



CALIFORNIA
ReLEAF

2011 ANNUAL REPORT

Connecting People, Trees, and Communities

A Message from the President



To kick off the California ReLeaf Board of Directors annual meeting last August, I challenged board members to a little game. Like a deck of cards, all the words to ReLeaf's mission statement were dealt out. Then, as a group, we reconstructed the statement. Although none of us, individually, could have stated it word for word, when we worked collectively the pieces came together nicely. The game not only prepared us to appropriately address the business ahead, it also eloquently demonstrated the collective power of urban and community forestry.

This collectiveness is wonderfully demonstrated by the makeup of the board of directors. I am pleased to continue working with Gail Church, Jim Clark, and Rose Epperson and in 2011 we welcomed Matt Ritter and Desiree Backman; creating a knowledgeable, fun, well-rounded group. Supported by the dedicated ReLeaf staff, we strive to advance the Mission and keep ReLeaf in the forefront of the urban and community forestry movement.

One of the great moments for urban and community forestry in 2011 was the official proclamation of California Arbor Week. ReLeaf staff provided direction and resources to groups up and down the state, using art, tree-plantings, and outreach projects to highlight trees and tree groups statewide. It seemed that for one week, all the pieces of our Network were working side by side.

We were equally pleased when the Governor signed AB587, extending the prevailing wage exemption for volunteers and protecting the volunteer base upon which our Network groups depend. This year marked the rollout of ReLeaf membership dues. For years the benefits of ReLeaf were offered at no charge to Network groups. With changing economic times and a clear need to diversify ReLeaf's funding sources, turning to those who most utilize the services was a necessary albeit difficult decision. We truly appreciate the organizations that quickly hopped on board and hope that other groups will recognize the merit of paid membership and our collective power.

I enjoy sharing with others outside of the urban forest arena about the great work of California ReLeaf. Each network group fills a niche in their community and together our work improves communities and our great state. It really is like a giant puzzle and slowly, working together, the green pieces are filling in. Please support us as a donor, as an advocate, or volunteer with a local organization. The collective power of these actions is making a difference in our communities.

Amelia Oliver

OUR MISSION

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

URBAN & COMMUNITY FORESTS

Urban and community forests are the tree canopy above, and the plant life below within every city and town. Since more than 94% of Californians live in an urban area, it is likely that 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 a network of community-based organizations to support healthy urban and community forests from San Diego to Sacramento to Eureka. California ReLeaf and the ReLeaf Network 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 is an invaluable ally in advancing urban forestry efforts in California through their Network coordination, grant administration and advocacy efforts."

John Melvin
State Urban Forester, CAL FIRE



CALIFORNIA RELEAF'S CORE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES ARE:

- Providing urban forestry **grants** in partnership with 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, and
- Uniting our members, cities, businesses, and individuals to educate Californians on the value trees provide during **California Arbor Week**.

FINANCIALS

California ReLeaf operates on a fiscal year. The financial information below reflects the 2011 calendar year.

OUTREACH & EDUCATION	\$93,839 (22.7%)
NETWORK	\$119,569 (28.9%)
GRANTS	\$180,723 (43.7%)
ADMINISTRATION	\$19,495 (4.7%)
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$413,626

Grants

In 2011, California ReLeaf provided more than 2-million dollars to 30 community groups and local governments to support green job training, urban forestry education, and tree planting projects across the state.

Utilizing funding provided under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), we supported 17 significant urban forestry endeavors in 2011 that, among other things, provided California with:

- 72,000 workforce hours pumped into the state's economy, supporting 140 green jobs;
- 30,000 trees planted and maintained;
- 250 urban forestry education workshops and trainings with nearly 5,300 participants;
- 41,500 hours in project volunteer support and \$1.4 million in match funding and in-kind contributions.

More importantly, these projects created a higher quality of life in California. They transformed LA affordable housing units into more livable spaces, greened some of the highest crime neighborhoods in San Diego, implemented cutting-edge water recharge projects in Oakland, improved small business ambiance in Visalia, reduced energy costs through strategic shade tree plantings Fresno, and created a green plan for the State's future urban forests in Sacramento.

Smaller local projects funded through California ReLeaf's two competitive grants programs are also had an important impact in greening our Golden State. From efforts to restore native oak woodlands in Sonoma County to programs designed to bring citizen forester education training to Kern County, these projects, too, built on the green infrastructure that is such a critical component of California's natural resource mosaic.

The amazing products that come from our grant recipients consistently demonstrate the value of these awards to local tree plantings, tree care, and urban forestry education. With generous support from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the US Forest Service, California ReLeaf will continue to fund all of these programs in 2012, and explore opportunities for new ones as well.



"The California ReLeaf grants are an important part of helping Amigos de los Rios realize it's vision of creating an extensive Emerald Necklace of parks and trees in East County Los Angeles to benefit urban residents that desperately need recreational areas and healthy communities."

Claire Robinson

Executive Director, [Amigos de los Rios](#)

"ReLeaf's ARRA Grant not only energized our regional Greenprint initiative, but significantly contributed to sustaining the Tree Foundation over the past two years."

Ray Trethaway

Executive Director,
[Sacramento Tree Foundation](#)



Outreach & Education

California ReLeaf uses an array of methods to deliver the message of the importance of California's urban and community forests.

California Trees, California ReLeaf's newsletter, features news and commentary on urban forestry programs and concerns around the state. Subscriptions are free and are delivered via US Mail or email. The California ReLeaf website, www.californiareleaf.org, uses a blog to share the latest urban forestry news in a timely manner. The site features news stories, job announcements from Network members, and general tree information. California ReLeaf also uses social media to stay connected to ReLeaf Network members and the public. Join us on Facebook - www.facebook.com/calreleaf or Twitter - [@CalReLeaf](https://twitter.com/CalReLeaf).

The 2011 California Urban and Community Forest Conference, held in Palo Alto, featured lectures and presentations from California Secretary for Natural Resources John Laird, State Urban Forester John Melvin, University of Washington Research Social Scientist Kathleen Wolf, and many others. Participants enjoyed the chance to network while learning about vital issues facing urban and community forestry.

Legislative Advocacy

Governor Jerry Brown wasted no time in 2011 working to trim down the \$26 billion budget deficit he inherited from Governor Schwarzenegger in

2010. With a balanced budget also viewed by the Legislature as the highest state priority to reconcile last year, little room was left for major movement in conservation policy or funding.

The final 2011-12 State Budget, passed in two phases extending through June, did provide approximately four million dollars in bond funding to CAL Fire for urban forestry projects, \$21 million to the Strategic Growth Council for urban greening projects, and full funding for the Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program at \$10 million.

In public policy, California ReLeaf sponsored successful legislation that officially designates March 7 – March 14 of every year as California Arbor Week, and joined with numerous Network members throughout California in supporting Assembly Member Gordon's legislation that extended the prevailing wage exception for volunteers through 2016. The bill, which was signed by Governor Brown in September, was critical to sustaining the success of urban forestry by ensuring Californians can donate their time and spirit to a spectrum of resource conservation activities, including critical tree care and tree planting projects. At one point in the legislative committee process, California ReLeaf Network Groups and their partners accounted for 84% of all registered support.

In short, the quiet but successful advocacy efforts of California ReLeaf and its local partners in 2011 ensured urban forestry efforts and visibility would be sustained and even enhanced now and in years to come.

"California ReLeaf is a great voice for urban forestry at the State Capitol. I was proud to work with them on ACR 10 this year."



Assemblymember Roger Dickinson
9th District, Sacramento, California

"California ReLeaf's role as this community's monitor of public policy allows groups to act or react to



important issues which few of us have the time or resources to otherwise follow."

Brian Kempf
Executive Director
Urban Tree Foundation

California ReLeaf Network

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 while fostering an ethic of environmental stewardship and promoting volunteer involvement.

The ReLeaf Network enables individual groups to use their collective power to improve the urban and community forest in their own towns. 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.

In 2011, the Network had 73 members that varied from small groups of dedicated volunteers working after hours to mature nonprofit organizations with paid staff. Network members represent diverse demographics and funding sources as well as a broad geographical spread throughout California.

In 2011, ReLeaf Network members:

- Planted over 53,000 trees
- Cared for over 122,000 trees
- Held over 1,400 outreach events
- Engaged over 31,000 volunteers

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

Each year, California celebrates Arbor Week as March 7 – 14. Although many municipalities, schools and organizations have hosted Arbor Week-related events and programs over the years, these efforts were not cohesively organized or broadly promoted. California ReLeaf recognized that there was an opportunity to grow and improve California Arbor Week, and thus implemented its California Arbor Week program in 2011. Our goals with this program are to market and promote Arbor Week as a statewide event, garner media attention and volunteer support, expand and enhance Arbor Week activities and programs, and educate our state's leaders and citizens about the value of urban forestry.



During the first year of the program, California ReLeaf launched a new website, www.arborweek.org, to increase the visibility and prominence of Arbor Week as a statewide event. The site included a calendar of Arbor Week happenings throughout the state to promote volunteerism within local communities. The site also included a broad range of materials and resources for organizations to host successful Arbor Week events.

Additionally, the 2011 Arbor Week program included a statewide poster contest for third, fourth, and fifth grade students. Teachers and schools throughout California were given a guide with classroom activity suggestions designed to increase student knowledge about the benefits of trees. Students were encouraged to design posters that reflected their understanding of the impact of trees in cities and towns. In total, 762 students participated in this contest, creating many eye-catching and colorful Arbor Week posters.

In 2011, California ReLeaf partnered with Assembly Member Roger Dickinson (D-Sacramento) to introduce Assembly Concurrent Resolution 10 in the Legislature to officially recognize March 7th – 14th of each year as California Arbor Week. On the final day of Arbor Week, ACR 10 was filed with the Secretary of State, highlighting the tremendous benefits of urban forests and urging Californians to observe the week by participating in local tree planting activities and programs.

The inaugural year of California ReLeaf's Arbor Week Program supported our Network partners and provided local citizens with enhanced opportunities to become more engaged and informed about the benefits of trees to our air, water, health and quality of life. California ReLeaf will continue to build on this successful program in years to come.

"California ReLeaf has given so kindly and generously to us over the years. They are the flagship urban forestry organization in the state."

Jim Williamson
Founder and President
Tree Partners

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California's urban forestry movement is at a crossroad.

As 2012 begins, many of the key fiscal resources that have supported statewide tree planting and tree care projects for so many years will be exhausted by year's end.

How can we, as a community speaking in a single unified voice, sustain and frame urban forestry from this point forward in California is a complex question. Are urban forests a catalyst for job creation in a state that is experiencing double-digit unemployment rates for a fourth consecutive year? Are they a training tool for educating at-risk youth and residents about the benefits of trees, helping to create the next generation of urban foresters? Or are they an essential component in helping California reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels and meet the goals of AB 32 through increasing a canopy that already sequesters 414,000 metric tons of carbon annually?

The answer, of course, is that urban forests are all of these and more. Urban forests are a resource that contributes to virtually all facets of California's fabric. Our community's job is to ensure that these forests remain a viable part of this mosaic, even when we are faced with great economic challenge.

California ReLeaf will use 2012 as an opportunity to explore new partnerships and new opportunities that could help support and sustain urban forestry now and into the coming years. As the public policy voice for the California ReLeaf Network, we will educate decision makers about the role urban forests play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions as discussions unfold regarding cap and trade revenues and projects. As the State's volunteer coordinator, we will engage Network members and partners in a series of dialogues as to how we can further meet local and regional tree planting and tree care needs. And we will continue the services and programs that are at the very core of California ReLeaf's mission.



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