

Fall 2016

# California Trees

## Start 'em Young

### California Arbor Week Instills a Love for Trees in California's Future Movers & Shakers

By *Melissa Gutierrez*

California Arbor Week is March 7-14 each year. So why do we start talking about it in November? With updated educational activities for 3rd-5th graders along with new activities and a new video contest for middle-schoolers, California ReLeaf wants to ensure we reach schools and students early to drum up participation. And, of course, we always want to get a head start on getting California's youth to appreciate all the amazing things trees do to strengthen our communities!

#### IT'S A BIRD... IT'S A PLANE... IT'S A TREE!

This year's theme – *Trees Are Superheroes!* – piggybacks off the evergreen attraction to American archetypes like Batman, Superman, and a whole slew of other heroes that kids and adults alike admire for protecting our cities. This theme encourages students to think about the ways that trees "save" their towns and cities: providing shade, shelter, safety, food, and more.



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



**Poster Contest**  
3rd, 4th, & 5th grades

**Video Contest**  
6th, 7th, & 8th grades

**Deadline: Feb. 14, 2017**

#### ALL ABOARD THE TECHNOLOGY TRAIN

While there's nothing quite as charming as the hundreds of hand-colored posters of trees California ReLeaf receives each year, there's also no denying the influx of technology amongst today's youth. According to eSchoolNews.com, more than half of students in grades 6-8 now use a tablet computer on a regular basis.

To take advantage of the vast

possibilities of new media, California ReLeaf has added a video contest to our Arbor Week programming. Middle school students are asked to create a 30-second video about all the ways trees act as heroes in their everyday lives.

The added contest also lends a new flexibility to the Arbor Week contest: whereas both the poster and video contests take place in-classroom for teachers to offer in conjunction with our educational activities, our

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video contest is also now open to any middle school student. Teachers can offer the video contest as an assignment, or interested students can make videos on their own free time and submit them individually.

### NOT JUST FOR KIDS

Beyond our annual Arbor Week contests and educational programs, California ReLeaf also works to promote California Arbor Week events statewide. Our Network Members all across the state put together a wonderful array of local events – everything from ceremonial plantings and commemorative tree talks to tree care workshops, street festivals, and more.

Our updated event calendar enables California ReLeaf to collect and share California Arbor Week events from all over the state on one streamlined page, showing off California's collective enthusiasm for celebrating trees! Most importantly, however, the calendar also allows users to search for events by their town or zip

code so that they can participate in an event near them.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

The excitement is contagious! Help California ReLeaf make the 2017 Arbor Week a memorable one by getting started early on spreading the good word about one of our state's most incredible resources. Here are some ideas for ways to get involved:

- Tell a young person in your life about how trees help protect and strength our communities.
- Spread the word about our contests and educational activities to a teacher or school in your area.
- Start planning your event using our online ideas & materials.
- Tweet or Facebook about California Arbor Week and the related contests and activities.
- Learn for yourself what's so super about trees at [californiareleaf.org/whytrees](http://californiareleaf.org/whytrees).

■ *Melissa Gutierrez is the Education & Communications Program Manager at California ReLeaf.*

**“For this upcoming Arbor Week, CAL FIRE is excited to see all the ways students see trees as superheroes. For us, the ability to help clean our water and our air is one of the best-kept secret superpowers. Arbor Week is a time when educators can strengthen students’ knowledge of how beneficial trees are, in hopes they will grow up to appreciate this beautiful forested state in which we all live.”**

**– Heather Williams, CAL FIRE Information Officer**

### Don't Miss A Single Arbor Week Opportunity!

- **Poster Contest (3rd, 4th, & 5th grades)**
- **Video Contest (6th, 7th, & 8th grades)**
- **Educational Activities – newly updated to meet Common Core standards!**
- **Event Calendars ... and more, all at:**

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

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



### End-of-Session Scurry Brings Big Win for Urban Forestry & Environmental Justice

*By Chuck Mills, Director of Public Policy & Grants at California ReLeaf*

The last week of California's 2015-16 Legislative Session yielded more urban forestry and natural resources victories than the previous 20 months combined, including much-needed funding allocations to multiple programs.

On the very last day of session, the Legislature passed a \$900 million cap-and-trade auction revenue spending plan that included \$15 million for CAL FIRE's Urban and Community Forestry Program, \$80 million for a new Urban Greening Program at the California Natural Resources Agency, and \$140 million for a new Transformative Climate Communities program at the Strategic Growth Council. Urban forestry is expected to be a significant component in the latter two programs. The Legislature also passed Senate Bill 859 on the last day of session, which includes (among other things) needed language to establish the aforementioned Urban Greening Program.

In addition, the Legislature passed legislation that revises the provisions of SB 535 to ensure 25% of cap-and-trade funded projects are located in disadvantaged communities, with another 10% providing benefit to low-income communities as defined in the bill.

Finally, two other major pieces of policy were sent to the governor in the last days of the legislative session. Senate Bill 32 (Pavley) continues California's landmark AB 32 efforts by extending the State's ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030. And Senate Bill 1386 (Wolk) requires all state agencies, departments, boards, and commissions to consider the protection and management of natural and working lands as an important strategy in meeting the state's greenhouse gas reduction goals when revising, adopting, or establishing policies, regulations, expenditures, or grant criteria relating to the protection and management of natural and working lands. Urban forests are explicitly captured in the "definitions" section of the measure.

Governor Brown signed all of these bills and budget augmentations in September 2016. ■



facebook.com / IndustrialDistrictGreen  
@mean2greenstrz

*An interview with Katherine McNenny, Co-founder of Industrial District Green*

## NETWORK SPOTLIGHT: INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT GREEN

### What is the history behind Industrial District Green?

Founded in 2013 by local residents Katherine McNenny, Hal McMath, and Gabrielle Newmark, Industrial District Green came together as a response to the dire lack of tree canopy in the eastern section of downtown Los Angeles. Our target zone includes the Arts District and Skid Row. Although these two districts sit side by side and share an unhealthy lack of greenery, they have completely different cultural personalities which are reflected by unique community organizations and structures – not to mention demographics.

By slowly building local relationships and employing modest grant funding from a variety of sources, we have been able to overcome some of the many challenges to greening in the area. Our key partnership for planting and maintenance is with the Koreatown Youth and Community Center Environmental Services Department. Internally, we focus on planting locations, outreach and education, and managing grant funding. IDG is primarily staffed on a part-time volunteer basis by its three co-founders and to date has planted and taken ownership of approximately 164 trees.

**What is the vision for IDG?** Our vision for the area is one of attractive, tree-lined streets that accommodate all community stakeholders: the housed and the homeless, businesses and residents alike. We're also advocating for a system of public "green alleys" in the industrial neighborhoods of Downtown Los Angeles that would address stormwater management, biodiversity, connectivity to the LA River, and local green space for all.

Our biggest challenge is convincing many local commercial property owners that trees (even those provided and maintained by public funds) are a good thing. We acknowledge that progress on this front will likely be incremental and require sustained long-term effort.

### What are the three best program or projects IDG currently has to offer?

Our Street Tree Team, which conducts monthly tree care walks with volunteers recruited from the Skid Row community, helps raise awareness and encourage environmental stewardship in some of the toughest urban places for trees to survive. Participants also help us monitor the trees' health and gather data. As the Street Tree Team helps educate local residents about the many benefits of a healthy and robust urban forest, they then spread the word! ■



*“We are most proud of the fact that we have experienced some initial success in bringing together many diverse members of the community to support our greening initiatives. A wide variety of local stakeholders has made consensus on certain greening issues difficult to achieve. Through networking, partnering and outreach efforts, we have started to make a real impact and persuade more and more stakeholders that urban greening is in everyone's best interests.”*



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## Want to Help?

Every dollar donated to California ReLeaf helps us strengthen and secure urban forestry legislative efforts in California by speaking for trees at the Capitol.

Donate online at [californiareleaf.org/donate](http://californiareleaf.org/donate).

California ReLeaf is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization and donations are tax-deductible. Our Tax Identification number is 90-0138904.

*Thank you for your support!*



## STAY CONNECTED: NETWORK WEBINAR

Heard the buzz about Twitter, but not sure where to start? Already have an account but want to learn to speak on a statewide level? Join California ReLeaf's Communications Program Manager Melissa Gutierrez as we break down Twitter into bite-sized steps and teach attendees how to use simple messages to reach important audiences like local news sources, state legislature, and potential funders. Plus, get a list of important Twitter handles and hashtags to help you reach key California partners!



Both social media novices as well as long-time Twitter users will benefit from this webinar. Network Members who want to learn how to set up their own Twitter accounts are particularly encouraged to attend, as the short webinar will allow for ample Q&A and customized troubleshooting. Can't make it this time? Watch the recorded webinar online later at the website below.

**“Tweeting for Trees:  
Twitter Basics to Better Your World”**  
Wednesday, Nov. 30, 2016 | 10:00-10:45 a.m.  
*Register online at:*  
**[californiareleaf.org/resources/webinars/](http://californiareleaf.org/resources/webinars/)**