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Contact: Samantha Guinn, Assistant Director of Parks 417-742-5384

**City of Willard to Improve Community Forests with Cost-Share Grant**

The City of Willard has been awarded a grant from the Missouri Department of Conservation through the Community Forestry Cost-Share Program. The cost-share program is designed to assist communities in improving their community forests and promoting the benefits of them.

Trees are a vital part of a community’s ecosystem, regardless of the size of that community. In Willard and others, trees prevent erosion and runoff in urban areas, soften noise and lighting, and provide habitat for wildlife. The Missouri Department of Conservation partners with many municipalities to ensure healthy community forests.

Samantha Guinn, Willard Parks & Recreation Assistant Director, said of the award, “The City of Willard, Willard Parks & Recreation, and the businesses and citizens of the community are grateful to receive the Community Forestry Cost-Share grant. A thriving tree population is a key element in building a happy and healthy citizenry. This grant allows the City to care for its trees so they can be enjoyed for decades to come.”

Missouri Department of Conservation has partnered with the City of Willard in tree canopy care for many years, assisting in maintenance and guidance for long-term community forest planning. The City’s collaboration with MDC has been vital to maintaining its Tree City USA status for over 20 years.