

EXTENSION SNAPSHOT

Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit

May 2022



Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

New oak savannah planted at Sommer Farm in Peoria

Youth and adults from Peoria County worked together on a unique community service project that they and others will watch grow for many years and will benefit generations to come. Thanks to a [4-H Green Communities Tree Program](#), 4-H members, parents, volunteers, [Extension Master Gardeners](#), and staff from [University of Illinois Extension, Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit](#), [Peoria County Soil and Water Conservation District](#), and [Peoria Park District](#) planted 25 oak trees at [Sommer Farm](#) located on the north edge of Peoria.

Dressed in rain boots and gloves, carrying shovels and trowels, twenty six people arrived at Sommer Farm on April 9 to plant the oak tree savanna. The savanna will bring new life to oak-hickory forests currently under threat in Illinois. The trees were planted in an open patch of ground surrounded by prairie grass & woods. "A design was created to allow the area to become a grove that will serve the needs of summer day camp participants and also serve as a wedding venue as the trees mature," stated [Mike Miller](#), Peoria Park District Sommer Farm Manager.

"Oak savannas are being overtaken by invasive species, as well as more shade-tolerant trees, such as maples," says [Curt Sinclair](#), U of I Extension 4-H specialist. "Illinois 4-H is primed to take action to increase the number of oak trees in the state."

This oak savanna was made possible by the 4-H Green Communities Tree Program which focuses on tackling global issues at a local level. U of I Extension partnered with the [Association of Illinois Soil & Water Conservation Districts](#) (AISWCD) to bring this project to life. Peoria County was just one of the 31 counties participating in this statewide program, which planted a total of 775 trees across the state.

4-H alumni and parent, Andrew Monkemeyer shared why he participated and why he thought it was important to be involved. "Being taught as a 4-H member growing up, we were shown how important it is to serve our community. I want to pass these values to my children as well. My daughter Mabel and I had a wonderful time being able to get outside on a beautiful Saturday morning and serve Peoria County through planting trees. Getting to know other 4-H members and families as well made it a fantastic experience for my family!"

This was a wonderful community collaboration that resulted in beautiful oak savanna that will benefit future generations for many years to come.



Andrew Monkemeyer, 4-H alumni, and his daughter were part of the team of people who planted 25 oak trees at Sommer Farm. The service project was made possible by 4-H Green Communities Tree Program that helped provide 775 oak trees throughout the state.

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