

\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 9, 2019

## *Free Native Trees Available for Residents of Aransas County Affected by Hurricane Harvey*

WHO—RETREET ([www.retreet.org](http://www.retreet.org))

WHAT—A Volunteer Planting Event ([www.retreet.org/aransascounty](http://www.retreet.org/aransascounty))

WHERE—Aransas County, TX

WHEN—Request trees beginning September 9, 2019, with planting to take place November 16, 2019

On November 16, 2019, a coalition of regional and national partners will lead volunteers in planting up to 150 native 15-gallon trees, free of charge, at the homes of residents of Aransas County affected by Hurricane Harvey. Only the owner of an impacted property may ask for trees and requests must be submitted online through RETREET's website ([www.retreet.org/aransascounty](http://www.retreet.org/aransascounty)). Representatives of RETREET and its partners will work with those who submit requests to determine the best planting locations at each home site, and volunteers from all over the US will travel to Aransas County to join locals in planting the trees.

This volunteer planting event will address an often-overlooked part of the recovery process. Trees are destroyed alongside infrastructure and housing in every disaster. While bringing life back to an area produces an immense psychological impact by making unfamiliar, decimated landscapes feel like home again, there are almost no resources available to do this unique work. Most people struggling through the recovery process do not have time, energy, or funds required to replace their lost trees and, furthermore, do not know which trees should be planted where, or when is best to do so. Of everything lost, mature trees are what will take the longest to replace.

"It's been a long journey back. RETREET's volunteers and trees helped my community fill voids left by the devastation and bring smiles as we watch them grow – a symbol that life is returning and this will be a great place to live again," said Rebecca Kasbaum, a resident of Moore, OK, pointing out the impact RETREET's work has had in her community following an EF5 tornado that devasted her town on May 20, 2013.

This planting will be a major environmental and infrastructural investment that will leave a legacy for generations to come. These trees, which serve as powerful symbols of hope, will reestablish the environmental identity of Aransas County, providing shade for islanders and habitat for birds and other wildlife. RETREET intends to spread its programs to other communities in the area rebuilding after Hurricane Harvey, and is committed to hosting numerous plantings over the next several years.

Inquiries about this planting or future events and offers of support or participation can be submitted to RETREET through their website ([www.retreet.org](http://www.retreet.org)).

## ***ABOUT***

RETREET redefines disaster relief by engaging communities to replant lost trees. To date, our programs have brought 5,335 trees to thousands of families recovering from natural disasters in 17 different communities across North America. There is no other agency focused on this unique, important, and underrepresented part of the recovery process. As such, RETREET has become the national authority in this work.

## ***CONTACT***

Grady McGahan  
Executive Director  
RETREET  
(347) 610-4454  
[grady@retreet.org](mailto:grady@retreet.org)  
Available for interviews