

California Trees

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

Economic Stimulus Package Includes \$6 Million in California ReLeaf Grants

By Crystal Ross O'Hara



Karen Maroot of Tree Fresno speaks to local ABC Channel 30 about the scope of the Tarpey Village Grant in January. (Photo: Tree Fresno)

In December, in an effort to create jobs, improve the environment and stimulate the economy, the federal government awarded California ReLeaf \$6 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds.

The ARRA funding will allow California ReLeaf to distribute grants to 17 urban forestry projects throughout the state, planting more than 23,000 trees, creating or retaining close to 200 jobs, and providing job training for scores of young people over the next two years.

So-called "green jobs" have been a hot topic of late, with President Obama promising, for example, that ARRA funds would mean more jobs in the areas of solar panel installation, alternative transportation, fire suppression, and more. The California ReLeaf grant is exceptional in that it addresses jobs by planting and maintaining urban trees.

Job Creation is Key

The focus of the ARRA projects is job creation and retention, particularly in economically distressed areas.

Potential ARRA projects were ranked according to whether or not they would:

- Create or retain jobs in economically distressed areas
- Create or retain sustainable jobs
- Create or retain jobs that help sustain the health, diversity or productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands
- Leverage other resources to create more jobs
- Meet Administration initiatives intended to help transform urban and rural economies

"These dollars are making a big difference," Sandy Macias, program manager for Urban and Community Forestry at the US Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Region,

(continued on page 2)

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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Stimulus Package *continued from page 1*

said. "They really are creating jobs and there's a myriad of benefits that come from urban forestry."

California ReLeaf's \$6 million is just a small portion of the \$1.15 billion the Forest Service was authorized to distribute, but advocates are hopeful that it signifies a shift in how people view urban forestry.

"I'm hoping this grant and others like it will raise the visibility of urban forestry," said Martha Ozonoff, executive director of California ReLeaf.

While the grant is part of a huge federal effort, Californians will feel the immediate benefits of jobs and a healthy tree canopy in their own neighborhoods, she added.

"Trees aren't planted on a federal level, they're planted on a local level and our grant is helping transform communities in a very real way," Ozonoff said.

L.A. Conservation Corps - Creating Jobs and Planting Trees in the Neediest Neighborhoods

One important requirement for ARRA funding was that projects be "shovel-ready," so jobs are created immediately. One example of where that is happening is in Los Angeles, where the Los Angeles Conservation Corps is already using its \$500,000 grant to recruit and train young people to plant and care for trees in Los Angeles' neediest neighborhoods. The "Nurturing Tomorrow's Urban Forest through Job Training Today" grant focuses on South

and Central Los Angeles, where many of the Corps' members call home.

"We're targeting areas that have the lowest canopy and also have the highest unemployment rates, poverty levels and high school dropouts -- not surprisingly, they coincide," said Dan Knapp, deputy director of the L.A. Conservation Corps.

The L.A.

Conservation Corps has for years been providing job training to at-risk teens and young adults, equipping them with a variety of hands-on career skills. About 300 men and women enter the Corps each year, receiving not only job training, but also life skills, education, and job placement assistance.

According to Knapp, right now the Corps has a waiting list of about 1,100 young adults.

This new grant, he said, will allow the organization to bring in about 20 people between the ages of 18 and 24 to receive urban forestry training. They will be cutting concrete and building tree wells, planting about 1,000 trees, providing maintenance and water to the young trees, and removing stakes from established trees.

The Corps is also working with local community colleges to establish a program to provide Corps members with college credits for the urban forestry training they receive, Knapp said, and



Right: An LA Conservation Corpsmember demonstrates for volunteers how to properly level trees at a planting in Griffith Park.

will be working with local employers to provide job opportunities in urban forestry once the Corps members have completed the program.

Tree Fresno - Improving Air Quality

The L.A. Conservation Corps project is among the larger of the California ReLeaf ARRA grants. But even smaller grants, like the one awarded to Tree Fresno, are having a big impact on communities hard hit by the recession.

Fresno consistently ranks among the top five worst cities for air quality according to several different organizations, including the American Lung Association. In addition, Fresno is among the cities hardest hit by recent declining home prices and rising unemployment rates.

"Our city literally has no budget for trees. We have some of the worst air quality in the nation and here we are in desperate need of trees to clean the air," said Karen Maroot, executive director for Tree Fresno.

Tree Fresno's efforts to remedy some of these problems has been boosted by a \$130,000 ARRA grant to plant 300 trees and provide tree care education to residents of Tarpey Village, an unincorporated area of Fresno County. The grant will help the organization retain three positions and relies heavily on engaging community volunteers. Outreach materials will be provided in English, Spanish and Hmong, the languages represented in the Tarpey Village area.

Maroot said the grant will go far in providing much-needed healthy trees to replace the elderly and decaying Modesto Ash trees in the area. But it is the community-building aspect of the project – residents taking an active role in improving their neighborhood – that is most exciting, she said.

"The residents are thrilled," she said. "They are just so grateful for this opportunity."

(Individual Project Information on page 5)

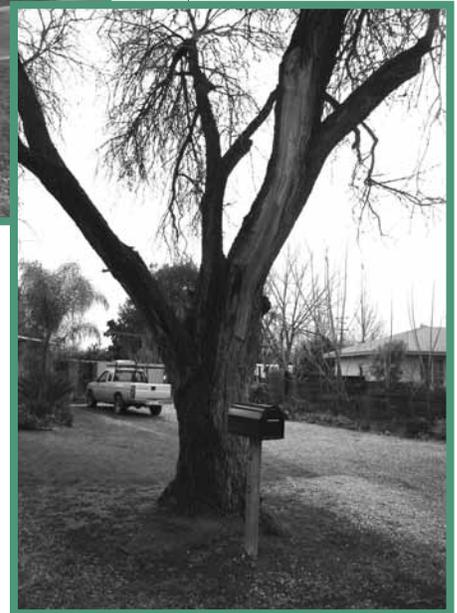
Crystal Ross O'Hara is a freelance journalist based in Davis, California.



Many of the Modesto Ash Trees in Tarpey Village are failing. These pictures show a bare area where a limb recently fell off. The ARRA grant will allow Tree Fresno to educate the neighborhood about proper tree care as well as plant new trees that are better suited for the climate in the Central Valley. (Photos: Tree Fresno)

"These dollars are...creating jobs and there's a myriad of benefits that come from urban forestry"

*Sandy Macias, Program Manager
US Forest Service*



Strategic Growth Council: Planning California's Future

By Connie Gallippi

Urban greening helps to improve the health and quality of life of densely developed areas by providing more natural areas, parks, gardens, shaded trails, and urban forests. Additionally, it helps to increase the use of alternative modes of transportation by greening and shading bicycle and pedestrian facilities and transit stations, and helps to reduce the urban heat island effect. In 2008, the creation of the Strategic Growth Council began to drive new policies and redirect funding streams to support these concepts and more sustainable development.

The Strategic Growth Council (SGC) was established by SB 732 (Steinberg), a piece of state legislation supported by California ReLeaf. The SGC is charged with coordinating existing policies, programs, and expenditure of funds, including infrastructure funds, to meet climate and sustainability goals. The council is composed of agency secretaries from five different state agencies and offices

(continued on page 4)

and one public member appointed by the Governor. (See the “Strategic Growth Council Members” box for more information.)

Each member, with the exception of the public member, has designated an existing staff person as the SGC representative for their respective agency. There are also plans to hire an Executive Director and staff-level administrator this year.

The SGC began meeting in February of 2009 and started picking up steam mid-year when it began discussing the development of the Proposition 84 grant programs under its authority. The first big push was the development of grant guidelines for an early appropriation of \$12 million of the Land Use Planning Incentive funds to be distributed to regions for data gathering and modeling to assist in SB 375 compliance. SB 375 (Steinberg) also passed in 2008 and requires that the Air Resources Board assign regional greenhouse gas emission reduction targets based on land use and transportation planning.

Following this effort, the SGC began to develop the guidelines for the remaining Proposition 84 funds - the Land Use Planning Incentives and the Urban Greening program.

California ReLeaf has coordinated with Conservation Strategy Group and other advocacy partners on topics and messaging for public comment at the meetings and written comments to the SGC and staff. In addition, California ReLeaf has provided several verbal testimonies to the SGC as well as participated in drafting comment

letters on the draft grant guidelines released in November 2009.

On February 9th, the SGC adopted the final guidelines for the Urban Greening and the Land Use Planning Incentives programs. The application deadline for both programs is April 30, 2010.

Additional issues on the horizon for 2010 and the SGC include, but are not limited to:

- Weighing in on federal transportation and climate change legislation
- Recommending changes to the state’s budget proposal process and 5-year infrastructure plan development
- Doing cross-cut budgeting to leverage existing agency funds
- Developing sustainability criteria for the next round of anticipated federal stimulus funds
- Developing sustainability goals for the state

Urban Forestry's Role

The Strategic Growth Council is a great opportunity to plan in a different, more sustainable direction for growth in California, and urban greening and urban forestry are critical components. As California begins to expand densely developed areas, increase public transportation, and provide more jobs closer to homes, urban greening and urban forestry are critical to making places healthy and livable.

California ReLeaf, its members, and partners must continue to stay involved to ensure urban forestry remains on the agenda of the Strategic Growth Council and is properly integrated into policies, programs, and funding streams. This is an opportunity not only to increase the visibility and funding for urban forestry, but to connect it to important issues, such as housing, transportation, public health, and natural resource protection. Through policy, the Strategic Growth Council can help move urban forestry into a healthy future with California and its communities.

For more information, visit www.sgc.ca.gov.

Connie Gallippi is the Senior Policy Consultant for Conservation Strategy Group, a consulting and lobbying firm specializing in environmental advocacy.

The Strategic Growth Council works to ensure tree-lined streets like the one pictured below are a part of California's future.



California ReLeaf American Recovery & Reinvestment Act Grant Program - Grant Recipients

San Francisco Bay Area

City of Daly City: \$100,000; 3 jobs created, 2 jobs retained; remove hazardous trees and plant 200 new trees; provide educational outreach to local schools

Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation: \$130,000; 7 part-time jobs created; plant 500 trees in West Oakland

Friends of the Urban Forest: \$750,000; 4 jobs created, 9 jobs retained; job training for at-risk youth in San Francisco; plant 2,000 trees, maintain an additional 6,000 trees

Our City Forest: \$750,000; 19 jobs created; plant over 2,000 trees and care for an additional 2,000 in the city of San Jose; job training program for low-income residents

Urban ReLeaf: \$200,000; 2 jobs created, 5 jobs retained; working with at-risk youth to plant 600 trees in Oakland and Richmond

Central Valley/Central Coast

City of Chico: \$100,000; 3 jobs created; inspect and prune old growth trees in Bidwell Park

Community Services and Employment Training: \$200,000; 10 jobs created; job training for at-risk youth to plant and maintain trees in Visalia and Porterville

Goleta Valley Beautiful: \$100,000; 10 part-time jobs created; plant, maintain and water 271 trees in Goleta and Santa Barbara County

City of Porterville: \$100,000; 1 job retained; plant and maintain 300 trees

Sacramento Tree Foundation: \$750,000; 11 jobs created; plant 10,000 trees in the greater Sacramento area

Tree Fresno: \$130,000; 3 jobs retained; plant 300 trees and provide community outreach in Tarpey Village, an economically-disadvantaged neighborhood of Fresno County

Los Angeles/San Diego

Hollywood Beautification Team: \$450,000; 20 jobs created; academic and vocational training in urban forestry; plant over 700 shade trees

Koreatown Youth and Community Center: \$138,000; 2.5 jobs retained; plant 500 street trees in economically-disadvantaged neighborhoods of Los Angeles

Los Angeles Conservation Corps: \$500,000; 23 jobs created; provide job-readiness training and job placement assistance to at-risk youth; plant 1,000 trees

North East Trees: \$500,000; 7 jobs created; provide 50 young adults with on-the-job urban forestry training; replant and maintain fire-damaged trees; street tree planting program

Urban Corps of San Diego County: \$167,000; 8 jobs created; plant 400 trees within three City of San Diego Redevelopment Areas

Statewide

California Urban Forests Council: \$400,000; 8 jobs created; 3 large-scale tree-planting events in San Diego, Fresno County and the Central Coast

California ReLeaf Network Member Profile: Mountains Restoration Trust

By *Suanne Klahorst*

Life just happens. “It was never my grand plan to become an advocate for the Santa Monica Mountains, but one thing led to another,” said Jo Kitz, co-director of Mountains Restoration Trust (MRT). Her childhood hikes near Mt. Hood put her at ease in the mountains. As an adult, she met children who were afraid of bugs and wild things and realized that joy in nature wasn’t a given. Serving as a guide for the California Native Plant Society and the Sierra Club, she thrived as an outdoor educator for city-dwellers, “They thanked me as if they had been to the most marvelous party ever!”



Above: Jo Kitz is the face behind Mountains Restoration Trust's determination to releaf the Santa Monica Mountains.

Under a valley oak in Malibu Creek State Park in the Santa Monica Mountains, Kitz had her aha! moment as she observed a surrounding landscape devoid of these majestic trees. “Valley oaks were once the most important and plentiful native trees in the southern coastal ranges to Los Angeles County. They were decimated by early settlers who harvested them for farmland, fuel and lumber.” A shooting location for the TV series “M.A.S.H.,” the park had only a handful remaining. She took her conviction straight to the park superintendent. Soon she was planting trees at pre-approved locations. It seemed simple enough in the beginning.

Learning to Start Small

Suzanne Goode, senior environmental scientist for the Angeles District of State Parks, described Kitz as “a fierce woman who never gives up, she keeps on caring and keeps on doing.” Only one tree survived from her first group of potted trees. Now that Kitz plants acorns, she loses very few, “When planting 5-gallon trees I soon learned that when you take trees out of a pot, the roots have to be cut or they remain restricted.” But there is nothing to stop the roots of acorns from seeking water. Of the 13 ecosystem circles planted in February, with five to eight trees per circle, only two trees failed to thrive. “They need very little irrigation once they are growing naturally. Over-watering is the worst thing you can do,” explained Kitz, “the roots come to the surface, and if they dry out without their feet in the water table, they die.”

In some years she has planted and then watered very little for five months. During the recent drought, however, more water has been needed to get the seedlings through the dry season. Native bunch grass provides groundcover. Squirrels and deer chomp on the grass if there is little else available, but if the grass takes root in the wet season it will survive these setbacks.

Using the Right Tools Helps Trees Thrive

MRT’s campground oaks improve the view from Goode’s park office window. “Oaks grow faster than people realize,” she said. At 25 feet, a young tree is tall enough to serve as a perch for hawks. For twenty years, Goode has approved the MRT planting sites, clearing them first with park archeologists so that Native American artifacts remain undisturbed.

Goode has mixed feelings about the required tree shields, which are fitted with nets to keep birds and lizards from getting trapped inside. “Protecting trees from the wind doesn’t allow them to develop the sturdy plant tissues they need to survive, so they have to be shielded for several years.” She acknowledged that campground trees need the shields to protect young trees from the occasional overzealous weed-whacker. “Myself, I prefer to plant an acorn and let it fend for itself,” said Goode, who has planted plenty during her career.

The weed-whacker is an indispensable tool for nurturing young trees. “When we started we didn’t think we needed a pre-emergent. We were so wrong, the weeds flourished!” said Kitz, who encourages native perennials as substitute for herbicides. Natives such as creeping rye, poverty weed and equestrian ragweed maintain a green carpet around the trees even during dry summers when the rest of the landscape is golden. She weed-whacks around the perennials in the fall to reseed the next year’s growth. By cutting back the dried brush, the owls and coyotes can eliminate the troublesome gophers that can easily destroy them. Every acorn is enclosed in a gopher-proof wire cage.



Above: Volunteers assemble tree tubes and wire cages to protect young seedlings from gophers and other browsers.

Creating a Sense of Place Through Partnership

“You can’t imagine how many mistakes can be made while digging a hole and sticking an acorn in,” said Kitz, who couldn’t replant Malibu Creek State Park without lots of help. Her first partners were at-risk youth from Outward Bound Los Angeles. The youth tree-planting teams were active for five years, but when funding ended Kitz sought out a new partner that could carry on independently. This made time for her other pursuits, the acquisition of land to expand and connect Santa Monica Mountain trails and habitats.

Cody Chappel, Mountain Restoration Coordinator for TreePeople, another Los Angeles-based urban forestry nonprofit organization, is her current on-the-ground expert in acorn quality control. He secures a tree’s future with a few enthusiastic volunteers who can only spare three hours to learn about the care and nurturing of an acorn. Chappel collects the adapted acorns from the park and soaks them in a bucket. Sinkers get planted, floaters do not, since air indicates insect damage. He talks of the mountains as “the lungs of LA, the source of the airshed.”

Chappel hosts MRT planting events at regular intervals, tapping into thousands of members and a celebrity-studded board of directors who pull in funding from mega-donors Disney and Boeing.

Kitz’s favorite spot in the park these days is an east-facing slope, where a young oak grove will one day inspire stories of “place” and imagination. Chumash tribes once gathered acorns here to make mush in the park’s grinding holes. The stories of the grinding holes don’t make sense without the oaks. Kitz imagined bringing them back, and by doing so found her place in the Santa Monica Mountains.

Below: The bucket brigade provides acorns and the surrounding vegetation with a strong start.

Suanne Klaborst is a freelance journalist based in Sacramento, California.



Spring 2010

Member Snapshot

Mountains Restoration Trust

Year founded: 1981

Joined Network: 2002

Board Members: 5

Staff: 3 full-time, 8 part-time

Projects include:

Park plantings, public education programs, native tree restoration programs, tree care programs

Contact:

Jo Kitz, Co-Executive Director
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Please welcome California ReLeaf Network's newest member!

Ojai Trees began in 2007 with a few meetings of a small group of concerned citizens. In 2008, they planted 143 trees at four planting events with approximately 20 volunteers at each event. They have also hosted tree care events where they trained volunteers and pruned young trees in the City of Ojai. Welcome to the Network!



Left: Volunteers enjoy a day of pruning at an Ojai Trees event.

FUF Celebrates 1,000th Planting

One of San Francisco's best-loved non-profit groups achieved a big milestone on February 20 when it lead a team of volunteers in planting trees in the Western Addition neighborhood. The event marked the 1000th time that Friends of the Urban Forest (FUF) has planted trees in San Francisco since it was founded in 1981.

Julia Butterfly Hill addressed the team of about 130 volunteers when they gathered in the morning at Rosa Parks Elementary School. The environmentalist and activist is best known for living in an ancient Humboldt County redwood tree for two years to prevent a lumber company from cutting it. Since emerging from the tree (which she named "Luna") in 1999, Hill has been an author, organizer and motiva-

tional speaker.

The February 20 planting of approximately 85 trees is amongst the largest FUF has done. Rosa Parks Elementary school, which won a "green makeover" contest among San Francisco public schools last year, received 24 trees, most of which are native to California, such as California Buckeyes, Coast Silktassels, and Western Redbuds. Kaiser Permanente provided funding for the event.

After a brief training, volunteers spent the morning planting trees at the school and at over two dozen other sites in the Western Addition. Afterwards, they returned to the school for a potluck lunch and a ceremony that included a Native American dance performance.

"Our thousandth planting was made possible by the vision, hard work and generous donations of thousands of San Franciscans over the past 29 years," said FUF executive director Dan Flanagan. "Thanks to the trees they've planted, San Francisco is a greener, healthier and more beautiful place."

FUF is a founding member of the California ReLeaf Network.



Photo: Chris Fenster

Above: Friends of the Urban Forest volunteers plant a tree during the organization's 1,000th planting.

Welcome Kathleen!

In February, California ReLeaf hired Kathleen Farren Ford as our newest Program Manager.



Kathleen comes to us from the Trust for Public Land (ReLeaf's former parent organization) where she was the Public Grants Manager, writing grant applications for land conservation projects all over the state. Prior to that position, she was TPL's Grant Relations Manager where she was more active in legislative analysis and advocacy.

Kathleen and her husband Scott are the proud parents of Olivia, 17 months.

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 Association of Local Conservation Corps
California Community Forests Foundation
California Urban Forests Council
Canopy
CREEC
CityTrees
Common Vision
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
Friends of Trees of Nevada County
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
Solano Advocates Green Environments
San Mateo Arboretum Society

San Mateo Park Association
South San Francisco Beautification Committee
Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods
Streaminders
TREE Davis
Tree Lodi
Tree Partners Foundation
Urban ReLeaf
Vacaville Tree Foundation
Vallepar Conservators
West Oakland Commerce Association
Woodland Tree Foundation

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA

Atascadero Native Tree Association
Carpinteria Beautiful
CSET
Goleta Valley Beautiful
Greenspace: The Cambria Land Trust
Ojai Trees
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
Koreatown Youth & Community Center
Los Angeles Community Forest Advisory Committee
LA Conservation Corps
Mountains Restoration Trust
North East Trees
Orange County Conservation Corps
Orange for Trees
Pasadena Beautiful Foundation
Professional Tree Care Association of San Diego
ReLeaf Costa Mesa
Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District
San Bernardino Volunteer Yard Beautification Project
San Diego Community Forest Advisory Board
Seal Beach Tree Committee
ShadeTree Partnership
Tree Lindsay
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) 757-7330, info@californiareleaf.org.

New California ReLeaf Website

In November, California ReLeaf launched its new and improved website at www.californiareleaf.org. The new site features allow staff to quickly change or add to the website so that the most up-to-date information is available.

One of the most exciting features is the new California ReLeaf blog. Through the blog, California ReLeaf is able to post advocacy and grant information as soon as it's available. ReLeaf Network groups can

also take advantage of the ReLeaf blog, by sending stories, job postings, and event news to amastin@californiareleaf.org.

Another great feature is the "Find a Local Organization" button on the home page. By clicking this button, visitors are taken to a fully searchable directory of the California ReLeaf Network. There, visitors can easily find an organization in their city or county.

Please visit our new site and let us know what you think by leaving a comment!



Above: California ReLeaf's new website was designed with change in mind.



Legislative Update

By Chuck Mills

A Mixed Bag for Urban Forestry as the State Weathers Big Budget Cuts

Governor Schwarzenegger unveiled his proposed 2010-2011 State Budget in early January that again seeks to address severe state deficits of roughly \$20 billion for both the current and forthcoming budget year combined. Several controversial options have been suggested by the Administration on how to close this gap, including a proposal to fund State Parks' baseline budget with revenues generated from off-shore oil drilling along the Santa Barbara coast.

For urban forestry and natural resources overall, the budget contains little good news. While the Governor's inclusion of \$10 million for the Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program is a welcome sigh of relief, the CAL FIRE budget contains no new allocations from existing bonds for urban forestry grants. Furthermore, the bond freeze for new projects remains fully in effect.

2010 promises to be another long year of budget debates and after hour's negotiations at the State Capitol. This is but the first of several budget drafts that will be considered in the coming months, and we will continue to provide updates as more information becomes available.

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 the president of California ReLeaf's Board of Directors.

National Legislative Update

By Alice C. Ewen

The federal outlook for appropriations is tempered. These are challenging financial times, but green initiatives continue to capture attention in Washington. Now is the time to showcase smart, thrifty solutions that will help conserve energy, extend infrastructure resources, protect the environment, revitalize neighborhoods and create jobs --- as the bumper sticker says, "trees are the answer."

How You Can Help in 2010

Working with our national partner, the Alliance for Community Trees, California ReLeaf is working to advance several priorities in 2010 and we need your help:

- Rally for continued funding for the **Urban and Community Forestry Program**, a critical support system for urban forests nationwide. This program is funded by the USDA Forest Service and delivered in partnership by state agencies. The urban forestry assistance offered by CAL FIRE relies in great part on this critical program. Ask your representative and senators to support \$100 million for FY 2011 for the Forest Service U&CF Program. This would significantly grow the scope of the current program, providing \$40 million first for current state cooperative programs plus \$60 million for new targeted, strategic approaches to optimize environmental services, mobilize volunteer stewardship, inventory and assess city forests, and create green jobs on the ground.
- Ask your representative and senators to reauthorize the **Small Business Administration Tree Planting Program**. This program provides funding for tree planting to revitalize commercial districts. It would support the nursery industry, which is primarily composed of small family businesses. Ask your House representatives to co-sponsor H.R. 4509, the Small Business Environmental Stewardship Assistance Act of 2010, which

appropriates \$50 million for each of the fiscal years 2010-2015. For more detailed instructions, see: <http://actrees.org/site/stories/sba.php>

- Ask your representative to co-sponsor H.R. 2222, the **Green Communities Act**. The Green Communities Act would support green infrastructure financial and technical assistance for localities to implement green stormwater infiltration and management strategies and invest in urban revitalization. Urban forestry is specifically identified as a practice the legislation would support. The bill is endorsed by Alliance for Community Trees and the American Nursery and Landscape Association, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and others. For more instructions, see: <http://www.greencommunitiesact.org/>
- Ask your representative to support H.R. 3734, the **Urban Revitalization and Livable Communities Act**. It would authorize \$445 million to rehabilitate and revitalize urban parks, connecting children to the outdoors and creating green jobs. The bill is endorsed by National Recreation and Parks Association, Alliance for Community Trees, and a diverse coalition of interests including the National Police Athletic League.

Federal Funding Opportunities for Practitioners

At the state and local level, we urge urban forestry groups to seek out opportunities to connect to stimulus funding in non-traditional ways. Localities have received billions of dollars for energy conservation. These **Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants (EECBG)** are locally directed and flexible. Consider how trees can help support the overall goal of energy efficiency for lower income residents. If your city is investing money to retrofit low-income homes with insulation, windows, and other features, you can make the case that adding two trees to strategically shade the structure is a low cost add-on. The City of Denver is an example of one

city that is using some of its federal EECBG funding to plant trees in strategic locations to provide energy conservation benefits to residents. (<http://www.milehigh-million.org/>)

The ARRA legislation also included a new provision allowing a percentage of projects funded by the **Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund** to be green infrastructure. This funding comes through EPA and is typically administered by the state department of environmental protection responsible for water quality enforcement. PENNVEST, a state infrastructure agency in Pennsylvania, is using ARRA funds from the loan fund to pay for green infrastructure projects, including urban forestry. Nearly 8,000 shade trees will be planted in Philadelphia utilizing this source of stimulus funding. (<http://www.pennvestportal.state.pa.us/projectsearch/ProjectDetails.aspx?id=3507>)

To learn more about ACT's action agenda for clean, green and healthy communities, visit Alliance for Community Trees at: <http://actrees.org/site/whatwedo/policy-alerts/index.php> or contact Alice C. Ewen at 301-277-0040 or alice@actrees.org

Alice C. Ewen is executive director of the Alliance for Community Trees, a national network of 160 nonprofit organizations across 40 states and Canada. ACT encourages all organizations engaged in urban forestry to join the alliance. To join online, visit <http://actrees.org/site/getinvolved/index.php>

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About

California Trees

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We Need Your Feedback!

California ReLeaf is thinking of making some changes to the format of *California Trees*. We value your opinion and hope that you will help us to make the best decisions for this publication.

Please take a moment to visit our online survey to answer a few short questions.

Visit <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CaliforniaTrees> to give your response.



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