Distributed by UW News Service, February 10, 2025

Link to original story: <https://www.uwsp.edu/news/leaf-tree-seed-collection-2024/>

**Students across Wisconsin helping the DNR to repopulate forests**

Written by University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point

The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point’s [LEAF – Wisconsin’s K-12 Forestry Education Program](https://www.uwsp.edu/wcee/wcee/leaf/sf/) and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – Division of Forestry’s Reforestation Program have been collaborating to get Wisconsin’s School Forests more involved in tree seed collection.

LEAF and the DNR saw an opportunity to encourage tree seed collection in school forests as a way to create a fun and meaningful educational opportunity as well as a way to ramp up for the school forest program’s centennial in 2027-2028. Tree seed collected now will become the seedling stock planted in school forests in 2-3 years’ time.

The project was piloted with three school forests in the fall of 2024 – Almond-Bancroft School Forest (Phillips-Unit), Cedric A. Vig Outdoor Classroom (CAVOC) in Rhinelander, and Laona School Forest. The school forest coordinators worked with LEAF and DNR staff to plan a seed collection trip.

In Almond-Bancroft, science teacher Brenda Sherman brought her 7th-grade students out to harvest red pinecones. Twenty-six students learned about red pine reproduction and assisted in harvesting a half bushel of cones.

In Rhinelander, school forest manager Mike Cheslock had various groups of elementary students to learn about seeds, seedlings, and different types of trees. Overall, students collected 66 pounds of red oak acorns.

In Laona, science teachers Karen Biedermann and Amy Vaclav brought out their respective middle school and high school students to learn about seed collection. Unfortunately, though the forest was rich with a variety of tree species, none of them were viable for seed collection on the day. Students were able to collect a few hemlock cones to investigate.

LEAF and the DNR are currently working to develop additional seed collection resources to share with school forests in the spring in hopes to get additional school forests involved in seed collection.

Each year, the Reforestation Program purchases quality seed from locally adapted native trees and shrubs to meet reforestation goals in Wisconsin. A large portion of this seed is purchased from local collectors.

LEAF, which is a partnership between the DNR and the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point’s Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education, coordinates the [Wisconsin School Forest Program](https://www.uwsp.edu/wcee/wcee/leaf/sf/). School forests are land registered through the state and owned or controlled by a public or private school for environmental education and natural resource management.