

# California Trees

www.californiareleaf.org

**Winter 2012**  
**Volume 20, No. 2**

**Inside:**

**4**  
**Urban & Community Forests: Creating Jobs. Leaving a Legacy.**

**6**  
**Network Update: Urban Corps of San Diego**

**8**  
**Network Corner**

**10**  
**Legislative Update**



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

## The State of California's Urban Forests Integrated Approaches Offer the Best Solutions

*By Suzanne Hurt*

California's urban forests are facing a swarm of challenges brought on by climate change and the global recession. As competition for limited local funding increases, the state's urban forests are falling into a state of dilapidation, suffering from a lack of understanding about the benefits thriving trees provide. According to experts, trees need all the help they can get right now.

"A few years of neglect can be very harmful to an urban forest and its health," said Greg McPherson, research forester with the Pacific Southwest Research Station of the U.S. Forest Service in Davis. "Even though trees look like they're permanent and never changing, they are actually very fragile."

Urban forests are contending with a range of issues including a lack of funding, low priority as a part of communities' infrastructures, and decreased functionality due to increased stresses. Some problems stem from the current era, dominated by global warming, an enduring recession and a state plagued by a continuing financial crisis. Other problems are more long-standing - tied to under-appreciation of trees for more than just their beauty.

Tree cover in the country's urban areas is decreasing by 4 million trees a year, according to a U.S. Forest Service study published in "Urban Forestry & Urban Greening." No research has been done on tree loss throughout California, but the study reported a one-percent decline in



*Trees shading a Fresno sidewalk, by Matt Ritter*

trees and shrubs in Los Angeles despite the success of the city's Million Trees LA campaign.

### Trees Work Hard for Communities

Two of the most critical issues confronting the state's urban forests are people's limited understanding of the benefits trees provide and the resulting low prioritization urban forests receive. Most people can name basic benefits of the trees in their community, but they don't realize how much a city or town gains by having a healthy urban forest.

The urban forests' commonly unacknowledged benefits include:

- The ability to collect, drain, store, and clean stormwater in their root zones - providing cities with flood protection. These forests help return much-needed water to the watershed.

*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:  
Rose Epperson  
President

Gail Church  
Secretary

Jim Clark  
Treasurer

Dessiree Backman

Tracy Lesperance

Catherine Martineau

Amelia Oliver

Matt Ritter

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

## Managing con't from page 1

- Reduction of air pollution and the offset of global warming by absorbing greenhouse gases and releasing oxygen into the air.
- Protection from extreme heat and decreased energy costs by shading buildings, streets, and parking lots.
- Increased property values for homes and higher spending on goods and services provided by businesses on tree-lined streets.
- Economic benefits as a \$3.6 billion industry that provides more than 60,000 jobs in the state.

According to TreePeople founder Andy Lipkis, only leading urban foresters grasp the full range of services provided by trees, soil and other vegetation, and the way those services could be maximized and integrated into a city's infrastructure system.

## Growing a Forest's Potential

As a result, many city and county officials give urban forests a low priority as they allocate city and county budgets. In a bad economy when local budgets are tight that translates into two more issues facing the forests: less funding and decreased maintenance.

"For the most part, our urban forests have been created and managed as decorations," Lipkis says. "In terms of the priorities of a city budget, aesthetics and decoration don't compete well with public safety and all the other required infrastructure functions, and so they're not getting the funding."

A lack of funding for tree planting and maintenance is happening at both the state and local levels. Matt Ritter, an associate botany professor at California Polytechnic State University who wrote *"A Californian's Guide to the Trees Among Us"* says finding money for tree care is harder because it's just not as "sexy."

Trees need to be watered and maintained, which includes weeding, mulching, proper staking and trimming. Tree maintenance is crucial in a tree's early years and beyond. Without it many trees are planted and then die. According to Ritter, the average life span of a tree in the L.A. area is seven to ten years.

"Without work and water early on in the tree's life, the tree has a really high chance of perishing," Ritter says. "What's the point of a

large planting of trees if they don't live on to become mature trees?"

Older trees also suffer because cities have cut back on mature tree trimming or even turned street tree maintenance over to property owners. Because many people now entrusted with the care of communities' trees don't know how to properly maintain them, cities likely won't get the full benefit of their urban forests, says State Urban Forester John Melvin.

Additionally, urban trees often need more care than trees in a natural environment, because they grow in harsh surroundings and experience increased stressors. Dr. McPherson says that many city trees don't grow in enough soil, must endure increased heat and drought from both climate change and intense urban development, and have to battle an increasing number of pests and diseases introduced from other countries.

"Trees have the potential to mitigate heat and drought and protect people from these extreme heat events if they're healthy and taken care of," he adds.

Urban trees are also more susceptible to pests and disease, because of the lack of diversity in the urban forest. Parts of the Los Angeles area have about 16 types of trees. In Sacramento's newer neighborhoods, approximately 20 species make up most of the urban forest, according to Dr. Ritter. Some urban forests are strained from having a lot of old trees, which are less resilient and need more care. Losing them simultaneously to pests or disease would significantly reduce tree canopy and other benefits.

"It's kind of like having a geriatric urban forest," Dr. McPherson says.

## From Problems to Solutions

While the issues may sound daunting, people who care about trees and the cities they grow in see a mountain of potential solutions.

One solution is to engage communities in tree planting and maintenance, which would help reconnect people with the trees they live among. Andy Lipkis believes that people won't fight for the trees' survival unless they feel a connection. Along with planting and maintain trees, communities



must also receive education about the benefits of trees, their needs and the value of designing functioning urban forests as a part of forward-thinking, integrated infrastructure management. Education should be targeted to residents, nonprofits, elected officials and government staff, arborists and even many urban foresters.

“Cities need to start becoming aware of the way their urban forests are not performing at their optimum level because of the separation....” Lipkis says. “Non-ecosystem-based thinking has become the standard in cities and the law.”

The priority of planting and maintaining urban forests has ebbed and flowed in California, but that can’t happen if the urban forests are to be kept healthy. Lipkis and others recommended residents make urban forests a higher priority and weigh in on how they want public funds spent. As cities struggle to balance budgets, one way to persuade decision-makers may be the use of software that calculates total tree benefits in an individual community.

Trees more than pay for the maintenance they get. A healthy urban forest is the lowest-cost way to offset climate change, Melvin says.

“It’s an investment in the future,” he adds. “It’s about whether the urban areas in the state end up being places people want to live, or places people get stuck living in.”

Urban forests need to be viewed as capital projects that require long-term investment. Most capital projects devalue and degrade after they’re built. Trees become more valuable once planted.

“That’s the last (budgetary item) they should be cutting,” Melvin says. “It’s one of the only infrastructure elements a city has that gains value with time.”

The right response to dried up maintenance funds is not to turn street tree maintenance over to property owners, experts agreed.

“Urban forests need to be viewed as a utility the same as any other utility, and you don’t turn maintenance of other utilities over to residents,” Dr. McPherson says.

There are ways a city can care for their urban forest, but still get as much value from their investment as possible. The best ways to do that integrate the forest with

other utilities. For example, the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) knows that trees can help minimize energy consumption. For the past 22 years, SMUD has partnered with the Sacramento Tree Foundation to provide trees for residents in their service area. These deciduous trees are specifically placed to reduce energy costs by increasing homes’ shade in the summer and allowing the sun’s rays to warm homes in the winter.

Another example benefits communities around California that experience water shortages. Urban forests could be collecting winter rainwater and saving it to water landscaping in the summer. TreePeople, local government and others are working on that concept in the form of an underground cistern as part of a watershed management project in the San Fernando Valley.

### **A Cost-Effective Urban Forest**

Cities can also save money by determining if parts of the urban forest are being overwatered. Communities can conserve water through more efficient management of the land, which could include changing the way it’s landscaped, what tree species are planted, the way land is watered and how much water is applied.

The State Urban Forester advocates for more drought-tolerant landscapes. Trees use less water than the average lawn but provide a lot more benefits. Currently, many California landscapes are watered too much for drought-tolerant trees, which can lead to decay and root disease.

Urban forests would become more resilient, and thus more cost-effective, through increased diversity of native and non-native species. Hundreds of species can grow in California. Nurseries and landscape architects tend to sell and use what’s cheap and what they know works, Dr. Ritter says.

Foresters and residents can easily identify tree species not growing in



*Above: Before and after pictures of Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd in L.A. The first was taken just before trees were planted by TreePeople in 1990. The second, featuring TreePeople founder and Executive Director Andy Lipkis, was taken in 2008. What a difference trees make!*





## Managing con't from page 1

a neighborhood and plant one. To do that, use the SelecTree guide, <http://selecttree.calpoly.edu>, on CalPoly Urban Forest Ecosystem Institute's website and ask a nursery to order that species.

Dr. Ritter has identified the Silver Linden, Soapbark Tree, Persian Ironwood and Bald Cypress as four undeservedly rare trees for Northern California. The Weeping Myall, Rose Gum, Toog Tree and Leopard Tree are four rare species in Southern California.

For urban forests that are already suffering from pests or diseases, Dr. McPherson and UC Davis graduate student Louren Kotow recently developed the California Municipal Forest Health Threat Assessment. The tool recommends specific ways communities can reduce risks to their unique urban forests, such as not planting trees known to be susceptible to pests and disease.

## Funding Urban Forests

In addition to maintaining their urban forests, communities should also look for new ways to fund them. While state bond funds for projects have been plentiful for the last 15 years, John Melvin recommends local governments and nonprofits find more creative funding sources now that state grants are drying up.

Some residents have voted to approve additional taxes for landscape maintenance districts in their communities. Local officials can also propose bond measures to help pay for tree maintenance, according to Melvin.

The health of California's urban forests is not only in the hands of individual communities though. Dr. McPherson and the U.S. Forest Service are working with California ReLeaf, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the California Urban Forests Council, the California Air Resources Board and Climate Action Reserve to develop protocols to sell carbon offsets from tree planting projects to help fund tree planting and care under the provisions of California Assembly Bill 32. California ReLeaf is also currently exploring other potential sources of revenue to replace disappearing CAL FIRE funds.

Keeping California's urban forests healthy is a responsibility of every Californian. Residents of communities across the state are suffering from the loss of natural landscapes and the services they provide. Forests, grasslands and other natural ecosystems have been cut down, paved over and filled with buildings. Working together, we can not only redevelop those environments, but also integrate them into our cities and towns in ways that reinforce forest health, community health, and economic health.

"The role of urban forests is so critical because forests did produce these services and they can again," Andy Lipkis says. Hope still exists in the urban forest.

*Suzanne Hurt is a Sacramento journalist whose work can be found via Wild Journalism at [www.wildjournalism.com](http://www.wildjournalism.com).*

# Urban and Community Forests: Creating Jobs. Leaving a Legacy.

*by Ashley Mastin*

In 2009, The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) assigned the U.S. Forest Service a role in facilitating the preservation and creation of jobs to promote economic recovery throughout the nation by helping those impacted by the recession.

California ReLeaf was selected by the U.S. Forest Service to administer \$6-million from the ARRA economic stimulus package to support 17 urban forestry projects statewide. The care and management of California's urban and community forests through these projects resulted in nearly 90,000 trees planted and maintained, the creation and retention of more than 380 local jobs, along with the contribution of over 205,000 job hours to California's workforce.

California's urban forests have declined alongside the economy, but by reinvesting in their urban forests, communities can also augment their economic recovery. Urban forestry care and management, as well as the integration of urban forests with other utilities to create a green infrastructure, creates jobs while also creating a healthier, cleaner, and more livable environment for decades to come.

The ultimate goal is to have communities that can sustain themselves environmentally, socially, and economically. Sustainable communities use land and infrastructure resources efficiently. Communities should focus on multi-benefit solutions that include urban forests and green spaces. Such efforts to make our cities and towns better places to live, work, and play enhance local economies by creating and

# Urban and Community Forests. Creating Jobs. Leaving a Legacy.

California ReLeaf empowers grassroots efforts and builds strategic partnerships that preserve, protect and enhance California's urban and community forests.

**50 million sites** available for planting new trees in California

Since 1992, the California ReLeaf Network has planted over

**1.5 million trees**

and represent 30 counties and 74 cities in the state

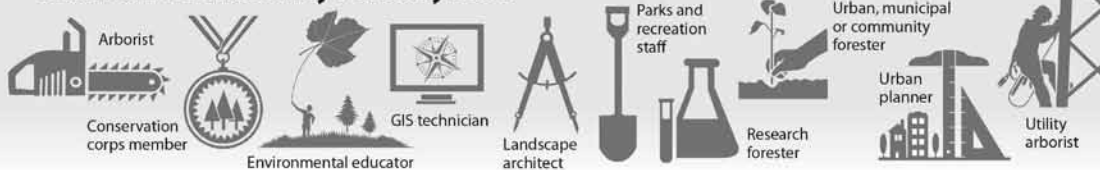
**94%** of Californians (35 million people) live in an urban area and depend on benefits from our urban forests

## Health and Quality-of-Life Benefits

Urban forests = trees and vegetation throughout our communities



## Urban and Community Forestry Jobs



## Urban forestry has large impacts on California's economy (2009)



## California ReLeaf ARRA Grant



Cities and towns across California can continue job creation and economic growth by investing in urban and community forests today.

**Join California ReLeaf in leaving a legacy.**



This publication made possible through a grant from the USDA Forest Service. This institution is an equal opportunity employer.

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

supporting a spectrum of green collar jobs that are non-exportable.

A recent study calculated that more than 60,000 urban forestry jobs throughout California resulted in \$3.3-billion in individual income. It also added \$3.6-billion in value to the state's economy. The ARRA projects demonstrate that urban and community forests can once again create local jobs and have positive impact on California's economy.

Help lead your community by recommending proper care and management of its urban and community forests as an important step on the road to economic recovery. Cities and towns across California can continue job creation and economic growth by investing in urban and community forests today.

For more information, visit [www.californiareleaf.org/treesandjobs](http://www.californiareleaf.org/treesandjobs).

# California ReLeaf Network Member Profile: Urban Corps of San Diego County

by Donna Orozco

Urban Corps of San Diego County has planted thousands of trees and improved the environment by putting high school drop-outs in a program that beautifies the landscape while teaching a strong work ethic and job skills.

D’Wane Brown was one of those drop-outs. He got kicked out of school for fighting in his senior year. He wasn’t living at home, so he needed to find a way to work while finishing school. Urban Corps was the answer.

As a corps member, Brown earned his high school diploma in six months while being paid for working in the community. After graduating, he continued to work for the corps in various jobs - running a shuttle service for the naval base, supervising graffiti abatement throughout the city and planting trees.

He left for another job for a while, but soon returned.

“My heart was in the corps. Showing others there is a better way,” said Brown.

Today, he is the lead manager for the corps’ community improvement service.

He’s seen how the corps can change lives.

“Once these young people learn skills, they can put them on their resumes and get hired for good jobs,” said Brown. He realizes corps

members often come in with an “I don’t care” attitude, but they soon begin feeling pride in their accomplishments.

## Job training

Urban Corps and its charter school began helping youth like D’Wane in 1989, based on the California Conservation Corps model created by Gov. Jerry Brown in 1976 during his first term as governor.

The majority of young people employed at Urban Corps are high school drop-outs ages 18-25 who have little or no job training. At Urban Corps they get a second chance to go back to school and develop new skills while contributing to the overall quality of life in the San Diego area by working in various conservation projects such as recycling, graffiti removal, environmental projects and urban forestry.

Corps members spend half of their time in class and the other half working in the community. Wearing their trademark green uniforms, 400 corps members annually participate in hundreds of projects done in conjunction with 300 partners throughout the county.

Just a few of their projects include:

- Cleaning up parks and neighborhoods, including Balboa Park
- Contracting with the city to remove graffiti in neighborhoods and at the Port of San Diego.
- Forest fire clean-up, erosion control and trail rehabilitation
- Hauling away trash and debris after San Diego Padres and Chargers games
- Restoration on a portion of the San Diego River
- Painting a 5,000-square-foot mural to revitalize and beautify the Midway and Rosecrans area
- Partnering with the San Diego Zoo and schools to plant trees and create vegetable gardens.

## Tree plantings

In 2002, the corps partnered with the mayor and the City of San Diego to establish the Urban Corps Urban Forestry





Division in response to the mayor's goal of planting 100,000 trees by 2020. Every year they plant thousands of trees through grants from California ReLeaf and other agencies.

In 2010, they planted 1,000 trees in one day on national Make a Difference Day. In 2011, they planted 900 trees along State Route 94 and last spring planted another 900 trees in Spring Valley and Casa de Oro. They will maintain and water the trees for three years until the roots are established.

One of the driving forces behind all of these tree plantings is Ty Sterns, the Corps' Project Manager for Urban Forestry and Environmental Services. Sterns was a landscape architect when he began working with Urban Corps on their redevelopment of a block near Old Town where the corps now has its recycling center, school and permanent home.

"I grew up in the inner city of San Diego, right on the edge of better neighborhoods, so I saw both sides of income levels," he said. "I always admired the nonprofit side. You can really make a difference. It's something I always wanted to do—work in low income neighborhoods."

He came onboard in 2009 when Urban Corps received a two-year grant funded by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) and managed through California ReLeaf. The grant was designed to put people to work. The project, called "Woods to the Hoods," aimed at putting trees into neighborhoods.

"We partnered with the Redevelopment Agency and local business associations and planted trees in three neighborhoods in the city," said Sterns. "We planted 120 trees in the historic business district, removing concrete, and cutting out tree wells."

There was a seven-block stretch that had no trees. "Now the trees are established. The blocks look beautiful with totally shaded sidewalks. The business owners value and maintain the trees."

That project went hand-in-hand with the Green Street Project of home improvements. California ReLeaf funded the planting of trees. Redevelopment dollars repaired the homes.

Recently, a California ReLeaf grant project is being done in conjunction with



*Above: Corps members plant a tree.*

*Opposite top: Corps members work with volunteers to plant trees for a local project.*

*Opposite bottom: Corps members spend half of their time in the classroom and the other half in the field.*

Groundwork San Diego, a local nonprofit. California ReLeaf is funding tree planting for four acres managed by Groundwork for the San Diego Unified School District as a propagation and outdoor science center.

Things have come full circle. Urban Corps was Groundwork's first major partner six years ago.

"Urban Corps is the best partner. They're talented, dedicated and experienced," said Leslie Reynolds, Groundwork's Executive Director. "I think it's because the corps members are out in the neighborhoods where they grew up and are given a chance to give back to their community."

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

## MEMBER SNAPSHOT

### URBAN CORPS OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Year Founded: 1989

Joined Network: 2006

Board Members: 12

Staff: 6

Paid Corps Members: 400

Projects include: Job training & education for young adults, conservation, recycling, urban forestry, graffiti abatement

Contact:

Urban Corps of SD County

P.O. Box 80156

San Diego, CA 92138

1-855-SDCORPS

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





Join us in welcoming the newest California ReLeaf Network members!

**CA CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE ENERGY: URBAN FORESTRY PROGRAM, San Diego**

The mission of the CA Center for Sustainable Energy's Urban Forestry Program is to establish a sustainable and committed approach to urban forestry management in the San Diego region through collaboration with local government, colleges and universities, nonprofits, community groups and citizenry.

**COLLECTIVE ROOTS, East Palo Alto**

The mission of Collective Roots is to promote food justice by engaging youth and communities in garden-based learning and nutrition education to positively impact health.

**FORESTRY EDUCATORS, Shingle Springs**

The mission of Forestry Educators, Inc. is to carry out fundraising, planning, and execution of the California Forestry Challenge Program.

**FULL CIRCLE FARM, Sunnyvale**

Full Circle Farm is a project of Sustainable Community Gardens, a community-based nonprofit dedicated to the renewal of local, sustainable food systems.

**THE INCREDIBLE, EDIBLE COMMUNITY GARDEN, Upland**

The mission of The Incredible, Edible Community Garden is to foster green programs, environmental awareness, healthy organic living, and a sense of community.

**JUST ONE TREE, San Francisco**

JUST ONE TREE is a non-profit project to promote the value of tree crops in cities worldwide, with an initial campaign to help San Francisco, their world headquarters, become self-sufficient in lemons.

**MARKHAM REGIONAL ARBORETUM SOCIETY, Concord**

The mission of the Markham Regional Arboretum Society is to partner with the City

of Concord to develop Markham Nature Park and Arboretum into a unique educational garden for the demonstration, collection, and preservation of trees and other plants which are adapted to the inland, maritime-influenced, Northern California region.

**ORANGE COUNTY GREAT PARK CORPORATION, Irvine**

The mission of the Orange County Great Park Corporation is to develop and operate, preserve and protect the Orange County Great Park for the benefit and enjoyment of all its visitors, those of today and those in the future.

**RICHMOND TREES, Richmond**

The mission of Richmond Trees is to promote and grow the City of Richmond's urban forest and green infrastructure through community planting, tree care, education and advocacy in order to improve the health and well-being of the diverse Richmond community.

**SAN JOAQUIN REGIONAL CONSERVATION CORPS, Stockton**

The mission of the SJRCC is to create a foundation for future success by embracing a diverse and innovative environment that recognizes individuality, instilling ethics, honesty, and integrity through everyday actions.

**SAN LUIS OBISPO BOTANICAL GARDEN, San Luis Obispo**

The mission of the SLO Botanical Garden is to honor and preserve our connection with nature.

**SEMPERVIRENS FUND, Los Altos**

Sempervirens Fund protects and permanently preserves redwood forests, wildlife habitat, watersheds, and other important natural features of California's Santa Cruz Mountains, and encourages people to appreciate and enjoy this environment.

**UNIVERSITY ARBORETUM, CSUS, Sacramento**

The Arboretum serves as an educational resource for the University and Sacramento community, acquainting the student population and general public with a representative sample of the world's woody plant diversity acclimated to Sacramento.



## From the Executive Director

Imagine living in a city or town without trees. Imagine going to a school with only concrete on the playground. Imagine your neighborhood without any parks or gardens. This is the reality for a large number of Californians. Over 94% of California's population, 35 million people, now live in a census-defined urban area. The trees and forests in California's cities and towns are critical to our health, well-being, and quality of life, yet often are taken for granted, neglected, and an afterthought when planning for our state's continued growth.

California ReLeaf and its Network of local partners are working to change this, but we can't do it alone. A thriving and well-managed urban forest provides clean air and water, happy and connected neighbors, and places to play and be active – all right in our own backyards. We need to ensure that all Californians have access to a healthy urban forest.

Right now, California ReLeaf is planning tree planting projects, outreach and education programs, and leading a statewide advocacy effort for 2013 and beyond. Without support from you, your colleagues, friends, and neighbors, our state's urban forests will continue to be just a "nice" addition to our cities and towns.

The \$10, \$35, \$100, or even \$1,000 dollars you give to our efforts go directly towards trees. Together we can preserve, protect, and grow California's urban forests. Join us as we work to leave a legacy for California and improve our green infrastructure for generations to come.

Best wishes this holiday and planting season!



Joe Liszewski



*Above: Students at Brentwood Academy in East Palo Alto plant an avocado tree during a Canopy/California ReLeaf event sponsored by a grant from Odwalla.*

## California Arbor Week Will Be Here Before You Know It!

As in years past, California ReLeaf will offer resources to make your Arbor Week events a success. Resources include:

- A calendar of events on which your organization, city, or community group can list your Arbor Week activities or request volunteers,
- A Planning and Promotion kit,
- Media templates,
- The annual poster contest for 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students in California, and
- The photo contest open to all Californians.



Log on to [www.arborweek.org](http://www.arborweek.org) to get your copy of all of these great resources and to register your Arbor Week event.



*"Dust Rays" by Kelli Thompson, winner of the "My Favorite California Tree" category in the 2012 California Arbor Week photo contest.*



## **Brown Budget Offers Urban Forestry Some Green**

Governor Jerry Brown signed a 2012-13 State Budget package in June that, in theory, closes a \$16-billion budget gap by relying heavily on voter's willingness to pass Prop 30 in November 2012. The budget contains a combination of cuts and revenue projections to help close this gap.

The spending plan included significant resources for urban forestry, including the last \$2-million in bond funding to CAL FIRE for urban forestry projects, and the last \$20-million in bond funding to the Strategic Growth Council for urban greening projects. The Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program was fully funded at \$10-million for the sixth consecutive year.

In total, California ReLeaf Network groups, cities, counties, and their partners will be able to apply for more than \$32-million in state funds directly related to tree-planting, urban greening, and urban forestry during the current fiscal year under the approved state budget.

## **Legislative Actions Leverage Opportunity for Urban Forestry**

It was a good night for urban forestry when the 2011-12 Regular Session of the CA Legislature ended in September. Here's a summary of what happened:

**Assembly Bill 1532** (Perez) –The State Air Resources Board will be conducting a series of auctions over the next several years that will allow specified industries to purchase credits that will allow them to continue emitting greenhouse gases (GHGs) at existing levels.

The funds generated from these auctions, which are projected to grow into billions of dollars annually, will be used to offset

emissions by investing in programs and projects that advance the goals and objectives of AB 32 – The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006. AB 1532 sets up a broad framework for how cap and trade (C&T) revenues should be allocated in coming years. The bill includes language specifying natural resources and forestry as eligible investments, and specifies roles for nonprofits within the larger program.

**Signed by Governor Brown.**

**Senate Bill 535** (De Leon) – California ReLeaf first reported on this bill in 2010, when it went to Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger as AB 1405. Though Schwarzenegger vetoed AB 1405, the sponsors came back and found success with Governor Brown. SB 535 ensures that at least 25% of the C&T dollars go to projects that benefit disadvantaged communities, which will be identified by Cal EPA using, among other things, broad environmental and economic criteria. **Signed by Governor Brown.**

**Senate Bill 1572** (Pavley) – This bill changed significantly in late June, and evolved into a measure that directed potential 2013-14 C&T dollars towards a short list of specified items, with the lion's share going to covered entities to assist with the adoption of innovative GHG emissions reduction technology. However, SB 1572 **died on the Assembly Floor on the last day of session.**

**Assembly Bill 2404** (Fuentes) – This measure was introduced as a way to create fiscal incentives for local governments to plan and implement their own GHG emission reduction efforts utilizing C&T revenues. However, AB 2404 **died in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.**

**AB 1492** (Budget Committee) – This bill creates a one-percent sales tax on specific lumber and engineered wood products. The revenue from the tax will be used primarily to support State review of timber harvest plans, which has been severely underfunded for several years. However, surplus revenues from the tax can be used for a small set of specified purposes, including urban forestry. **Signed by Governor Brown.**

**AB 296** (Skinner) requires the Cal EPA to work with its partners on the Climate

Action Team to develop strategies to combat urban heat island effect that includes urban forestry, cool roofs, and sustainable or cool pavements. **Signed by Governor Brown.**

California ReLeaf supported all of these bills except AB 1492, in which the organization did not take a position.

### **Water Bond Bounced to 2014**

California's State Legislature voted on July 5<sup>th</sup> to move the \$11-billion water bond slated for the November 2012 ballot to 2014, thus opening an opportunity to craft a more economically feasible and environmentally responsive product for voters to consider. This is the second time the bond vote has been delayed since 2010.

### **Federal Forestry Opportunities Fall Flat in 2012**

Congress failed to move the Farm Bill or the Urban Revitalization and Livable Communities Act this year. Though a continuing resolution passed in 2011 will support the US Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry Program (U&CF), actions and inactions from the 2012 Congress did little to advance urban forestry efforts,

as further detailed below:

**The 2012 Farm Bill** – While there was some effort in the U.S. Senate to advance this issue, including committee recommendations and markup language to increase U&CF funding from \$30-million to \$50-million, the Farm Bill was not reauthorized, leaving its fate to the new 2013 Congress. Until then, the initiatives and funding which were parts of the first Farm Bill (1940) will be supported with continued funding. Initiatives such as U&CF are likely to have funds to "carry-forward" into the new year, though the brief lame duck session following the elections will task Congress with consideration of passing a resolution to keep these programs in place until the next Congress acts.

**Federal Transportation Enhancements (TE) Program** Congress did manage to pass a new 27-month federal transportation bill signed by President Obama that dramatically changes the landscape and scope of this program to make federal transportation policy more highway-centric, focusing on new road capacity and increasing the federal share of such projects from 80-percent to 95-percent. Prior to this change, TE was the largest Federal funding source for walking and bicycling trails, and also provided significant resources for landscaping, urban forestry and environmental mitigation.

### **Reflecting on Success, Embracing Opportunities**

Two years ago, California ReLeaf re-committed ourselves to "engaging on urban forestry issues that matter most to all of us as the next legislative session gets underway." We spoke of our need to sustain funding, advance the goals and objectives of AB 32, and protect those policies that allow urban forestry to thrive and survive.

Since that time, we helped get Assembly Bill 587 (Gordon and Furutani) signed into law, which extends the current prevailing wage exemption for volunteers through 2017. We sponsored successful legislation that officially recognizes California Arbor Week. And we supported budget proposals in 2011 and 2012 that resulted in \$100-million in bond dollars and other special funds becoming available for urban forestry projects along river parkways, urban streams, transportation corridors, and within California's communities statewide.

***Together, we've achieved what we set out to do at the end of 2012, and this is just the beginning.***

On AB 32, the cap and trade bills are a first great step with urban forestry and nonprofits well-positioned to play an important role in the continued development of this program. Nonetheless, the argument that urban forestry is the right investment for auction revenues at the state level, local level, and within disadvantaged communities must continue.

On the front end of AB 32 compliance, we must unify, then revisit the urban forestry protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board to ensure urban forestry projects can actually be competitive as a compliance offset tool.

Finally, the \$11-billion water bond slated for the November 2014 ballot contains no urban forestry funding. With the Legislature focused on cutting this bond down by as much as 50% over the next 20 months, the entire urban forestry community has an uphill climb ahead as we collectively argue that trees are a critical water quality component, and must play a role in the restructured bond.

Through continued and increasing partnerships, the value of urban forestry is being elevated at the public policy level. California ReLeaf noted in 2010 that we believe state, local, and 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. Our job over the next two years will be to translate that recognition into local investments. Together, we can meet these goals.

We're proud to report that we kept our word, and look forward to accomplishing even more with our Network and urban forestry partners in the years to come.







Nonprofit Organization  
U.S. Postage PAID  
Sacramento, CA  
Permit No. 604


California ReLeaf  
2112 Tenth Street  
Sacramento, CA 95818

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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

Follow us!



 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)

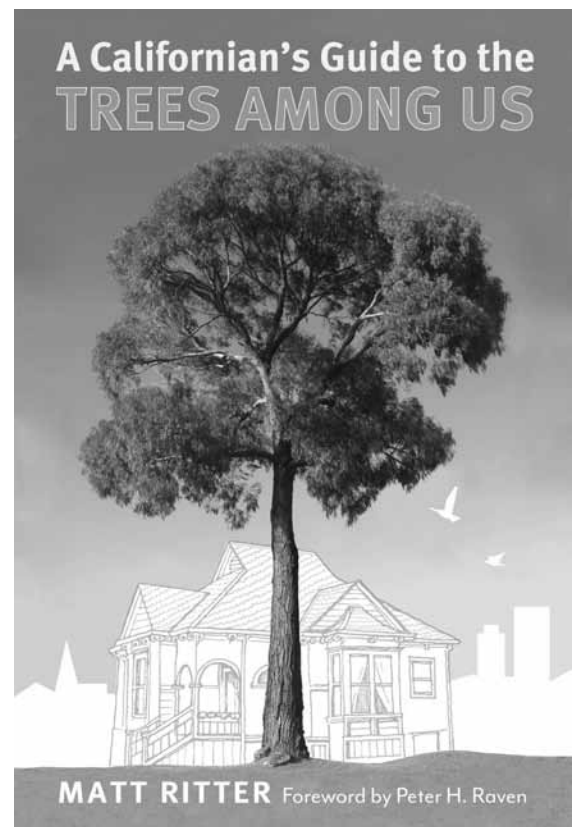
## Make California's Future Greener

California ReLeaf works hand-in-hand with local organizations throughout the state to clean California's air and water, save energy, and create jobs by planting trees.

**The trees planted using your tax-deductible gift will make California's future greener.**

You can donate by visiting [californiareleaf.org/donate](http://californiareleaf.org/donate) or by sending in the included remittance envelope. Thank you for your support!

**Donate \$100 or more to California ReLeaf before December 31, 2012 to receive a copy of this book as a special thank you gift.**



For electronic subscriptions, please email [info@californiareleaf.org](mailto:info@californiareleaf.org) with the subject line: "electronic subscription".