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Volunteers from the Black community, the Boys and Girls Clubs of Southwest Washington and Vancouver Urban Youth Program, close out Black History Month by planting trees at Bagley Community Park.

Cultivating Community Pride

Tree plantings honor legacy of Black leaders

Black History Month was celebrated in Vancouver with tree plantings at Bagley Community Park.

Volunteers from the Black community, Boys & Girls Clubs of Southwest Washington and the city's Urban Youth program, worked in small groups on Feb. 27 to plant 24 trees while follow-

ing COVID-19 safety guidelines. They were joined by Vancouver Mayor Anne McEnery-Ogle, Urban Forestry Commissioner Clif Barnes and Parks and Recreation Advisory Commissioner Matthew Kuntz.

The annual tree planting event began in 2006 and honors the legacy of many Black American lead-

ers by encouraging civic engagement and cultivating community pride. This year's ceremony began with an acknowledgement recognizing the Cowlitz and Chinook tribes. Vancouver Parks and Recreation Special Events Coordinator and Urban Youth leader Johnie Tucker also shared a brief history of George Washington Bush, a

Black pioneer who was one of the earliest permanent settlers in the Washington Territory.

In addition to aesthetic improvements, increasing the urban tree canopy helps the environment by off-setting carbon dioxide produced by cities, and the root systems that trees develop are useful in stormwater management.