

California Trees

www.californiareleaf.org

Tree City USA Award: One Urban Forester's Opinion

By John Melvin

Since 1976 The National Arbor Day Foundation has been administering the well-known national urban forestry awards program for cities - the Tree City USA Award. To recognize higher levels of tree management, the Tree City USA Growth Award was established in 1991, designed to show that a city's tree program has significantly improved and is expanding and developing. As a further recognition, communities that have earned the Growth Award for 10 years receive the special Sterling Tree City USA designation.

These programs are coordinated by the State Forester in each state. In California, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) fills this role. The Director of CDF serves as the State Forester, who delegates the administration of the Tree City USA awards to the Urban and Community Forestry Program, overseen by Program Administrator Glenn Flamik.

From the perspective of a CDF Urban Forester, the Tree City USA awards program has many good qualities, and some limitations. We'll look at some of the positives and negatives of this program. However, before we discuss the pros and cons of what this award means for the larger picture of urban forestry, let's look at some California-specific statistics.

Tree City USA Statistics for California

Since last year's statistics have not yet been compiled, we will focus on the numbers for the calendar year 2004. In that year a total of 144 California cities qualified for Tree City USA status, and 16 cities were awarded the Tree City USA Growth Award. Two cities qualified for the Sterling Award in 2004. At press time it was learned that the City of Livermore fulfilled the qualifications to receive the Sterling Award for 2005, bringing the total number of California cities that have earned this recognition to five.

(continued on page 2)



CDF Urban Forester John Melvin presents the Tree City USA Award to the City of Santee at the 2005 Arbor Day celebration.

Spring 2006
Volume 16, No. 1

Inside:

6

Network Profile:
Vallejo Conservators

8

Network Corner

10

Legislative Update



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

Tree Advocate in Action:

State Assemblyman Paul Koretz

By Jane Braxton Little

When the City of West Hollywood planted seven new street trees to inaugurate a citywide urban forest campaign, Assemblyman Paul Koretz served as keynote speaker for the January 2005 ceremony.

"Whenever we've needed him for anything - anything! - he's there for us," says Angee Beckett, executive director of the West Hollywood Tree Preservation Society.

Koretz, a third-term California assemblyman, has spoken up for urban forests and other environmental causes throughout his career as a West Hollywood city councilman and state official.



(continued on page 4)



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
P.O. Box 72496
Davis, CA 95617
(530) 757-7333
(530) 757-7328 fax
info@californiareleaf.org

STAFF:
Martha Ozonoff
Executive Director

Elisabeth Hoskins
Network Coordinator

Joe Liszewski
Grant Coordinator

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Rick Mathews
President

Gail Church
Secretary

Chuck Mills
Treasurer

Nancy Hughes

Teresa Villegas

www.californiareleaf.org

Tree City USA, continued from page 1

The number of Tree City USA-qualified cities has steadily increased in California, though the increase has slowed in recent years. In 1994 there were 93 Tree City USA communities in California. In 1999 the number had increased to 119. In 2002 there were 142, in 2003 there were 143, and as we mentioned before, in 2004 there were 144. So, as you can see, there has been an increase of only one city in each of the last few years. This may be a reflection of the recent recession. When forced to make budget cuts, often the first cuts a city makes are those items perceived as amenities, trees and other landscaping being among these. We urban forestry advocates know better - trees are assets, not amenities! What can you do to alter this perception? If your city is not a Tree City USA, a great place to start is to encourage the city to obtain that status.

Pros and Cons of the Program

Although there are many positive aspects of the Tree City USA program, there are some drawbacks that need to be discussed. First, there is a perception by many in municipal government that Tree City USA status means they are doing a great job and do not need to strive for improvement in urban forestry management. Sad to say, even some municipal arborists and foresters go along with this mis-

taken assumption. But most urban forestry professionals know that Tree City USA status is a starting point for a program of planting and care that must continue through the years. It recognizes that, yes, trees are important to a community and we, as a town/city/community, need to address them and invest in them.

Also, Tree City USA status does not address the issue of sustainability, which is a central concept in urban forestry. An urban forest should be able to pay for itself over time and enhance the urban ecosystem. Tree City status does not guarantee sustainability, but it is a step in the right direction. After all, the point of the Tree City USA program, from this Urban Forester's point of view, is to show that urban forestry has payoffs in political and economic terms and, ultimately, payoffs for urban ecosystems.

In my mind, another drawback is that the requirements for Tree City USA status are relatively easy to meet. To qualify, a city needs to have a department or board tasked with the responsibility for the community's trees, have a tree ordinance that includes at least minimal National Arbor Day Foundation specifications, observe Arbor Day, and spend a minimum of \$2.00 annually per capita on its tree program.

Let us take a closer look at these four basic requirements. Every locality must have a department or agency responsible for the com-

munity's trees, but in many cases these departments do not have tree experts on staff and often view trees as an afterthought. Though many municipal agencies have good, active tree programs, there are a significant number that view trees as secondary in importance to other responsibilities. Perhaps it would be better to require a tree board or department that has as its primary function the planting, care and



CDF Riverside Unit Chief Craig Anthony speaking at the Newport Beach Arbor Day celebration where he presented the Tree City USA Sterling Award for 2004.

Photos for this story: CA Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection





Santa Clarita Mayor Pro Tem Laurene Weste and city staff accept the Tree City USA Award presented by the LA County Fire Department's Forestry Division and CDF.

maintenance of trees.

The tree ordinance requirement should also be tightened for Tree City USA status. This is more difficult to accomplish since no one ordinance will work for all communities. Requiring an ordinance that includes tree care best management practices, a comprehensive management plan, and some sort of education program would be a good start.

The requirement that a city observe Arbor Day in order to obtain Tree City USA status has the potential to raise awareness of urban forestry in a community. However, there should be some required components built into the Arbor Day event. For instance, the ceremony should be a public event that is widely advertised, not just a small event involving city staff and elected officials that this Urban Forester often sees. The bigger and better the event is, the greater the community's payoff for urban forestry and also from a public relations standpoint.

And finally, let's look at the minimum \$2.00 per capita spending requirement. I think a better way to go would be to have a sliding scale based on population rather than one fixed amount. Smaller communities usually have an easier time meeting the \$2.00 per capita requirement; larger cities would find much greater amounts difficult. Maybe the range ought to start slightly higher than \$2.00

per capita for the very large cities, and slide upward based on population. This is a difficult issue, but \$2.00 per capita is not sufficient for even a start-up urban forestry program. Also, this Urban Forester sees a good number of municipal tree programs using most of their budget dollars on maintenance only, leaving no funds for tree replacement and education.

The Growth Award and Sterling Growth Award requirements would have to be adjusted as well. A place to start would be to develop guidelines that move local programs towards sustainability. In California especially, it is time to push beyond minimal tree maintenance efforts

and move towards sustainable urban forestry programs if we want to make our visions become reality. One way to do this would be to up the ante for Tree City USA status, and up it further for the Growth and Sterling Growth awards.

Tree City USA Program - A Great Tool

In spite of the drawbacks, it is important to recognize what Tree City USA status does for urban forestry and the positive impact it can have on a community. This awards program is a great tool for bringing attention to the urban forestry needs of a community, but only if the program is used to bring about heightened public awareness of those needs.

Marketing and Public Relations are very important to the future of urban forestry. The Tree City USA awards program can be a great public relations tool, but is often not used for this purpose. We in the California urban forestry community need to do a better job at every level utilizing this tool that is at our disposal. But it is especially important on the local level. Make sure you use the Tree City USA program to its best possible purpose - to push your community towards sustainability in urban forestry management. ■

John Melvin is an urban forester with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

For more information about the Tree City USA Awards program, please visit The National Arbor Day Foundation's website at www.arborday.org.

Tree Advocate, continued from page 1

One of the reasons he ran for the Assembly was to help California make more significant progress on environmental issues. His commitment has earned him Environmentalist of the Year honors and perfect voting records from the Sierra Club and California League of Conservation Voters.

"Paul cut his teeth with the environmental movement," says Jeff Prang, a third-term West Hollywood city councilman who served with Koretz for four years.

Koretz, a Democrat, was the first Southern California director of the California League of Conservation Voters and administrative director of the Ecology Center of Southern California. As a city councilman, he introduced numerous measures to protect and restore street trees and generally improve the urban environment.

"It was understood that Paul was the most frequent author of anything dealing with the environment," says Prang.

But he faced a formidable challenge in West Hollywood, the city he helped create in 1984. The area, smaller than two square miles, is packed with 40,000 people - one of the densest cities in the state. Because it is fully built out, West Hollywood offers limited opportunities for urban forestry.

During his 12 years on the city council, Koretz worked with the West Hollywood Tree Preservation Society to form numerous partnerships, says Prang. Their ongoing goal is to have a tree in front of every residential building.

As the state's 42nd district assemblyman, Koretz has authored bills that range from gun control and animal rights to anti-tobacco advocacy and gay and lesbian rights. One of his accomplishments is the creation of an environmental advisory committee composed of 25 local environmental leaders, including representatives of the Sierra Club, TreePeople, and the Endangered Habitats League. They have helped Koretz develop strategies for bills banning the use of carcinogenic dry-cleaning solutions, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and recycling electronic devices.

Koretz is extremely easy to work with, col-



Assemblyman Koretz and former West Hollywood Mayor John Duran are joined by members and friends of the West Hollywood Tree Preservation Society at a community tree planting.

legal, and accessible, says Prang. But he is determined about the causes he holds dear.

"Paul doesn't roll over. He never turns up the heat. He just doesn't let go," Prang says.

As a politician, Koretz focuses on issues, not opponents. "Sometimes he wins, sometimes he loses but he never makes any battle his last one," says Prang.

That was true in a controversy over the restoration of a three-mile stretch of Santa Monica Boulevard, part of historic Route 66 and one of the country's most recognizable thoroughfares. Koretz adamantly opposed the removal of the boulevard's ficus trees, enlisting the Sierra Club in his effort to save them. When the other city council members approved the project over his objections, Koretz worked with them to select appropriate species for the 1,200 new street trees, which tripled the previous number.

The \$32 million boulevard project, which included \$2 million for pocket parks and other green space acquisition, broke ground after Koretz left the city council for the State Assembly. But he continues to show up to help plant trees, says Beckett.

State term limits will force Koretz to leave his Assembly position in 2006. He has formed a committee to explore a 2008 campaign for the position now held by California Senator Sheila Kuehl.

"He has a very full plate," says Angee Becket, "but he always finds room on it for urban forestry." ■

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

Photos this page and page 1:
Konstantin Sutyagin



Assemblyman Paul Koretz (left) and former West Hollywood Mayor John Duran take a break during a tree planting.

California ReLeaf Board Welcomes Two New Members!



2006 California ReLeaf Board of Directors: Gail Church, Teresa Villegas, Chuck Mills, Nancy Hughes, Rick Mathews (front)

California ReLeaf is happy to welcome Nancy Hughes and Teresa Villegas as our newest board members. Both bring to ReLeaf many years of urban forestry and nonprofit experience. Nancy is the administrator for the California Urban Forests Council and Teresa is a consultant specializing in environmental issues. Nancy and Teresa join current board members Rick Mathews, board president and owner of Madrone Landscapes, Inc.; Gail Church, board secretary and executive director of Tree Musketeers in El Segundo; and Chuck Mills, board treasurer and outreach program manager for the Trust for Public Land.

Farewell to Stephanie!

The California ReLeaf staff and board of directors bid farewell to one of their own last fall. Stephanie Funk, who for many years edited *California Trees* and shaped it into the publication it is today, has left to pursue a career in the adaptive fitness field. Starting at California ReLeaf in 1991 as a one-day temp, Stephanie served the organization over the years in a variety of roles, eventually becoming associate director. She left that position in 2000, but to our delight she continued working for California ReLeaf on a contract basis and eventually again as a staff member, serving as newsletter editor and working on a number of special projects.



We miss her team spirit, her vast knowledge and historical perspective of the organization, and her talent for keeping track of details. But we especially miss her as a valued colleague and friend, and we wish her good luck and success in her new career!

STAFF CHANGES AT CDF

A fond farewell to Bruce Hagen, urban forester with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF), who retired last fall after close to 25 years with CDF. Bruce was stationed in Santa Rosa and served the Northern California region. He has been a true friend and supporter of California ReLeaf over the past decade, contributing articles to *California Trees*, speaking at conferences and events, providing advice and guidance on our grant programs, and so much more. His many years of technical and field expertise, combined with his enthusiasm and willingness to share his wisdom, have made Bruce a tremendous resource to California ReLeaf and the California urban forestry community. Fortunately, he will remain an active force in urban forestry, working two days a week on special projects for CDF, and continuing to serve as editor of *Western Arborist*, the quarterly magazine of the Western Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture. We wish Bruce well in all his future endeavors!

CDF Director Dale T. Geldert, appointed by Governor Schwarzenegger in June 2004, resigned his post at the end of 2005. During his tenure Director Geldert oversaw the reorganization of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, increasing the number of regions from two to four to provide better oversight and coordination with local governments. Former Chief Deputy Director Ruben Grijalva has been appointed acting director. Prior to joining the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Mr. Grijalva served as fire chief for the City of Palo Alto.

California ReLeaf Network Member Profile: Vallemar Conservators

By Donna Orozco

Picture an idyllic coastal setting - Monterey pines 100 feet tall, a breathtaking view! This used to be the scene as you headed down Highway 1 south of San Francisco into Pacifica. The town's oldest neighborhood, Vallemar, took you through a solid tunnel of trees along Calera Creek. This stunning urban forest was the single most defining feature of Vallemar. The trees were planted over 80 years ago by renowned landscape architect John McLaren, who also designed and planted Golden Gate Park.

But the corridor began changing about 10 years ago when the trees, becoming diseased at the end of their life cycle, began falling. Homes were damaged, and the city started cutting down the most hazardous trees.

Tree Removals Prompt Community Action

"Vallemar residents are fiercely in love with their forest, and many had an intensely emotional reaction to the news," says Nancy Hall, a founder of Vallemar Conservators, a small group of neighbors who organized around the mass tree removal.

After hearing from their own arborist, who agreed that the trees would have to come down, and learning that the City of Pacifica did not have the funds to replace them, Vallemar Conservators decided it was up to them to take action.

"We were able to help our neighbors process the bad news and turn grief into action," says Hall. She and her life partner, Andrew Leone, wrote an organizational grant to California ReLeaf, and Vallemar Conservators was awarded funding to organize Pacifica's first Arbor Day celebration in 1996, which included the planting of trees by community volunteers.

The group held a membership drive that brought in 150 active residents and other contributors. They enlisted "tree heroes," volunteers to plant and nurture new trees, and "water sponsors," who lived adjacent to the newly planted trees and agreed to let water from their property be used to water the trees.

"We went to the water district and learned that it would only add about a dollar to a person's monthly bill to water a tree," says Hall.

The group also decided they would replace the Monterey pines with a variety of native trees.

"My wife and I are naturalists," says Joel Fontaine, an early member of the steering committee. "We wanted to plant what would naturally be here - red alders, buckeyes, toyons, redwoods, and maples."

Besides replacing trees, the group cut out sidewalk blocks to plant trees down Vallemar's main street and worked with elementary school students to beautify their school grounds. They also designed

and installed native plant landscaping for a BP gas station at the entrance to the valley.

Hall estimates that the Conservators planted 100 trees in the first five years. But then she and



Member Snapshot

Vallemar Conservators

Year founded: 1994

Joined Network: 1995

Board Members: 12

Membership: 130

Projects include:

Tree plantings and maintenance, environmental education, tree-related public art projects

Contact:

Nancy Hall

Steering Committee Chair

Vallemar Conservators

215 Winona Avenue

Pacifica, CA 94044

(650) 359-2073

andrewleone@earthlink.net

Andrew Leone, Vallemar Conservators' co-founder, and a group of volunteers are hard at work on a tree trunk that will be carved into a commemorative totem pole and displayed in the city of Pacifica.

Photo: Stephen Johnson

Leone got involved in creating an art center in town, many on the steering committee became burned out, and there was less need to plant because the city was cutting down fewer trees.

Renewed Community Efforts

But that lull came to an end in 2003 when the city started a mass removal of all the remaining Monterey pines.

"Now the city is going from one end of the creek to the other - probably 10 blocks long - and taking out all the pines," says Fontaine. "It's totally empty where there used to be a forest."

The steering committee reorganized and brought in some enthusiastic young professionals, people who have started a website and created printed materials, and landscape designers who can help plan the community's tree rebirth.

"One good thing about the tree removal, now we can actually do a landscape design and plan how we want the tree groupings to look," says Fontaine. "Although they will be small for years, we'll have a second forest."

"In a world where weird things are happening, we're in the right place to be doing something," says Hall. "When you dig a hole and plant a tree, that's making a difference."



Nancy Hall, steering committee chair of Vallemar Conservators, waters a young redwood, thanks to the generosity of a neighbor serving as "water sponsor."

Photo:Vallemar Conservators

Last spring, Hall wrote a grant to the Peninsula Community Foundation to continue the restoration project, to include under-story California native plants, and to create commemorative public art - totem poles at either end of the creek, created out of a landmark tree.

"They cut the tree down in one piece and hauled it down to the arts center where we have weekend totem pole workshops. We're hoping to carve human, plant, and animal designs on the poles, so they will say something about our community," says Hall.

Along with the tree plantings, the volunteers are building up the creek bed and stopping erosion. "One of our new members is a biologist who specializes in red-legged frogs," says Fontaine. "As we refurbish the creek, we hope that it will bring back the frogs and other native wildlife."

Partnering with the City

On Oct. 1, 2005, the Conservators held a community tree planting. Over 80 volunteers showed up and 30 trees were planted. The City of Pacifica has been a very willing and helpful partner.

"The Public Works Department has been incredible. That's dangerous work to cut down those huge trees," says Hall. "And they came out on the planting day with a whole work crew."

Ray Biagini, field services manager for the Public Works Department, says until recently the city has been reactive instead of proactive. "What we're trying to implement now is a whole new tree management plan." The plan will include such things as listing the best species to plant and creating an inventory of trees.

Biagini hopes the Vallemar Conservators will be a big part of that plan. "Without them, we couldn't have gone as far as we have," he says.

"In a world where weird things are happening, we're in the right place to be doing something," says Hall. "When you dig a hole and plant a tree, that's making a difference." ■

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



California ReLeaf is pleased to welcome three new members to its growing network of community-based urban forestry groups!

The **Highland Environmental Education Coalition** was founded in 2003 to support the San Bernardino County Library and Environmental Learning Center and help provide resources, activities, materials, and programs to increase environmental education. The coalition wants to educate the public on healthy urban forest practices and educate children and teachers through Project Learning Tree. www.h-e-e-c.org

Keep Downey Beautiful, founded in 1977, is dedicated to educating the community on environmental issues and involving the public in a variety of projects - including beautification and tree planting projects, graffiti and litter removal, recycling, water conservation and storm drain pollution prevention - all aimed at improving the quality of life in Downey. www.downey-gis.org/pw/keepdowneybeautiful.htm

The **San Mateo Arboretum Society** has been in existence since 1975 as a nonprofit volunteer organization. Its purpose is to benefit the San Mateo community by providing a green oasis in the city, promote the collection, cultivation, and display of unique plant species and increase the public's knowledge and interest in gardening plants and trees. The Society has a memorial tree program and is interested in the perpetuation of historic tree groves in the San Francisco Bay Area. www.san-mateoarboratum.org



Volunteers Laurie Raphael and Brenda Litwin are potting up historic tree seedlings at the San Mateo Arboretum Society.

photo: San Mateo Arboretum Society

Honors and Awards for California ReLeaf Network Members

Congratulations to the following California ReLeaf Network member groups that received awards at the California Urban Forests Council's annual meeting in Lompoc last October:

Goleta Valley Beautiful was named Best Urban Forestry Program in 2005. This 27-year old nonprofit organization in Santa Barbara County has created community partnerships for planting and maintaining trees where no programs existed. Executive Director Ken Knight accepted the award.

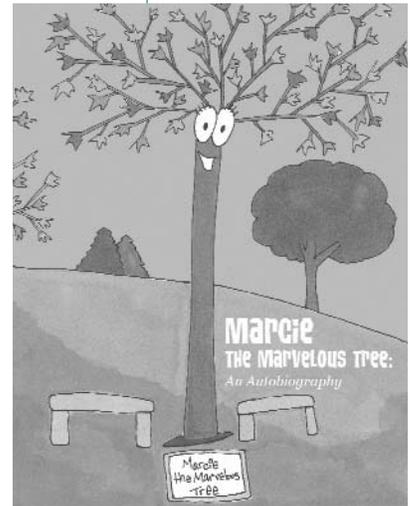
Santa Barbara County ReLeaf and the City of Lompoc, represented by Cindy McCall, jointly received the Durrell Maughn Founders Award for advancing urban forestry practice and citizen education.

Tree Partners Foundation of Atwater received the Fred Anderson Award, honoring this 2-year old nonprofit community group as Urban Forestry Volunteer of the Year. The award was accepted by the founders of Tree Partners, Jim and Barbara Williamson.

We congratulate Kemba Shakur, founder and executive director of **Urban ReLeaf** based in Oakland and Richmond, on receiving the Bay Area Jefferson Award for Public Service last November. Kemba was subsequently selected from among 48 local winners to receive the Silver Medal award and a \$1,000 check at a media presentation sponsored by CBS Channel 5, the San Francisco Chronicle, and PG&E. The Jefferson Awards are a prestigious local and national recognition system honoring community and public service in America. They are a program of the American Institute for Public Service, a nonprofit foundation, co-founded in 1972 by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, U.S. Senator Robert Taft, Jr., and Sam Beard.

Exciting news reached **Tree Musketeers** of El Segundo in February! The organization has been selected to receive the National Arbor Day Foundation's Media Award for the publication and distribution of the children's book *Marcie the Marvelous Tree: An Autobiography*, which describes how kids and trees can change the world. The award will be presented during the National Arbor Day Awards Celebration, on April 28, 2006, at the Arbor Day Foundation in Nebraska City. ■

Congratulations to all for these outstanding honors and awards and a special welcome to our new California ReLeaf Network members!



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 citizen involvement.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Atherton Tree Committee
California Community Forests Foundation
California Oak Foundation
California Urban Forests Council
Canopy: Trees for Palo Alto
CREEC
CityTrees
Fair Oaks Beautification Association
Friends of Carmel Forest
Friends of El Cerrito Trees
Friends of the Urban Forest
Greater Modesto Tree Foundation
Keep Eureka Beautiful
Magic
Marina Tree Committee
Marin ReLeaf
Mendocino County ReLeaf
National AIDS Memorial Grove
North Hills Landscape Committee
Oak Habitat Restoration Project
Our City Forest
Patrick's Point Garden Club
Petaluma Tree Planters
Placer Tree Partners
Richmond ReLeaf
Roseville Urban Forest Foundation
Sacramento Tree Foundation
San Mateo Arboretum Society
San Mateo Park Association

South San Francisco Beautification Committee
Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods
Streaminders
TREE Davis
Tree Partners Foundation
Urban ReLeaf
Vacaville Tree Foundation
Vallejo Conservators
Woodland Tree Foundation

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA

Atascadero Native Tree Association
Carpinteria Beautiful
Goleta Valley Beautiful
Greenspace: The Cambria Land Trust
Ojai Valley Land Conservancy
Santa Barbara Beautiful
Santa Barbara County ReLeaf
Santa Margarita Community Forestry
Tree Foundation of Kern
Tree Fresno
Trees for Cayucos
Tule River Parkway Association
Urban Tree Foundation
Visalia Beautification Committee
WildPlaces

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Arroyo Seco Foundation
Community ReLeaf
Coronado Street Tree Committee
Fallbrook Land Conservancy
Highland Environmental Education Coalition
Hollywood Beautification Team
Huntington Beach Tree Society
Ivey Ranch Park Association
Keep Downey Beautiful
Keep Riverside Clean & Beautiful
Los Angeles Community Forest Advisory Committee
Mountains Restoration Trust
North East Trees
Orange for Trees
Pasadena Beautiful Foundation
People for Trees
Professional Tree Care Association of San Diego
ReLeaf Costa Mesa
San Diego Community Forest Advisory Board
Seal Beach Tree Committee
ShadeTree Partnership
Tree Musketeers
TreePeople
Trees for Seal Beach
Victoria Avenue Forever
West Hollywood Tree Preservation Society

If you would like to reach any of the groups listed, or you are with a group that would like information on membership in the California ReLeaf Network, visit us online at www.californiareleaf.org, or contact our Network Coordinator Elisabeth Hoskins at (949) 642-0127, ehoskins@californiareleaf.org.

2005 Legislative Session Leaves Little for Urban Forestry

Governor Schwarzenegger "moved to the right on big-ticket items" and "sided with the California Chamber of Commerce and business interests on most of the latter's top priorities," reported Capitol Weekly shortly after the 2005 legislature adjourned for the year.

The Governor signed 729 bills that were sent to his desk in the 2005-2006 legislative session - the lowest number of bills signed by any recent governor in a single year. While Schwarzenegger delivered a few small victories to the environmental community, big ticket items did not fare as well, some even receiving the Governor's veto. These included zeroing out the Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program in the 2005-2006 State Budget and a veto of Senator Sheila Kuehl's Senate Bill 658. SB 658 could have provided up to \$112 million annually for resource conservation to coastal counties that could include urban forestry projects.

Thanks to everyone who supported both of these important efforts over the last several months.

Governor's 2006 Budget Proposals Mirror Much of 2005

Governor Schwarzenegger submitted his proposed 2006-2007 State Budget to the Legislature in early January that features very little for urban forestry, parks, and open space.

Included in this package is his proposal to again remove all funding from the Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program for the next fiscal year. Over the last three budget cycles, this program has received 1/3 of the total funds that have been allocated in the past. This year, the EEMP represents less than 1/1000th of California's proposed transportation budget, yet provides funds to plant thousands of trees throughout California, protect essential open space lands and provide additional recreational opportunities for tourists and residents throughout the state. California ReLeaf will again partner with numerous statewide conservation groups this year on a joint grassroots effort to restore full funding to this critical conservation program.

Governor Schwarzenegger's 2006-2007 State Budget proposal also includes the ongoing one-million-dollar allocation from Proposition 12 for urban forestry, but does not include the first of three proposed annual appropriations of \$3 million from Proposition 40. California ReLeaf will actively work with other urban forest interests to have this funding included in the "May Revision" of the Governor's budget.

Finally, in his State of the State Address, the Governor announced that he will be seeking to rebuild and enhance California's infrastructure through comprehensive bond measures that will address a host of issues including flood control, water quality, transportation, and possibly natural resources (including urban forestry). At the time of printing, however, no agreement had been reached on the infrastructure package, with no bond expected for the June ballot.



~ GRANT ALERT ~

Guidelines and applications for the California ReLeaf 2006 Tree-Planting Grant Program are available at www.californiareleaf.org. Proposals must be post-marked by May 12, 2006.

2006: The Year of the Bonds

Legislative leaders from both Houses and the conservation community are also moving forward with several other bond measures that will address some or all resource conservation issues including:

WATER QUALITY, SAFETY AND SUPPLY. FLOOD CONTROL. NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION. PARK IMPROVEMENTS. BONDS - This \$5.4 billion citizens' initiative received official Title and Summary from the Secretary of State in February. Over 600,000 signatures will be gathered in the next four months to qualify the bond for the November 2006 ballot. About half of the funding included within the bond will be available for acquisitions and easements in urban parks, state parks, river parkways, urban greening, and other critical statewide areas for open-space protection. The initiative contains \$20 million exclusively for any and all purposes specified in the Urban Forestry Act of 1978.

THE CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND COASTAL PROTECTION ACT OF 2006 - Senator Chesbro's \$4 billion bond act (SB 153) may move quickly in 2006. The last amended version of the bill contains \$10 million for urban forestry. **THE SAFE FACILITIES, IMPROVED MOBILITY, AND CLEAN AIR BOND ACT OF 2005** - Senate President pro Tempore Don Perata amended his transportation bill (SB 1024) in September, and again in January, to more broadly reflect a host of infrastructure needs. The current version of this measure contains earmarks for the Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program and infill incentive grants for, among other things, urban greening, including tree planting and community landscaping projects.

THE CALIFORNIA INFRASTRUCTURE, IMPROVEMENT, SMART GROWTH, ECONOMIC REINVESTMENT, AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FINANCING ACT OF 2006 - Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez introduced this legislation (AB 1783) in January 2006 as a placeholder for a measure that will include bond funding for the EEMP and open space preservation, in addition to other conservation and infrastructure items. ■

By Chuck Mills, outreach program manager for the Trust for Public Land's Western Region and a member of California ReLeaf's Board of Directors.

National Tree Trust Dissolves - But Legacy Continues

Early last year the National Tree Trust (NTT) of Washington, DC, announced plans to dissolve the organization at the end of 2005. However, NTT's support of urban and community forestry organizations will continue through a \$5 million grant to The National Arbor Day Foundation, which will integrate NTT programs beginning this year.

Through this grant, the Arbor Day Foundation's Board of Trustees is committed to maintaining and expanding relationships with volunteer tree-planting and urban and community forestry (U&CF) organizations nationwide. Programs such as NTT's Seeds Program leadership training and existing Arbor Day Foundation programs like Tree City USA, Trees For America, and Tree Line USA will continue. The grant will ensure the legacy of the America the Beautiful Act and will continue to support U&CF programs that are in line with the original legislation on which the National Tree Trust was founded.

NTT's success over the past 15 years has been based on capacity-building programs that have enabled nonprofit organizations and their volunteers to undertake a variety of urban forestry projects. Since its inception in 1990, NTT has worked with hundreds of U&CF partners and countless volunteers to plant more than 11 million trees in all 50 states.

"The National Tree Trust can count many successes over its 15-year history," said Dan Patterson, NTT Board Chairman, "...we can look back proudly at what has been accomplished, but also look ahead with anticipation at what is yet to come."

For more information, visit NTT on the Web at www.nationaltreetrust.org and the Arbor Day Foundation at www.arborday.org.



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*.

Comments, submissions, and subscription requests may be sent to:

California ReLeaf
Attn: Editor
P.O. Box 72496
Davis, CA 95617
caltrees@californiareleaf.org

An Invitation to Join the California ReLeaf Network!

The California ReLeaf Network is a statewide alliance of community-based organizations that share the common goals of planting and protecting trees and promoting volunteer involvement. The Network enables individual groups to use their collective power to improve the urban forests 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 California.

We welcome new members and invite eligible urban forestry groups to join the California ReLeaf Network. The membership criteria that a group must meet are:

- Have as one of its principal goals the planting, care, and/or protection of trees in the community and be committed to long-term environmental stewardship.
- Recruit and involve the public in its urban forestry efforts.
- Have a mission statement and an action plan outlining its goals and activities.
- Be in existence at least six months and have completed at least one community project.
- Have a phone number and mailing address that can be made available to the public.

Currently, Network members vary from small groups of dedicated individuals, working after hours to improve their communities, to well-established nonprofit organizations with paid staff. Activities range from planting and caring for urban trees to restoring native oak habitat and riparian areas; from advocating better tree pruning practices and helping cities develop progressive tree policies to raising public awareness of the benefits of healthy urban forests.

For more information or to request an application, please contact our Network Coordinator Elisabeth Hoskins, at (949) 642-0127, ehoskins@californiareleaf.org.



California ReLeaf
P.O. Box 72496
Davis, CA 95617

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage PAID
Santa Barbara, CA
Permit No. 553

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

www.californiareleaf.org