

California Trees

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

Urban Forestry Becomes a Cool Topic

By Crystal Ross O'Hara

It wasn't so long ago that recycling was a novel idea, practiced in a few isolated areas, mainly in California. Now, less than three decades later, about 30 percent of solid waste in the U.S. is recycled or reused and California state law requires 50 percent of waste to be diverted from landfills.

Could urban forestry, like recycling, become the next big thing in environmental stewardship?

Trees in the News

As environmental issues gain momentum in the public arena, the subject of urban forests and how they relate to global warming has come to the forefront. Urban forest initiatives have been highlighted in newspapers, radio programs and television shows in recent months. Last year in September alone, USA Today, the Washington Post, the Los Angeles Times, and the Sacramento Bee all featured stories focusing on the issue of urban forestry.

In January, the PBS series "Edens Lost and Found," hosted by Actor Jimmy Smits, put the spotlight on the Los Angeles tree-planting organization TreePeople and its founder, Andy Lipkis. And former Vice President Al Gore has done much to galvanize interest in global climate change and the many small ways people can help to reverse the trend. In his acclaimed documentary "An Inconvenient Truth" Gore calls on viewers to "plant trees, lots of trees." *(continued on page 2)*



Photo: Sacramento Tree Foundation

Smokey Bear applauds the efforts of a young volunteer as he puts the finishing touches on a redwood tree that was planted by members of the Sacramento Tree Foundation in Capitol Park as part of Governor Schwarzenegger's "Living the Green Dream" inaugural kick-off event on January 4, 2007.

Tree Advocate in Action: Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa - Bringing the Forest to Los Angeles

By Jane Braxton Little



On the morning of his first day in office as mayor of the City of Los Angeles, Antonio Villaraigosa planted a tree. Then he joined hundreds of city residents to water, mulch and prune 30 gold medallion trees (*Cassia leptophylla*) in the West Adams neighborhood.

This inaugural event was Mayor Villaraigosa's way of demonstrating his commitment to make Los Angeles the cleanest and most eco-friendly city in the United States.

"The dirtiest big city in America has the opportunity to be the greenest," he says.

The mayor's goal is to make an environmental model of the metropolis known *(continued on page 5)*

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.

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California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger featured a tree planting event as part of his 2007 inaugural celebration. "Living the Green Dream" was the theme of the inaugural kick-off. And because the Governor is both a politician and a Hollywood star, his inauguration drew intense media coverage throughout the nation and overseas.

Living the Green Dream

The Governor's inaugural kick-off showcased what many say is the best of what California has to offer: progressive environmental ideas and the latest in green innovation and technology.

The event featured alternative-fuel vehicles, recycled products, demonstrations of alternative energy sources, and guest appearances by well-known entertainers as well as stars of the environmental world, like Ralph Cavanagh, senior attorney for the National Resources Defense Council, former Environmental Advisor to the Governor Terry Tamminen, and former U.S. EPA Secretary William Reilly.

The Sacramento Tree Foundation was on hand, helping children plant acorns that will be planted throughout the Sacramento area later this year. In addition, the foundation planted a California redwood tree in Capitol Park in honor of the Governor's 2007 Inauguration.

But state officials' commitment to living the dream goes beyond photo ops, resulting in real policy changes. California Assembly Bill 32, known as the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, requires

that the state's global warming emissions be reduced to 1990 levels by 2020. It puts a statewide cap on global warming emissions that will be phased in beginning in 2012. Co-authored by Assembly Speaker Fabian Nuñez and former Assembly Member Fran Pavley, the historic bill was signed by Governor Schwarzenegger last fall.

"California has taken the leadership in moving the entire country beyond debate and denial [about global warming]... to action," the Governor said during his January State of the State Address. "As California goes, so goes the rest of the nation."

And certainly California is the leader in the urban forest movement. Sacramento and Los Angeles have set the example, with each city on its way to reaching ambitious tree-planting goals.

The Greenprint Initiative

It was the Sacramento Tree Foundation's Greenprint program that drew the attention of a Washington Post article dated September 4, 2006, and titled "Tree-Planting Drive Seeks to Bring a New Urban Cool."

The article, part of a special series called "Threat of Climate Change," highlighted the regional project, which covers six counties. The initiative seeks to double the Sacramento area's urban tree canopy by planting up to five million new trees in the coming years.

Despite actually being ranked eighth in the nation when it comes to tree canopy, Sacramento has long called itself the "City of Trees." But like other major cities, the

"Plant trees, lots of trees."

Vice President Al Gore

Photos: Sacramento Tree Foundation



Everybody joins in the fun at the "Living the Green Dream" inaugural kick-off. From left, Ray Trethewey, Sacramento councilman and executive director of the Sacramento Tree Foundation, explains the benefits of urban trees to a television news crew; area school children plant acorns in containers; and California First Lady Maria Shriver visits with vendors.



number of trees in the area has been on the decline while development has made a major upswing.

"We've just lost touch with this great urban friend, the shade tree," says Ray Tretheway, executive director of the Sacramento Tree Foundation and a Sacramento city councilman.

Tretheway and others set out to change that trend beginning with an agreement in 2001 between 20 area municipalities to seek out ways to best optimize the region's urban forest. The compact was followed by an educational campaign highlighting the many benefits of urban trees. For example, policy makers and residents were informed that doubling the canopy could reduce air pollution by as much as 50 percent, that strategically placed shade trees can cut air-conditioning costs by as much as 30 percent, and that shaded neighborhoods and business districts increase property values by 10 percent.

But Tretheway says getting people to join in the tree-planting initiative didn't require a hard sell. "People were very receptive right off the bat," he says.

Twenty-six jurisdictions in the six counties have signed on to the Greenprint. The Sacramento Municipal Utility District joined in, providing up to 10 free trees for residents. Community foresters from the Tree Foundation are also available to advise residents on what trees would be

best for their property and where they should be planted.

Tretheway says the program is gaining momentum and attracting attention from communities outside of the Sacramento area. Also, education continues to be a major focus of the tree-planting drive.

"We'd really like to have a great swell of educated, informed citizens advocating on behalf of the urban forest," Tretheway says.

Million Trees LA

Los Angeles is known for a lot of things, but it is the iconic palm that often comes to mind when people think of the "City of Angels."

And while palms may be beloved by Angelenos, they provide little in the way of shade.

This dichotomy was the subject of several media pieces last year, including articles by the Associated Press and USA Today and a spot on National Public Radio. While the pieces focused on the tension between those who love palms and those who favor shade trees, they also brought attention to the Million Trees LA initiative.

Los Angeles consistently ranks as one of the country's most polluted cities, a title that many, including the mayor, would like to see changed.

Pledging last year to make the city "greener, cleaner, healthier and more beautiful," Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa announced a plan to plant one million new trees in Los Angeles, a significant improvement in a city with a tree canopy cover of only 18 percent, according to a study by the Center for Urban Forest Research in Davis. The national average is 27 percent.

(continued on page 4)

Left & Bottom: Young volunteers have fun planting trees and taking part in the Million Trees LA initiative.

Photos: JuanCarlos Chan, City of Los Angeles



Right: A volunteer lends a hand in the Million Trees LA initiative.
Photo: City of Los Angeles

Bottom: California First Lady Maria Shriver chats with visitors and the press at the inaugural kick-off event in Sacramento.
Photo: Martha Ozonoff

Urban Forestry, continued from page 3

Million Trees LA is similar to Sacramento's Greenprint initiative in that it is a partnership between local tree groups, volunteers, city departments, and businesses. The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power is offering free trees to customers.

Paula Daniels, commissioner of the L.A. Board of Public Works, is chair of the Million Trees LA initiative.

"It's just been really very inspirational for me to work on this," she says, adding that community members and policy makers have been receptive to the program. Part of the reason why, she states, is that people enjoy the symbolic act of planting a tree.

"When you plant a tree you are directly involved in an activity that changes the environment for the better," she says.

At the same time, Daniels stresses that education about how important trees are to the environment has also been key. The program emphasizes that trees help clean the air, clean up polluted urban runoff, and cool streets and buildings.

Daniels says Million Trees LA often refers to shade trees as a "biogenic utility," one that actually increases in value as it ages.

"We want people to understand that trees are not merely aesthetic or ornamental," she says. "We want to shift that thinking to an understanding that (trees) have value, real value to our environment."

A Nation of Trees

California may be "leading the green dream" when it comes to understanding the importance of urban forestry, but it is certainly not alone in its efforts.

Washington, DC, Baltimore, Atlanta, Chicago, Indianapolis, Denver, and many other cities throughout the nation are making new commitments to trees.

"Challenges to plant trees seem to be heating up this year and that fits in with the new focus on the environment," says Alice Ewen Walker, executive director of the Alliance for

Community Trees (ACT), a Maryland-based coalition of more than 100 organizations focused on urban tree planting, care, and conservation. ACT has member organizations in



35 states as well as Canada.

It is community members and municipal policy makers that are leading the commitment to the urban forest, Ewen Walker says, not only

through tree-planting initiatives, but also by creating and enforcing local tree regulations regarding, for example, the removal or replacement of trees.

"A lot of times when people hear the word 'regulation' they think of it negatively, but communities are just responding to citizens' demands and values. They want to protect the trees they have," says Ewen Walker.

The September 4, 2006, Washington Post piece noted that Iowa is the only state with a long-term record of using state law to push private utilities to plant trees for energy conservation. According to the article, the program has been a success for both tree advocates and the utility companies.

"It is difficult to put a value on the community relationships we have built through trees," Karmen Wilhelm, a spokeswoman for Alliant Energy, told The Post. "It has been wonderful for our reputation."

However, Ewen Walker of ACT says that while municipal and state governments, individuals, and grassroots organizations have placed a new emphasis on tree planting and care, there is concern among urban forest advocates that support at the federal level will continue to decline.

Ewen Walker is particularly concerned about the 2008 budget for the USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program, an entity that has suffered significant cuts in recent years.

Regardless of the federal budget, any continued emphasis or spreading of the gospel of the urban forest will likely come from individuals, nonprofit organizations, and local policy makers.

But to keep up the momentum, it is vitally important that urban forestry continues to be "in the news." ■

Crystal Ross O'Hara is a freelance journalist based in Davis, California.



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for smog, freeways, and its concrete-lined namesake river. Since taking office in July 2005, he has tackled air and water pollution, expanded city parks and public transit systems, and launched a waste-to-energy program.

The heart of Villaraigosa's environmental campaign is Million Trees LA, an ambitious initiative that aims to plant one million trees throughout the city during his four-year term. Over 5,000 new trees were already in the ground by the time he marked his first 100 days in office.

The mayor has tapped TreePeople, North East Trees, the Hollywood/Los Angeles Beautification Team, and other urban forest organizations to work with city departments to involve residents in neighborhood projects. Leaders of this public-private partnership believe the infusion of trees will not only create new beauty but also awareness of the power of urban forests to absorb carbon, cool heat islands, and reduce skin cancer.

"It's a great vision. This mayor is willing to be bold," says Andy Lipkis, founder and president of TreePeople, which organized the West Adams event.

And Villaraigosa understands that a key to success is engaging the public, Lipkis says: "He knows that urban trees don't live without engaged communities participating in selecting them, watching over them, and caring for them -- and holding city officials accountable

We're using the momentum of the mayor's leadership to establish a legacy that will benefit Los Angeles for generations to come.

Paula Daniels, Chair Million Trees LA

for their commitments to them."

The mayor's passion for tree planting grew out of his childhood in the City Terrace neighborhood of East LA, a place that still has few trees, says Paula Daniels, commissioner for the city's Board of Public Works and chair of Million Trees LA. As California State Assembly Speaker, Villaraigosa oversaw passage of landmark legislation in 1998/99 that included the largest urban neighborhood parks measure in America. As a city councilman elected in 2003, he created the largest passive park on the east-side of Los Angeles.

His Million Trees LA initiative is Villaraigosa's most daunting undertaking yet. An analysis of LA's forest canopy found less than 20 percent of the city covered by trees, with some neighborhoods having as little as five percent.

To accomplish his goal, the mayor is working with every city department that owns property where trees could be planted, including many offices that have never focused on tree planting. It's part of an institutional change in the city bureaucracy that includes the appointment of Nancy Sutley to serve as LA's first deputy mayor for energy and the environment, a position Villaraigosa created.

"We're unpaving paradise. This will only happen with the participation of everyone," says Daniels, one of the mayor's many appointees with a background in environmental activities.

Villaraigosa enjoys widespread support for Million Trees LA despite questions about procuring that many trees, realistic accomplishments in a four-year timeframe, and the \$70 million price tag. Funding is in the works through existing municipal programs and private contributions, says Daniels: "We know this will take several years. We're using the momentum of the mayor's leadership to establish a legacy that will benefit Los Angeles for generations to come."

No one doubts Mayor Villaraigosa's dedication to the environment, particularly the urban forest. Trees are an entry point to his conservation agenda, a way for people to take responsibility for a piece of green in Los Angeles, says Larry Smith, executive director of North East Trees: "He's the most committed environmental mayor we've ever had." ■

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



Above: Volunteers from the Hollywood/Los Angeles Beautification Team (HLABT) take part in a Million Trees LA tree planting. Photo: HLABT



Left: Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and Andy Lipkis, president of TreePeople, participate in the West Adams neighborhood community tree planting on the mayor's first day in office.

Photo: Laurie Kaufman

California ReLeaf Network Member Profile: Ojai Valley Land Conservancy

By Donna Orozco

Residents of the Ojai Valley, just east of Ventura in southern California, like to say it is a little bit of Shangri-La. In fact, the mountainous view was used in the 1939 movie "The Lost Horizon" to depict that utopian land. The city of Ojai was built in the midst of beautiful oak woodlands.

But as in many California regions, development pressures threatened to destroy some of that beauty. It was that threat that helped launch the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy (OVLC) that now preserves and restores nearly 2,000 acres of scenic vistas, greenbelts and wetlands, 20 miles of recreational trails, 3-1/2 miles of the Ventura River and over 300 species of plants and trees.

Early History

It started in 1981 when Richard Handley learned that a huge shopping center and housing development was going to be built on a beautiful wetland where he regularly walked his dog. "They would have completely paved over the area," says Handley, "and it would have become a tremendous flood problem because everything drained into the wetland there."

That was the beginning of an 18-year effort to save what is now the Ojai Meadows Preserve, one of five preserves maintained by the OVLC. In 1987 Handley, his wife, and three others with the vision of saving open spaces created the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy. It took them 10 years to acquire their first property -- land donated by the Ilvento Family, now known as the Ilvento Preserve.

Two years later in 1999, the land Handley had originally wanted to save finally was freed up. OVLC was able to raise \$1.25 million in 11 months to buy the Ojai Meadows property.

Ojai Valley ReLeaf, the conservancy's urban forestry-focused program, joined the California ReLeaf Network in 1996. This program carried out various projects such as creating an oak tree brochure and slide show, holding an educational Heritage Oaks Day and coordinating local tree-planting projects. Eventually this program became inactive, but the land conservancy continued



Top: Members of the land conservancy are busy planting acorns in mulch on the Ojai Meadows Preserve. Photo: Dave Hubbard

Bottom: Sara Benjamin (foreground, left), Oak Grove School watershed coordinator, leads a group of toddlers and adult helpers to collect acorns for the Ojai Meadows restoration project. Photo: Derek Poultney



as a California ReLeaf Network member and in recent years has undertaken more and more tree-related projects funded through grants.

Ojai Meadows Preserve

One of OVLC's more dramatic projects is restoring the 58-acre Ojai Meadows to its natural wetland, riparian and oak savanna status. Old timers say you could once row a boat across the area in a rainy winter, but the parcel was cleared for cattle and alfalfa in the late 1800s. Subsequent development and drought dried up the wetland. Water had been diverted and often flooded the adjacent Nordhoff High School and Highway 33.

A recent grant from the California Department of Water Resources has funded the redirection of the runoff from the high school back into the wetland where seeds were still viable and sprang back to life, attracting birds and wildlife.

"The wetland's job is to catch and filter water before it soaks into the ground, ending up in the rivers and the ocean. The whole ecosystem of oaks and other native plants is part of that system," says Sara Benjamin, a former intern with OVLC and now environmental coordinator at one of the three schools that adjoin the preserve.

She often takes students into the preserve, which serves as an outdoor science laboratory. The students have been part of a project to collect 1,000 acorns, propagating them in the school greenhouse and then planting them in the preserve.

"There's not much 6-year-olds can do about environmental devastation, but they care about it," says the passionate Benjamin. "When the kids start a plant or tree from seed, and it gets to be 3 feet tall, they get a sense of power. The way to change the world is to start where you are, and they are changing the world."

OVLC Board Member Barbara Washburn, who has helped with planting projects, feels much the same. "Trees teach us patience," says Washburn who has also planted oak trees on her own property. "When we plant a tree, we really should think about future generations."

Other Tree Restoration Projects

The conservancy maintains five preserves, and all are open to the public. Most feature hiking trails and beautiful, majestic trees, predominantly coast live oaks.

Besides planting the local school children's greenhouse-raised acorn seedlings in Ojai Meadows, which resulted in close to 150 new trees in the preserve, OVLC has planted 15 larger oaks from containers and is planning to add more. As part of the restoration efforts, non-native eucalyptus trees that were planted in the 1950s and are beginning to fall are being cleared away and will eventually be replaced by natives.

In the Ventura River Preserve, a 1,591-acre ranch adjacent to Los Padres National Forest, OVLC is planning to remove dying orange trees and restore native chaparral and oak habitat.

The Confluence Preserve, located at the merging of Ojai Valley's two major year-round streams, has the best remaining examples of cottonwood and sycamore stands in the area. The 2005 flood washed away some of the river banks, and the conservancy has planted long rows of willows that will catch sediments to build up the banks again.

In the San Antonio Creek Preserve, a nine-acre former eyesore, the conservancy is protecting oak seedlings from being cut down during annual fire-control weed clearings. Before the conservancy acquired the land, many oak seedlings were mowed down each year.

Although only a small portion of the conservancy's preserves falls within in the City of Ojai's borders, the city is happy to work collaboratively with OVLC.

"We're so fortunate to have an organization such as the land conservancy in our community because the city doesn't always have the resources to do the kind of things the conservancy has been able to do," says Heidi Whitman of the City of Ojai. ■

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



*Top: As part of the restoration of Ojai Meadows Preserve, OVLC members are planting a valley oak from a 15-gallon container on the preserve along Maricopa Highway.
Photo: Derek Poultney*

*Bottom: OVLC volunteers are installing tubing to protect oak seedlings on the Ojai Meadows Preserve.
Photo: Dave Hubbard*



Member Snapshot

Ojai Valley Land Conservancy

Year founded: 1987

Joined Network: 1996

Board Members: 10

Staff: 7

Projects include:

protecting open space,
restoring oak woodlands,
wetlands, wildlife habitat;
conducting education programs.

Contact:

Fred Fox, Executive Director
Richard Handley, Preserve Mngr
Ojai Valley Land Conservancy
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**The California ReLeaf Network is growing!
We are happy to welcome two new member groups.**

The Merced River Watershed Ecological Restoration Club of Atwater was started in 2004. The club is headed by a teacher and advisor from Buhach High School and involves students in environmental and natural science education through hands-on restoration work on the Merced River. Currently the students are working on a restoration project in partnership with the Tree Partners Foundation of Atwater, also a California ReLeaf Network member. lrobinson@muhsd.k12.ca.us



Members of the Merced River Watershed Ecological Restoration Club brave cold and rainy weather as they prepare cuttings from native box elders and willows for new plantings along the river. The students' efforts are part of the Merced River - Santa Fe Aggregates restoration project.

Photo: Tree Partners Foundation



Mountain View Trees is a new community-based group in the San Francisco Bay Area, formed in 2006 to sustain and enhance the trees of Mountain View through community stewardship, education, and advocacy. The group has already completed a city-wide survey of 3-year-old trees to determine their maintenance needs. Its goals are to become a locally recognized source of information on the urban forest, and to educate residents on the benefits of trees and the care they need to create a sustainable urban forest. www.mountainviewtrees.org.

Board Member Wendee Crofoot (left) of Mountain View Trees joins volunteers Steve Hays and Gail Claspell in putting the finishing touches on a newly planted Chinese pistache in downtown Mountain View.

Photo: Mountain View Trees

2007 ISA International Conference

July 28 - August 1, 2007
Honolulu, Hawaii



"Catch the Wave of Global Arboriculture" is the theme of the 83rd Annual Conference and Trade Show of the International Society of Arboriculture hosted by the Western Chapter ISA. WCISA is holding their annual meeting in conjunction with the international conference.

Visit the ISA website, www.isa-arbor.com/conference/default.aspx, for more information.

Nationwide Arbor Day Campaign

The National Arbor Day Foundation and The Home Depot Foundation are partnering together to plant 1,000 trees across the country. These tree-planting events are part of a nationwide, 10-city campaign to increase awareness of the importance of trees as green infrastructure in our cities and to create healthier communities in urban areas.

The City of Sacramento, California, is one of the ten cities selected this year and will host an Arbor Day event on April 27, 2007, in partnership with the **Sacramento Tree Foundation**. This event will be held at Carl Johnson Park located in North Sacramento, beginning at 1:00 pm. Residents are invited to attend and help plant 100 new trees. Please visit <http://www.arborday.org/takeaction/homedepot2007/> to learn more about the Sacramento event.



At right, local dignitaries from the Sacramento area help plant a tree in Cesar Chavez Park. Photo: Sacramento Tree Foundation



Network Members

Formed in 1991, the California ReLeaf Network is a statewide alliance of community-based organizations that share the common goals of planting and protecting trees, fostering an ethic of environmental stewardship, and promoting volunteer involvement.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Atherton Tree Committee
California Community Forests Foundation
California Oak Foundation
California Urban Forests Council
Canopy
CREEC
CityTrees
Fair Oaks Beautification Association
Friends of Carmel Forest
Friends of El Cerrito Trees
Friends of Rodeo, Refugio, and Carquinez Watersheds
Friends of the Urban Forest
Greater Modesto Tree Foundation
Keep Eureka Beautiful
Keep Oakland Beautiful
Magic
Marina Tree Committee
Marin ReLeaf
Mendocino County ReLeaf
Merced River Watershed Ecological Restoration Club
Mountain View Trees
National AIDS Memorial Grove
North Hills Landscape Committee
Oak Habitat Restoration Project
Our City Forest
Patricks 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
Vallemar Conservators
Woodland Tree Foundation

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA

Atascadero Native Tree Association
Carpinteria Beautiful
CSET
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
Tree Guild of Arroyo Grande
Tule River Parkway Association
Urban Tree Foundation
Visalia Beautification Committee
WildPlaces

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Arroyo Seco Foundation
City Beautiful of San Diego
Community ReLeaf
Coronado Street Tree Committee
Fallbrook Land Conservancy
Highland Environmental Education Coalition
Hollywood/Los Angeles 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
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
Urban Corps of San Diego
Victoria Avenue Forever
West Hollywood Tree Preservation Society

If you would like to reach any of the groups listed, or if you are with a group that would like information on membership in the California ReLeaf Network, visit us online at www.californiareleaf.org, or contact (530) 757-7333, info@californiareleaf.org.

Big Bond Dollars Proposed for Urban Forestry in 2007 Budget

Governor Schwarzenegger embraced Urban forestry to the tune of more than \$9 million in his 2007-2008 State Budget submitted to the Legislature in early January. Tapping \$4.7 million in urban forestry funding still left from Propositions 12 and 40, the Governor almost matches this figure with an additional \$4.5 million appropriation from Proposition 84 -- The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006. The vast majority of these funds can be used for purposes identified in the Urban Forestry Act of 1978, with only \$1.8 million from Proposition 12 restricted to tree planting projects.

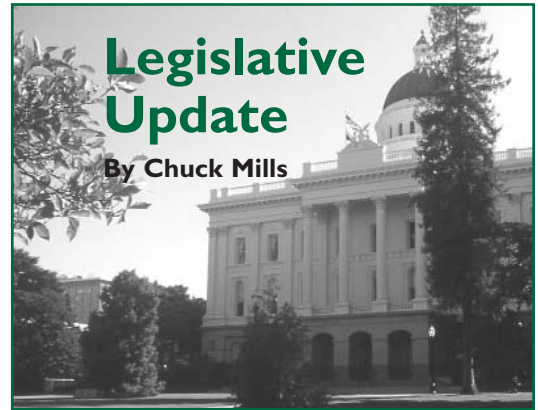
Bond-related Legislation May Provide Additional Urban Forestry Opportunities

Though Proposition 84 mandates no less than \$20 million be available for urban forestry, several bills seeking to regulate expenditures from all of the bonds passed by the voters in 2006 may provide even more urban forestry opportunities. The following State Assembly bills currently provide the most promise for additional resources:

Assembly Bill 29 (Hancock) - Infill Development Incentive Grants. Proposition 1c provides \$850 million for infill incentive grants tied to affordable housing development. This bill would capture a portion of these funds for grants to cities and counties through the Department of Housing and

Community Development for the construction or acquisition of capital assets, including urban greening projects such as tree planting, community landscaping, and public gardens.

Assembly Bill 1602 (Nuñez) - Sustainable Communities and Urban Greening Program. The Assembly Speaker seeks to create a program guided by the Resources Agency that provides grants to local public agencies and nonprofit organizations for the purpose



Legislative Update

By Chuck Mills

of improving the sustainability and livability of communities through the development of green infrastructure, including urban forestry. The bill would appropriate an unspecified amount from the urban greening dollars in Proposition 84 for these purposes.

Neither bill has been scheduled for committee hearings, though both will likely be referred to resource policy and appropriations committees in the coming days.

Governor's Budget Still Doesn't Shine on EEMP

Governor Schwarzenegger included in the State Budget package his proposal to again remove all funding for the Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program for the third consecutive fiscal year. Over the last four budget cycles, this program has received less than half of the total funds that have been allocated in the past. This year, the EEMP represents less than 1/1300th of California's proposed transportation budget, which includes hundreds of millions from Proposition 1b to address traffic congestion and related transportation issues. The EEMP is a critical piece of the transportation puzzle, providing funds to plant thousands of trees throughout California and protect essential open space lands.

With the strong support of the conservation community, the Legislature last year restored the EEMP into the State Budget signed by the Governor. California ReLeaf will partner with numerous statewide conservation groups this year on a joint grassroots effort to again restore full EEMP funding.

For more information on these and other legislative issues, please contact Martha Ozonoff at California ReLeaf, mozonoff@california-releaf.org, (530) 757-7333.

Chuck Mills is associate director of the California Council of Land Trusts and a member of California ReLeaf's Board of Directors.

Grant Alert - Funding for Urban Forestry Projects!

California ReLeaf is pleased to announce that grant funds will be available this year for education, outreach, and tree-care projects. Nonprofit organizations and unincorporated community groups, with a financial sponsor, are eligible to apply for funding from California ReLeaf's Urban Forestry Grant Program. Although a timeline has not been established, we hope to have the guidelines ready by the summer. Please visit our website, www.californiareleaf.org, for the latest information on grant availability.

National Legislative Update

By Alice Ewen Walker

President Bush released the administration's budget in early February, marking the start of the budget process for federal FY2008. Cooperative forestry programs, including Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF), fared very poorly in the Forest Service budget. Urban and Community Forestry received a 38-percent cut, resulting in a national budget of \$17.4 million. The FY 2006 budget for this program was \$28.4 million.

This will have a severe impact on state programs, including

California's urban forestry program. In FY 2006, California received \$842,000 from the federal U&CF Program to provide technical and financial assistance to communities.

While California is better prepared than other states to sustain these losses, advocates should be concerned that the US Forest Service's 2008 budget signals possible elimination of the national U&CF Program. This program requires advocacy support if we want to see it continue.

Please talk to your House representative and Senate members about the issue, outlining what federal urban forestry funds have helped make possible in your district and statewide. In particular, Representative Jerry Lewis, Representative John Doolittle, Senator Dianne Feinstein, and Senator Barbara Boxer should be targeted. In addition, influential House Appropriations Committee

members from California are: Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard, Rep. Sam Farr, Rep. Barbara Lee, Rep. Adam Schiff, and Rep.

Michael Honda. Meetings with your district representative, even if he/she does not serve on Appropriations, are always very valuable.

California tree advocates are in a strong position to educate influential House and Senate members about how urban trees can help the nation address climate change. Urban trees are a practical solution to conserve energy, cool cities, and reduce smog. Lawmakers need to hear about the real-world application of this technology.

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By Alice Ewen Walker is executive director of the Alliance for Community Trees, a national network of 105 nonprofit organizations engaged in urban and community forestry (alice@actrees.org; www.actrees.org). For free action alerts on this issue, sign up for ACT's NeighborWoods Network e-mail list.

Talking Points for Tree Advocates

The federal government must find a better way to pay for fire fighting. The US Forest Service is spending an ever-increasing portion of its budget on fires, to the detriment of all other forestry programs. The agency has reduced its research capacity by nearly half in the last 15 years, and in FY 2008 the agency is severely reducing funding for all state cooperative programs.

In particular, I want to talk to you [or am writing you] about the Urban and Community Forestry Program. The federal U&CF Program has helped my community in the following ways: (for example, list projects funded through grants and/or California ReLeaf programs that have benefited you).

The Urban and Community Forestry Program is the only federal program that focuses on the needs and issues of cities in managing their natural resources. No other federal agency is focused on this unique issue. We are very concerned that the program not be eliminated.

We (or organization name) support a \$50 million appropriation for the Urban and Community Forestry Program, with an additional \$6 million for urban forest research. The program budget peaked at \$36 million in FY 2003. The President's budget is \$17.4 million for FY 2008, which will hurt all states, including California. Our position is also supported by many national organizations, including the Alliance for Community Trees, the International Society of Arboriculture, the American Public Works Association, and the US Conference of Mayors.



About

California Trees

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2007 California Urban Forest Conference November 1 - 3 San Francisco

The Diverse Influences in Urban Forestry is the theme of the 2007 California Urban Forest Conference, taking place November 1-3 at the Cathedral Hill Hotel in San Francisco. Co-sponsored by the California Urban Forests Council (CaUFC) and California ReLeaf, the conference will include sessions on cultural and professional diversity in urban forestry. The program will kick off with an opening reception the evening of November 1; the conference will close with tours the afternoon of November 3.

Registration will be available online in mid-to-late summer. Check back at www.caucf.org or www.californiareleaf.org for registration details. For more information, contact CaUFC at (415) 408-3222, nancy@caucf.org, or California ReLeaf at (530) 757-7333, mozonoff@californiareleaf.org.

Attention California ReLeaf Network Members: This year, the California ReLeaf Network Retreat will not be a separate event but will be held in conjunction with the Urban Forest Conference. The conference program will include presentations and workshops focused on the specific needs and interests of nonprofit and community organizations. And as always, you will have the opportunity to network with other groups as well as speak with urban forestry professionals and advocates from across the state. We look forward to seeing you in November!



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