trees?

Trees can be planted anywhere, including your 4-H farm, your school, your homes, on the streets of your city, town, or rural area, or any place they can be properly maintained. In addition, we encourage clubs/units to contact the manager of their local National Wildlife Refuge to volunteer to plant trees. We think that native deciduous shade trees planted around the south sides of houses are ideal in warm climates because mature trees yield a huge (30-40%) decrease in air conditioning costs and associated environmental impacts associated with this electricity production. Follow links on the project website, search your library or the internet, or consult with your local Cooperative Extension agents to find information and advice on planting appropriate native species for your particular climate, and for maintenance suggestions. To maximize longevity, please be certain that the trees are native and locally adapted to your climatic zone.

When should 4-Hers plant trees?

We hope that all 4-Hers adopt this project as one of their monthly community service projects. Any day this spring is a good day to plant a tree, and we encourage clubs/units to target the weekends of Earth Day, national or state Arbor Day, and Global Youth Service Day (4/25/09). The symbolism of all 4-H members planting 1,000,000 trees on the same days is huge, and it demonstrates the solidarity of youth in the organization. However, any day throughout the year is a great day to plant trees.

How do clubs communicate with 4HMT?

4HMT intends to communicate with participant clubs via the project website at www.4hmilliontrees.org, where we will post updates including progress on clubs registration, the number of trees planted, and the amount of carbon dioxide removed from the atmosphere. In addition we will send project updates to your E-mail, while always maintaining a strict privacy policy. Given the magnitude of the project, we think that using the online form, which feeds the information into the project database, will be the best way for clubs to send information to 4HMT. We do have an E-mail address at 4hmilliontrees@gmail.com, however the prospect of tens or hundreds of thousands of messages is daunting. So, please send data via the web-based form. When the project is complete, 4HMT hopes to publish a book with selected stories, scrapbook pages, and photos of 4-H youth participants in the project. Submissions for the book can be sent via E-mail at 4hmtbook@gmail.com.

How can 4-Hers do more to help?

4HMT hopes that individual clubs, club officers, other 4-H units and all members will want to take a leadership role and join with us to help organize and fundraise for the project in their town, county, state, or nationally. The easiest way to participate is to use existing resources, raise funds, or obtain donations as a club and then obtain and plant trees near your home. We can support youth wanting to give presentations or write articles on the project. We need someone to create a Facebook and MySpace presence. Contact us if you have an interest in GIS. Individual families can also register and plant trees under this program. Help write your 4HMT story and provide photographs for the book. Please contact us with a proposal if your club wants to take a larger role in this project.

How can 4-Hers help publicize the project?

Public relations is an important aspect of this project, and we plan to publicize the project through national and local television, newspaper and magazine articles, public service announcements, newsletters, and so on. In fact, 4HMT has already organized newspaper and magazine articles and TV shows to make the public aware of the project. Check a TV clip on the project home page. 4-Hers can help the project greatly by publicizing the 4-H Million Trees national service-learning project in their local media. This is also great experience and counts in the record book.

4-Hers Unite!

Project members are very excited to join with 4-Hers from across the U.S. on this national community service project. The trees will help beautify our country and make a big environmental impact, and the experience will teach 4-H youth life lessons about responsibility, citizenship, leadership, communications, organization, project management, and cooperation. In other words, this project will help reinforce the basic goals of the 4-H program while empowering 4-H kids to make a big difference in their world. Let's prove that kids can have an impact on national and global problems, and let everyone know that the younger generation, led by 4-H club members, is going to change the world it will soon inherit!

Sincerely,

Tom Webber
Project Leader

Laura Webber
Teen Leader