

California Trees

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Tools for the 21st Century

By Kelaine Vargas

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Empowering grassroots efforts and
building strategic partnerships that
preserve, protect, and enhance
California's urban and
community forests.



Photo: C.E.L., Public Relations

Above: Minneapolis used their Streets analysis to develop their "Trees Pay Us Back" campaign which was created by [C.E.L., Public Relations](#).

In this article, we'll survey the current market for technological tools related to urban forestry, describe how they work and give examples of how some of our colleagues have put them to use.

i-Tree suite

In March, the i-Tree team (a collaboration among the US Forest Service, Davey Tree Expert Company, and several national tree advocacy groups) released the fourth version of

In urban forestry, a gulf has long separated the scientists from the practitioners. For many years, researchers have been engaged in obscure activities like putting trees in bubbles to assess their [air quality impacts](#), cutting them down and weighing them to develop biomass equations for [estimating carbon storage](#), setting them in giant buckets to determine their [stormwater capture rates](#), and stripping off their leaves and feeding them through machines to [measure leaf area index](#). The results of these studies have been published in scholarly journals and debated in academic conferences, but have been largely unavailable to the public, to public officials, or to those managing and caring for our urban forests.

Advances in technology in the last 10–15 years, however, have started to make the results of these studies more accessible. Many of the scientists engaged in the early research to determine the benefits of the urban forest have turned their attention to creating tools to help the rest of us estimate the contributions of our trees at scales ranging from individual specimens to statewide projects.

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California ReLeaf is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working to empower grassroots efforts and build strategic partnerships that preserve, protect, and enhance California's urban and community forests.

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their suite of urban forest assessment applications. The package now includes nine products, ranging from the complex, field-data-heavy i-Tree Eco to the quick and fun i-Tree Design; all are based on the latest research by US Forest Service scientists and are available free of charge at www.itreetools.org.

Eco

Description: i-Tree Eco (formerly UFORE) was developed by the team of David Nowak at the US Forest Service Northern Research Station. Eco provides a broad picture of the environmental contributions of the entire urban forest, including trees on public and private land. Projects can range in size from the parcel scale to entire states, although city-wide analyses are most common. The results of an Eco analysis include data on urban forest structure, such as species composition, importance values, pest susceptibility, and condition, and data on ecosystem services, including carbon storage and sequestration, air pollutant removal, and effects on energy use.

Methods and Output: An i-Tree Eco project isn't for those short on time and resources as the field data collection requirements are significant. A typical project will include 200 plots of 0.1 acre. In each plot, information on cover types and land use must be collected. Then, for each tree in a plot, more than a dozen fields must be measured, including species, diameter at breast height (dbh), height, distance and direction to nearest building, and percent canopy missing.

In earlier versions of Eco, the data were sent to the Forest Service for processing and results would take 2–6 weeks to be completed. The latest version allows for automated processing that usually takes less than a day.

Analysis results are returned in the form of tables and charts as well as an automatically generated written summary (~15 pages).

Applications: i-Tree Eco has been used in a wide variety of contexts. At the smallest scale, property owners have estimated the value of just a few trees on a parcel (for these small projects, not all environmental

benefits are assessed). This summer, the Sacramento Tree Foundation will be collecting data for their second Eco study as part of a long-term project looking at how changes to the urban forest canopy affect air quality. Milwaukee used the results of their Eco study to predict the devastating losses the emerald ash borer could bring to their city. The Eco analysis of Caspar, WY, helped make the argument that the city's trees were a great asset that was worthy of a formal urban forestry program.

Streets

Description: i-Tree Streets (formerly STRATUM) was developed by the team of Greg McPherson at the US Forest Service's Center for Urban Forest Research (now known as the Urban Ecosystems and Processes team). The software focuses on a city's street trees, analyzing their environmental benefits, including energy conservation, air quality effects, carbon sequestration and storage, and stormwater impacts, and structure, including species and age distribution, importance values, and relative performance index. The impact of trees on property values is also estimated.

Methods and Output: i-Tree Streets projects also require field data collection, but the demands are significantly less than for an Eco project. For either a random sample or for all street trees, dbh and species must be collected. Other fields, such as condition and maintenance needs, can be assessed to provide more robust information about forest structure, but do not influence the benefits calculations.

Analysis results are presented as tables and charts and are species and dbh-class specific. Environmental benefits are assessed both as units (gallons of stormwater, kWh of energy) and in dollar terms.

Applications: i-Tree Streets has been used by many California cities to provide managers with practical information to improve the structure and function of the urban forest. In addition, other cities have made creative use of their results to reach out to the public. Minneapolis used their Streets analysis to develop their "Trees Pay Us Back" campaign. The highlight of the

campaign was the giant “price tags” placed on the trees around the city capitol that presented the dollar value of each tree’s environmental contribution. With the Streets estimates of the tons of atmospheric carbon dioxide reduced by their trees, Chattanooga, TN, was able to highlight the role of urban forestry in their climate action plan, bringing greater support to their program.

Other i-Tree Products

Design is an online tool to estimate the environmental contributions of individual trees at the parcel scale, while taking into consideration how tree location influences energy use and associated emissions. Vue uses national land cover data maps that are available for free to make quick and coarse estimates of the ecosystem services provided by a community’s existing urban forest and to model alternative scenarios. Canopy offers a quick and statistically valid way to estimate the distribution of different land covers. The results can be used to determine tree canopy, set canopy cover goals for the future, and track success. Hydro is the first vegetation-specific, watershed-scale urban hydrology model to estimate how changes in tree canopy cover and impervious surfaces affect stream flows and water quality.

CITYGreen

CITYGreen was the first software to analyze the ecosystem services of trees, and 2011 marks its 15th year in existence. It was developed by American Forests using models originally created by the US Forest Service and the Natural Resource Conservation Service. It can be downloaded from the [American Forests website](#) at a cost of between \$195 and \$895.

Description: CITYGreen uses ESRI’s ArcGIS or ArcView software, aerial or satellite imagery, and optionally, field-collected data to estimate the air pollution removal, carbon sequestration, stormwater management, and in rare cases, energy conservation related to the urban forest. Valuable features of CITYGreen include the ability to estimate the future benefits of a population of trees as they grow and to assess the impacts of changes to land cover.

Methods and Output: Using aerial imagery, trees are either “drawn” individually by the user or areas of canopy are identified with image processing software. Calculations make use of assumptions based on field studies in reference cities.

Environmental benefits are presented both in units (gallons of stormwater, pounds of air pollutants) and in dollar terms. Results are given as totals for the urban forest as a whole (not species-specific). Maps of canopy cover and land use are included.

Applications: CITYGreen analyses have been done for

many cities across the country. In Washington DC, the images of a city that had lost 64% of its tree cover in only 12 years prompted the gift of a \$50 million endowment and the establishment of Casey Trees. Other cities have used CITYGreen to develop canopy cover goals (Roanoke, VA), enforce existing tree ordinances (Atlanta, GA), and enact parking lot shade and stormwater management regulations (Salem, OR).

Tree Carbon Calculator

The Tree Carbon Calculator was developed by the Center for Urban Forest Research for use with the [Urban Forest Project Protocol](#), which allows entities to plant trees for carbon offsets. The current version of the Calculator is an Excel-based program that can be downloaded (free of charge) from the US Forest Service’s online [Climate Change Resource Center](#).

Description: The Calculator focuses on two kinds of benefits: energy (impacts on heating and cooling) and carbon (including sequestration and reductions associated with lower energy use) and allows for a great deal of site-specific customization.

Methods and Output: Required inputs include geographic region, species and dbh (or age) of the tree, distance and direction to the nearest building, and the building’s vintage and type of heating and cooling equipment. Default emissions factors associated with electricity production and heating can be edited.

Results include reductions in energy use for cooling and heating, the associated reductions in carbon dioxide emissions when less power must be produced, annual sequestration of carbon dioxide, and the total carbon stored by the tree to date.

Applications: In addition to the Calculator’s role in carbon offset projects, the detailed inputs and results make it appropriate for those interested in very site-specific and scientific results. Because the Calculator allows you to estimate benefits by age, it can also be used to predict future energy conservation and total lifetime carbon storage.

One Practical Application: The Urban Forest Map

The tools described here have done a lot to make the results of scientific research accessible and of practical use, but they don’t, by themselves, help spread the word about the value of trees. Urban forest assessments may still end up on a shelf, unappreciated by the public and unused by urban forest managers and advocates. The [Urban Forest Map](#) is one real-world example of a community sharing valuable

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Tools *continued from page 3*

knowledge about the environmental contributions of trees.

Description: The Urban Forest Map is an open-source, web-based pilot project in San Francisco that engages the public in mapping, protecting, and celebrating the urban forest. The environmental benefits, derived from the data underlying i-Tree Streets, are calculated for each mapped tree and are added to the city's total.

Methods and Output: Mappers create an account, log in, and add new trees to the Map or edit the information that's already there. City agencies and tree advocacy groups can also upload large quantities of data at once.

Applications: Want to compare the benefits of the city's redwoods against its purple plums? Search the map for each species, the trees will be highlighted on the map, and the total benefits provided by each will be summed. Want to pit one city councilmember against another to encourage tree planting projects? Search by district and see who's lagging behind in tree numbers and ecosystem services. Want to see where the greatest air quality benefits are being achieved? Search by neighborhood and get an idea of where to concentrate scarce resources for the greatest good.

In recent years, there has been a boom in technology that puts research about the benefits of city trees into the hands of the general public, policy makers, and urban forest managers. There are tools for use at every scale—from the individual tree to the urban forests of an entire state and beyond—and for all levels of resources. The coming years are sure to hold new advances and new products, but there's no time like the present to get started assessing the value of the trees around you.

Kelaine Vargas is an ecological consultant and owner of [Urban Ecos](#), where she uses many of these tools to evaluate the environmental contributions of urban forests.

California ReLeaf Celebrates Arbor Week with New Statewide Program

California acknowledges Arbor Day with an entire week each year starting March 7th – the birthday of famed horticulturist Luther Burbank – and concluding March 14th. For many years, Californians have celebrated this week through ceremonial tree plantings, the presentation of Tree City USA awards, and other urban forestry activities – often with little fanfare and promotion...until now.

Opportunity to Expand

As a statewide organization in close contact with community tree organizations and local municipalities, California ReLeaf recognized that there were great opportunities to grow and improve California Arbor Week. Opportunities to market and promote Arbor Week as a statewide event would garner media attention and volunteer support, expand the number and scope of Arbor Week activities, and educate our state's leaders and citizens about the value of urban forestry.

For these reasons, California ReLeaf unveiled a new statewide program in 2011 that created a brand, marketing model and official state recognition of California Arbor Week with a goal of creating more visibility and opportunity to showcase the tremendous role that urban and community forests play in our communities.

Creating Multimedia Messaging and Cohesion

Within this new program, California ReLeaf established a new website, www.arborweek.org, to increase the prominence



CALIFORNIA
ARBOR WEEK
MARCH 7 - 14

of Arbor Week as a statewide event. With a page that was continually updated to reflect a calendar of Arbor Week happenings throughout the state, visitors could search the website for events by city or by date to find out more about scheduled activities and volunteer opportunities in their local communities. This site also included materials and resources for organizations to host successful Arbor Week events, including a Planning and Promotion Kit with step-by-step ideas, tips and tools for event planning, media promotions, outreach to elected officials, and more. Finally, California ReLeaf created a new Facebook page that featured weekly posts on California Arbor Week and local celebrations.

Reaching and Teaching the Next Generation

California ReLeaf's 2011 Arbor Week program included a statewide poster contest for third, fourth, and fifth grade students designed to increase student knowledge about the important roles of trees and the many benefits they provide. Teachers and schools throughout California were sent a "Trees are Worth It" Lesson Plan guide with classroom activity suggestions and poster contest rules that encouraged students to design a poster that reflected his or her understanding of the impact of trees in cities and towns.

In total, 762 students participated in this contest, creating many eye-catching and colorful Arbor Week posters that were judged by staff from California ReLeaf, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, and the California Community Forests Foundation. Prizes went to Mira Hobie of Westlake Charter School in Sacramento (3rd grade winner), Adam Vargas of Celerity Troika Charter School, Los Angeles (4th grade winner), and Celina Ries of Lone Tree Elementary, Beale AFB (5th Grade Winner) for their wonderful work. Congratulations to all of our winners and participants who demonstrated their love of trees through a myriad of urban forestry drawings!

Earning an Official Seal of Approval

Finally, while the dates of March 7th -14th have long been understood and accepted as Arbor Week in California, there was no official state recognition of these dates in state statute or by Executive Order.



To rectify this situation and to bring greater awareness to Arbor Week, California ReLeaf partnered with Assembly Member Roger Dickinson (D-Sacramento) to introduce Assembly Concurrent Resolution 10 in the Legislature, which officially proclaims March 7th – 14th of each year as California Arbor Week. The resolution highlights the tremendous benefits of urban forests and urges California residents to observe the week with appropriate tree planting activities and programs. Assembly Member Dickinson and Senator Fran Pavley (D-Agoura Hills) championed the passage of this resolution, which sailed through the State Assembly and Senate with strong bipartisan support and was signed by the Secretary of State on the last day of Arbor Week.

The inaugural year of California's now-official Arbor Week and California ReLeaf's Arbor Week program provided tree lovers and urban forestry enthusiasts throughout the state with enhanced opportunities to become more engaged and excited about the benefits of trees to our air, water, health and quality of life. California ReLeaf will continue to build on this initial success in the years to come, beginning with building more tools and momentum for 2012's California Arbor Week.

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Above: A young volunteer from [Tree Musketeers](#) helps plant a tree during Arbor Week.

Left: The Arbor Week logo was created for use by any group hosting an Arbor Week celebration.

California ReLeaf Network Member Profile: Hollywood Beautification Team

Below left: Arborist Jeff Miele centering a Heritage American Elm tree in a street parkway.

Below right: HBT has mentored over 35,000 children in interactive art, tree planting & cleaning projects and environmental classes at their schools.

Right: 9/11 Memorial Mediation space built by HBT.

Nearly 20 years ago, three Los Angeles police officers were acquitted of charges of police brutality directed against a parolee involved in a 1991 high-speed chase through the San Fernando Valley. The infamous 1992 LA Riots ensued shortly thereafter, leaving several sections of the region, including portions of Hollywood, shattered and burning for days.

Only weeks prior to the riots, Sharyn Romano had founded the Hollywood Beautification Team in response to the decline and deterioration the city was increasingly experiencing due to high gang-level activity. She was in the Neighborhood Watch and used trees as a way to organize people to block out graffiti and improve the neighborhoods. Her timing was fortuitous.

In the aftermath of the riots, HBT volunteers spent eight days cleaning up the mess – removing graffiti, clearing debris, and helping to restore the tattered

town. The civil unrest sparked the federal government to respond with greening grants for these communities; and, in 1993, HBT received their first grant to continue graffiti abatement and cleanup.

Romano didn't start out with the vision to create a major urban tree organization. She just wanted to help save her hometown, the once star-studded, but then tarnished Hollywood. "In 1990, Hollywood was overwhelmed

with 25 violent gangs. The town was not livable anymore," said Romano, who recalled attending Hollywood High School when it was beautiful. "Over 20 years, the city had deteriorated so much I had to move or do something." Thankfully, she chose to do something, and immediately turned her attention to preserving her alma mater.

Romano ran HBT as a volunteer until 1995 when the organization grew to be a city-wide program. Because of their proven success in adopting schools in Hollywood the Los Angeles Unified School District asked them to apply for grants to work with their schools. Later, they partnered with the Pasadena Unified School District, planting 2,000 trees and conducting an environmental assessment of existing trees on each campus. From this point on, trees became a cornerstone in the beautification efforts of HBT, along with habitat restoration, water conservation, and a strong focus on education and outreach.

Beautifying Tinsletown

Like other urban forestry groups, HBT tree-planting efforts extend into neighborhoods and commercial areas, too. But in a city once nicknamed "Tinseltown", successfully positioning trees into the spotlight and the iconic Hollywood areas that are known worldwide takes vision and lots of help.

For example, Mulholland Drive has a spectacular view of the Hollywood sign, Bowl and city. It is a cinema staple that has been captured repeatedly in television and film, but it also needed a touch of urban forestry. HBT recognized this need and partnered with a neighborhood homeowners' association to plant over 400 trees along the famous drive. HBT board member Steve Bloodworth (who is also a member of the homeowners' association) was tapped to get the group on board for the plantings, but also succeeded in getting the homeowners to water the trees, and even run irrigation lines from their homes to get the trees established. Bloodworth points to HBT as a catalyst for renewing the Hollywood area.

"HBT looks for people to take a



leadership role,” notes Bloodworth, “especially to take care of the first four or five years of a tree’s life. There’s been a complete renaissance in the last 10 years, and I give credit to HBT.”

HBT also tackled the challenge of bringing new sparkle to the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Many merchants located along the star-studded path have metal roll-down doors, and more were added to protect the store fronts after the 1992 riots. Left unattended after business hours, the stark, metal slidings became a target for graffiti.

Thanks to HBT artists already on staff, two dozen of these slide-down doors were transformed into 24 metal canvasses adorned with stunning street paintings of such celebrities as Bob Hope, Debbie Reynolds, Dean Martin, James Cagney and Jimi Hendrix. “Our idea was to make them look like a night time gallery and brighten up the boulevard,” said Romano. “My staff designed the doors and matched the figures selected to the stars on the Walk of Fame.”

Conserving Hollywood

HBT continues to add to the suite of services provided to the City of Stars. Utilizing funding provided by Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina through park and water bonds approved by voters, HBT has restored habitat in two areas along the San Gabriel River. Students helped clean up the sites, removing non-native vegetation, installing drip irrigation and reintroducing native plants.

Last year, HBT received a \$450,000 grant from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA federal stimulus funds) administered by California ReLeaf. Through that grant, they have planted over 700 trees and maintained another 1,328 trees.

And HBT’s most recent focus is on water conservation. The organization has modified city trash cans and recycled tubs to collect rain water, and is building bioswales to capture storm water so that it will flow into the water table instead of running down storm drains. And a recent grant from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) will allow HBT to drill out concrete and put in piping that drains water into the ground.

Another grant from CAL FIRE is

helping to build HBT’s new “green” headquarters. The building is designed to be filled with natural light and air flow in order to minimize the use of utilities. It includes a large classroom where HBT can continue their environmental training.

“HBT is a fun and energetic group to work with,” said Thomas Shoots from CAL FIRE. “They have a lot of buy-in from the community. They’ve done a lot of great things in Hollywood and L.A.”

Commitment to Community

HBT continues to take on new projects to enhance and restore Hollywood and surrounding areas – all of which depend on community participation and empowerment.

From the very first grant, Romano recognized the need to engage Hollywood students and residents. The 1993 funding award allowed HBT to hire some technical staff, but they needed a labor pool. Romano arranged to use citizens who had to perform community service to rebuild from the riots. She also began employing at-risk students and homeless youth, providing them with environmental training which increased their job skills and led to a feeling of community pride. “We try to empower these kids,” said Romano.

To that end, HBT involves students and youth at every opportunity. Before each school tree planting, staff teach the students about the structure as well as the benefits of trees and how to care for them.

For the ARRA grant, Romano has hired at-risk youth to do much of this work.

And at the Thienes Avenue Gateway entrance to the San Gabriel River, local youth created 12 totems from old telephone poles as an added enhancement to the walking and horse trails along the river.

Over the last 19 years, HBT has adopted over 140 public schools, hired 2,500 youth and mentored over 35,000 children in tree planting and art projects. As part of their beautification efforts, HBT has worked with students and volunteers to design, install and maintain 250 murals throughout Hollywood.

Recalling that it all began with some graffiti removal, Romano reflects on what HBT has achieved, and what is still to come. “Trees are part of everything. Trees inspire people to have a clean environment. We have to clean up, beautify and plant.”

Donna Orozco is a freelance writer based in Visalia, California.

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Hollywood Beautification Team

Year founded: 1992

Joined Network: 2002

Board Members: 6

Staff: 20

Contact:

Sharyn Ramano, Executive Director

Hollywood Beautification Team

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Please welcome our newest Network member!



Pictured: Amigos de los Rios volunteers plant trees at a local school.



A [migos de los Rios](#) started in 2003 by a group of professionals committed to developing open space in park poor areas. The groups hoped to act as a catalyst for creating healthy communities. By using sustainable design principles and partnerships with green consultants, park development is embraced as a tool to enhance the capacity of communities to address the environmental and social issues most critical to them. Amigos de los Rios is based in Altadena, but works throughout underserved areas of Southern California.

Thank you for supporting the California ReLeaf Network!

Thank you to all of our network members who responded so positively to California ReLeaf's new network membership structure. Your financial support is critical to enabling California ReLeaf to advocate for tree-friendly legislation in our State Capitol and strong urban forestry regulations within the Administration. Lobbying for bills such as AB 587, which extends the prevailing wage exception for volunteers, and for other important issues such as the inclusion of strong urban forestry protocols at the Air Resources Board, is an essential part of the mission of California ReLeaf and the services we provide to our Network Members. California ReLeaf is your voice in Sacramento and we thank you for your financial support which makes this possible.

Connecting People, Trees and Communities

2011 California Urban & Community Forest Conference
Crowne Plaza Cabaña Hotel, Palo Alto
September 15-17



Join municipal arborists, urban forest managers, landscape design professionals, planners, and non-profits from across California for this unique educational and networking experience. With a focus on utilizing urban forestry to revitalize California's communities, participants will leave the conference with tools to improve the areas where the majority of Californian's live, work and play. This conference is co-hosted by California ReLeaf and California Urban Forests Council.

Go to californiareleaf.org/programs/conference for more information and to register.

Network Members

Formed in 1991, the California ReLeaf Network is a statewide alliance of community-based organizations that share the common goals of planting and protecting trees, fostering an ethic of environmental stewardship, and promoting volunteer involvement.

Northern California

Atherton Tree Committee
California Association of Local Conservation Corps
California Community Forests Foundation
California Urban Forests Council Canopy
CityTrees
Common Vision
Friends of Carmel Forest
Friends of the Urban Forest
Greater Modesto Tree Foundation
Keep Eureka Beautiful
Magic
Marin ReLeaf
Mendocino County ReLeaf
Mountain View Trees
North Hills Landscape Committee
Oak Habitat Restoration Project
Our City Forest
Patrick's Point Garden Club
Roseville Urban Forest Foundation
Sacramento Tree Foundation
Solano Advocates Green Environments
South San Francisco Beautification Committee
Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods
Streaminders: Chapter of the Izaak Walton League

TREE Davis
Tree Lodi
Tree Partners Foundation
Urban ReLeaf
West Oakland Green Initiative (WOGI)
Woodland Tree Foundation

Central California

Atascadero Native Tree Association
Carpinteria Beautiful
CSET
Goleta Valley Beautiful
Greenspace: The Cambria Land Trust
Ojai Trees
Ojai Valley Land Conservancy
Santa Barbara Beautiful
Santa Barbara County ReLeaf
Santa Margarita Community Forestry
Tree Foundation of Kern
Tree Fresno
Tree Lindsay
Tree Guild of Arroyo Grande
Urban Tree Foundation

Southern California

Amigos de los Rios
Arroyo Seco Foundation
Coronado Street Tree Committee
Fallbrook Land Conservancy

Highland Environmental Education Coalition
Hollywood/Los Angeles Beautification Team
Huntington Beach Tree Society
Koreatown Youth & Community Center
Los Angeles Community Forest Advisory Committee
LA Conservation Corps
Mountains Restoration Trust
North East Trees
Orange for Trees
Professional Tree Care Association of San Diego
Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District
San Bernardino Volunteer Yard Beautification Project
San Diego Community Forest Advisory Board
Shadetree Partnership
Street Tree Seminar, Inc.
Tree Musketeers
TreePeople
Trees for Seal Beach
Urban Corps of San Diego
Victoria Avenue Forever
West Hollywood Tree Preservation Society

If you would like to reach any of the groups listed, or if you are with a group that would like information on membership in the California ReLeaf Network, visit us online at www.californiareleaf.org, or contact (916) 497-0037, amastin@californiareleaf.org.

Arbor Week *continued from page 5*

GRANT ALERT! FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR URBAN FORESTRY PROJECTS

California ReLeaf will have funding available this summer for tree-planting and education projects. The programs are funded through a contract with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE).

Eligible applicants will include incorporated nonprofit organizations and unincorporated community-based groups, with a financial sponsor, located in California.

Please visit us at www.californiareleaf.org/programs/grants for more information.

It's not too early to start planning for California Arbor Week 2012!

The dates never change, so start coordinating now to make it bigger and better than 2011. Together, we can raise funds and raise awareness so that all Californians can be involved in making our state a cleaner and healthier place to live. Here's what you can do:

Start planning an event. Arbor Week events of all sizes make a significant impact in improving our communities. Visit www.arbor-week.org for all the resources and materials you need to make your 2012 event a success.

Ready, set, draw! Make sure your local schools and teachers know about California ReLeaf's lesson plan and poster contest. Contact California ReLeaf at postercontest@californiareleaf.org to get on the mailing list for the 2012 contest. Rules, guidelines and curriculum will be available by September 1, 2011.

Donate to Arbor Week. Donations to California ReLeaf for California Arbor Week are an investment that will benefit our Golden State for generations to come.



Legislative Update

By Chuck Mills

Urban Forestry Assured a Role in Historic Cap-and-Trade Program

The California Air Resources Board (ARB) voted late last year to adopt the first large-scale cap-and-trade program in the United States in an effort to help fight climate change and boost California's clean-technology industry and overall economy.

The rules place a limit on greenhouse-gas emissions for the state that will decline over time. Power plants, refineries and other industrial facilities that emit carbon dioxide and can't cut their emissions by the required amount will be able to obtain pollution allowances from the state or buy them from other emitters with excess allowances. Companies with facilities that emit carbon dioxide could also purchase carbon credits, or offsets, tied to emission-reduction projects, such as forests that are managed to contain carbon dioxide, to comply with required emission cuts.

In the latter case, urban forestry would be considered an eligible emission-reduction project. In fact, the role of urban forestry in the cap-and-trade program is discussed in detail in a 62-page report that accompanies the proposed regulation which was adopted by the Board. Specifically, the report notes that "a climate protection role for urban forests has been recognized by the Climate Action Team and by ARB's AB 32 implementation Scoping Plan, where urban forestry is one of five strategies to enhance the capacity for urban and rural forests to remove atmospheric CO₂." AB 32 is California's landmark Global Warming Solutions law that requires the state to cut greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020.

Look for more information on this important program in 2012 when the rules are scheduled to go into effect.

New Legislative Session Starts with a Budget Blow to State Resources

The 2011-12 Regular Session of the California Legislature started with a directive from Governor Jerry Brown that California's Legislature fix the chronic budget deficit that has plagued California. The budget blueprint unveiled by the Governor earlier this year sought a mix of deep cuts and tax solutions that would be placed before California voters in a special election. To date, only the deep cuts have been signed into law, which solve less than half of the state's \$26.6 million deficit. These include severe reductions to farmland funding and historic losses for State Parks (see sidebar).

Resources and programs critical to urban forestry still hang in the balance. Though the Governor's May Revision of his January budget blueprint sustains his request for \$2.4 million in bond funding to CAL FIRE for urban forestry projects, \$21 million to the Strategic Growth Council for urban greening projects, and full funding of the Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program, there are no certainties in how or when the budget debate will end.

California ReLeaf will continue to monitor progress from Sacramento and provide updates to our Network Members in the coming weeks.

Volunteer Bill, Arbor Week Resolution Top 2011 Legislative Priorities

The State Legislature introduced over 2,300 measures earlier this year -- a handful of which touch upon issues critical to sustaining urban forestry operations and visibility in California.

Topping the list is Assembly Bill 587 (Gordon and Furutani), which seeks to extend the current prevailing wage exemption for volunteers through 2017. AB 587 is essential to preserving the rights of all Californians to donate their time and spirit to a spectrum of resource conservation activities, including the critical tree care and tree planting that are the foundation of successful urban forestry projects. Over 20 Network groups have joined California ReLeaf in a letter supporting this important measure.

In addition, California ReLeaf

A Sad Day for State Parks

The Department of Parks and Recreation released its list of 70 state parks proposed for closure on May 13th, 2011.

According to the California State Parks Foundation, this closure list constitutes the first time in the 100 year history of California state parks that a serious, deliberate effort has been made to significantly reduce the state parks system. In sum, the list adversely affects 25% of the entire state parks system.

California ReLeaf Network members have consistently supported efforts to preserve our magnificent state park system through the legislative process and on the state ballot, and will continue the urban forestry tradition of standing by our parks partners.

sponsored Assembly Concurrent Resolution 10 (Dickinson) earlier this year, which officially designates March 7th – March 14th of each year as California Arbor Week. The bill went into effect the last day of this year's Arbor Week celebration, and encourages all Californians to take a more active role in supporting tree planting and urban forestry projects.

Finally, California ReLeaf continues to monitor several other bills that could become more relevant to urban forestry as they progress, including AB 296 (Skinner), relating to cool pavements, and SB 1285 (Fuentes), which creates a regional greenhouse gas reduction program for California.

For more information on these bills and other pertinent urban forestry legislation, please contact Chuck Mills at (916) 497-0035 or cmills@californiareleaf.org.

Chuck Mills is the Grants Program Manager for California ReLeaf.

Urban Forestry Advocates Storm Capitol Hill

By Leland Milstein

Representative from urban forestry organizations throughout the nation converged in Washington DC earlier this year to spread the word on the need for healthy, green cities to over 100 Congressional offices on Capitol Hill. National networks like Alliance for Community Trees (ACT) and the Sustainable Urban Forests Coalition (SUFC) joined with local and statewide groups to meet with legislators and staff to discuss the importance of urban trees and green infrastructure, and to promote specific legislative and budgetary requests moving forward this year, including funding proposed for the Urban & Community Forestry Program, and reintroduction of the Urban Revitalization and Livable Communities Act (see below).

Proposed Obama Budget Boosts Urban & Community Forestry Program, Land and Conservation Fund

ACT, SUFC, and other urban forestry groups nationwide strongly support the

\$32.4 million for the Urban & Community Forestry Program of the USDA Forest Service that President Obama recommends in his budget blueprint for 2012 [see attached pdf]. This figure represents a 7% increase over last year's enacted budget, which delivered baseline technical, financial, research, and educational services to over 7,000 communities in every state in 2010.

This modest increase is a major victory for us all and signals strong support for urban forestry by the Forest Service and the Administration. By comparison, the overall Forest Service budget was reduced by \$178 million in the President's proposed budget.

Finally, the 7% increase is reflected in \$2 million specifically proposed for a nationally competitive strategic tree planting initiative, designed to demonstrate the ability of trees in our cities and towns to improve energy efficiency, carbon sequestration, and climate change impacts. Major cities with tree planting campaigns, including numerous California communities, would be well positioned to compete for these funds.

In addition, the President's budget blueprint also recommends full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) by Congress in 2012. The LWCF helps protect important natural areas and develop public outdoor recreation space by using a very small percentage of offshore oil and gas production revenues to sustain these activities. Fully allocating these funds to LWCF would support greening initiatives in cities around the country as the primary funding source for the America's Great Outdoors initiative, which contains a strong emphasis on urban nature, including the goal to "create and enhance a new generation of safe, clean, accessible parks and community green spaces" through strategic urban initiatives.

While the prospects for retaining most of the funding proposed for the Federal program remains positive, the reality is that LWCF consistently takes severe hits in the annual battle budget, with funding reduced by several hundred million dollars on numerous occasions. The state-side component of LWCF – which goes to states and cities through matching and competitive grants – is always a prime target for cuts, so our collective support will help determine how LWCF will fare in the 2012 budget passed on Capitol Hill.

A Second Shot at the Urban Revitalization and Livable Communities Act (H.R. 709)

A reboot of earlier legislation (known as UPARR) will rehabilitate and improve urban parks and recreational infrastructure if passed by Congress and signed by the President. The objective is to revitalize communities with the attendant benefits of urban greening and recreation spaces through increased economic development, improved public health, increased daily physical activity, reduced crime, and reconnecting children with nature, and safe, healthy alternatives for at-risk youth. H.R. 709 currently has 48 co-sponsors, including several who signed on after hearing from urban forestry advocates from their home states. A Senate companion to this bill is also in the works.

ACT believes green infrastructure solutions for water management, urban revitalization, jobs, and energy savings will continue to be key drivers and sources of federal support for trees and urban greening in the foreseeable future. More bills are on the horizon that will seek to provide these resources, so please visit ACT at www.actrees.org for more information and updates.

Leland Milstein is the Program Director for Alliance for Community Trees.





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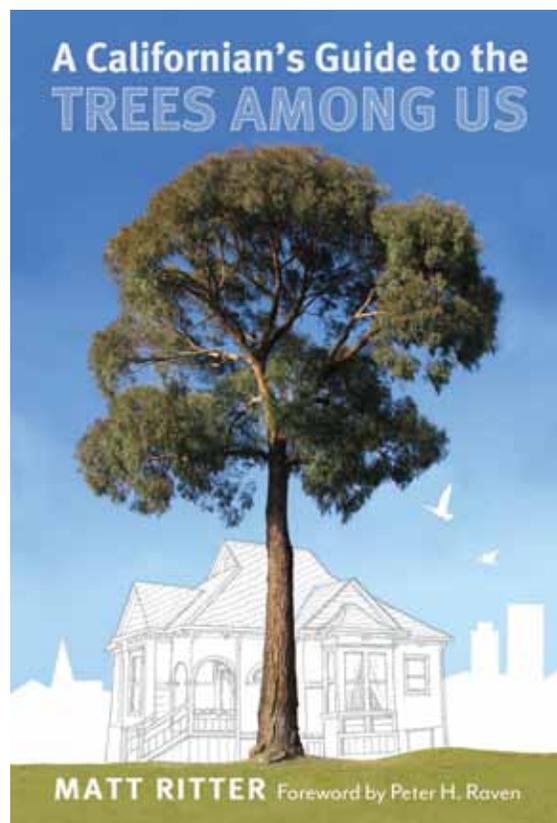
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Get to Know California's Most Common Urban Trees

A new book written by Matt Ritter, *A Californian's Guide to the Trees Among Us*, features over 150 of our state's trees with beautiful photographs and illustrations. Whether used as a field guide or read for pleasure, this book provides readers with stories behind the trees that shade our parks, grace our yards, and line our streets. *A Californian's Guide to the Trees Among Us* is available at select bookstores or through the publisher Heydey Books at www.heydaybooks.com.

Donate \$100 or more to California ReLeaf before December 31, 2011 to receive a copy of this book as a special thank you gift.



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