Community Tree Connections

Connecting people with resources to help improve their Community Forests

The Newsletter of the Oregon Department of Forestry Urban and Community Forestry Program

Number 39 **www.odf.state.or.us/UF** **May 2008**

CALENDAR OF COMMUNITY FORESTRY EVENTS

May 28-30, 2008
National Conference on Urban Ecosystems, Orlando, FL
Details at www.americanforests.org.

June 5, 2008
Urban Forestry: A Tool for Sustainable Communities, the Annual Oregon Urban Forestry Conference, Portland
Sacramento CA City Councilor Ray Tretheway headlines a diverse group of speakers for the 8th annual state UCF conference, being held at the World Forestry Center. The program includes the annual state urban forestry awards. Visit the ODF UCF webpage for a registration form. Register by May 15 and save $$.

July 26-30, 2008
International Society of Arboriculture Annual Conference, St. Louis, MO
Visit www.isa-arbor.com for registration information.

September 22-24, 2008
Pacific Northwest Chapter ISA Annual Conference, Boise, ID
Visit www.pnwisa.org for details. A registration form will be available later this summer.

October 12-15, 2008
The Future of Urban Forestry - It's More Than Trees: Society of Municipal Arborists Annual Conference, San Diego, CA.
Visit www.urban-forestry.com for details. A registration form will be available later this summer.

Oregon's Cities Earn Tree City Growth Awards

Of the record 49 Oregon cities that earned the Tree City USA award for 2007, eight cities also received a Tree City Growth Award. Congratulations go to the cities of Corvallis, Eagle Point, Echo, LaGrande, Lebanon, Medford, Tualatin and Wilsonville.

Tree City USA Growth Awards recognize cities for environmental improvement and the completion of special projects over the year, and for encouraging higher levels of tree care. Growth awards are an important milestone for a community because they show a high level of ongoing commitment to trees, tree appreciation and quality tree care.

Research Shows Misconceptions About Trees and Street Safety

University of California researchers recently published "The Intersection of Trees and Safety", an article about research that used computer modeling and drive-through simulations to analyze the amount of visual obstruction caused by street trees and other objects at intersections. This research was stimulated by engineering policy recommendations in many cities that have resulted in vigorous limitations on street trees near intersections, but little regulation of other possibly obstructing elements. This reality is of concern for two reasons. First, restricting street trees may not be solving the intersection visibility problem, since parked cars and newspaper racks can present more of an obstruction to driver's sight lines than street trees. Second, restrictions on street trees at intersections mean that cities are creating streets that do not function as well as they might. Research from social science and environmental design disciplines suggests that sidewalk street trees play a major role in creating well-defined, comfortable, safe-feeling, and inviting pedestrian realms, as well as calming traffic and encouraging slower speeds. In addition, street trees provide ecological benefits, such as shading hard surfaces and evapotranspiration, which helps mitigate urban heat island effects. Thus, restricting the planting of trees along streets results in the loss of these potential benefits.

The primary conclusions from this study are that, first, the presence of high-branching sidewalk trees near intersections does *not* significantly affect a driver's ability to see approaching cars—or at least its significance is considerably less than that of other equally common curbside objects such as parked cars and newspaper racks. Second, the presence near intersections of a combination of parked cars and newspaper racks *does* significantly affect a driver's ability to see approaching cars, regardless of whether street trees are kept out of the recommended clear sight-triangle or not. In the end, the basic conclusion of this research is that street trees—if properly selected, adequately spaced, and pruned to branch high—do not create much of a visibility problem for drivers entering an intersection. If you'd like a copy of this article, contact your Community Assistance Forester.

COMMUNITY FORESTRY AROUND OREGON

Congratulations to **Tigard City Arborist Todd Prager,** who had a peer-reviewed article on selection and propagation of deep-rooted trees published in the May issue of *Arboriculture & Urban Forestry.*

Four Oregon utilities, the **Eugene Water & Electric Board, Pacific Power, Consumers Power,** and **Forest Grove Power and Light** have been named as **TreeLine USA** award winners. TreeLine USA is a recognition program for utilities that practice sound vegetation management principles.

*Mayor Charlotte Lehan (right) and Long Range Planning Manager Chris Neamtzu (left) receive the City of **Wilsonville's** 10th Tree City USA award and a Growth Award at an April City Council Meeting.*

COMMUNITY TREE CONNECTIONS

Published bimonthly by the Oregon Department of Forestry Urban & Community Forestry Assistance Program. Our mission is to help Oregonians improve their quality of life by promoting community investment in our urban forests. Subscriptions are free and available by contacting ODF. Published in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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New Guide Highlights Benefits of Trees in Cities

The U.S. Forest Service's Center for Urban Forest Research has released a new guide demonstrating how trees benefit cities in temperate parts of the West such as parts of the Oregon Coast and Columbia Basin.

"The Temperate Interior West Community Tree Guide: Benefits, Costs and Strategic Planting" is the latest in a series of nine publications showing how trees improve air quality, conserve energy, filter storm water and reduce carbon dioxide in the nation's cities. Similar guides were previously published covering the Willamette Valley and Eastern Oregon.

Tree advocates, arborists and public officials have used the guides since 1999 to increase public awareness and support for tree programs by quantifying the average annual net benefits of trees.

Center for Urban Forest Research scientists found energy conservation to be the most significant benefit provided by urban trees in the temperate interior West. A mature hardwood tree in this region can bring annual savings of $40 in electricity and $15 in heating costs, while reducing power plant emissions through energy conservation.

Scientists also found the same tree absorbs about 6 pounds of air pollutants and intercepts 2,100 gallons of storm water each year. It also sequesters several tons of carbon dioxide, and provides about $1,100 in aesthetic, social and economic benefits in its life.

The latest guide also includes sections on applying cost/benefit data to a specific city, maximizing energy savings from shading, selecting hearty trees, avoiding conflicts with infrastructure and reducing storm water runoff.

The new guide, like its counterparts for other parts of the state, can be downloaded for free at: http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/programs/cufr/tree_guides

Seeing The Sidewalks For the Trees

When faced with six 45-foot-tall trees in the path of a sidewalk renovation project, most local government officials would fire up the chainsaw. In Forest Grove, they pick up the phone and call Tom Epler.

Epler, owner of EF Nursery, was a logical choice for a couple reasons. First, he has a lot of experience moving trees -- even big trees. Second, he was the one who planted the six Karpick red maples on 21st Avenue 10 years ago. Epler said he was glad to donate his crew's labor and pick up the tab for the truck-mounted tree transplanter from Big Trees Today in Hillsboro.

"They were too nice-looking" to cut down, said Epler, who estimated the city would probably have had to spend $5,000 for the work. Plus, the maples had spent a decade providing shade for parishioners at the United Church of Christ, where he and his family are active.

The trees, whose rootballs weighed more than two tons each, had to come out to accommodate the city's downtown sidewalk renovation. Contractors began working on Monday, starting on 21st Avenue, between Main Street and College Way.

The new sidewalks will have improved curb cuts for wheelchairs and feature the decorative brick accents used along Main Street in downtown Forest Grove. They new space won't, however, allow the six towering maples to go back in the holes they came out of.

So, the trees will be stored at Epler's nursery, on Hiatt Road, south of town, while the city finds new homes for them. Options include Lincoln Park and the Forest Grove Community School.

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For more Urban Forestry news, Visit TreeLink:

www.treelink.org