

Planting Nassau's Future

Background Information and Project Summary

Keep Nassau Beautiful, Inc. (KNB) is a 501(c)(3) charitable and educational affiliate of Keep America Beautiful (KAB). KNB was incorporated in 1991 and has a long-standing relationship with organizations and citizens of Fernandina Beach and Nassau County. Our purpose is to educate and enable citizens in ways of improving the community's appearance. To achieve this purpose, we:

- maintain litter and waste control programs utilizing the Keep America Beautiful System, a behavioral approach to changing attitudes and habits about proper solid waste handling;
- investigate, study, develop and propose plans to bring about community appearance improvements for the beautification and conservation of Nassau County;
- promote the benefits of a clean and beautiful environment.



In October 2019 as part of our commitment to continually succeed in the KNB purpose we launched Planting Nassau's Future (PNF). This KNB program will engage citizens in community appearance improvement projects for the beautification and conservation of Nassau County, FL. KNB is the organization that crosses all local neighborhoods and communities with goals that are easily relatable and can yield results that are easily seen and measured.

PNF projects include; Adopt-A-Tree, Legacy Tree, sea-oats planting, and flowering gardens in spots across Nassau County. Adopt-A-Tree is a project with an annual goal to plant 300 trees throughout Nassau County. Legacy Tree is an annual project which coordinates public space with individuals and corporate donations or grants which are earmarked for the planting of larger Legacy Trees. Sea-oats planting will be coordinated with Fernandina Beach during first quarter 2020 to protect and restore dunes. Flowering gardens is a second half of 2020 project to plant native flowering species in public spaces.

Statement of Need

Nassau County is experiencing tree loss due to extreme weather events, age and increasing development. With rapid growth citizens have begun to focus their efforts on opposing zoning designations and citing over-development and the loss of tree canopy and native foliage as having a negative impact on quality of life. KNB desires to implement PNF projects to help instill a sense of community pride in the citizens of Nassau County. Through these projects we will engage citizens in the positive actions we can take as a community to restore the tree canopy and plant native species to retain the benefits trees and other native foliage have brought to our community.

PNF projects are expected to be funded through grants and private donations specifically earmarked for the PNF program. Grants and private donations provide funding to plant nursery trees in public spaces and to plant native flowering species in public spaces. KNB will recognize sponsors of PNF, if desired, on our website, social media, literature and news releases.

Goals

Goals are set for the program and each project. The goals are to:

- gather private and public resources, from all corners of the county, around the goal of planting 300 native trees throughout Nassau County during 5-month periods from December 1, 2019 through April 30, 2020, and again November 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021;
- champion the planting and maintenance of native flowering species in high visibility public spaces in Nassau County during Q3 and Q4;
- organize and lead community volunteers and partner organizations in planting sea oats that are critical to dune preservation during Q1;
- provide educational programming (workshops, literature, activity books, and celebrations) to expose project participants and volunteers (neighborhood HOA, environmental non-profit organizations, families, children, schools and Scouts, church groups, etc.) to the science and landscape design aspects of trees, our suburban forest, dune system, and native foliage;
- conduct a Citizen Science exercise where participants complete a tree inventory worksheet that will be tallied into a GIS layer illustrating the number, species, tree health condition, and mortality/remains, with the aim of contributing to the Florida Forest Service data in Nassau County, FL. Database paves the way for future tree planting projects coordinated by KNB or other county-based groups;
- instill in participants and volunteers' civic pride that is known to result in better behavior as it relates to littering and the resilient strategies that extend beyond the PNF projects.

Sustainability

Successful implementation of projects, and community participation and enthusiasm, leads to continued financial support for same and similar projects in future years. Ongoing educational events and future inventories of trees and spaces planted during this project is expected to provide a platform for ongoing community tree planting and maintenance.

Outcomes

Expected outcomes of PNF projects include:

- increased sense of community pride and well-being as a result of beautifying surroundings and appearance of the community;
- improved carbon footprint over time which can be measured by the reduction of carbon dioxide levels, reduction of air temperature, reduction of noise, and reduction in the severity of storm related wind and water damage;
- increased property values, by up to 20 percent, and increased attractiveness to tourists and the business community.

Key Performance Indicators

We believe “What gets measured gets done.” Regular measurement and reporting will keep us focused and help identify where we need to make modifications to meet the needs of the community. Our Key Performance Indicators are as follows:

- distribute and install up to 300 trees during project planting window;
- utilize the National Tree Benefit Calculator (www.treebenefits.com/calculator), and the iTree Tools (www.itreetools.org/tools) to track and measure carbon offset and economic metrics as related to tree planting projects;
- install Legacy Trees donated by individuals and organizations;
- organize community planting projects of sea oats in Amelia Island beach-front dunes and native flowering species in high visibility public spaces in Nassau County;
- measure participant participation and satisfaction with educational workshops;
- collect Citizen Science tree inventory sheets and set up a database for community future use;
- meet budget estimates with projects fully funded through earmarked grants, donations and fundraising events.

Key Personnel

KNB Project Committee Members;

Kelley D. McCarter (Project Chair, SAF Certified Forester and KNB Board Member)

Christine Harmon (co-founder Amelia Island Beach & Marine Life Conservancy, co-founder of Amelia Island Conservancy Network and KNB Board Member)

Lynda Bell (KNB Executive Director and Florida Master Naturalist Land Steward).