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Press Release

April 25, 2013

[Metro-North](#)

IMMEDIATE

### Arbor Day News Flash!

#### *Prehistoric Species, Dawn Redwood, Found in North White Plains*

In recognition of Arbor Day on April 26, MTA Metro-North Railroad is proud to disclose its stewardship of a very special tree - an ancient Dawn Redwood - a prehistoric species that lived when dinosaurs still roamed the planet.

The tree is just outside Metro-North's office building at 525 North Broadway in North White Plains. The "living fossil" was first noticed by Karen Timko, Metro-North's Director of Environmental Compliance and Services, when the railroad began remodeling the office building.

"I knew right away we had found something special," Timko said. "It has a very strangely configured trunk and the branches come out is very unique looking. We know plants very well and this is something I'd never seen before."



The odd trunk structure and interesting branch formations led Timko and Assistant Director of Planning and Design Jennifer Barry to do some research.

What they discovered was that the 70' tall, 5' thick giant is a critically endangered species and cousin of the Giant Sequoia, called *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, one of three species of conifers known as redwoods.

Dawn Redwoods were thought to be extinct until 1948, when scientists rediscovered the trees growing in its native habitat, the Sichuan-Hubei region of China. Since then, Dawn Redwoods have been reintroduced to the United States. The one in North White Plains is about 50 years old.

The trees are extremely rare and can grow to 200 feet tall. Even more impressive is that the trees have experienced morphological stasis, meaning they have maintained the same form for millions of years.

Metro-North's dedication to the tree's preservation reflects its commitment to environmental responsibility. And Timko is hopeful that the significance of the tree's history will protect it from damage.

Timko noted that when 525 North Broadway was purchased by Metro-North and remodeled for its offices, the railroad was eager to achieve LEED certification. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. The building is a certified Silver building. LEED certification provides independent, third-party verification that a building is energy-efficient and uses sustainable technologies and non-toxic materials for the long-term health of humans and the planet.

"This is a LEED building, so to start taking down trees is counterintuitive," Timko explained. "We should be trying to maintain the green that we've got and be planting more things rather than taking things down."

Thanks to Timko and Barry's recognition of the Dawn Redwood, the grassy area at the entrance to the parking lot will remain the tree's home for many years to come, by which time we'll all be fossils.