

C A L I F O R N I A  
**ReLEAF**

Annual Report 2010

*Connecting People, Trees  
and Communities*



# Our Mission:

To empower grassroots efforts and build strategic partnerships that preserve, protect and enhance California's urban and community forests.

## At first glance,

this 2010 *California ReLeaf* Annual Report may look like every other annual report, full of inspiring glimpses into the good work of *ReLeaf*. However, let me tell you right off, 2010 was a year of change.

Fitting for an organization turning 21, there was a change in leadership. We were all comfortable with the dedication, aptitude, and wit of Martha Ozonoff, who served *ReLeaf* since 2000. As she decided to move on, she left *California ReLeaf* in a strong position and orchestrated a nearly flawless transition to our new Executive Director, Joe Liszewski. As expected, Joe took over the reins with confidence and enthusiasm. With new leadership came a new office. Now located just blocks from the Capitol in downtown Sacramento, the *ReLeaf* staff have created a dynamic hub for the Network and an appropriate location to deliver our statewide voice.

At the Board level we experienced the loss of two founding members: 'Visionary' Rick Mathews and 'Policy-central' Chuck Mills. However, we didn't lose Chuck altogether as we were fortunate to have him join staff as Grants Program Manager.

One of the biggest changes and expansions was the launch of the *California ReLeaf* American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Grant, which supports 17 urban forest projects statewide. Administering this grant changes many aspects of *ReLeaf*. Our urban forestry influences are now not just measured environmentally, by increases in the state's tree canopy, but also economically, by the way urban forestry projects can create jobs and contribute to the livability of California. Financially, the boost of \$6 million alters the way we must demonstrate our fiscal transparency, prompting the implementation of new fiscal procedures and oversights. Moreover, this grant philosophically changes the perception of *ReLeaf* by putting us 'on the map' nationwide.

To think that all these changes occurred with not a blip in services is truly a testament to the organization. The Network grants continued. Policy rallying, particularly on AB 32 continued. Education programs and the Network retreat continued. And even in the face of budget cuts and rollbacks, the *ReLeaf* staff and Board continued to diversify our funding sources and programming.

I have been a part of *California ReLeaf* for over 15 years, mostly at the grassroots level. The steadfastness of *ReLeaf* to the Network while evolving into a stronger organization has always amazed me. As President, I am grateful to members of the Board and staff for their leadership, ingenuity, and dedication to our Mission. I am proud of the entire Network and our partners for making *California ReLeaf* something to talk about! I encourage you to join us, support us as a donor, as an advocate, or volunteer with a local organization, and help make our communities greener and healthier places to live.

*"When you're finished changing, you're finished."*

—Ben Franklin



*Amelia Oliver*  
California ReLeaf Board President



In 2010, the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act grant program created or retained **over 180 jobs**, and planted and maintained over **33,000 trees**.

The California ReLeaf Network engaged over **37,000 volunteers** in 2010.

Through the advocacy efforts of ReLeaf and its partners, the Governor's budget included **\$10 million** in Environmental Enhancement & Mitigation Program funding and **\$20 million** in Strategic Growth Council Urban Greening grants.

Urban and community forests are the tree canopy above, and the plant life below within every city and town. Since more than 90% of Californians live in an urban area, it is likely you live, work and play in an urban forest.

California has more urban and community forestry organizations than any other state. Based on this fact alone, it is clear that trees, green spaces and canopy cover are important to many Californians. Although many people do not think about the full impact a healthy urban forest has on their quality of life, they can appreciate how trees soften the landscape and offer cool shade on a hot day.

*California ReLeaf* is the only entity that convenes 75 community-based organizations to support healthy urban and community forests from San Diego to Sacramento to Eureka. *California ReLeaf* and its Network of organizations are vital to California's green infrastructure. Together they increase knowledge about the environmental, economic, and human health benefits of trees in our communities.

### California ReLeaf's core programs and services are:

- 🌱 Administering urban forestry **grants** on behalf of the State of California and the US Forest Service
- 🌱 Coordinating the **California ReLeaf Network**, an alliance of urban forestry organizations throughout the state
- 🌱 Monitoring state and federal **legislation** for opportunities to influence public policy on behalf of urban trees
- 🌱 Providing **assistance and information** to individuals and organizations managing urban forests in California communities
- 🌱 Publishing **California Trees**, a newsletter exploring current issues in urban forestry
- 🌱 Co-hosting the bi-annual **California Urban Forest Conference** with the California Urban Forests Council, attracting over 150 professionals to hear about current trends in urban forestry



## Urban Corps of San Diego

On a crisp February day in 2010, the Urban Corps of San Diego gathered 25 volunteers and planted the potential for five tons of CO2 capture and 100,000 gallons of rainwater retention annually in this 1.25 million resident metropolis. It still sounds strange to think of tree plantings in these terms, but for the community of Golden Hills, this project means even more.



The tree-planting grant awarded to the Urban Corps by *California ReLeaf* targeted 50 low-income residential sites where cover canopy is scarce but blight remains prevalent. The project brought community awareness of the benefits of trees to an underserved area of the city and helped beautify a portion of one of San Diego's most historic and architecturally eclectic zones.

Urban Corps CEO Sam Duran notes "this community forest initiative funded by *California ReLeaf* captures all the critical elements of a successful and sustainable urban greening project. The commitment from the Golden Hill residents to ensure these trees do become mature vessels for cleaning our water and air is extraordinary. We're proud to be a part of this story."



# Grants

Over the course of the last two decades, *California ReLeaf* has proudly distributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to dozens of community groups for urban forestry education and outreach, and countless tree-planting projects. In 2010, *California ReLeaf* ventured into new terrain by expanding the scope of our successful grant-making program to include federal funding directed towards stimulating job growth through urban forestry.

During the 2009-2010 grant cycle, California provided an astonishing \$2.8 million to nearly three dozen community-based organizations and local governments throughout California. These funds contributed to projects that reinforce all of our existing grant program priorities, including capacity-building, education and outreach, program development, and volunteer-based tree-planting projects.

Additionally, these funds meant jobs – green jobs that bolstered California's sagging economy and combatted the state's 12% unemployment rate. The dollars provided to *California ReLeaf* in 2010 through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act pumped nearly 97,000 job hours into the Golden State's workforce, while simultaneously supporting almost 13,000 new tree plantings.

Through the continuing support of CAL FIRE and the US Forest Service, *California ReLeaf* has been fortunate enough to provide our Network members and urban forestry partners over \$6 million

in state and federal grants since 1992. These funds have been used to recruit thousands of volunteers in the planting and care of more than 135,000 trees and contributed no less than another \$6 million in donated goods and services, volunteer time and cash contributions.

## 2010 Grant Recipients

-  Atherton Tree Committee
-  Belmont 4-H Club
-  Benicia Tree Foundation
-  California Urban Forest Council
-  Canopy
-  City of Chico
-  City of Daly City
-  City of Porterville
-  CityTrees
-  Community Services and Employment Training
-  Eagle Rock UF Collaborative
-  Fallbrook Land Conservancy
-  Friends of Balboa Park
-  Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation
-  Friends of the Urban Forest
-  Friends of Washington Square
-  Goleta Valley Beautiful
-  Hollywood Beautification Team
-  Huntington Beach Tree Society
-  Koreatown Youth and Community Center
-  Los Angeles Conservation Corps
-  Northeast Trees
-  Ojai Trees
-  Our City Forest
-  Petaluma Tree Advisory Committee
-  Sacramento Tree Foundation
-  San Bernardino National Forest Association
-  Tree Foundation of Kern
-  Tree Fresno
-  Tree Lindsay
-  Tree Musketeers
-  TreePeople
-  Urban Corps of San Diego
-  Urban ReLeaf
-  Woodland Tree Foundation



## Legislative Advocacy

The polarizing political climate in Sacramento and Washington DC in 2009, coupled with California's continuing bond freeze, sent a strong message to the conservation community that the next year would be dedicated to protecting what we've worked so hard to sustain. And the urban forestry public policy agenda never veered from that objective throughout 2010.

At the national level, promising proposed policy related to urban revitalization and green communities gave way to the specter of mid-term elections, with neither measure from the House or Senate advancing.

In California, minor progress was made in public policy relevant to the new Strategic Growth Council, but the major environmental and urban greening victories came with the Air Resources Board's adoption of the nation's most comprehensive cap-and-trade program (in which urban forestry could play a key role); and the defeat of Proposition 23 at the ballot in November. *California ReLeaf* opposed Proposition 23, which would have essentially repealed California's landmark climate change law, eliminating opportunities to continue advancing strong urban forestry protocols and other efforts to ensure trees remain a critical component of AB 32 implementation.

Finally, efforts to sustain and even augment funding to green our local communities throughout California received a much-needed booster when Governor Schwarzenegger proclaimed an end to the bond freeze on Earth Day, 2010. This not only allowed thousands of stalled projects to begin moving forward again, but also paved the way for funding \$184 million of local parks projects and \$16 million for urban greening grants through the Strategic Growth Council. *California ReLeaf* again successfully worked with Network partners, state agencies and the Schwarzenegger Administration to provide more than \$3 million in urban forestry local assistance funding through CAL FIRE in 2010, and another \$10 million through the popular Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program.

## Financials

*California ReLeaf* operates on a fiscal year. The financial information below reflects the 2010 calendar year

### Outreach and Education:

**\$ 98,367**  
(20.9%)

**Network: \$ 64,476**  
(21.3%)

**Grants: \$ 151,700**  
(41.5%)

**Administration: \$ 49,896**  
(16.3%)

**Total Expenses: \$ 364,439**

**Nearly 85%**  
of *California ReLeaf's* budget is spent on program costs, including grant programs, support of the *California ReLeaf* Network and outreach and education

The California ReLeaf Network is a state-wide forum for exchange, education, and mutual support for community-based organizations. The members have common goals of planting, maintaining, and protecting trees, fostering an ethic of environmental stewardship, and promoting volunteer involvement.

In 2010, the Network had 75 members that varied from small groups of dedicated volunteers to mature nonprofit organizations with paid staff. Network members represent diverse demographics and funding sources as well as a broad geographic spread throughout California.

Membership in the California ReLeaf Network is open to any community-based group in the state that meets the membership criteria. The Network enables individual groups to use their collective power to improve the urban forest in their own communities. Through membership in the Network, groups build their organizational and technical skills, share their enthusiasm, experiences and ideas, address issues of common concern, and work together to advance urban forestry throughout the state.



# California ReLeaf Network

- Arroyo Seco Foundation, Pasadena
- Atascadero Native Tree Association, Atascadero
- Atherton Tree Committee, Atherton
- California Association of Local Conservation Corps, Sacramento
- California Community Forests Foundation, Sacramento
- California Urban Forests Council, Novato
- Canopy, Palo Alto
- Carpinteria Beautiful, Carpinteria
- CityTrees, Redwood City
- Common Vision, Ukiah
- Community Services & Employment Training, Inc. (CSET), Visalia
- Coronado Street Tree Committee, Coronado
- Fallbrook Land Conservancy
- Save Our Forest Committee, Fallbrook
- Friends of Carmel Forest, Carmel-by-the-Sea
- Friends of the Urban Forest, San Francisco
- Goleta Valley Beautiful, Goleta
- Greater Modesto Tree Foundation, Modesto
- Greenspace - The Cambria Land Trust, Cambria
- Highland Environmental Education Coalition, Highland
- Hollywood/Los Angeles Beautification Team, Hollywood
- Huntington Beach Tree Society, Huntington Beach
- Keep Eureka Beautiful, Eureka
- Koreatown Youth & Community Center, Los Angeles
- Los Angeles Community Forest Advisory Committee, Los Angeles
- Los Angeles Conservation Corps, Los Angeles
- Magic, Stanford
- Marin ReLeaf, San Rafael
- Mendocino County ReLeaf, Ukiah
- Mountain View Trees, Mountain View
- Mountains Restoration Trust, Calabasas
- North East Trees, Los Angeles
- North Hills Landscape Committee, Oakland
- Oak Habitat Restoration Project
- Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation, Walnut Creek
- Ojai Trees, Ojai
- Ojai Valley Land Conservancy, Ojai
- Orange for Trees, Orange
- Our City Forest, San Jose
- Patricks Point Garden Club, Arcata
- Professional Tree Care Association of San Diego, San Diego
- Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District, Riverside
- Roseville Urban Forest Foundation, Roseville
- Sacramento Tree Foundation, Sacramento
- San Bernardino Volunteer Yard Beautification Project, San Bernardino
- San Diego Community Forest Advisory Board, San Diego
- Santa Barbara Beautiful, Inc., Santa Barbara
- Santa Barbara County ReLeaf, Lompoc
- Santa Margarita Community Forestry, Santa Margarita
- Shadetree Partnership, Inc., Irvine
- Solano Advocates Green Environments (SAGE), Vallejo
- South San Francisco Beautification Committee, South San Francisco
- Stewards of the Coast & Redwoods, Duncans Mills
- Streaminders/Chapter of the Izaak Walton League, Forest Ranch
- Street Tree Seminar, Inc., Anaheim
- Tree Davis, Davis
- Tree Foundation of Kern, Bakersfield
- Tree Fresno, Fresno
- Tree Guild of Arroyo Grande, Arroyo Grande
- Tree Lindsay, Lindsay
- Tree Lodi, Lodi
- Tree Musketeers, El Segundo
- Tree Partners Foundation, Atwater
- TreePeople, Beverly Hills
- Trees for Seal Beach, Seal Beach
- Urban Corps of San Diego, San Diego
- Urban ReLeaf, Oakland
- Urban Tree Foundation, Visalia
- Victoria Avenue Forever, Riverside
- West Hollywood Tree Preservation Society, West Hollywood
- West Oakland Green Initiative, Oakland
- Woodland Tree Foundation, Woodland

# Urban Tree Foundation

## Profile of a California ReLeaf Network Member

Urban Tree Foundation (UTF) Director Brian Kempf has truly taken the meaning of “community roots” to heart. Though Brian and colleague Tony Wolcott founded Urban Tree Foundation in 1999 out of the Berkeley/Albany area, Brian quickly found himself returning to his home town of Visalia each year to plant a few dozen street trees downtown. In 2001, he responded to the requests of business professionals and community leaders to bring UTF to Visalia.

Since that time, UTF has been at the forefront of establishing community roots in urban forestry with local governments, industry professionals, and fellow nonprofit urban forestry organizations. UTF’s three-person staff provides technical arboriculture education for professionals ranging from city planners, landscape architects, nurseries, and tree care specialists. They have helped set the standard statewide in identifying best practices for tree quality, tree planting, and root management. And, as California moves towards a larger vision of “urban greening,” UTF is at the forefront of demonstrating new possibilities and funding opportunities for *ReLeaf* Network Groups.

Aside from the organizations tremendous success at capturing Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program (EEMP) funds (which have subsequently been used to completely reforest downtown Visalia with 1,800 street trees), UTF is finding success through building alliances with others seeking funding for urban parks, transportation enhancement projects and waterways. UTF facilitated the partnership that recently applied for a Department of Water Resources (DWR) storm water management grant in which UTF will serve as the lead entity to build up habitat around the storm basins identified in the proposal. “The ability to work with people and get things done starts with partnerships, for the Urban Tree Foundation, it is also an opportunity to contribute to larger projects in public areas and build recognition and community support from residents, the City, and the business district,” says Brian.

Indeed, Visalia businesses still reeling from the economic crisis are UTF’s greatest champions. Visalia City Manager Steve Solomon explains that UTF has “helped reshape the community culture and spur growth in downtown business.” In a city where summer temperatures reach 106 degrees, the 1,800 street trees planted downtown by UTF go a long way to providing much-needed shade canopy. As Brian observes, “we must have a healthy environment (urban forest) in order to have a healthy economy.”

Urban Tree Foundation’s roots continue to expand from Visalia through the *California ReLeaf* Network. Brian points to this collaboration as one of the premier benefits of being part of this larger Network. Says Brian, “*California ReLeaf* keeps urban forestry from operating in a vacuum; the information sharing and partnership model are the same tools we embrace at UTF. It is one of the core components of building and sustaining these community roots.”

## Network Highlights

In 2010, California ReLeaf Network members made a huge impact on the state of California.

### California ReLeaf Members:

- 🌱 Planted 85,389 trees
- 🌱 Cared for 94,866 trees
- 🌱 Held 915 outreach events
- 🌱 Engaged 37,385 volunteers



## California ReLeaf Staff

**Joe Liszewski** - Executive Director  
*jliszewski@californiareleaf.org*

**Ashley Mastin** - Program Manager  
*amastin@californiareleaf.org*

**Kathleen Farren Ford** - Program Manager  
*kfarren@californiareleaf.org*

**Chuck Mills** - Program Manager  
*cmills@californiareleaf.org*

## Board of Directors

**Jim Clark, Ph.D.**  
HortScience, Inc.  
*Pleasanton, CA*

**Gail Church**  
Tree Musketeers  
*El Segundo, CA*

**Rose Epperson**  
Epicenter Management/WCA, Inc.  
*Porterville, CA*

**Matt Ritter, Ph.D.**  
California Polytechnic State University  
*San Luis Obispo, CA*

**Amelia Oliver**  
*Wheatland, CA*

**Teresa Villegas**  
MTV Environmental Consulting  
*Los Angeles, CA*



2112 10th Street  
Sacramento, CA 95818

[www.californiareleaf.org](http://www.californiareleaf.org)  
(916) 497-0034

CALIFORNIA RELEAF SPONSORS INCLUDE:



## Partners in Progress

California ReLeaf was selected by the US Forest Service to administer \$6 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) economic stimulus package to support job creation through 17 urban forestry projects statewide. This next generation of California's labor corps will be essential in sustaining and improving our state's public green infrastructure. These urban forestry projects will provide physical, social, economic, and environmental health benefits to California communities for years to come, with an emphasis on creating tomorrow's workforce today.

In 2010, the ARRA urban forestry projects:

- Created/retained 186 jobs.
- Planted over 12,000 trees.
- Maintained over 21,000 trees.

Once completed, these projects will have provided critical training in the public work sector for young adults and at-risk youth while also creating a healthier, cleaner, and more livable environment for California residents.