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10-22-2024

UMN Morris Students Lead Campus Tree Survey Project

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
MORRIS

UMN Morris students lead campus tree survey project

(October 22, 2024) In summer 2024, two UMN Morris student interns, Darlene Corte '27 and Megan Linder '26 worked with partners to conduct a tree survey of campus. They share a passion for the outdoors and animals. Corte is studying biology and is interested in animal behavior research. Linder is studying environmental studies and wants to pursue a career working with wildlife.

The project began in winter 2023. It had been about a decade since there was a comprehensive tree survey conducted on the campus. Before the survey could get underway there was a big challenge. The team needed a method for storing and displaying tree data that could be used by the campus for several years. Gillian Deidre '24, stepped up to address the challenge. Deidre used U of M GIS tools to create a digital platform to contain the tree data and display it.

“A big goal for this year was to create the scaffolding for a tree survey methodology that can be used today and into the future. I think we have accomplished that goal,” says Linder.

Over the summer, Corte and Linder broke the campus into several zones and began their work. By the end of August, the team had surveyed nearly three thousand trees. The dynamic duo then presented their findings to UMN Morris Facilities Management.

Their summer work did not end at the edges of campus. They also assisted the city of Morris to implement a community tree survey. And they did additional survey work at the Morris EcoStation.

“We also worked with Minnesota GreenCorps member, Cameron Berthiaume '22, who conducted a survey of the tree canopy in the city of Morris. We were glad to help the city with that work. We also surveyed trees at the Morris EcoStation and created a framework that can be expanded on next year,” explains Corte.

In May 2022 a derecho hit Morris and took down many trees on campus. The campus has an active tree-planting program. Lisa Harris, facilities director, “These students did a great job at creating a tree inventory that our Morris grounds crew will be able use to help with their tree planting decision making.”

