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Plant a Wish

tree project planned at the point of beginning

Review Staff Reports

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OHIOVILLE, Pa. - The Ohio River Trail Council will host the "Plant a Wish" project at 1 p.m. Saturday along Ohio River Trail at the Point of Beginning.

Plant a Wish is a nationwide tree planting and public awareness project that is being filmed for a feature documentary.

Community members from Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia are invited to join the Ohio River Trail Council and Plant a Wish project founders Joseph Imhoff and Sara Tekula in the planting of three native state trees, including a Sugar Maple, Buckeye and an Eastern Hemlock.

The tree-planting, movie-making team from Hawaii is in town as a part of their mission to plant native trees in all 50 states and make a documentary film about it. At this geographically unique spot, there will be trees planted from each of three states: Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia. This planting event is free to the public.

The Point of Beginning is the beginning point of the U.S. Public Land Survey and is a United States National Historic Landmark, in Ohioville near Glasgow, Pa. A monument marks the border between the U.S. states of Ohio and Pennsylvania, on the north side of the Ohio River. It is near the three-way intersection of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and the northern tip of West Virginia.

The Point of Beginning is significant as being the point from which the Public Land Survey System was performed, starting in 1785, which would open what was then the Northwest Territory for settlement. The commemorative site is located about two miles east of the center of East Liverpool on Ohio State Route 39 and Pennsylvania Route 68.

During the planting at the Ohio River Trail site, community members will be invited to write down their wishes on pieces of scrap paper to be planted under the trees. Wishes may also be shared on camera for inclusion in the historic film. This event will also be featured in an article on the Plant a Wish blog, at www.plantawish.org.

Plant a Wish was launched on Earth Day 2010 with national recognition, and the team has been planting trees and filming segments on their home island of Maui, Hawaii. The plan is to visit about 22 states in the month of June; all located in the upper Midwest and Northeast. Then, the duo will return in subsequent trips in Fall 2010 and Spring 2011 until they have planted trees in all 50 states of the U.S.

Imhoff and Tekula have worked together in Hawaii and Los Angeles since they met in 2005 and have been recognized both locally and nationally for their work in media outreach, video production, and writing. Now a married couple, they say the Plant a Wish concept came to them during one of their usual brainstorming sessions at their Maui home.

"We were making a list of things we wanted to do in the coming year," says Tekula. "Our wish list consisted of four things: travel, meeting and connecting with lots of people, planting lots of trees, and making a documentary film. Then we realized we could do all of those in one project."

Tekula says Imhoff was the one who came up with the idea to plant in all 50 states. "I felt like the project needed a specific mission, some goal that we as filmmakers must attain to make this historic, so I suggested we do all of the U.S. States, along with Washington, D.C.," says Imhoff. "I believe we'll be the first people in history to have accomplished this when we're finished. As you might imagine, we are on this challenging adventure. Being able to plant trees in three states in one stop along our tour will buy us some time, and we are excited to work with the Ohio River Trail Council. We love hearing about the new greenways that are popping up around the country."

Article Photos



A monument is located at the Point of Beginning to mark the border between Ohio and Pennsylvania. (Photo by Wayne Maris)

The Ohio River Trail (ORT) is a proposed greenway that begins at the Point of Beginning and interconnects existing trails in Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia. The proposal is headed up by the Ohio River Trail Council (ORTC).

Dr. Vincent Troia, Chief Executive Officer of the ORTC, stated that the tree planting at the Point of Beginning is offered to the tri-state communities as an opportunity to learn about the important role that native trees and plants play in our daily lives and to lend the Councils support to Plant a Wish. "I am very pleased to partner with Sara and Joe in this act of caring for our environment. Each tree planted can absorb as much carbon dioxide as a car produces in a year. We all share a similar vision for our future." The idea is that these three Plant a Wish trees become important in our communities and grows to improve the health of our environment for generations to come.

Since Earth Day, the Plant a Wish filmmakers have been using social media and PayPal to raise money for the project from friends, family, and strangers for amounts as low as \$20 per person, and have paid for the entire trip from this fund. This tree-planting event at the Ohio River Trail Head is offered to the community as an opportunity to learn more about the important role native trees and plants play in our daily lives, to enjoy speakers from the community, and to lend their support to partnering organizations. The idea is that the Plant a Wish trees become important ones in the community, and grow to improve the health of the surrounding environment for generations to come.

Donations to the film project are welcome at the organization's website, at plantawish.org/get-involved/donate. To volunteer at the event, or for more information, please call Plant a Wish at 808-250-4030 or simply come by to attend the event on Saturday at Lock 57 Park, Ohioville, Pa., near the the Point of Beginning and the Ohio River Trail mile marker zero just west of Glasgow, Pa.

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