

December 15, 2016 10:26AM

Program plants live trees in housing areas

Live trees purchased for the holidays are planted on post after the holidays.

Christopher Burnett | Staff Writer

Fort Leavenworth Frontier Heritage Communities and the Environmental Division of Directorate of Public Works have partnered to create a program in which live trees purchased for the holidays are planted on post after the holidays.

Neil Bass, DPW natural resources specialist, said members of the Natural Resources Committee conceived the idea. The committee meets quarterly, and is comprised of volunteers who represent various organizations on post that utilize the natural resources on the installation.

“The Natural Resources Committee represents groups like the horse stables, Scouts, Rod and Gun Club, (the Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation) and (the Directorate of Emergency Services),” Bass said. “We share information in meetings on what natural resource areas are being used for training and what areas are closed for various other reasons. Our guidance is based upon the overall installation natural resource goals. We also discuss how community groups may be using the areas, and consider any viable ideas for conserving natural resources on post by members of the post community.”

Bass said that during one of the committee meetings, Neile Stallings, a volunteer member representing the stables, suggested doing a live Christmas tree program. The program would ultimately provide new trees to be planted in the post’s residential neighborhoods.

Live Christmas trees differ from cut trees. A live tree is purchased from a nursery with its roots in a container or with the root ball intact and wrapped in burlap. Live trees can be replanted, but cut trees are discarded after the season.

“I felt this type of conservation initiative would also help compensate for the trees on post that have already been lost to construction projects,” Stallings said. “Live trees eliminate expenses associated with disposing of discarded cut trees. This live Christmas tree program can also enable community residents to leave a living legacy on the post.”

Others on the committee also thought this was a good idea, so Bass said he started looking into how to make it happen. Since it directly affects the military housing residents, Bass contacted Michaels Military Housing, the parent company of FLFHC.

“Ron Hansen, president of Michaels (Management Services and Michaels Military Housing), was already scheduled to be on post and he agreed to meet with me to discuss the live Christmas tree idea,” Bass said. “We met, he said it was a great idea, and he told the Michaels staff here on post to work with me.”

An exact location has yet to be determined for planting the new live trees. According to Bass, Barren Outdoor Solutions, FLFHC’s landscape contractor, has agreed to pick up the live trees curbside from residences, then replant the trees when weather conditions allow and locations are set.

“Since the live Christmas tree program is in its first year, the committee sought ways to get the word out to the community,” Bass said. “Halie Souza, a high school student who lives here on post, developed a flier that can be downloaded from the FLFHC website. She worked with Neile Stallings on the concept and then the digital design. The flier also lists three locations where trees may be purchased, but there are probably other sources throughout the greater community as well. Producing the flyer was an all volunteer effort, created from original design work and not just made using simple clip art.”

Residents wishing to participate in the program should place their undecorated live trees curbside after Dec. 27. Barren Outdoor Solutions will collect the live trees through Jan. 13.

When the trees are planted depends upon weather and ground temperatures. In the event of deep snow or frozen ground, the trees will be taken to an outside staging area to wait for the ground to thaw.

“When soil conditions are appropriate, the trees will be planted in common areas and greenways around housing,” Bass said. “Depending on the location of the planting, trees can even provide nesting habitat for birds or shelter for animals from the wind and winter storms.”

The Environmental Division is responsible for environmental compliance, pollution prevention, asbestos/lead/hazardous material sampling, hazardous waste management, recycling and reuse program, and natural resource management.

For more information about this program, contact Bass at michael.n.bass.civ@mail.mil or call 684-8979. Download the Fort Leavenworth Live Trees Program flyer at <https://themichaelsorg.com/uploads/files/902233024206685844-2016-live-christmas-tree-flyer.pdf>.



PHOTO/ PRUDENCE SIEBERT, FORT LEAVENWORTH LAMP

Neile Stallings, Fort Leavenworth Natural Resources Committee representative, looks at price tags on small evergreen trees and shrubs Dec. 12 at Home Depot in Leavenworth. Stallings suggested a live Christmas tree program during a quarterly Natural Resources Committee meeting to help replace some of the trees that have been lost across post because of development. Michael’s Military Housing and the Fort Leavenworth Environmental Division have partnered to kick off the live tree program this season and will plant live Christmas trees purchased by Fort Leavenworth residents. Several live Christmas tree vendors are available in the area. Photo by Prudence Siebert/Fort Leavenworth Lamp

