

# California Trees

www.californiareleaf.org

## Nature Matters: How Urban Greening Can Change Lives

By Jane Braxton Little

Winter 2010  
Volume 18, No. 3

### Inside:

4

Million Tree Initiatives:  
Tools for Campaign  
Success

6

Network Update:  
Woodland Tree Foundation

7

A View from Sacramento:  
The State of Urban  
Forestry in California

10

Legislative Update



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

A girl – let’s call her Annie – ignores the open book in her lap and stares out the window of her third-floor Los Angeles apartment. She looks onto barren pavement and walls of unrelenting concrete. Not a blade of grass or tree leaf in sight. By now Annie, 12, has lost all interest in her textbook. She gets up, rummages around in her mother’s purse, finds a cigarette and lights it.

Fast-forward a year: Unable to concentrate on her studies, Annie has been held back. Lately, she has been skipping classes and getting into more and more trouble. In the long list of setbacks that Annie faces, no one has thought that her environment could play a role in her poor health and mental welfare.

Would a grass lawn and green trees outside Annie’s apartment make a difference in her young life? If Annie had a view of nature, would she have a better chance of success? A group of researchers with University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign responds with a resounding and unequivocal “yes!”

### Trees - Essential to Health & Welfare

Their study of inner-city children and their mothers found that green space immediately outside their upper-story apartment homes can contribute to girls leading more effective, self-disciplined lives. “The greener a girl’s view from home, the better her performance,” says Andrea Faber Taylor, who conducted the study with Frances E. Kuo and William C. Sullivan.

These findings add to a growing body of evidence that residential trees, street trees, park trees and green grass are not mere amenities of urban life. They are health and welfare essentials. Over the last few decades, social science research has confirmed that the presence of trees and



Above: The opposite ends of the green spectrum are contained in one housing complex in Chicago where the Landscape and Human Health Lab of University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign compiled their research.

(continued on page 2)



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.

CALIFORNIA RELEAF  
2112 Tenth Street  
Sacramento, CA 95818  
(916) 497-0034  
(916) 497-0038 fax  
info@californiareleaf.org

STAFF:  
Joe Liszewski  
Executive Director

Ashley Mastin  
Program Manager  
Editor

Kathleen Farren Ford  
Program Manager

Chuck Mills  
Program Manager

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:  
Amelia Oliver  
President

Teresa Villegas  
Secretary

Rose Epperson  
Treasurer

Gail Church

Jim Clark

www.californiareleaf.org

*Right: Three girls plant a tree during a Common Vision event. According to studies, these girls are more likely to succeed because of the new green in their environment.*

## Nature Matters *continued from page 1*

other natural features in city neighborhoods makes us happier and more physically fit. Urban greenery strengthens family and community ties. It increases property values, reduces stress and the risk of disease. Trees can even contribute to a reduction in city crime.

“Throughout time people have noted that nearby nature is an important part of places that are livable and have a high quality of life,” says Kathleen L. Wolf, a social scientist at University of Washington who has spent more than 40 years studying the human services provided by urban forests. “We may intuitively accept that urban nature is important for public health but today supporting evidence confirms our intuitions: Every bit of nearby nature has the potential to benefit hundreds to thousands of people every day.”

With more than 80 percent of the population of the United States now living in cities, understanding how nature affects our lives becomes ever more crucial. Recent research has run the gamut from street safety to domestic violence and the connections between nature and healing. Much of it has focused on the effects of urban greenery on children:

In California, the American Institutes for Research studied the impact of weeklong residential outdoor education programs on at-risk youths. Over half of the teenagers had never spent time in a natural setting. Compared to a control group that did not have the outdoor learning experience, the researchers found a 27 percent increase in mastery of science concepts. The youths who participated in the weeklong program also showed enhanced cooperation, gains in self-esteem and problem-solving skills.

Kuo, Sullivan and Faber Taylor, the University of Illinois researchers, were interested in demonstrating how

green settings affect children with Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder, an affliction that causes chronic difficulty in paying attention and focusing. AD-HD affects up to seven percent of children in the United States. In a Midwest based survey, parents reported their AD-HD children performed with more focus and attention when their activities were outside in natural areas.

A Canadian study conducted by Anne Bell and Janet Dymont was designed to observe obesity in children, but it also documented the benefits to students from school grounds that are ecologically diverse, with free-play areas, walking trails, gardens and wildlife habitat. Children who experience school areas with diverse natural settings are more physically active and more aware of nutrition. They are also more civil to one another and more creative, the researchers found.

## Girls & Greenery

In their study of children living in inner-city apartments in Chicago, the University of Illinois researchers found an interesting distinction between girls and boys. Their survey was designed to examine the relationship between nature close to home and self-discipline in children, both boys and girls. Faber Taylor, Kuo and Sullivan selected a public housing development with 28 buildings and over 12,000 residents, most of them welfare recipients. They chose this site because the buildings were nearly identical but their surroundings offered different levels of greenery. Some had nothing but bare pavement, some small pockets of green. Other areas in the housing development had grass and trees.

Faber Taylor and her team interviewed 169 mothers and their children – 91 boys and 78 girls, all between the ages of 7 and 12 years old. Some of them lived in apartments with views of trees and grass in common spaces between the buildings. Others had no glimpse of



Photo: Common Vision

any natural greenery from their apartment windows.

The researchers used standard assessment tools to measure concentration, impulse inhibition and delay of gratification – qualities that contribute to self-discipline. The study was based on the widely held sociological assumption that self-discipline is an important personal characteristic and can shape a child's future. The greater the self-discipline, the more likely a child is to do well in school, avoid risky conduct, and behave in ways that contribute to success in life.

The research results show that the greener a girl's view from home, the better she concentrates. Being able to see something natural from home also makes girls more effective at inhibiting impulses and delaying gratification, the researchers found. They concluded that the view from the apartment windows accounted for a 20 percent difference in girls' self-discipline scores.

Boys, however, produced different results. While girls showed consistent and often strong links between near-home nature and self-discipline, boys showed "only the barest hint of such a link," says Faber Taylor. The University of Illinois research team has planned future studies to examine the relationship between levels of nature in typical play spaces for boys and how that affects self-discipline.

### What About Annie?

While some impacts of urban greening, like crime rate or increased property values, are much easier to measure (see sidebar), for girls like Annie, the effects are much more subtle. What if we could change the view out of her L.A. apartment window? What if instead of pavement and concrete, she looked out on grass, shrubbery and trees that tower above her third floor window? Statistically, that would make a significant difference, according to the data gathered by Farber Taylor, Kuo and Sullivan.

With more natural surroundings visible

*(continued on page 5)*

### TREES & CRIME

As scientists delve deeper into the social and psychological impacts of urban greening, their studies are targeting increasingly precise causes and effects. While some studies try to quantify the subjective and emotional benefits of trees, others work to supply concrete measurements of urban trees' benefits. The impact of urban trees on crime rates has been a frequent research topic, but a recent project in Portland, Oregon took it to a new level of detail. U.S. Forest Service researchers studied the effect of city trees on crime rates by taking exact measurements of tree canopies, heights and locations.

Geoffrey Donovan, a research forester with the agency's Pacific Northwest Research Station, used Portland Police Bureau crime data from 2005 to 2007 to study property and violent crime rates in relation to the number and size of trees on residential property. Working with Jeffrey Prestemon, who is based at the Forest Service's Southern Research Station, Donovan examined crimes in seven different categories that had a physical address. He paired this data with site information on 2,813 single-family homes where both property and violent crimes had taken place. Using aerial photographs, Geographic Information Systems data and site visits, Donovan and Prestemon plotted the location of every tree within their study area. To determine the size of each tree, they extrapolated information on the crown area of both street and yard trees to calculate tree heights.

The effect of trees on crime was mixed. Donovan and Prestemon found that trees on some residential lots could actually increase crime. Their explanation is straightforward: trees provide cover to criminals. How much cover a would-be burglar gets depends on the size and location of the trees near homes. Several smaller trees give the most cover. Houses

with larger trees are less attractive to burglars because they have higher crowns, reducing the hiding places. The farther taller trees are from a house, the less they obstruct the view. So a burglar would likely choose a house with an abundance of small and bushy trees – places where he could hide, the Forest Service study concludes.

And just when does a tree progress from being a crime attractant to a crime deterrent? Donovan calculated the break-even point at 42 feet. Shorter trees obstruct the view from first-floor windows, he says. The data sends two clear messages to homeowners: 1) Prune existing trees to prevent them from blocking the view of crooks creeping into the yard. 2) Select new tree species and locations with criminal deterrence in mind.

The way trees reduce crime is less obvious than the way they encourage it. Other studies have documented the positive effects of street trees, which encourage people to spend time in public spaces and thus increase the probability that criminals are observed. Researchers have also found that trees often send a signal that these neighborhoods and houses are cared for and that more people are keeping an eye out for intruders. While Donovan and Prestemon did not specifically study street trees, the larger trees on residential lots located away from houses had a similar effect on crime. Their studies consistently found that street trees were associated with reduced crime.

The Forest Service study of trees and crime rates in Portland was modest in scope, and the authors are modest about their results. "It is unlikely that anyone would choose to plant a tree solely for its crime-reduction benefits. However, in combination with the other benefits of trees, crime reduction may provide a spur to tree planting," Donovan concludes.

## Million Tree Initiatives: Tools for Campaign Success

by *Kelaine Vargas*

It seems that our many years of hard work and dedication spent helping policy makers see the benefits of trees in cities are finally starting to pay off, at least if the profusion of initiatives to plant a million trees is any indication! At least a dozen cities across the United States, including three of the four largest, have started ambitious tree planting campaigns (there's even a "Million Trees for Michael Jackson" project).

### Could your city be next? Should it be?

The popularity of tree planting initiatives has led to increased scholarly and policy-oriented attention to help answer those questions. This includes forthcoming research in *Arborist News* and the *Journal of the American Planning Association* by Dr. Greg McPherson, director of the US Forest

Service's Center for Urban Forest Research, and Dr. Robert Young, Department of Planning, Public Policy and Management, University of Oregon; the recent Municipal Tree Planting Initiatives Workshop held in Los Angeles; and a panel at the Partners in Community Forestry conference. This

article pulls together a few pearls of wisdom from these sources on what makes for a successful tree planting campaign, both from the perspective of the campaign and the perspective of the trees.

### Campaign success

**Have good relationships in place.** One of the most important steps to building a successful program is having good relationships with the mayor, city staff, and local tree advocacy partners before the project starts. In some cities, mayors, motivated to "green" their cities, have

announced programs out of the blue to the surprise (and anxiety) of local nonprofit tree groups and even their own city staff. Good lines of communication will ensure that you are part of the planning process, helping to set realistic goals and to argue for sufficient funding.

**"Institutionalize" the program so that a change in administration doesn't result in an abandoned project.** As Greg McPherson points out, "It's hard to sell a new mayor on the other guy's plan," so make sure the campaign is embedded in your city's administration to keep it from withering and dying.

### Involve partners in the early stages.

In Denver, relationships with local tree groups and stakeholders were damaged when the Mile High Million project was announced by the mayor without warning. Those groups felt, not unreasonably, that the significant work they had done over many years was not valued. Engage as many partners as you can early on—you're going to need them.

**Reach out to a diverse group.** Finding a place for a million trees and getting them in the ground will not be easy. You'll need many, many partners, including groups not typically affiliated with urban forestry; encourage them to reach out to the public they serve in imaginative ways. In Los Angeles, neighborhoods with large populations of recent immigrants were resistant to having trees planted. The offer of fruit trees, however, sparked their interest and engaged them in the initiative. In the Sacramento region, SMUD, the local utility, is a major partner in the 5 Million Tree campaign because of their interest in using trees to reduce energy consumption.

### Tree success

It's not enough for a program itself to be successful from an organizational, public relations, and community engagement perspective. To be truly successful, (at least most of) the trees have to survive.

**Have a plan for quality planting.** The "number of trees given away" or even the "numbers of trees planted" isn't the best metric to judge success. Many of the trees



*Above: Two young Los Angeles residents watch as North East Trees workers plant a tree in their yard as part of the Million Trees L.A. Initiative.*

given away are never planted, and trees planted by well-meaning but untrained volunteers have a high rate of failure. Sarah Davis, program coordinator of Denver's Mile High Million program, adheres to the "puppy rule," saying, "You wouldn't send a puppy home with every 5th grader. Think of trees the same way."

**Have a plan for quality stewardship.** Morgan Monaco, director of Million Trees NYC, is careful to emphasize that their goal is to "plant and care for" a million trees, but in many cities the latter part is glossed over in the planning and budgeting. All partners--homeowners, volunteers, and of course the city administration--should understand that the trees will require a lifetime of care and investment. In particular, a tree care plan for the first few years after planting will pay huge dividends in future health and longevity.

**Combine tree planting with tree canopy goals.** One danger of focusing too much attention on tree planting is that your existing forest may suffer from neglect. Having a dual goal of increasing canopy cover helps emphasize the importance of caring for what you have and growing the urban forest as a whole.

Million Tree initiatives have a great potential to make our cities more sustainable, more livable, and greener while engaging residents in their urban forest, but the path to success is not easy. Hopefully these pearls of wisdom from those who have taken on such projects will help smooth the way for others.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

5 Million Tree Campaign of the Sacramento region: <http://www.5milliontrees.com>

Million Trees LA: <http://www.milliontreesla.org>

NYC Million Trees:  
<http://www.milliontreesnyc.org>

Denver's Mile High Million:  
<http://www.milehighmillion.org>

---

*Kelaine Vargas is the owner of Urban Ecos, an environmental consulting firm offering technological and design solutions to enhance sustainability through the careful use of natural resources.*



*Above and right: Sacramento Tree Foundation volunteers, both young and old, help to plant what will hopefully one day be 5-million trees.*



#### Nature Matters continued from page 3

out their windows, the girls they studied had better concentration and control of their impulses. With some greenery in sight of her window, Annie might forego that purloined cigarette. She might curb her urge for immediate gratification - she might finish reading her homework assignments and stop skipping classes to hang out with friends. Annie, the researchers found, would have more self discipline if she had trees in her immediate neighborhood.

We may never know whether a greener environment ultimately changes the lives of girls like Annie as they grow up, or how it impacts the 250 million other people who live in cities across the United States. But as studies of the social and psychological effects of urban greenery become more and more sophisticated, they are demonstrating benefits that extend beyond the tangible - burglary and other crimes - to the internal - concentration and self-discipline. Throughout the spectrum, the scientific consensus is clear: urban trees make a difference. Nature matters.

---

*Jane Braxton Little is a freelance journalist based in Plumas County, California.*

# California ReLeaf Network Member Profile: Woodland Tree Foundation

By Donna Orozco

“You meet wonderful people—good-hearted people—planting trees,” says David Wilkinson, a founder and board president of Woodland Tree Foundation.

During its 10 years of operation, the foundation has planted over 2,100 trees in this Tree City USA northwest of Sacramento. Wilkinson is a historian and says Woodland got its name because it grew out of an oak forest. Wilkinson and the foundation want to preserve that heritage.

The all-volunteer group works with the city to plant trees downtown and replace aging trees. Twenty years ago, there were almost no trees in the downtown area. In 1990, the city planted three or four blocks of trees. Since 2000, when the Woodland Tree Foundation was created, they have been adding trees.

sued the city to stop the removal.

They eventually settled out of court, and the city agreed to move the olive trees. Unfortunately, they were not cared for properly and they died.

“The silver lining is that the incident inspired me and a group of people to form a non-profit tree foundation,” said Wilkinson. “A year later we successfully procured our first grant from the California Department of Forestry.”

Because of budget cuts, the city is now encouraging the foundation to take on even more responsibility.

“In the past, the city did a lot of marking and service alerts for underground and utility lines,” said Wes Schroeder, city arborist. “That is very time consuming, and we’re helping the foundation phase that in.”

When old trees need to be replaced, the city grinds out the stumps and adds new soil. Then it gives the locations to the foundation to replace trees.

“We would probably do a lot fewer plantings without the foundation,” said Schroeder.

## Working with Neighboring Communities

The foundation is also getting a lot of assistance from tree groups from two neighboring cities, Sacramento Tree Foundation and Tree Davis. In October and November, the two organizations got grants and chose to work with the Woodland Tree Foundation to plant trees in Woodland.

“Hopefully they’ll become team leaders in our towns when we do plantings,” said Keren Costanzo, new executive director of Tree Davis. “We’re trying to increase collaboration among the organizations and pool our resources.”

The Woodland Tree Foundation is also working with Tree Davis to plant trees along Highway 113 which joins the two cities.

“We’ve adopted seven miles along the highway,” said Wilkinson. “It was just completed 15 years ago and had very few trees.”

The foundation has been planting there for eight years, using mostly oaks and some

California Trees

MEMBER  
SNAPSHOT

### Woodland Tree Foundation

Year founded: 2000

Joined Network: 2004

Board Members: 14

Staff: None

Projects include:

Downtown & other in-fill street plantings and waterings, an Arbor Day event, and plantings along Highway 113

Contact:

David Wilkinson, President  
Woodland Tree Foundation  
P.O. Box 8753  
Woodland, CA 95776  
(530) 662-9202  
davwilk@pacbell.net  
<http://groups.dcn.org/wtf>

## Roots in Tree Protection

Although the city and foundation work hand-in-hand today, the foundation actually grew out of a lawsuit against the city over a road widening project that was going to destroy a row of 100-year old olive trees. Wilkinson was on the city tree commission. He and a group of citizens



Above: Downtown plantings have once again made this town a “Woodland”.

redbuds and pistache.

“Tree Davis was planting on their end, and they taught us how to do it on our end, how to grow seedlings from acorns and buckhorn seeds,” said Wilkinson.

Early in 2011 the two groups will join to plant trees between the two towns.

“In the next five years, we’ll probably have trees all along the corridor. I think it will be pretty fabulous as years go by.”

Interestingly enough, the two cities first planned to join their towns with trees back in 1903, according to Wilkinson. A women’s civic club in Woodland, in response to Arbor Day, joined with a similar group in Davis to plant palm trees.

“Palm trees were the rage. The California tourism bureau wanted to create a tropical feel so easterners would be thrilled to come out to California.”

The project fizzled out, but the area still has palm trees that were planted in that era.

## Modern Day Success

The Woodland Tree Foundation has received grants from California ReLeaf, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and PG&E (the latter to make sure the proper trees are grown under power lines). The foundation has a list of 40 or 50 volunteers who help with three or four plantings a year, mostly in the fall and on Arbor Day. Students from UC Davis and boys and girl scouts have helped.

Recently a woman in town who has a family charitable trust contacted the foundation. She was impressed by the foundation’s track record and volunteer spirit.

“She is interested in making Woodland a more walkable, shady city,” said Wilkinson. “She has offered us a major gift to pay for a three-year strategic plan and funds to hire our first ever paid part-time coordinator. This will enable Woodland Tree Foundation to reach deeper into the community.”

Wilkinson believes the foundation is leaving an incredible tree legacy.

“A lot of us feel what we’re doing is special. Trees need care, and we’re leaving them better for the next generation.”

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

Winter 2010

# A View from Sacramento: The State of Urban Forestry in California

*By John Melvin*

The past two years have been rewarding and challenging times for urban forestry in California. We have seen many victories and successes, but also many things to be very concerned about.

Since I became the State Urban Forester, you may have noticed my profile has been somewhat low. This is not in my nature, and also not what I had hoped for. Most of that time, I have spent trying to keep day-to-day business flowing in the face of the state’s December 2008 bond fund freeze. With the bond freeze over, I am now able to focus more on other aspects of our program’s efforts beyond administrative tasks.

Despite the challenges California urban forestry has faced in the past two years, there were still some successes.

The leadership of the Urban and Community Forestry Program at CAL FIRE was elevated to a management level position for the first time in program history. I believe this demonstrates that CAL FIRE is taking Urban and Community Forestry more seriously than ever before.

Thanks to California ReLeaf, an update to the Urban Forestry Act was passed in 2008, making it even stronger. Please see our program’s website, ([http://www.fire.ca.gov/resource\\_mgt/resource\\_mgt\\_urbanforestry.php](http://www.fire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource_mgt_urbanforestry.php)), and read this wonderful piece of legislation. It will give some insight into what our program aspires to do. Additionally, a minor revision was achieved by CAL FIRE and our partners in 2010 to fix some definitions and allow CAL FIRE to enable us to loan our urban wood utilization equipment again.

Additionally, I have reached out to other state departments to help increase their knowledge and appreciation for urban forestry. They now understand why they have a stake in California’s urban forests and are receptive as outreach is continued.

Another exciting development has been the inaugural meeting of the California Urban Forestry Advisory Committee (CUFAC). CUFAC has been formed as a formal advisory body to the Director of CAL FIRE on urban forestry matters. Their first meeting was on November 3-4. You will be hearing more about them and from them in the future. It is our hope they will help us to make our program the best it can be. You can find the roster of members on the program’s website provided above.

Field staffing for the program now stands at six. The staff is highly trained, technically competent, friendly, and passionate for urban forestry. I hope you already have met your Regional Urban Forester. If not, make a point to do so today. They are a fantastic resource for you and can be found via the program website mentioned above.

Looking towards the future, there are some issues and information that are important for those involved in urban forestry in California to know about.

All of the current funding for the Urban and Community Forestry Program at CAL FIRE is temporary and may run out as soon as 2012/2013. I am hopeful that funding will materialize via numerous efforts by CAL FIRE and our partners.

Municipal urban forestry programs are suffering cuts. In some cases

*(continued on page 8)*



## Economic Recovery Funds Fostering Jobs Through Urban Forestry

California's urban forestry community has plenty to be proud of in regards to how they have strategically spent and leveraged federal funding provided under The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) over the last twelve months.

In 2009, California ReLeaf was awarded \$6 million in ARRA funding to be administered to 17 community groups and public agencies with shovel-ready projects that could immediately put people to work and trees in the ground. Since that time, approximately \$2.2 million has been invested in creating or retaining more than

140 jobs statewide that have contributed nearly 71,000 job hours to California's work force. More than 6,500 trees have been planted with these funds, and another 16,000 maintained. Finally, these resources have leveraged tens of thousands of dollars in local or state match funding, and utilized hundreds of volunteers to help accomplish project goals.

Over the next year, California ReLeaf will be highlighting the accomplishments of individual projects. Please visit [www.californiareleaf.org](http://www.californiareleaf.org) for more information.

---

### View from Sac *continued from page 7*

the cuts are severe. The good news is the cuts seem to be less severe, in many cases, than in past recessions, despite a deeper recession. I think this speaks well of everybody's efforts to elevate urban forestry as a priority in recent years. Please take time to advocate strongly for your local urban forestry program.

Take a look at [www.urbanforestmap.org](http://www.urbanforestmap.org) and [www.ufmptoolkit.com](http://www.ufmptoolkit.com). These are fantastic tools that cities throughout California can use.

The 2010 Forest and Range Assessment and companion strategies document (<http://www.frap.fire.ca.gov>) has recently been completed by CAL FIRE. For the first time both include a robust urban forestry section. Did you know that the urban forest industry in California is a \$5.4 Billion dollar industry? We didn't. In early 2011, a report will be available that breaks down just how big the industry is, and what it contributes to the jobs and taxes in this state. Stay tuned.

Some other items of state policy interest to urban forestry include:

The California Climate Adaption Strategy - This document will help shape how Californians adapt to a changing climate: <http://www.climatechange.ca.gov/adaptation/index.html>. Urban Forestry is well represented.

The emergence of the Strategic Growth Council (SGC) ([www.sgc.ca.gov](http://www.sgc.ca.gov)). The SGC is tasked with coordinating state efforts in land use planning and urban greening.

In closing, California needs a much bigger presence in the national urban forestry and urban greening scene. Currently, California is vastly under-represented in Washington for urban forestry efforts. Indeed, the entire western United States is. It's time to start changing this. We are the nation's most populous state, and we have the biggest stake in insuring successful urban forestry efforts.

The key to the future of urban forestry is in integrating our messages with other stakeholder professions and interest groups. We need to instill in all related disciplines, their advocates and stakeholders that urban forestry and urban greening are a big part of the solutions to their problems. This must create a fundamental shift in thinking. Green must be part of the infrastructure, not just an afterthought. It must be business as usual, not the notable exception.

This will take a focused effort by all of us. Collaboration is the key. Please ask yourselves: how can I work toward this end? You may be able to emerge as a leader in this state. You may be able to advocate or take a leadership role at the local or regional level. The future is bright for urban forestry. In California, urban forestry organizations are working together better than ever before with focused goals and efforts. Let's keep the momentum going!

*John Melvin is the State Urban Forester at the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.*

## 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  
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 Guild of Arroyo Grande  
Urban Tree Foundation

### SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Arroyo Seco Foundation  
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  
Tree Lindsay  
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](http://www.californiareleaf.org), or contact (916) 497-0037, [info@californiareleaf.org](mailto:info@californiareleaf.org).

## GRANT ALERT! FUNDING WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR URBAN FORESTRY PROJECTS THIS SPRING

California ReLeaf will have funding available in spring 2011 for tree-planting and education projects. The program is funded through a contract with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE).

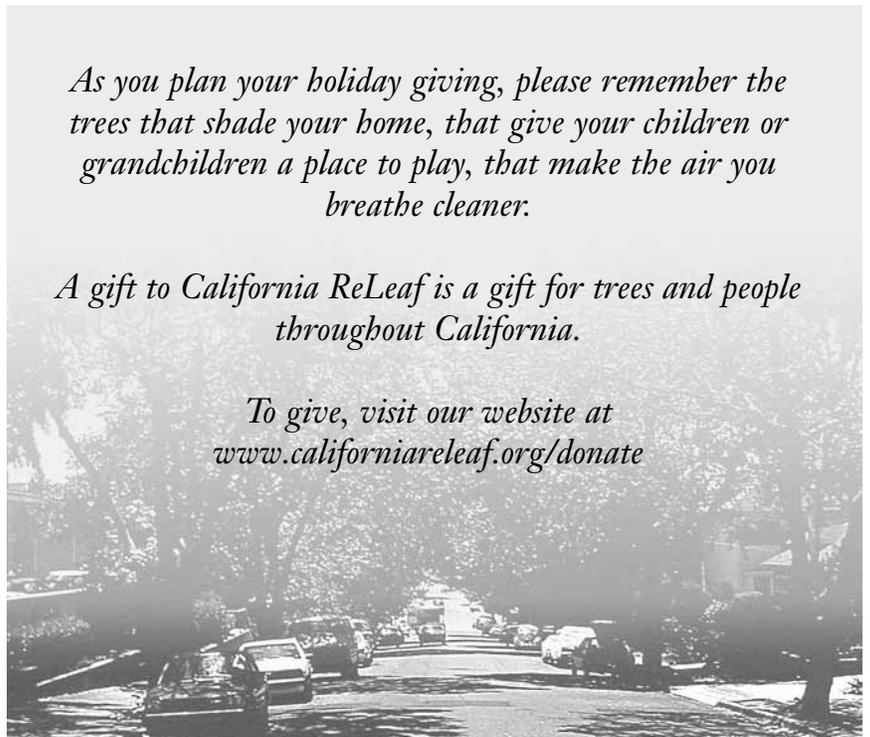
Eligible applicants will include incorporated nonprofit organizations and unincorporated community-based groups, with a financial sponsor, located in California.

Please visit us at [www.californiareleaf.org](http://www.californiareleaf.org) for more information.

*As you plan your holiday giving, please remember the trees that shade your home, that give your children or grandchildren a place to play, that make the air you breathe cleaner.*

*A gift to California ReLeaf is a gift for trees and people throughout California.*

*To give, visit our website at  
[www.californiareleaf.org/donate](http://www.californiareleaf.org/donate)*





## November Elections Buck National Trend; Save Climate Change Law

Californians struck a blue chord at the ballot box on November 2nd, 2010, voting in the full slate of democrats running for executive office beginning with Governor Elect Jerry Brown.

For California ReLeaf and many members of the environmental and resource conservation community, the real races were centered on voter response to key initiatives that appeared on the November ballot.

The defeat of Proposition 21 – the state parks pass initiative – represents a big loss for our parks, our children, and our environment. California ReLeaf and multiple network members joined with over 700 organizations in supporting this effort to create a permanent funding source for supporting California’s state parks and other conservation priorities. California State Parks Foundation notes that without Proposition 21, “the damage that has been done to state parks through decades of budget neglect will continue and take years to fix.”

However, the defeat of Proposition 23 marked a major victory for California’s environment and the urban forestry community, which can continue its role in crafting strong urban forestry protocols and working to ensure trees remain a critical component of AB 32 implementation. Proposition 23 would have essentially repealed California’s landmark climate change law. California ReLeaf joined hundreds of organizations and public agencies in opposing this deceptive ballot measure, which was blasted by more than 61% of Californians casting votes in the November election.

Thanks to all network members that joined California ReLeaf in endorsing Proposition 21 and opposing Proposition 23. We will continue to support California’s magnificent state parks system, and continue to engage in the ongoing debate over how to best address climate change, and the critical role urban forestry plays in that discussion.

## Late Blooming Budget Filled with Urban Forestry Blossoms

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and the State Legislature passed a record-late state budget in early

October that sought to close a \$19 billion budget gap through a variety of solutions that include significant assumptions regarding Federal aid, and deep cuts to a variety of state-sponsored programs.

However, the impact to resources was minor, with virtually no adverse impact to urban forestry. The 2010-11 State Budget includes \$3.2 million to CAL FIRE for urban forestry grants, \$10 million for the Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program, and \$21.1 million to the Strategic Growth Council for urban greening projects that include urban forestry.

As always, the unified voice of this community helped make a difference, and is reflected in the \$33 million that can be directed to urban forestry in the coming fiscal year. Congratulations on surviving, and thriving, through another tough year.

## Legislative Session Ends with a Handful of Small Wins and Losses

The 2010-11 Regular Session of the California Legislature ended in the wee hours of September 1st with partisan bickering and last minute deals. With most statewide environmental organizations still stinging from the Governor’s veto pen in 2009, The scope of strong conservation measures that went before the Legislature was significantly reduced this year.

California ReLeaf supported the following measures that were signed by the Governor in 2010:

AB 2761 (Committee on Natural Resources), Amendments to the Urban Forestry Act of 1978 – Signed into Law. After the ReLeaf-sponsored re-haul of the Act in 2008, CAL FIRE noted that having the term “surplus” in the bill made it difficult for the department to loan out equipment to local communities. ReLeaf responded by helping correct this through AB 2761 that, among other things, updates the Act to strike the word “surplus” from the Public Resources Code. The bill also updates the definition of urban forestry so that it matches the definition of urban forests.

SB 1006 (Pavley), Climate Change and Natural Resources – Signed into Law. This bill updates the activities of the Strategic Growth Council to require the council to provide guidelines and distribute

data to local governments that assist in developing and implementing climate change adaptation strategies.

## Term Limits Claim Conservation Leaders in 2010

California's term limits laws forced more than 20% of the sitting State Legislature out of office this year, including numerous champions for urban forestry, parks, and environmental protection.

Among those leaving the State Senate are Denise Ducheny (D-San Diego), Gil Cedillo (D-Los Angeles) and Patricia Wiggins (D-Santa Rosa). Over the last decade, these State Senators have not only consistently supported numerous strong conservation measures, but also authored key bills that enhance parks, protect important agricultural resources, and elevate the relevance of nonprofits in the eyes of the State.

In the Assembly, termed-out legislative leaders such as former Speaker Karen Bass (D-Los Angeles), Noreen Evans (D-Santa Rosa) – now a state senator, Pedro Nava (D-Santa Barbara), Ira Ruskin (D-Redwood City), Lori Saldana (D-San Diego) and Dave Jones (D-Sacramento), were instrumental in advancing a policy agenda that prevents offshore oil drilling, promotes AB 32 implementation, and protects projects impacted by the State's bond freeze.

Most important, California ReLeaf acknowledges the hard work and true environmental spirit of Assembly Member Hector de La Torre (D-South Gate). Over the last six years, de La Torre has been a crucial component in moving key environmental measures off the Assembly Floor through his tireless efforts to secure those critical votes that can make or break some big bills. He's authored legislation that advanced urban forestry and expanded urban greening opportunities, and has been a great friend to the environment. Hector de La Torre will truly be missed.

California ReLeaf extends a heartfelt thanks to these and other departing members that have tirelessly supported resource conservation through their votes and actions over the last several years. Your dedication to building a better California one tree at a time is greatly appreciated.

## Looking forward, Looking back

California ReLeaf and the urban forestry community can point to several strong accomplishments achieved in the policy arena in the short amount of time the organization has been an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit.

Together, we ensured that CAL FIRE received no less than \$20 million in the last statewide resources bond passed by the voters in 2006 -- a record allocation for urban forestry funding in any one California bond that has been the lifeblood for community forestry projects.

We brought the Urban Forestry Act of 1978 into the 21st Century by successfully sponsoring AB 2045 in 2008 by Assembly Member Hector de La Torre which recognizes the tremendous value of trees in combating adverse climate change impacts to our cities and our environment.

We've helped sustain funding for the \$10 million Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program for the last five state budget cycles, and helped extend the prevailing wage exception for volunteers through 2011.

And we have been at the Air Resources Board and Cal EPA promoting strong urban forestry protocols as an essential ingredient to implementing California's landmark climate change law – Assembly Bill 32.

We've shared in the tremendous challenges endured by urban forestry, such as the state's bond freeze initiated in 2008; and rejoiced in the triumphs, such as the crushing defeat of Proposition 23 in November 2010. Much has been achieved, with much more still to come.

California ReLeaf has heard the collective voice of our urban forestry network, and the value you place on our role in crafting a sound, strategic resources policy agenda at the state capitol. It is for that reason that we are re-committing ourselves to engaging on urban forestry issues that matter most to all of us as the next legislative session gets underway.

In the coming months, we will once again have to work hard to provide another statutory extension that will allow volunteers to do what they do best – support the hard work of California's conservation nonprofits by selflessly giving of themselves to help leave a green legacy for our children.

And there is still much to do regarding AB 32 implementation, strategic growth, adaptation and the role urban forestry will continue to play in these issues.

Finally, we have to find stable, permanent funding for our state's urban forestry needs. The bonds that have provided capital for our projects for the last decade have been essential for our collective success. But the continued struggle of our state's economy and chronic budget deficit both demonstrate that we, as a community, will need to be more strategic than ever before in how we sustain urban forestry funding in California.

At a time when numerous resources programs that are crucial to protecting state parks and California's wildlife have been decimated, urban forestry has thrived like never before. Why? We believe it's because the state, local governments and the Federal government all recognize the multiple benefits that urban forestry provides for communities at a low cost and with huge returns in jobs, neighborhood beautification, and health benefits that include cleaner air and cleaner water.

As always, your support will be essential, and your input is always appreciated. We can only achieve more in partnership with our network, and California ReLeaf will continue its proud tradition of being a voice for urban forestry at the State Capitol this year and in the years to come.





California ReLeaf  
2112 Tenth Street  
Sacramento, CA 95818

Nonprofit Organization  
U.S. Postage PAID  
Sacramento, CA  
Permit No.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

[www.californiareleaf.org](http://www.californiareleaf.org)

 *Printed on 100% recycled paper, using all post-consumer waste and non-deinked pulp. You can help us prevent waste by passing this publication on to a friend, recycling it when you're through, or letting us know if you would rather not receive it. Thank you for your commitment to the environment.*

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

About

## California Trees

Published by California ReLeaf. Funding for *California Trees* is provided in part by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the National Urban and Community Forestry Program of the USDA Forest Service. Subscriptions are free.

Reproducing and distributing material from this newsletter is encouraged, provided credit is given to the author and *California Trees*.

Send comments, submissions, and subscription requests to:

California ReLeaf  
Attn: Editor  
2112 Tenth Street  
Sacramento, CA 95818  
[caltrees@californiareleaf.org](mailto:caltrees@californiareleaf.org)

## California ReLeaf Celebrates Arbor Week

Arbor Day, celebrated nationally on the last Friday in April, began in 1872. Since then, people have embraced the day by creating celebrations within their own states. In California, instead of celebrating trees for just a day, they are celebrated for an entire week. In 2011, Arbor Week will be celebrated March 7-14. California ReLeaf, through a partnership with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, is developing a program to bring cities, nonprofit organizations, schools and citizens together to celebrate. The full program, "Trees Are Worth It" will be available in early 2011.

As part of this program, we will be offering:

- A Planning & Promotion Kit to help your organization or city energize the community around its Arbor Week celebration;
- A website listing Arbor Week celebrations and volunteer opportunities throughout the state in one easy-to-access place;
- An Arbor Week Poster Contest for 3rd-5th grade students that includes classroom curriculum and prizes for the first place winner in each grade level (currently available at [www.californiareleaf.org/programs/arborweek](http://www.californiareleaf.org/programs/arborweek)).

### California ReLeaf hosts Arbor Week webinar

Join us February 3 at 10 a.m. for tips and tools on how to plan and maximize your Arbor Week event!

Email [amastin@californiareleaf.org](mailto:amastin@californiareleaf.org) to be included.

Questions about Arbor Week?  
Contact Ashley at the email address above or (916) 497-0037.