

Hello friends, (with apologies for impersonal group note, as always),

It's hard to believe that I've been at TREE Fund long enough to be riding my fourth annual Tour des Trees this year, but that is indeed the case! As President and CEO of TREE Fund, I could just cheer on the volunteer riders and thank them for their efforts, but I choose to experience it with them, on the road, putting in the same time and effort they do. I also choose to fully fundraise for myself, rather than having TREE Fund pay my way.

We're going to be in Ohio this year, riding 530 miles over seven days (July 29 to August 4) through the arbor rich central and northeastern part of the State. Our route will cycle through Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Cleveland's extensive and visionary "Emerald Necklace," two Tree Campus USA's, eight Tree City USA's, and will end at the International Tree Climbing Championships in Columbus. While the fundraising part of this event is obviously important to us, its primary benefit to TREE Fund is as a community engagement event, where we inform and educate people face-to-face on the importance of urban and community forests.

Ohio values its trees and has a special relationship with them. The legendary John Chapman (aka Johnny Appleseed) planted thousands of apple trees throughout his life, many of which were in Ohio. The mixed forests of northeastern Ohio are essentially the birthplace of modern scientific tree care: in 1880 John Davey started The Davey Tree Expert Company in Kent, Ohio, on the premise that trees could be saved and made to flourish with proper attention. His revolutionary 1901 publication, *The Tree Doctor*, established methods for caring for trees based on sound scientific methods and observation.

The 2018 Tour des Trees will pay homage to Ohio's tree history by planting certified Johnny Appleseed trees along the route. We will also be planting a Liberty Tree (cloned from the last standing colonial Liberty Tree in Annapolis, which fell in a 1999 storm) at the Ohio State Capitol, and we will be offering a dozen educational opportunities for children and adults alike, in schools, parks, libraries, and beyond. The photo below shows one of my favorite events of that variety from last year's Tour: planting a Liberty Tree at the State Capitol in Maryland, 35 years and one mile from where I took the oath on I-Day at the Naval Academy. (I'm the one in the yellow "Navy" cap, as we perform our traditional "blessing of the tree" with elected officials and guests).

I'd be thrilled if any of you could come join me on the road, and would be happy to work with you to get you signed up and onboard if that's of interest. It's a fully supported adventure tour with room, board and programs covered for all riders who meet the \$3,500 fundraising minimum. I'd also be just as thrilled if you would contribute to my campaign, here:

<https://2018-tour-des-trees.everydayhero.com/us/j-eric-smith-s-tour-des-trees-fundraising-page>

Many of you have been faithfully supportive of my work in the nonprofit sector over the past quarter century, and I am very grateful for that. Don't hesitate to give me a call or shoot me a note if you'd like to learn more of what I'm up to these days (or just to say "hi!"), and thanks in advance for supporting my ride this year on behalf of the trees we live with, and all the things they do to our collective benefit!

