

Sovereignty Speaks[©]

Native Plant Conservation through Landscape Management



Oklahoma State University marked its 15th annual Arbor Day celebration with a collaborative tree planting event involving four campus organizations: OSU Landscape Services, OSU Native American Student Association (NASA), OSU Center for Sovereign Nations (CSN), and OSU Center for American Indian Studies (AMIS).

Three native trees—two serviceberries and one hackberry—were planted on the north side of Life Sciences East in OSU's Native Plant Corridor. These trees enhance the ecological functionality and campus beauty through a means culturally significant to the Native American student community and highlight tribal nation sovereignty through the preservation of traditional plants.

Miss American Indian OSU, Lauren Branham, spoke about the vital role native plants play in supporting pollinators like butterflies, emphasizing their ecological and cultural importance.

NASA Involvement Chair and Natural Resource Ecology and Management junior, Toby Martin, worked closely with OSU Landscape Services to select the tree species to plant, as well as the planting locations, integrating his passion for Native heritage and for botany.

OSU Interim President Jim Hess praised the collaboration, saying, "My favorite part of today's celebration is the collaboration between the Native American Student Association and our Landscape Services. The native plant corridor highlights our university's commitment to serve the institution and honor the heritage of so many of our current and former students, as well as our community at large. Because my first priority as your president is to always put students first, and we always do, I'm proud that this event highlights and shines a light on the great work of our students." Hess also reminded the crowd that "the two best times to plant a tree are 20 years ago and today."