Media Advisory

On Thursday, Dec. 8, 20 Ruston High School students studying green careers and social equity will put their knowledge to work, planting dozens of trees in a community park alongside local Weyerhaeuser Company volunteers. The students are among roughly 200 at Ruston High School who were the first to engage with a new curriculum designed by American Forests with support from Weyerhaeuser and Project Learning Tree.

The planting of 33 trees at Duncan Park kicks off a partnership between American Forests and Weyerhaeuser designed to expand American Forests' Tree Equity program into smaller, more rural communities and provide environmental education focused on careers in urban and community forestry to hundreds of students. The program aims to identify and tackle disparities in tree canopy cover in Ruston and two other communities where Weyerhaeuser employees live and work, and provide replicable best practices for communities nationwide. Students in those communities will learn about environmental justice issues and design a green project that gives them a window into the field of forestry.

For the Ruston planting Thursday, the partnership is working with Darrell Street, who owns Tiguar Urban Forestry Consulting LLC.

Dignitaries attending the planting include Ruston Mayor Ronny Walker; Alderwoman Carolyn Cage, representative for Ward 1; and John Young, assistant superintendent, Lincoln Parish Schools

When: Thursday, Dec. 8; Remarks at 10 a.m., followed by planting trees until 11:30 a.m.
Where: Duncan Park, 1450 Arlington St., Ruston, LA

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More background:

The Weyerhaeuser-funded project is built around American Forests' Tree Equity Score (treeequityscore.org), a tool that helps gauge which neighborhoods in a community need trees the most. Until now, American Forests has only used the tool to calculate neighborhood scores nationwide for "urbanized areas," or those with 50,000 people or more. With the support of Weyerhaeuser, the organization will apply the tool to "urban clusters," areas with populations between 2,500 and 50,000, making the tool more accessible than ever and helping ensure that everyone experiences the health and climate benefits that trees provide no matter their race, income, age or neighborhood.