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Twenty-three Arkansas Playgrounds Selected to Participate in Annual Shade Trees on Playgrounds Program

LITTLE ROCK, AR –The Arkansas Department of Agriculture’s Forestry Division is pleased to announce the expansion of the Shade Trees on Playgrounds program to celebrate the program’s 20th anniversary. Twenty-three schools in 20 communities, more than double the number of schools in previous years, have been selected across the state to participate in this year’s program. The selected schools for 2022 are as follows:

- Park Avenue Elementary – Stuttgart
- Drew Central Elementary – Monticello
- Jimmy Brown Elementary – Star City
- Star City Middle School – Star City
- Star City High School – Star City
- Oscar Hamilton Elementary – Foreman
- Caddo Hills Elementary – Norman
- Bobby Barrett Elementary – Mount Ida
- East Side School Kindergarten Center – Magnolia
- East End Elementary – East End
- Arkansas Arts Academy Elementary – Rogers
- Berryville Intermediate School – Berryville
- Clarksville Intermediate School – Clarksville
- Butterfield Elementary – Fayetteville
- Heber Springs Middle School – Heber Springs
- Sacred Heart School – Morrilton
- Little Rock West High School of Innovation – Little Rock
- McRae Elementary – Searcy
- Southwest Middle School – Searcy
- Oak Grove Elementary – Paragould
- M.D. Williams Intermediate – Pocahontas
- Batesville Preschool – Batesville
- Marshall Elementary School – Marshall

The Shade Trees on Playgrounds program (STOP) was organized to lower adult skin cancer risk by reducing childhood exposure to direct sunlight where children play, like school playgrounds. Winning schools receive up to five shade trees, mulch, watering supplies, and planting guidelines after participating in program training.

“The STOP program combines hands-on, outdoor experiences with classroom curriculum about the importance of trees and how to care for trees,” says Urban & Community Forestry Program Coordinator, Kristine Kimbro. “We hope this program not only improves the health of Arkansas students, but also leaves a lasting impression about the value of forests and how to be good stewards of our natural resources.”

Schools are invited to submit STOP applications annually. To qualify, participating schools must lack shade, participate in a virtual STOP workshop, agree to use Forestry Division curriculum to emphasize the importance of trees and forestry in Arkansas, hold a tree-planting ceremony with students, and agree to long-term maintenance of the planted shade trees. Forestry Division personnel assist with the

transport and planting of the trees. Trees for each campus are chosen by local Forestry Division staff to fit the unique region and conditions of each playground and are purchased from local nurseries and suppliers.

Learn more about the STOP program and other Urban & Community Forestry services and programs at agriculture.arkansas.gov/forestry/urban-community-forestry. With program questions, contact Kristine Kimbro at 479-228-7929 or kristine.kimbrow@agriculture.arkansas.gov, or Harold Fisher at 501-580-4054 or harold.fisher@agriculture.arkansas.gov.

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture and forestry to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation. Visit agriculture.arkansas.gov/. The Arkansas Department of Agriculture offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.