

# **AN URBAN FORESTRY PLAN FOR MORE LIVABLE OREGON COMMUNITIES**

## **"MANAGING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY FORESTS"**

**OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND  
THE OREGON URBAN AND COMMUNITY FOREST COUNCIL**

**URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY  
STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 1998-2003.**

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# URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY STRATEGIC PLAN

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THE OREGON URBAN AND COMMUNITY FOREST COUNCIL  
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FOR 1998-2003.

### **Vision Statement**

The Oregon Urban and Community Forest Council and the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program envision sustained, well managed urban forests contributing to the increased economic and environmental vitality and quality of life in Oregon communities.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this urban and community forestry plan is to continue to highlight the state-wide actions necessary to support cities, communities, volunteer groups, civic organizations and citizen efforts in planning and caring for their urban and community forest. The objective of this plan is to help direct resources in a focused way by accomplishing specific goals. These goals include recognizing the urban and community forest as a major infrastructure component in our cities and promoting the role of trees in creating a better place to live and work, a higher quality of life, and a healthier environment for salmon and other species. This is an essential part in the implementation of the “Oregon Plan for Watershed and Salmon Recovery” and other efforts to sustain threatened and endangered species.

### **PLAN COMPONENTS:**

- Public Awareness and Education**
- Community Partnerships**
- Community Forest Management**
- Information Distribution**
- Program Administration and Monitoring**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Trees and related vegetation of our cities constitute the urban and community forest – a resource that contributes to the quality of life in our cities. Insufficient public awareness constitutes a major barrier in the attainment of healthy urban and community forests. On an average, 65% of an urban and community forest exists on private property. By informing and educating the public, this barrier can be breached and communities can manage their urban and community forest for health and sustainability.

The urban and community forest is a major contributor to the health and well being of Oregon’s communities. Economically, forest benefits attract consumers thereby helping businesses, attract

residents for strong neighborhoods and provide wood products. Environmentally, trees help purify our air and water, provide shade, reduce soil erosion, create wildlife habitat and are essential in restoring endangered and threatened species.

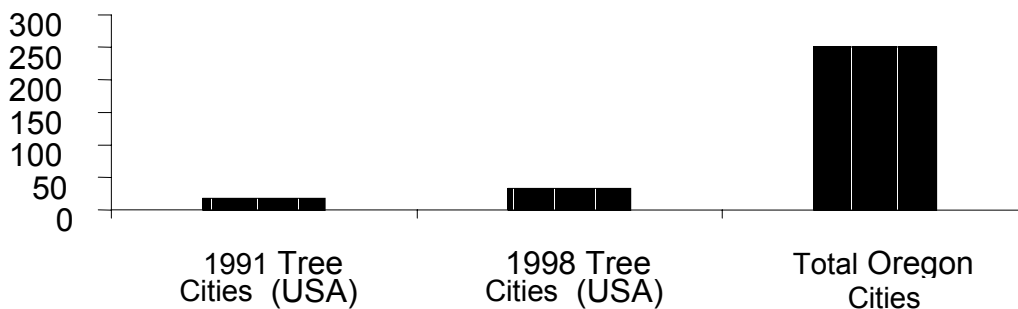
The urban forest is vital to the livability of Oregon communities. Urban and rural trees provide the basis for numerous segments of our state economy and attract businesses, residents and tourists. All over the state, people have been reaping the benefits of the urban forest. Ask Portlanders about the importance of trees to the Rose City and they'll probably mention Forest Park, the Park Blocks, or the stately trees of the Irvington and Westmoreland neighborhoods as examples of Portland's valuable urban forest. Travel to downtown Medford on a hot August afternoon and count the people congregating in the cool shade of the majestic trees in Library Park. Standing among the Sitka Spruce and towering Monterey Pines which accent Shore Acres gardens near Coos Bay one can appreciate the beauty and function of trees in Oregon cities.

Oregon has long been a national leader in forest management. Oregon had one of the country's first forest practices acts to regulate the quality of timber harvesting and mandate reforestation. Oregon is no longer a rural state. Nearly 65% of the state's population live in the municipal limits of Oregon's 250 incorporated communities. As the state's population has shifted, resources to manage the urban forest have not kept pace. The planting and care of trees in Oregon cities have lagged far behind the efforts of cities in other parts of the country. While we spend billions of dollars planning and managing our rural forests, Oregon cities spend a few million on planting and managing community trees. The increased impact of population growth and the spread of urban areas are being felt in virtually all Oregon communities. As communities struggle to keep pace with the pressures of growth and economic development, their need to manage and maintain a healthy community forest will increase. It is time for Oregon to be a national leader in urban and community forestry.

## HISTORY – 1991-present

Urban and community forestry is at a watershed mark in Oregon. Citizen interest in the environment and trees has never been higher. The need for tree planting and management to enhance the economic and environmental vitality of our cities and communities has never been greater. A coordinated urban forestry program will bring together the partnerships that will make this a reality for the majority of communities in Oregon.

Since 1991, there has been a steady increase in the number of communities achieving Tree City USA status. The following chart shows this increase and the need to continue to work with communities to achieve Tree City USA status:



As the chart illustrates, since 1991 the program has steadily increased the number of Tree City USAs. With only 33 Tree Cities, there is still a lot of growing room to increase participation in the Tree City USA program.

The following success stories demonstrate the value of the state urban and community forestry program in the development of healthy and sustainable urban and community forests. Between 1991 and 1995, the program has successfully administered over \$2,000,000 in Small Business Administration grants. These grant funds were distributed to communities for tree planting projects. Other grant programs included one with PacifiCorp for a Tree Replacement Program. In this partnership, PacifiCorp provided over \$15,000 to the ODF's Urban and Community Forestry Assistance program to grant to three communities for the removal and replacement of problem trees under power lines and on public property. Another unique partnership included the Public Utility Commission (PUC), PacifiCorp and ODF's Urban and Community Forestry Program. This partnership utilized \$120,000 from PacifiCorp to the ODF's Urban and Community Forestry Program for grants to the City of Corvallis for the development of the City's urban and community forestry program. Instead of a fine from the PUC, these funds were provided and granted to Corvallis for a street tree inventory, a small tree arboretum, street tree plantings, for testing tree growth regulators on trees under power lines, and for the development of a community forestry plan.

In addition, other private funds from the J. Frank Schmidt Family Charitable Trust helped fund grants for the establishment of an arboretum in Echo, Deschutes County, and Klamath Falls.

Since 1991, a solid growth of partnerships has formed the foundation for the effectiveness of the Urban and Community Forestry Assistance program. Along with the USDA Forest Service and the Oregon Urban and Community Forest Council, these partners have expanded to include: the Oregon State University Cooperative Extension, Linn-Benton Community College, the World Forestry Center, Oregon Association of Nurserymen, Friends of Trees, Bend Community Trees, Oregon Arborist Association, Pacific Northwest Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture, Oregon Landscape Contractors Association, Klamath Community Forest Council, PacifiCorp, Portland General Electric, Idaho Power, Consumer's Power Inc., Public Utility Commission, and the J. Frank Schmidt Family Charitable Trust just to name a few.

## **TURNING PLANS INTO ACTION**

The components of this plan represent the opportunities available to bring health and vitality to Oregon's urban and community forests. Seizing these opportunities will take time, commitment and resources. The opportunities are prioritized in each section. The most important section with the highest priority is program Administration and Monitoring, followed by Community Forest Management, Public Awareness and Education, Community Partnerships and Information Distribution.

The state program staff and Council intend to work closely together in pursuing the opportunities identified in this strategic plan. Together, they will focus on the opportunities for funding, developing marketing tools, and information distribution methods that will increase public awareness, education, and the visibility of the program nationally and within the state. Following is a list of results expected by turning these plans into action.

An increase in the number of

- Communities receiving their Tree City USA status
- Community trees planted, maintained and managed
- Volunteer tree planting groups, efforts and activities
- Cities, organizations and volunteers groups receiving financial and technical assistance
- Communities moving into more sustainable urban forest management

- Dollars spent on urban and community forestry at the state and local level

These results will form the foundations of sustainable urban and community forests in Oregon. Oregonians will experience an increase in their quality of life and work as a result of healthy and vital community forests in more livable communities. However, achieving these benefits will not be realized by simply identifying them in a plan. We must turn these plans into actions and implement a state-wide urban and community forestry program with the same zeal and determination that made Oregon the most progressive state in rural forest management.

The measurable results achieved by this program will be directly dependent upon three factors: available funding, community leadership, and cooperative partnerships. Taking advantage of the opportunities in this plan and turning them into beneficial results for Oregon's urban and community forests is dependant upon the effective interaction among the major players and partners.

## **PLAN COMPONENT: PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION**

### **Description**

Urban and community forestry is an idea that is not fully understood by the public and elected officials. People like trees, but often fail to comprehend the unique care and management required to maintain trees in our cities and communities. Insufficient public awareness constitutes a major barrier in the attainment of a healthy urban forest. On average, 65% of an urban forest exists on private property. By informing and educating the public, this barrier can be breached and the occurrence of destructive practices such as tree topping and severe root removal can be decreased. To achieve healthy urban and community forests, we need an informed and educated public.

### **Current Status**

As more communities become aware of urban forestry and recognize the need for programs, there is an increased demand from these communities for information and technical assistance in developing community forestry programs. There are still many Oregon communities that need additional information about urban forestry before they are willing to initiate an urban forestry program. Others need more advanced and technical information for the management of their community forests. In most cities and communities, citizen input and demand drive the creation of urban forestry programs.

Educational efforts aimed at the general public are designed to stimulate individual action and promote community involvement. Educational materials such as brochures, newsletters and videos distributed by the USDA Forest Service and the Oregon Department of Forestry are available to communities, cities, businesses, utilities, organizations, volunteer groups and individuals in Oregon. The distribution of these materials is currently enhanced through the use of the Internet, e-mail, and partnerships. As public awareness increases and urban forestry receives more exposure in the media, the increase in demand for information will be best accomplished through the electronic media. This will enable the program's Community Assistance Foresters to better serve more of the state at a lower cost.

### **Constraints**

- The public's lack of technical knowledge about proper tree planting and care techniques represents a major barrier to healthy urban forests.
- Urban and community forestry is a concept that is not yet recognized, effectively promoted, and fully understood by the media, average citizen, nor legislators and decision makers.

- Funding for urban forestry information has focused on traditional education delivery methods such as pamphlets and brochures that are not as effective as public service announcements, videos, radio, television and the Internet in reaching mass audiences.

## **Opportunities**

Numbered and Ranked by Priority

1. Promote Tree City USA recognition for cities and communities that can stimulate individual pride and action in community improvement projects.
2. Develop partnerships with organizations like Cooperative Extension, National Forests and Conservation Education program that will provide general and technical community forestry education and training to an increasing number of organizations, communities and individuals.
3. Meet the educational needs of the general public, students, and policymakers through a state-wide coordinated educational effort using public service announcements, videos, radio, television and the internet in reaching mass audiences to gain a better understanding of urban forests.
4. Provide educational and resource materials on the web so they are immediately available to a larger number of individuals.
5. Develop a state-wide/regional educational program for raising public awareness and appreciation of the value and importance of working for urban and community forests.
6. Initiate demonstration projects that result in opportunities for public participation to increase understanding and exposure to urban forestry.
7. Educate the public about the benefits of urban and community trees

## **PLAN COMPONENT: COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

### **Description**

Successful urban forestry programs involve a wide variety of individuals and organizations cooperating towards a common goal: the planting and care of trees in communities. Opportunities exist for many diverse groups interested in environmental issues, such as youth groups, corporations, and neighborhoods that may have different motivations yet need each other in order to be successful. As an integral part of their success, effective urban forestry projects involve people in active citizen participation and organizational cooperation. With the continuing funding constraints experienced by communities, increased citizen participation in community forest management is crucial to the success of our urban and community forests.

### **Current Status**

Only a handful of communities have actually been successful at establishing workable partnerships with city and citizen involvement. Neighborhood groups, civic and service organizations, and the private sector have cooperated on tree planning projects. However, no partnerships aimed at improving the long-term health of the urban forest exist. Many opportunities exist across Oregon for private and public partnerships not only in the establishment but also in the continued management of our urban forests. These management opportunities include tree board planning and development, tree code and ordinance writing, urban forest management plans, community based tree inventories, public education and volunteer involvement in tree planting activities and tree care workshops.

## Constraints

- The biggest threat to community tree planting partnerships is the continual drying up of funding. As competition for funding among social services, education, and housing needs increases, trees must be viewed as a vital part of what makes a city and neighborhood livable.
- Tree planting projects need the supervision of qualified, personable, committed, flexible leaders to ensure a well organize and successful project. Lack of proper supervision can lead to improper site selection and poor planting techniques. Unsuccessful planting projects undermine the ability of groups and organizations to form partnerships and to experience success with projects undertaken. Insolvency is a major threat to community partnerships. A non-profit organization has to devote a significant amount of energy just to stay in existence, using resources that might otherwise be directed to urban forestry projects.

## Opportunities

Numbered and Ranked by Priority

1. Foster partnerships that will provide general and technical urban forestry information to an increasing number of organizations, communities and individuals.
2. Encourage state legislation that recognizes the importance of and need for urban forestry programs, allocates stable resources, creates other financial opportunities that can sustain the management of our urban and community forests.
3. Provide forums and opportunities for a wide variety of organizations involved in urban forestry efforts to network, share information and build relationships that will create more public awareness and community forestry program funding.
4. Involve and increase the number of partners working together for Oregon's community forests to include additional non-profit, educational, and professional organizations, volunteer groups, economic development commissions, Governor's Watershed Councils, State Agencies, Native American Tribes, economically underserved and culturally diverse groups.
5. Utilize successful volunteer organizations like the Friends of Trees as leaders and examples for others to follow and use as a resource for partnerships.
6. Explore partnerships with the national forests adjacent to urban areas and other federal and state agencies such as Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Small Business Administration (SBA), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Army Corp of Engineers and National Park Service (NPS) in order to provide more resources for Oregon's community forests.
7. Develop programs through high schools, colleges, universities and extension agencies to educate and stimulate volunteer participation in urban forest efforts.
8. Utilize the resources of national organizations such as the National Tree Trust and American Forests for forming community tree planting partnerships.

## PLAN COMPONENT: COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT

### Description

Community forests need to be managed. Many people don't realize that trees in cities require a different kind of care than trees in rural areas. Management of our urban forests involves an inventory as well as planning scheduled maintenance and replacement just like other city infrastructure components. The community forest management process involves planning, taking inventory of resources, setting short and long-term management goals, developing ordinances, and generating annual budgets to implement the program.

## **Current Status**

The current status of community forest management is moving from an emphasis on individual tree care and the management of public trees such as street and park trees, to the management of the entire community forest ecosystem for more sustainable urban and community forests. Efforts are underway by citizen tree planting groups, cities, the state and utility companies to plant and care for trees, but for the most part these efforts are only part of a sustainable forest. The preservation and maintenance of existing trees on private and public property constitute a large part of a sustainable urban forestry program. Many cities lack a comprehensive vision and policies for how the urban forest should be managed. Fiscal constraints, combined with rampant growth and development within our urban growth boundaries, have exceeded many cities' capability to adequately manage what happens to their community forest and natural resource base. Management of the community forest is clearly in a reactive mode, responding to citizen complaints and hazardous situations, rather than in a proactive mode where replacement planting, preventive maintenance and care is based on the needs of the trees and the community forest as a whole.

Positive actions are coming from citizens and community leaders who see managing the urban forest as an investment in the livability of their community. Many urban forestry leaders recognize education as the key to successful community forest management. A heightened environmental awareness by the public presents the opportunity to move forward. Educational efforts are a catalyst for change.

## **Constraints**

- Most communities in Oregon do not adequately fund tree planting and care programs, so their trees suffer from a lack of proper management and expertise. Trees are often viewed as obstacles to development rather than vital components of what make a city and community more livable. Lack of money, combined with lack of vision and community leadership, are leading causes of the decline of the urban forests in Oregon.
- Increased demand for housing and greater density of living is removing our urban forest in the neighborhoods that most need trees to improve their quality of life and the neighborhood environment.
- Urban forest health is on the decline due to insect and disease problems such as Dutch Elm Disease, Asian Longhorn Beetle and human activity. At the moment, no mechanism exists to assist communities in dealing with the issue of tree health and a major forest health problem.
- No dedicated fund exists to encourage tree-planting efforts that mitigate urban problems such as excessive carbon dioxide production, land clearing, urban sprawl, habitat degradation and inadequate habitat restoration, poor air and water quality.

## **Opportunities**

### **Numbered and Ranked by Priority**

1. Help cities and communities develop a vision, defined mandate, specific goals and strategic plan for integrating trees into the fabric of daily life in our communities and emphasizing trees as a vital component of a city's infrastructure and an essential part of the successful implementation of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds, Clean Water Act, Forest Practices Act and the Endangered Species Act.
2. Assist cities and communities in developing their understanding of Oregon's community forest composition, condition, and management needs.
3. Increase the communities and public's commitment to and understanding of the relationship between trees and the quality of drinking water, fish habitat, and how their actions and efforts are part of the

Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watershed's solution for recovery of our important and endangered species.

4. Utilize the Oregon Department of Forestry Districts to improve the delivery of information and technical service to communities, and to utilize their experience in fire protection and forest health on the impact on the health and management of Oregon's forests in the communities within the rural and urban interface.
5. Improve the quality of urban and community forests by promoting the use of proper planting and pruning standards, and by managing for the sustained health of the whole urban forest ecosystem.
6. Provide funding assistance in developing, monitoring and updating tree inventories and management strategies.
7. Establish a community based forest monitoring program for the health of the community forest and promote community based tree inventories.

## **PLAN COMPONENT: INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION**

### **Description**

Information, education, and training are essential management tools in any discipline and help communities to develop and implement a vision for their community forest. In urban and community forestry, these components have a great impact on the average citizen, urban forestry practitioner, and decision-maker. Properly applied, these tools are critical in raising public awareness and increasing the quality of care for our community forests.

### **Current Status**

Information and educational materials related to Oregon's urban and community forests are generated and distributed on two different levels. For the general public and decision-makers, generic educational materials relating to the benefits of urban forests and on the techniques of proper tree care are distributed from national and state sources. Materials produced by the USDA Forest Service and various tree-promoting organizations such as American Forests, International Society of Arboriculture and the National Arbor Day Foundation serve to inform and educate Oregon citizens and urban forestry leaders alike.

Given the diverse geographic and climatological conditions found throughout the entire state of Oregon, educational materials addressing these site-specific needs are severely lacking. National materials must be adapted to fit the tree growing conditions unique to Oregon such as the wind swept, coastal area or the drier climate east of the Cascades. The Oregon Department of Forestry has begun to develop specific state-wide educational materials in conjunction with Oregon State University (OSU) Cooperative Extension and other public and private organizations.

Educational programs developed by the ODF's Urban and Community Forestry Assistance program provide a diverse clientele with a variety of tree related educational opportunities. In addition, the program partners with other professionals, trade groups, and educational organizations such as universities, community colleges, the International Society of Arboriculture and the World Forestry Center. This enables the delivery of a more wide reaching educational program, plus information distribution and dissemination of current technical data.

## **Constraints**

- Tree related research in Oregon is focused on production or on traditional forest management and is supported by institutional systems and interest groups that have been slow to recognize the benefits of urban and community forests.
- In this time of severe fiscal constraints, tightened municipal budgets have resulted in limited funds for professional development and other training opportunities.

## **Opportunities**

Numbered and Ranked by Priority

1. Develop and coordinate the development of materials for public information, training of professionals, and technical assistance to communities.
2. Develop marketing tools to include a state-wide/regional media campaign for raising public awareness and appreciation of the value and importance of urban and community forests to the quality of life for people and the environment.
3. Package and configure available information to effectively reach and be utilized by communities.
4. Strengthen the local networks and partnerships with Cooperative Extension, National Forests and the Conservation Education program for information dissemination.
5. Provide educational and resource materials on the Web so they are immediately available to a larger number of individuals.
6. Encourage and support research in community forestry, and extend research findings to communities, field practitioners and the general public.

## **PLAN COMPONENT: PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND MONITORING**

### **Description**

For an urban and community forestry plan to be successful, focused administration and active monitoring objectives must be put into effect. This means that numerous departments within agencies, organizations, and other groups must work together cooperatively under a shared vision with common goals. New initiatives must be linked to existing programs and duplication must be eliminated. Effective state-wide leadership must coordinate, manage, and monitor state-wide community forestry efforts and translate this information into an effective promotion and marketing tool for increased public awareness and into a tool for the development of local leadership and management of community forests.

The success of urban forestry will not be measured by the number of trees planted, or the number of ordinances passed, but rather by the number of people educated about trees and the collective accomplishments of the diverse partnerships created. Some of these collective accomplishments can be found in the recovery of endangered and threatened species, cleaner air, water, an improved environment and a higher quality of life in our communities.

### **Current Status**

The Oregon Department of Forestry's Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program provides leadership to the urban and community forestry movement in Oregon. The program provides technical, financial, and educational assistance to cities, civic organizations, non-profit groups and other governmental agencies. Funded by the USDA Forest Service Cooperative programs, the program assists about one-third of the Oregon communities annually. In addition to providing direct technical

assistance, funds from the USDA Forest Service are also passed through the Urban and Community Forestry Program directly to communities in a matching grant program.

The Oregon Urban and Community Forest Council also known as “Oregon Community Trees” is a state-wide non-profit organization formed to advise the State Forester in the implementation of the state’s Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program and promote a greater understanding and appreciation of community forests. A twenty-six member Board of Directors is composed of urban foresters, arborists, nursery professionals, non-profit volunteer tree planting organizations, citizen tree advocates, educators, and government officials. In conjunction with this plan and representing close to 200 similar council members, the Board of Directors develops goals and objectives, plans of action and partnerships that meet the challenges of community forestry in Oregon for the next century.

Using tree inventories to monitor the health and condition of the urban forest has not been a priority in Oregon. Few studies have been conducted to identify and evaluate the challenges facing municipalities in the development of tree inventories and monitoring systems for measuring the health of their community forests. In the past, a study surveyed Oregon community leaders in an effort to identify urban forestry needs and to guide future program efforts. The document “Seeing the Forest for the Trees” incorporated these needs into a strategic plan. This plan has formed the foundation of urban and community forestry efforts in the state, and serves as the starting point for this document, “Managing Sustainable Community Forests”.

## **Constraints**

- The Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program is dependent upon federal funds as its sole funding mechanism. Limited funding and personnel restrict program accomplishments at the state level.

## **Opportunities**

### **Numbered and Ranked by Priority**

1. Provide leadership to evaluate and monitor the effectiveness and achievement of the state urban and community forestry strategic plan implementation, state-wide efforts in urban forestry goals and action plans developed by community forestry partners.
2. Coordinate activities of ODF strategic plan with the Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program five-year plan.
3. Maximize the state urban and community forestry strategic plan implementation's effectiveness through establishing and nurturing partnerships, cooperative projects, and coordinated programs.
4. Effectively develop a state-wide and local strategy for sustainable public and private funding opportunities within state and local community forestry programs.

## **FUNDING**

### **Current Funding Status**

The level of success achieved by a comprehensive, state-wide urban and community forestry program will be dependent upon stable, reliable funding sources. Current funding levels at both the state and local levels limit achievement of a coordinated program.

At the local level, fiscal constraints have made tree planting and management efforts very difficult for Oregon communities. Declining tax bases for smaller communities and an increasing demand and expectation for city services greatly limit a community's ability to provide for planting and caring of trees. Yet left unmanaged, trees in cities and communities represent a potential liability, and the cost of this neglect is usually larger than the cost of a tree care program. The funds involved in a single lawsuit could cover the annual expenditure of a tree care program for many years. These expenditures are primarily from general funds, gas taxes, and donations of time and materials.

At the state level, Oregon's Department of Forestry's Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program is completely supported by federal funds, provided by the USDA Forest Service Cooperative Programs, of approximately \$240,000 annually. Approximately \$50,000 is passed directly to communities in a matching grant program. Currently, the state is not programmatically matching the \$240,000 allocation of federal funds. The state doesn't have a dedicated source of urban and community forestry funds to directly match the federal funds.

The efforts to secure program funding at the state level have been a combined effort of the program staff and Council. In the past, private funds have been secured but the Council and staff's effort at securing state level funding has been thus far unsuccessful. The program staff and Council are pursuing funding at the state level through both solicitations of private funds and working with the state legislature for program funding. The development of marketing tools and an increase in public awareness will assist local communities in their efforts in local funding urban and community forestry programs.

## **Future Funding Needs**

In the future, the state may be required to programmatically match the \$240,000 allocation of federal funds. Funding for urban and community forestry in the other states is usually obtained through a complex patchwork of public, private, and foundation sources. Funding sources such as tax check-off programs, gas taxes, fees on carbon dioxide emissions and other fees and assessments are the most common funding mechanisms found in other states. In Oregon, resources necessary to provide a coordinated statewide program include:

- Field community assistance foresters to provide direct technical assistance to communities.
- University and Cooperative Extension support.
- Information and education efforts.
- A dedicated source of revenue from state and local, public and private sources and to be used for tree planting and urban forest management. Such funding would have a multiplier effect allowing increases in local fund raising and expenditures to meet urban forestry needs.

Local efforts to fund urban forestry programs are hampered by ever increasing expectations and demands for city services combined with ever decreasing municipal budgets. Cities need to develop diverse yet stable funding sources to provide for long-term planting and management programs. Decreasing reliance on property taxes means communities must find other sources of revenue, such as assessments, development fees, or transportation related funds.

Since the end of the Small Business Administration tree planting grant program, there have been no dedicated funds for tree planting and care available to be passed through to groups and communities. As a result, local tree planting accomplishments have tapered off since the ending of the Small Business Administration (SBA) tree planting grant program. The National Tree Trust, Global Re-Leaf and Friends of Trees are organizations that have filled some of this void but the need for more funds in this area increases for the full potential of Oregon's urban forestry program. To achieve an acceptable standard in the program, new partnerships among agencies, organizations and the private sector will be necessary.

It is by sharing the responsibility of support among these groups that we can achieve solid and long-term urban forestry funding and program.

## **BENEFITS**

The benefits of a coordinated state-wide Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program reflect a vision for a fully operational program that integrates the planting and management of urban trees into the fabric of daily life in our communities. The success of a fully implemented urban forestry program will not be measured merely by the number of trees planted or maintained, nor by the number of cities achieving Tree City USA status, but rather by the increased awareness, concern, recognition and value given to trees in our communities. This success will result in the development of sustainable urban and community forests, more livable communities and a general improvement in the environment and quality of life.

The projected results of implementing this plan include:

- Maximizing the benefits of the urban forest by increasing the number of Oregon communities developing sustainable urban and community forests by adopting comprehensive urban forest management plans, achieving Tree City USA status and moving their communities toward a greater awareness of trees.
- An increase in resources devoted to community forestry programs and projects including funding, volunteer hours and number of trees planted.
- A better educated public that embraces trees as a vital resource and necessary part of the city's infrastructure.
- An increase in the number of trees planted and managed for Oregon communities to:
  - Lower CO2 levels in metropolitan areas.
  - Reduce noise pollution.
  - Improve the quality of our water and streams.
  - Increase property values, business opportunities, and tourism.
  - Reduce runoff and soil erosion.
  - Create, preserve, and restore wildlife habitat and diversity.
  - Reduce heating and cooling costs.
- An increase in the quality of life in our cities and communities and environment.
- An increased level of citizen awareness and participation in community tree activities and civic beautification through neighborhood improvement projects.
- A promotion of healthy community forests that make our cities more attractive and better places to live and work.
- Increased economic development and stability benefits that attract businesses, consumers, investors, homeowners and tourists into communities resulting from planting streetscapes, riparian areas, parks, open spaces and neighborhoods with trees.

## **A CALL FOR ACTION**

Oregon's Benchmarks, a publication of the Oregon Progress Board, lists quality of life as one of the measures of Oregon's vitality and health. There are few issues that contribute more to the quality of community life than the management of the community's urban forest and natural resources. Benchmarks such as air and water quality, affordable housing and urban mobility all benefit from the planting and care of trees in our communities.

This plan outlines the urban and community forestry challenges and opportunities facing legislators, city councilors, and community leaders. An investment in the health of our community forests is long overdue. In order to help our cities and communities attract residents, businesses, tourists and consumers we must make every effort to make our cities and communities healthy, attractive and safe. Planting and managing the trees in our cities and communities is an important step to ensure these economic and environmental benefits. Achieving these quality of life benchmarks will not be without cost. An annual investment of this scale for our urban and community forests pales when compared to funding levels for rural forest management. Yet it is this “seed money” that will leverage funds with a multiplier effect from private and other public sources. Funding and leadership from legislators, city councilors, and community leaders will be crucial to the success of urban and community forestry programs. The Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds continues the call to action in our efforts to save the salmon by restoring habitat and improving the quality of the water and environment through the planting, restoring and sustaining of our urban and community forests for a more livable Oregon.

## **MAJOR PLAYERS AND PARTNERS**

A well-organized state-wide urban forestry effort has a positive impact on the health of our urban and community forests. The organizations and agencies that play a vital role in this process to develop a comprehensive, state-wide urban and community forestry program for the State of Oregon include:

### **ORGANIZATIONS**

American Planning Association, Oregon Chapter  
Bend Community Trees  
Community Colleges  
Federal Agencies such as: HUD, EPA, NPS, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Army Corp of Engineers  
Friends of Trees  
Klamath Falls Community Forest Council  
Linn-Benton Community College  
Local tree planting groups  
Local tree boards, commissions, volunteer groups  
National Forests in Oregon  
Oregon Arborea  
Oregon Association of Nurserymen  
Oregon cities and counties  
Oregon Department of Forestry  
Oregon Home Builders Association  
Oregon Landscape Contractors Association  
Oregon Parks and Recreation Association  
Oregon Recreation and Parks Association  
Oregon Soil Conservation Districts  
Oregon State University College of Forestry  
Oregon State University Cooperative Extension  
Oregon System of Education  
Oregon Watershed Enhancement Boards  
Oregon Urban and Community Forest Council (Oregon Community Trees)  
Pacific Northwest Chapter/International Society of Arboriculture  
Portland State University  
Private consultants  
Public Works Association

Stop Oregon Litter and Vandalism (S.O.L.V.)  
USDA Forest Service PNW Region – Cooperative Programs  
Utility Companies  
World Forestry Center

Working together, individuals and the groups they represent can make a significant difference in the future of our communities. By seizing opportunities and taking action, we can grow livable communities through sustainable urban forests.

**For More Information Contact;**

**Oregon Department of Forestry  
Urban and Community Forestry Program  
2600 State Street, Salem, OR 97310  
503-945-7391  
<http://www.odf.state.or.us/fa/UF/uf.htm>**

**Oregon Urban and Community Forest Council aka Oregon Community Trees  
PO Box 13074  
Salem, OR 97309-1074  
<http://www.odf.state.or.us/fa/UF/OCT/index.html>**