

June 12, 2024

## **State leaders participate in June 12 tree planting at Buffalo State University**

(BUFFALO, NY)—New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Region 9 Director Julie Barrett-O’Neill offered comments and helped plant a river birch at a special tree planting event June 12 on the campus of Buffalo State University. She joined attendees of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence River Water Resources Regional Body and Compact Council, which held its summer meeting on the BSU campus, in the ceremonial planting.

The event was part of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Trees Initiative. This regional initiative aims to plant 250 million trees in the region by 2033 and directly complements New York State’s own commitment to planting 25 million trees over the same time frame.

“DEC is proud to partner with fellow Great Lakes states and provinces in support of planting 250 million trees across the Great Lakes Basin over the next decade,” **DEC Region 9 Director Julie Barrett-O’Neill said.** “The initiative directly complements and bolsters the goal set by Governor Kathy Hochul earlier this year to plant 25 million trees statewide by 2033 because of the many roles trees offer in creating habitat, cleaning and restoring our waters, anchoring shorelines, and absorbing carbon from the atmosphere, and DEC looks forward to working together to bring these benefits across the Great lakes region.”

The Regional Body/Compact Council meeting is designated as a Great Lakes Green Event, a program of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers Conference (GSGP). The program encourages destination stewardship and environmentally beneficial practices for conferences and other events across the Great Lakes region. As a Great Lakes Green Event, the Compact has committed to reducing food waste, eliminating single-use plastics, and creating a positive footprint by supporting tree planting in the local community.

“Over the next decade, GSGP will work with the region’s states and provinces, federal governments, corporations, cities, and other institutions to achieve this goal,” said **Mike Piskur, program director at GSGP.** “Tree planting creates many benefits for the region’s environment, economy and people. These benefits include carbon storage, water quality improvements, wildlife habitat and public health. We applaud DEC’s leadership and collaboration with the initiative.”