

# NEVADA

Nevada Division of Forestry



Partnering with a burgeoning tree-planting non-profit enables the Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF) to connect public-private spaces and achieve tree canopy and community building outcomes. By supporting programmatic development, NDF has helped build a new community resource that thinks about community needs first in areas that lack the most, and yields social and environmental benefits along the way.

How do we support a sustainable, equitable, and resilient tree canopy in the hottest, driest desert in North America? With all the struggles and environmental barriers that we face, the answer lies in partnerships.

Over the past year, NDF has been partnering closely with Nevada's first tree-planting-focused nonprofit, [Nevada Plants](#). The Nevada Urban and Community Forestry program has historically focused efforts on trees in the right-of-way and park trees, without focus on other areas of the urban forest. To achieve equitable tree canopy distribution, NDF is now looking to "fill in the blanks" and expand planting beyond street trees and parks. Focus groups that address air quality, heat mitigation, and outdoor recreation determine that "trees are the answer", but to get there, Urban and Community program staff need to engage, support, listen to, and involve residents. Without engagement from residents, progress will be unable to move beyond the fragmented public spaces to measurably increase tree canopy in a place like Nevada.

NDF worked with Nevada Plants to develop a comprehensive program that is a "one-stop shop" for tree planting and care resources throughout Nevada. Nevada Plants is focusing intently on communities that experience extreme urban heat, food deserts, and lack of tree

canopy resources. They start by asking communities what they want, where they need it, and how they'll care for it – getting the "buy-in" that is necessary for future maintenance, care, and to achieve needed tree establishment outcomes. Because of this approach, NDF has seen an immense swell of public-private partnerships, with private investments in plant material to match the USDA Forest Service funded programmatic infrastructure support enabling NDF to work in the most vulnerable communities – where NDF believes they can achieve the greatest change, the greatest benefits, and detectable desired outcomes.

Because of the community-driven approach, NDF sees that those that want trees care enough to call when they see problems with their newly planted trees. They tell their neighbors about the programs and tell organizational staff about how much trees mean in their lives. They engage as multi-generational families to pick up and plant trees, passing down knowledge and strengthening family and community bonds. This approach has even resulted in the first-ever state-sponsored community tree planting on tribal land – working with the Ely-Shoshone tribe to plant trees in neighborhoods completely devoid of tree canopy cover.



**Header:** Ely-Shoshone tribal members plant shade trees in neighborhoods in eastern Nevada, NDF's first-ever tribal tree-planting project. **Above:** Community members plant fruit trees in a Las Vegas area community garden. Photos: Lisa Ortega