



California ReLeaf

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

*Connecting People, Trees,
and Communities*





Familias En Acción



We support grassroots efforts and build strategic partnerships that protect, enhance, and grow California's urban and community forests.

OUR PROGRAMS



NETWORK

Convening a Network of urban forest nonprofits and CBOs for collaboration and peer-to-peer learning.



OUTREACH & ED

Sharing resources and research to support healthy urban forests through local activism.



GRANTS ADMIN

Seeking and providing grants to local groups to plant and care for trees in their communities.



ADVOCACY

Speaking for trees in state legislation and providing resources for community groups to find their voices.

Dear Friends of ReLeaf,

We really appreciate your dedication and support of California ReLeaf and our work helping community-based organizations plant and care for urban trees across California. Despite the many challenges of the pandemic these last few years, ReLeaf Network members and supporters have worked to expand tree canopy, especially in underserved neighborhoods and communities that need it the most. Pandemic-related hurdles did not stop the work—challenges became opportunities. Community groups stepped up to adjust in the field and expanded their outreach virtually. It has been inspiring to see the creative new ways Network members, grantees, and supporters have engaged neighbors, students, and volunteers in our joint cause of caring for our urban forests.

Although we look forward to bringing back in-person meetings in the next year, we are grateful for the virtual pivot we took to strengthen our statewide network. This last year, we met over zoom for Learn Over Lunch sessions (LOLs), connected during our educational webinars, and shared new resources via our Network Listserv group. Because of the success of our virtual programs we were able to launch our new Urban Forest Leadership program in 2022. Our initial class cohort consists of nonprofit and municipal professionals from over 20 cities across the state! We hope to continue this initiative next year, with the goal of investing in new and diverse voices and leaders in our field.

This past year was a reminder of the stark new realities of the climate crisis - drought and extreme heat. We know we have much work ahead as we look to the future. With these climate challenges, we also see the hope of unprecedented new public funding streams for nature-based solutions in 2023. In gratitude, we look to you as the champions of our urban forests. We look forward to continuing to help fund grants, provide support, and advocate for your work at the local level. Together we are making an impact one tree at a time.

This report will give you more information about our major program areas, stories from our grantees, and highlights from our Network in fiscal year 2022.

Thank you for your support and partnership!

Cindy Blain
Executive Director





Tree San Diego

Strengthening Nonprofits and Community Groups

Caring about and caring for our urban forests starts locally. Because of the great work of the California ReLeaf's Network of 75+ nonprofits and community tree groups, planting and caring for urban canopies is happening throughout the state - positively changing neighborhoods. Since California ReLeaf's founding in 1989, we've strived to connect and support a coalition of community-based tree groups. Our diverse experiences help strengthen and build upon our joint cause of increasing tree canopy in the state.

Increasing capacity at the local level requires funding for tree planting projects. California ReLeaf works hard to advocate for funding streams and programs to support these efforts at the state level. Not only do we advocate for additional funding in urban forestry and urban greening, but we also seek out private foundations to sponsor grants, as well as offer educational opportunities for our Network to strengthen their own fundraising skills.



Food Exploration and Discovery

2022 RELEAF HIGHLIGHTS



Hosted **Educational Webinars** and **“Learn Over Lunch”** Zoom sessions. Network members shared insights and lessons learned about their programs.



Refreshed our website adding many new resources, such as a **Tree Planting Event Toolkit** and a **comprehensive Resource Page**.



Awarded 13 Treecovery grants in Cycle 1 and seven in Cycle 2. Projects include shading under-canopied neighborhoods (adaptation) and selecting species that will capture high amounts of carbon in their lifetimes (mitigation). Treecovery grants focus on capacity rebuilding by allowing increased personnel expenditures and overhead rates, as well as continuing to offer support during the application process and post-award milestone.



Expanded the “Relief through ReLeaf” grant program – funded by Prop 68 revenue – into **Santa Rosa, Chico, Fresno, Watsonville, and San Ysidro**. This program targets areas affected by extreme weather events where resources are strapped. Projects help communities adapt and become more resilient through urban reforestation, and have opportunities for healing.



Partnered with CAL FIRE, the USDA Forest Service, a national team of researchers, and stakeholders to plan an **economic impact study designed to provide current data on the contribution of urban forestry enterprises to California's economy.**



Creating Climate Resilient Communities

Climate resilience requires anticipating and proactively responding to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. Nature-based solutions like growing urban tree canopies statewide help California communities cope with the new realities of extreme heat, continued drought, and pollution. Tree canopy and green spaces not only mitigate climate impacts but also provide complementary benefits like sequestering carbon, protecting the local economy, improving public health, and improving livability and tourism.

Most of our grants are funded by California's Cap and Trade program with built-in targets to meet for greenhouse gas sequestration. We meet these targets while also maximizing co-benefits to the communities where trees are planted.



2022 RELEAF HIGHLIGHTS



With support from ReLeaf Network members, State Agencies and Save Our Water, we helped coordinate a **statewide media campaign to Save Our Water and Our Trees during drought**. California ReLeaf served as a spokesperson on national and regional news. With the help of Network partners, California ReLeaf worked collaboratively to get the message out about watering trees during drought.



Launched **Growing Green Communities grant program with sponsorship from PG&E** and ongoing support of CAL FIRE's Urban and Community Forestry Department and the U.S. Forest Service. **Awarded five grants focusing on the Central Valley where 297 trees were planted**. This incubator grant encouraged new community-based organizations to engage in tree planting activities.



Joined State and National partners in **advocating for the Inflation Reduction Act** and a \$30 billion dollar investment in nature-based climate solutions, including a **\$1.5 billion investment in urban trees**.



Co-sponsored Assembly Concurrent Resolution 109 on Extreme Heat with TreePeople which went to committee and passed in January 2022. Encouraged legislators to **prioritize urban greening and urban forestry as extreme heat mitigation measures** in budget conversations.

2022 ReLeaf Grantees & Network Members

2022 PUBLICLY FUNDED GRANT BENEFITS

The data values listed below are 40-year project lifetime benefits of the trees planted by our publicly funded grantees in FY22.



Sustainable Claremont



Tree Foundation of Kern



North Coast Opportunities

2,542
TREES PLANTED BY
PUBLICLY FUNDED
GRANTEES IN FY22

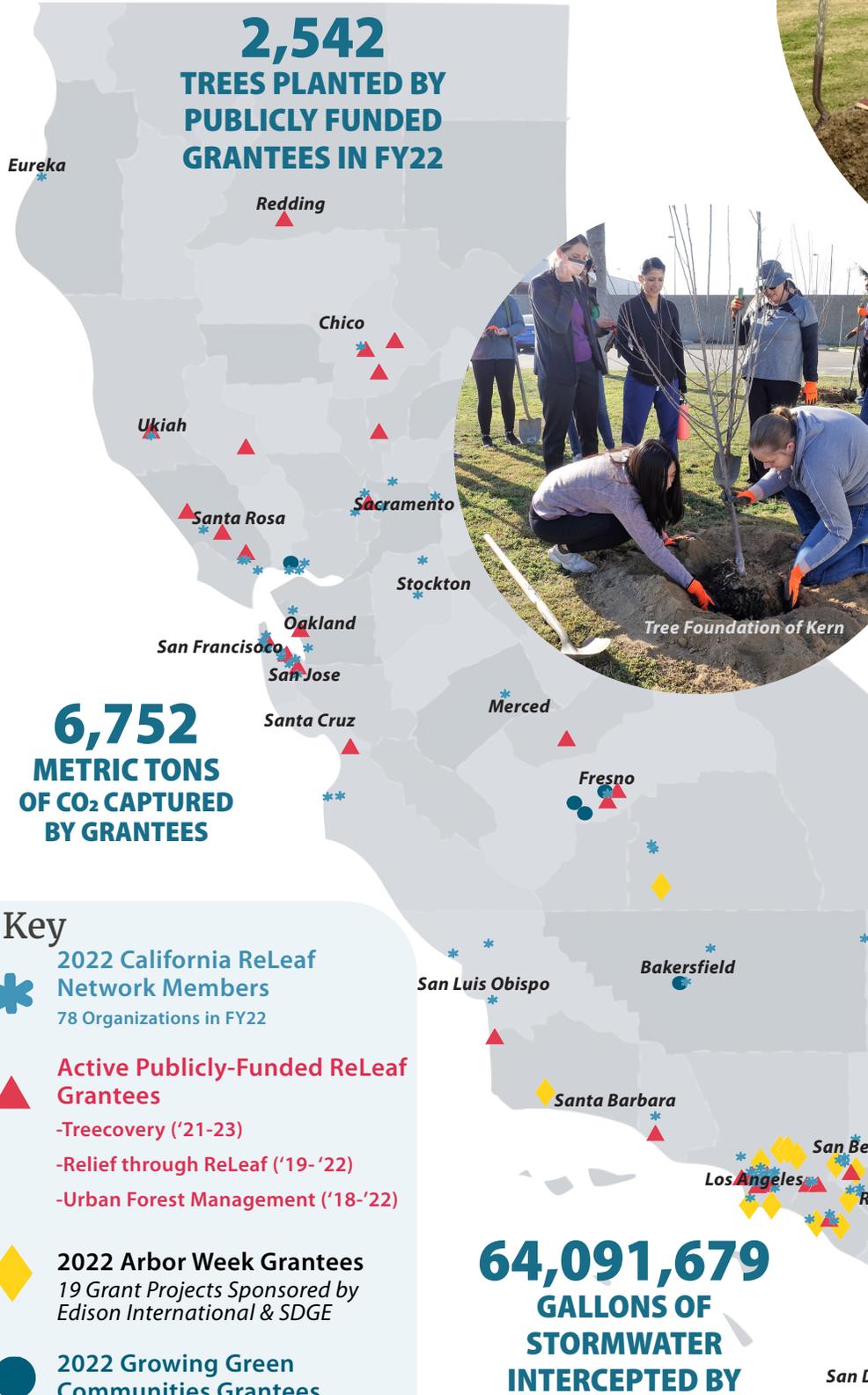
1,978,978 kWh
OF ENERGY CONSERVED
BY GRANTEES

That's enough energy to power 186 households for a year.

6,752
METRIC TONS
OF CO₂ CAPTURED
BY GRANTEES

64,091,679
GALLONS OF
STORMWATER
INTERCEPTED BY
GRANTEES

63,752 LBS
OF AIR POLLUTANTS
REDUCED BY GRANTEES
including O₃, NO₂, SO₂, VOC, & PM_{2.5}.



Key

-  2022 California ReLeaf Network Members
78 Organizations in FY22
-  Active Publicly-Funded ReLeaf Grantees
 - Treecovery ('21-'23)
 - Relief through ReLeaf ('19-'22)
 - Urban Forest Management ('18-'22)
-  2022 Arbor Week Grantees
19 Grant Projects Sponsored by Edison International & SDGE
-  2022 Growing Green Communities Grantees
5 Grant Projects Sponsored by PG&E



2022 Network Impact

The California ReLeaf Network was hard at work in FY22, planting trees, engaging communities, providing jobs, and caring for their community forests. The collective impact of the Network can be felt across the State! The numbers below were reported by 41 of our Network members.



25,542
TREES PLANTED



18,463
VOLUNTEERS



48,897
TREES CARED FOR



131,270
VOLUNTEER HOURS



11,602
SQ FT OF CONCRETE
REMOVED
BY 5 NETWORK ORGANIZATIONS



6,185
TREES PLANTED IN
DISADVANTAGED
COMMUNITIES
BY 16 NETWORK GROUPS



9,435
HOURS OF JOB
TRAINING PROVIDED
BY 7 NETWORK GROUPS



169
INTERNSHIPS
PROVIDED
BY 11 NETWORK GROUPS



2022 NETWORK MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

Arroyo Secco Foundation's Hahamongna Native Plant Nursery grew more than 10,500 native plants and trees to support habitat restoration projects in Los Angeles.

Amigos de los Rios partnered with sixteen Los Angeles area schools including Jackson Elementary in Altadena on school greening projects, lowering temperatures and increasing canopy for the physical and mental health of students.

Climate Action Now! won the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) 2022 Gold Leaf Award for Outstanding Landscape Beautification Activities for their work in San Francisco.

Concerned Resource & Environmental Workers C.R.E.W. launched its Green Valley Project initiative to Re-Oak Ojai by creatively engaging youth interns and volunteers.

SistersWe received a Sustainability Grant from the National Association of Realtors (NAR) to install a pocket park outside their 8th & D Street Community Garden in San Bernardino expanding the community greening project to include more trees, as well as amenities like picnic tables, bike racks, and drinking fountains.



Engaging New Urban Forest Advocates

We believe an engaged community can grow and sustain a successful tree canopy. A thriving forest needs residents to care about and care for trees, especially in the critical first seven years after planting. California ReLeaf focuses a portion of our outreach and grants on engaging new active groups in urban tree planting. We believe that grassroots voices and leadership are key to developing a canopy that survives, thrives, and serves future generations of residents.

We are committed to providing technical assistance for groups in the application, implementation, and reporting phases to reduce barriers. At the Capitol, we build strategic partnerships, including groups focused on natural resources, climate justice, racial justice, economic justice, job training, community health, and more. Urban trees impact a myriad of interconnected issues, so we cultivate new partners everywhere we can—helping them see the value of urban forests.

2022 RELEAF HIGHLIGHTS



Welcomed six new Network members: Community for Trees, Eastern Kern County Resource Conservation District, El Ceritto Community Garden, Kate Sessions Committment, Nehyam Neighborhood Association and PLANT Parenthood.



Hosted the annual **Arbor Week Poster Contest**, engaging kids across the state and cultivating tomorrow's tree heroes. Our 2022 theme, "Trees Bring Us Together" invited students to explore how trees bring a community together especially as a result of the pandemic.



Distributed funds to 19 Arbor Week grantees in Southern California for tree planting celebrations in their communities through the sponsorship of Edison International and San Diego Gas & Electric and the ongoing support of CAL FIRE's Urban & Community Forestry Department and the U.S. Forest Service. These "intro" grants are intended to nurture new tree nonprofits.



ARBOR WEEK POSTER CONTEST WINNERS

ARBOR WEEK GRANT HIGHLIGHTS



43 SCHOOLS INVOLVED



2,265 SCHOOL CHILDREN
ENGAGED IN ARBOR WEEK GRANT PROGRAMS



616 TREES PLANTED

Grantee Story: Sustainable Claremont

POMONA, RANCHO CUCAMONGA, & GLENDORA, CALIFORNIA

Like many communities in the Inland Empire, the cities of Rancho Cucamonga and Pomona suffer from some of the worst air quality in the nation. With three major freeways bordering these cities and continual traffic congestion, grey streets fade into the smoggy horizon on almost a daily basis. Studies show that Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties are among the five worst locations for particle pollution, which can negatively affect lung function and worsen medical conditions such as asthma and heart disease. These cities' underserved communities are further challenged by canopy inequity bearing additional extreme heat exposure in residential neighborhoods, schools, and parks.

Recognizing both air pollution and climate change-induced extreme heat events are growing issues in their area, Sustainable Claremont broadened its reach beyond the City of Claremont through California ReLeaf Urban Forestry Management (UFM) Social Equity Forest Improvement Grant. Known as "Green Crew," Sustainable Claremont's urban forestry program's mission is to alleviate environmental injustices, especially in underserved communities, through greening projects creating cleaner and cooler air for all.

To expand tree equity for heat and pollution mitigation, Sustainable Claremont developed partnerships with the cities of Pomona, Rancho Cucamonga, and Glendora. With the help of city partners and UFM grant funding, Sustainable Claremont planted an additional 163 trees within underserved communities while providing three urban forestry internships for local youth. Interns trained with city arborists, learned about proper tree planting and care, and were instrumental in tree planting, monitoring, and community engagement projects for the grant.

Interns trained with city arborists, learned about proper tree planting and care, and were instrumental in tree planting, monitoring and community engagement projects.

Tree plantings took place at public parks, schools, and health centers in Pomona and Glendora, as well as in low-income residential neighborhoods in Rancho Cucamonga. Sustainable Claremont's "Walk the Town" initiative focused on underserved communities of Rancho Cucamonga,

where Sustainable Claremont staff and interns canvassed many neighborhoods, personally inviting 196 residents to participate in adopting and caring for a city tree in their yard. As a result, the Sustainable Claremont team successfully planted 50 new trees through this program alone. After planting, staff and interns provided watering bags and educational information to residents in addition to monthly monitoring and reminders about tree care and watering, which resulted in the survival of an incredible 99% of all trees planted.



For More Information about Grants and Funding Opportunities

Please Visit <https://californiareleaf.org/grants>

Watsonville Wetlands Watch

WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA



Located in the Pajaro Valley southwest of Santa Cruz, the City of Watsonville is California's 5th largest agricultural producer. With a large farmworker population, over 80% of all Watsonville students come from low-income households. Despite a population of over 52,000, city data shows that only 7.8% of streets, schools, parks, and neighborhoods have tree canopy, making urban heat a growing health issue, especially in disadvantaged neighborhoods, as climate change-induced extreme heat events continue to increase annually in California.

Watsonville Wetlands Watch, an organization dedicated to environmental stewardship and student education, saw an opportunity to address the tree canopy disparity in their community by getting involved in the city's tree planting initiative, and by launching a youth climate action urban forest revitalization program.

Because of California ReLeaf's Urban Forestry Management (UFM) Social Equity Forest Improvement Grant, 100 new trees on school campuses and parks have been planted in Watsonville by creatively engaging high school youth in urban forestry education and job training programs.

Twelve underserved students from Pajaro Valley High School participated in Watsonville Wetlands Watch's Climate Corps Leadership Institute. Through the year-long internship program, these students were provided tools to become climate action leaders, all while gaining hands on experience in urban forestry with career development opportunities. Climate Leadership interns trained with the Parks and Community Services Department and Watsonville Wetlands Watch staff while helping lead tree

100 new trees on school campuses and parks have been planted in Watsonville by creatively engaging high school youth in urban forestry education and job training programs.

planting events and ongoing tree maintenance at their school campuses and community parks. By the end of the project, the twelve climate interns had given hundreds of service hours in tree care, maintenance and education benefiting their neighborhoods for years to come.



For More Information about Grants and Funding Opportunities

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Desirée Backman: 2011–2022

Tree cheers to Desirée Backman who dedicated eleven years of service to California ReLeaf's Board of Directors and for the last three years served as the Board President. Thank you for your dedication.

STAFF

Cindy Blain
Executive Director

Victoria Vasquez
Grants & Public Policy Manager

Megan Dukett
Education & Communications Program Manager

COVER IMAGES THANKS TO CALIFORNIA RELEAF GRANTEES AND NETWORK MEMBERS:

Amigos de los Rios and Stanbridge University

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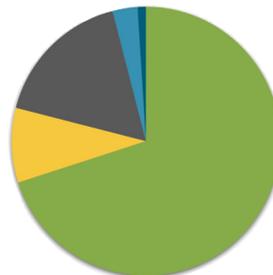
Pacific Gas and Electric Company®



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FY2022 Expenses:

\$1,222,793



70% GRANTS
9% OUTREACH & ED
17% MANAGEMENT
3% NETWORK
1% ADVOCACY



CALIFORNIA
ReLeaf