



WESTERN FORESTRY
LEADERSHIP COALITION



COLLECTIVE PROGRESS

Enhancing Urban & Community Forestry
Across the West

Table of Contents	1
Introduction	2
State Stories	3-13
Alaska	3
Arizona	4
California	5
Federated States of Micronesia	6
Hawai'i	7
Montana	8
Nebraska	9
North Dakota	10
Oregon	11
South Dakota	12
Utah.....	13

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act

Many stories in this collection were made possible by funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) or the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

BIL was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Biden on November 15, 2021. Nationwide, it has provided roughly \$5.5 billion to the USDA Forest Service. Provisions include but are not limited to enhancing forest management, supporting reforestation projects, funding wildfire mitigation, and providing forestry careers.

IRA was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Biden on August 16, 2022. IRA has awarded over \$1 billion for Urban and Community Forestry Grants. Without this funding, many of the projects in this collection may not have been possible.

This publication was finalized in October 2024. Additional stories are added as they become available.

Stories were provided by the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition's Western Urban & Community Forestry Committee.

Front Cover Photo: Jennifer Killian, Oregon Department of Forestry

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Introduction to the Publication

The Western Forestry Leadership Coalition's Western Urban and Community Forestry (WUCF) Committee provides a channel for ongoing communication and collaboration between western states, U.S.-Affiliated Pacific Islands, the USDA Forest Service, and forestry partners.

In 2024, the WUCF Committee developed a strategic plan to guide future direction and increase continuity. Following an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT), goals emerged, including enhancing partnerships that will inform policies, federal grant implementation, capacity building, member support, and strengthening resilience.

The stories presented in this publication highlight actions in specific states while also showing common issues that apply across the West. Many of the stories demonstrate the impact of federal funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act.

Underlying federal investments is the recognition that forestry is a long-term practice where one-time funding should create opportunities to achieve long-term goals. States in association with local organizations are creating or enhancing policies, partnerships, professional capacity, education, outreach, and analysis.

We invite you to explore the stories conveyed from across the western region, where local and state efforts illustrate the transformative power of increased federal funding. Successes are highlighted to inspire improvement and expansion of all urban and community forestry programs by adapting and applying ideas.

To learn more about the work of the WUCF Committee, please visit <https://www.thewflc.org/about/committees/western-urban-community-forestry-committee>.

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CAL FIRE



STATEWIDE COMMUNITY FORESTRY SURVEY

When Congress approved the historic 1.5 billion dollars for Urban and Community Forestry through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the Alaska Community Forestry Program, like everyone else, got pretty excited. The Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry & Fire Protection (DOF) considered lots of ideas for grant projects. Ideas were floated, shot down, reconsidered, pondered, and debated. The DOF staff decided to take a breath and ask the fundamental question, “What community forestry projects do Alaskans want?”

To find out, program staff retained a nationally regarded natural resource planning and research consultant for assistance. The consultant helped develop a statewide survey to assess the priorities among Alaskan communities regarding community forestry programs and projects. Over 900 survey invitations were sent to community leaders, agencies, nonprofits, and schools in more than 250 Alaskan communities.

Working with the consultant was invaluable in determining what type of grants DOF should offer. Based on the survey results, the Alaska Community Forestry Program (ACFP) landed on the following grant categories:

- Green Infrastructure Projects
- Streambank Stability/Restoration Projects
- Invasive Tree Control Projects
- Phytoremediation Projects
- Community Forestry Management Plans, Tree Inventories, Tree Canopy Assessments

Alaska launched the first round of IRA grant program funding in March 2024 and will announce recipients of the second funding round by December 2024.

Header: Steve Masterman’s Zone 3 orchard outside of Ester, Alaska. Photo: Josh Hightower. **Right:** ACFP staff and Alaska Community Forest Council members tour an Intrinsyx Environmental phytoremediation project at a former petroleum transfer site adjacent to the Fairbanks International Airport. Photo: Jim Renkert





ARBORICULTURE PRE-EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Young people facing obstacles to traditional employment, with limited knowledge or experience in arboriculture and residing in low-income areas, are looking for new and exciting career opportunities. Many are interested in trees, gardening, and natural resources but have yet to be introduced to these fields during high school. The Arizona Arboriculture Pre-employment Program was piloted in Yuma to introduce young adults to careers in arboriculture while providing training, skill development, and post-program opportunities.

The Arizona Arboriculture Pre-Employment Program (AAPP) in Yuma, modeled after the American Forests curriculum of the same name, was designed to provide opportunities for forestry career exploration targeting the City of Yuma residents aged 18-26. Yuma was selected given the city's low tree equity score and the significant economic importance of protecting healthy trees.

The Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management provided seed money through the 2022 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) allocation to deliver the program in partnership with Arizona Western College's (AWC) Continuing Education Program. The pilot program was an 8-week classroom experience paired with an 8-week internship opportunity. The course was advertised via high schools, community colleges (including AWC), community events, the Yuma Workforce Center, local Native Tribes, social media, and one-on-one conversations with youth in the target age range. The classroom portion of the course utilized instructors from the local arboriculture community as well as subject matter experts. State, municipal, and private organizations hosted interns. Participants were provided tools and resources, including

safety equipment, and were paid to participate for the entire 16 weeks. They received certifications in CPR and first aid and received professional development funding to attend other existing arboriculture workshops sponsored by the Arizona Community Tree Council. Mentors worked with the students to ensure participation. This program is unique because it is only one of a few workforce development programs in Arizona that pays students to participate. It also offers materials for students to keep and provides a framework for success.

Ten participants from underrepresented communities were accepted into the program, eight of whom completed the classroom portion of the course and moved on to internships. Pre- and Post-program evaluations were distributed, and students indicated increased knowledge in categories including tree identification, soils, arborist tools and their use, and professional skills. Two of the students have accepted full-time employment, one accepted part-time employment, and one is currently in the final interview process for full-time employment with their host organizations. All students indicated they enjoyed the program, made professional and peer-to-peer

connections they will keep, gained increased confidence, and are ready to take the next step in their career.

"Two months ago, I would have never imagined myself going up in a bucket truck, climbing a tree, or using a chainsaw, let alone even picking one up and for that I am very proud of myself for stepping outside of my comfort zone."

Emma Fregozo



Header Left: Students were given the opportunity to shadow industry professionals. **Header Right:** Student inspecting nursery stock.

Above: Program participants are taught various arboriculture techniques and skills like tree climbing. Photos: Rebecca Clemence



GREEN SCHOOLYARDS GRANT PROGRAM

California's youngest residents are increasingly confronted with the challenges of climate change and the urban heat island effect. With approximately 5.9 million K-12 students attending public schools across nearly 130,000 acres of land in the state, a significant portion of these schoolyards remains unshaded and covered in asphalt. This lack of green space contributes to rising temperatures and limits students' access to beneficial outdoor environments. The need for sustainable and resilient school grounds is critical, as these spaces play a pivotal role in the health and educational experiences of our children.

The Green Schoolyards Grant Program, spearheaded by CAL FIRE's Urban and Community Forestry Program, is a transformative initiative aimed at addressing these pressing issues. This program is designed to protect and enhance the health, well-being, and educational opportunities of California's students, particularly those most vulnerable to the effects of rising temperatures and extreme heat. By investing in the creation of greener, cooler, and more dynamic school environments, the program not only combats the urban heat island effect but also fosters a range of educational and developmental benefits.

With an impressive \$121 million allocated specifically for school greening projects, the Green Schoolyards Grant Program has made substantial strides in reshaping educational landscapes across California. To date, the program has funded 29 K-12 school grants, impacting over 164 campuses statewide. These projects have transformed barren, asphalt-heavy spaces into vibrant green areas that offer tree shade, improve air quality, and create inviting environments for outdoor learning and play.

In addition to the school projects, approximately \$27 million has been dedicated to enhancing non-profit childcare facilities that receive government funding. This investment has supported 20 grants benefiting 41 facilities, broadening the scope of the program's impact and extending its benefits to younger children in early education settings.

Each project funded by the Green Schoolyards Grant Program includes features such as shaded playgrounds through trees, interactive garden spaces, and outdoor classrooms. These upgrades not only provide a healthier environment but also offer invaluable opportunities for nature-based, hands-on learning. Additionally, integrating stormwater capture systems into these designs helps manage runoff and supports local wildlife by creating habitats that attract pollinators and birds. Students engage with their surroundings in ways that boost environmental literacy, foster creativity, and develop essential social skills such as collaboration and problem-solving.

Through these green schoolyards, CAL FIRE is not just improving individual

school environments; it is contributing to a more sustainable and resilient future for California. By addressing the immediate needs of our students and preparing them for the challenges of a changing climate, the Green Schoolyards Grant Program embodies a forward-thinking approach to education and environmental stewardship.



Header Left: Campus corridor at Jackson Elementary has been turned into a green space with native plants and walking paths. Photo: Walter Passmore. **Header Right:** Corridor space between classrooms at El Monte City School campus transformed into a raised garden space for students to learn and interact with their environment. Photo: Henry Herrera. **Above:** Three-year-old tree planted along fence at Bassett High School. Photo: Walter Passmore



URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM

The Federated States of Micronesia consist of diverse islands with unique ecological systems that are vital to the well-being of local communities. Urbanization and climate change pose significant threats to these environments. Effective urban and community forestry can play a crucial role in mitigating these challenges by providing habitat restoration, improving air quality, and enhancing overall community aesthetics.



Consultation Meetings

Consultation Meetings for the Kupluc Mangrove Landowners was held on September 12, 2024, in Kosrae State with the Mayor of Malem and some members of the Shrew Jonas, one of key landowner of Kucpluc. The meeting was a success; the group of family landowners/members showed interest and noted that not all the rightful landowners in the family were on island. As a result, the landowners agreed that the best way to move forward was to meet other adjacent landowners who shared similar interests in the project and who are currently on island. Thus, UCF Program Coordinator and Mr. Shrew Jonas agree to organize another meeting and invite adjacent landowners to seek interest and endorsement to join the project.



Nursery Improvement

In Pohnpei State, the Urban and Community Forestry Program has been supplying communities and farmers with fruit, ornamental, and medicinal trees for over ten years. However, there have been concerns about the seedlings' ability to thrive after distribution due to their small size. The UCF Program has provided essential financial support for maintaining the nursery. To improve seedling survival rates, the NRM division has begun cultivating seedlings to a height of up to 10 feet before distribution. Additionally, plans are underway to expand the nursery with more cloth, bedding, and space for larger seedlings. A site has been selected, with foundational work already in progress.

Distribution of Tropical Fruits Trees

In 2023, a severe drought hit the islands of Yap State and disrupted many of the island ecosystem services. Yap U&CF program response with agroforest enhancement program through fruit tree replanting in the communities. This resulted in requests from the community for fruit tree seedlings. Citrus, mountain apple, cacao plants, Sour sap, breadfruit, Mango, and other fruit trees, were distributed to many communities in Yap. In 2024, the severe drought impact continued affecting several outer islands, impacting 70% of crops and trees on Fais limestone atoll. To help mitigate the effects of the severe drought, the Urban Community Forestry combined efforts with Forest Stewardship to support the planting of fruit trees in Fais. Through the partnership of Melai Mai and Yap Forestry, U&CF and other Agriculture and Forestry Staff sent one hundred ten assorted tropical fruit trees to one of the communities on Fais Island.

Header: Yap Agriculture & Forestry Staff
Distributing Tropical Trees in Fais Island
Left: Consultation Meeting in Malem (Kosrae)
Center: Nursery Improvement in Pohnpei

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**‘A‘ohe ‘ulu e loa‘a i ka pōkole o ka lou.
No breadfruit can be reached when the picking stick is too short.
There is no success without preparation.¹**

In Hawai‘i, urban and community forestry projects exist in the context of increasingly high costs of living and an estimated 85 - 90% reliance on imported food². That means these projects can meet Hawaii’s critical need to involve young people in promoting long-term equitable access to nutrient-dense, culturally sustaining foods. Hawaii’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) projects stepped up to this challenge.

University of Hawai‘i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UH CTAHR) Extension, Farm to School Program: SPROUTS-O‘ahu (Students Propagating ‘Ulu Trees for Schools on O‘ahu) engaged Kaimukī Middle School students in caring for 50 ‘ulu (breadfruit) trees, which were distributed to and planted at 17 public schools across O‘ahu. A popular “All About ‘Ulu” professional development course was created and delivered in two cohorts



to 84 public school teachers from 24 schools on five islands to prepare their school communities for planting, care, and curricular integration of ‘ulu trees.

Hawai‘i Public Health Institute: Food Trees for Schools Initiative expanded the scope of Hawai‘i Farm to School (a statewide network) to plant fruit trees in school gardens. The project supported tree establishment and vitality by conducting interviews, consultations, and increased campus buy-in by consulting an advisory panel and offering webinars and in-person planting training.

MA‘O Organic Farms expanded on its successful farm internship program by offering new workshops with agroforestry professionals and planting fruit trees in areas formerly dominated by invasive species. This project enhanced the food production potential of these farm sites and encouraged interns to connect their interests in farm work with the field of arboriculture.

Upcoming Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) projects share intentions to promote food security (two sub-awardees) and provide supportive frameworks for youth in tree-planting initiatives (three sub-awardees). In addition, statewide IRA initiatives will address food production (Community Coconut Project) and support schools (Shade



Trees in Schools). Food sovereignty and place-relevance are shared priorities across climate resilience, public health, and urban and community forestry sectors. Kaulunani is proud to partner with groups building resilient food forest systems.

References

¹ Pukui, M. K. (1983). *‘Ōlelo no‘eau : Hawaiian proverbs & poetical sayings*. Bishop Museum Press.

² Office of Planning, Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism; State of Hawai‘i Department of Agriculture. *Increased food security and self-sufficiency strategy*. U.S. Department of Commerce. Accessed from https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/op/spb/INCREASED_FOOD_SECURITY_AND_FOOD_SELF_SUFFICIENCY_STRATEGY.pdf on May 24, 2024.

Header: SPROUTS professional development course participants with a newly planted ‘ulu tree. Photo: Lydi Morgan Bernal, UH CTAHR. **Left:** The Food Trees for Schools team delivers ‘ulu trees to teachers at Waipahu High School. Photo: Cailyn Schmidt, Hawai‘i Public Health Institute. **Above:** Gabe Schachter-Smith of Hawai‘i Banana Source led a workshop on cultivating and caring for various varieties of banana. Photo: MA‘O Organic Farms



RURAL URBAN FORESTRY

The focus of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funds to disadvantaged communities brought more attention to the health, equity, and geographic components of urban and community forestry. It also highlighted the existing work that this program brings to the West: Rural Urban Forestry. It's tempting to give the acronym of RU ... because that is what it is. Small populations require staff to wear multiple hats in their communities, and capacity is stretched thin. In Montana, the services in rural communities deserve a nod for implementing projects with these new funds. The themes of their projects revolve around protection, sustainability, safety, health, and sovereignty.

Rural Urban Forestry may sound like an oxymoron, but this is a common role for Montana, as the fourth-largest state by area and the third-least densely populated state. The biggest factors affecting Montana's disadvantaged communities include environmental issues, economic disparities, and public health. Additionally, communities span far apart, creating challenges in access to commodities and resources.

In the spring of 2023, Montana received \$750,000 in funds from IRA. The Urban & Community Forestry (UCF) program released the first round of IRA funds in December 2023. While \$300,000 was available, applicants requested over \$700,000 in project funds. Projects started to get off the ground in the summer of 2024, and the energy has continued to grow.

Small, rural communities developed project proposals to establish food systems, shelter, canopy, and much-needed maintenance for an aging tree population. These projects represent the needs of underserved populations who live in these areas. For example, the Harnessing Hope Foundation will

bring a multifunctional windbreak to the tribal communities in Fort Belknap Reservation. This concept involves using culturally appropriate trees that can provide both shelter from environmental elements and produce a food source for the local residents.

Montana Urban and Community Forestry Association received funds to aid small, disadvantaged towns across the state. Their goals include assisting in inventories and management plans for disadvantaged communities, promoting tree boards, and assisting public works employees. They also encourage the profession of UCF tailored to Montana's urban forestry challenges and opportunities; share technology tools and resources relevant for rural communities; incorporate biodiversity, health, resiliency, and climate change impacts into trainings and outreach. This targeted approach to underserved rural residents will promote resilient and healthy community forests.

Designing projects tailored to rural areas is an important aspect of UCF in Montana. In order to best serve our communities, we must understand the

population, the culture, local conditions, and the changing climate. The success itself lies within ensuring the next generation can enjoy the benefits that come from trees and building the foundation to support these efforts.



Header Left: Fort Benton, a small town in central MT with a rich history, features a walking path with legacy cottonwoods and aging ash trees along the Missouri River. Photo: Jamie Kirby, DNRC. **Header Right:** Staff at Blackfeet Community College start a row of shelterbelt trees in the highline tribal community of Browning, MT. Photo: Jamie Kirby, DNRC. **Above:** Tribal Senator Harold Male Bear and the Wyola Mighty Few Youth members worked with DNRC to bring trees to their community, including trees for shade, protection, and fruit-producing trees for food sovereignty. Photo: Josh Smith, DNRC



FEDERAL FUNDING ENHANCES RURAL FORESTRY EFFORTS

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding has been critical in Nebraska for improving local community forestry programs and providing better service to rural communities.

In June 2024, Nebraska Forest Service (NFS) staff converged to conduct a tree inventory in the western Nebraska town of Curtis, population 839. Knowing what, where, and condition of community trees helps municipalities make data-driven management decisions to ensure trees are around for the future. BIL provides critical funding to better serve rural parts of Nebraska through two full-time positions stationed in western and central Nebraska. Through this additional capacity, NFS has completed numerous tree inventories, improved program delivery for the Free Trees for Fall Planting program, and provided timely technical assistance. Without BIL funding, the high level of technical assistance communities receive wouldn't be possible.

Furthermore, BIL funding has allowed NFS to hire a summer intern, Clara Walstad, from the University of Nebraska's Community and Regional Forestry Program to assist with program implementation. One of her projects

has been helping Crete, Nebraska (an underserved community) by providing an inventory of park trees.

"I enjoy honing my tree ID skills and learning alongside foresters and parks staff."

Clara Walstad
NFS Intern

Ultimately, the inventory will help set Crete up for its IRA funding and become a Nebraska Statewide Arboretum (NSA) Affiliated Arboretum site.

IRA funding is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Nebraska's communities to improve their community forestry through no-match funding. Between storms, drought, tree age, and Emerald Ash Borer, there is a backlog of expensive tree removal and replacement needs. IRA helps address this need and expand local community forestry programs. NFS received \$1.875 million in IRA funding for distribution to Nebraska

communities. In addition, the USDA Forest Service awarded \$1 million to South Sioux City and \$10 million to the NSA. Thus far, NFS awarded \$1.54 million to eleven large communities for community forestry projects in underserved areas. Twenty-five applicants from small communities, less than 8,000 people, requested over \$430,000. NFS and NSA collaborated to expand the initial funding pool and ensure all qualifying applicants received IRA dollars without the burden of submitting another application. Recipients will start projects in the fall of 2024.

Header Left: For Clara Walstad, NFS intern, helping Crete with their inventory is one way she is learning while helping trees and communities thrive. Photo: Graham Herbst. **Header Right:** Kaden Vowers, Assistance Community Forester, helps with a tree inventory in western Nebraska. BIL funding has improved service to rural communities. Photo: Chrissy Land



REVITALIZING VELVA PARK

The Velva Park District used a Bipartisan Infrastructure Law - Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (BIL-IIJA) grant to remove declining trees in their city park and replace them with new shade and ornamental trees. A local tree service company was hired to remove 12 large, hazardous ash trees that had suffered storm damage over the years. A variety of new young trees were purchased from a local greenhouse and planted in appropriate locations around the park. Selections planted include 'Harvest Gold' Mongolian linden, 'Spring Snow' crabapple, quaking aspen, common hackberry, littleleaf linden, and American linden. These successful new plantings increase the diversity of Velva's community forest and serve as an inspiration for tree diversity all across town.

Town of Velva, ND

Velva is a small town of roughly 1,000 people in north-central North Dakota, in McHenry County. Although the city's economy is centered around agriculture, it lacks a full-time forestry position. According to 2022 U.S. Census Bureau data tools and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, this community meets the criteria for rural and underserved communities.

Significance of City Park

Velva only has one city park, located within a bend of the meandering Souris River. The city park serves as a primary gathering place for school and community activities. In addition to the natural beauty and historic setting, the area is desirable for its protection from wind and ample shade. Historically,

the forest consisted of American elm, green ash, boxelder maple, cottonwood, and occasional bur oak along with native riparian understory species. Unfortunately, invasive insects and diseases have jeopardized the two most abundant native trees in North Dakota. Additionally, the relentless onslaught of prairie summer storms and harsh winter conditions had left many poor-condition ash standing in the park, many of which posed a hazard to park users.

Removal of Declining Trees

The City of Velva decided to be proactive by utilizing a BIL-IIJA grant to remove 12 declining ash and plant 20 replacement trees in canopy gaps throughout the park. Not only did this grant project mitigate a potential hazard, it also increased species diversity and strengthened the resilience of Velva's

urban forest against exotic pests and diseases. Mongolian linden, American linden, littleleaf linden, quaking aspen, hackberry, and crabapple trees are now thriving in the park's understory and will become part of the next generation of park trees as the ash trees are removed in stages. This BIL-IIJA grant project also brought awareness of the threat posed by Emerald Ash Borer and served as a template for Velva residents to follow for removal and replacement of green ash. While enjoying a shady walk along the Souris River, park users can view a sampling of alternative tree species hardy to North Dakota while contemplating the benefits these young trees will one day provide to future generations.

Header: Ground View of Velva Park. Photo: Joel Allen



The Oregon Department of Forestry's Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Program has been awarded \$26.6 million in Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) grant funding to build statewide urban forestry management capacity and establish two distinct sub-award programs for overburdened and underserved communities. One funding opportunity is devoted specifically to the nine Federally Recognized Tribes of Oregon, and the other is available to all eligible entities in qualifying geographies. Both sub-award programs aim to promote equity and environmental justice using a community-centered, whole systems approach. The aim is not just to get a lot of trees planted in the short-term but rather to initiate a cultural paradigm shift that helps build enduring programs and long-term urban sustainability. By focusing on comprehensive workforce development and diversification programs, Oregon is hoping to move "beyond the golden shovel" of traditional urban tree planting initiatives.

Although ODF's IRA sub-award programs are just getting started, Oregon is already seeing encouraging results from this historic funding opportunity. One of the most conspicuous of these early results is the rapid growth and capacity building of ODF's UCF team and its network of community partners. At ODF, the team has expanded from historically having only two permanent, full-time employees (FTE) to now having nine permanent FTE. This has made it possible to take on new work and projects previously impossible, such as working closely with Tribes, small rural communities, educational institutions, non-profits, trade organizations, and counties. Three of the seven new positions are being funded by IRA, two are being funded by the State of Oregon, and two others are being funded by a

BIL Cooperative Forest Health grant. This is a prime illustration of how taking advantage of one funding opportunity can build confidence in a program and help leverage/open up other funding opportunities.

One of the most noticeable and exciting effects of the IRA funding opportunity in Oregon has been the considerable uptick in the number of interdisciplinary, cross-sector conversations and collaborations that are occurring. These conversations and collaborations focus on tree equity and environmental justice and involve/elevate overburdened and underserved populations.

Thanks to the IRA, the ODF team's ability to partner with and provide support to non-municipal entities has been greatly enhanced. The team can now provide

technical, financial, and educational assistance to all areas of the state and deeply engage with local community partners. This will soon result in better planning, better implementation, and better follow-up care for trees in historically disadvantaged communities throughout the state.

While planting more urban trees throughout Oregon is an eventual goal, ODF will first focus on building sustainable systems. This will be achieved by expanding opportunities for urban forest planning and monitoring, education and engagement, network and relationship building, workforce development and diversification, expansion of nursery capacity, enhancing long-term tree maintenance, and facilitating adaptive management and storytelling/lesson sharing.



Header Left: Community volunteers in Corvallis help to plant a new street tree and demonstrate that many hands make light work and that community-based tree planting initiatives have distinct advantages over municipal/contractor-based initiatives. Photo: Jennifer Killian, ODF. **Header Right:** Eugene's Mayor, Lucy Vinis, works with UF Technician, Heidi Lakics, to plant and dedicate a new street tree at the Downtown Farmer's Market. Photo: Scott Altenhoff, ODF. **Left:** City of Salem Urban Forester, Milan Davis, and Urban Ashes Founder/CEO, Paul Hickman, tour the urban wood mill at the Marion County Juvenile Department's Alternative Program. Photo: Scott Altenhoff, ODF



SEASONAL INTERNS COMPLETE TREE INVENTORY

Identifying the Need

South Dakota had a notable need for street tree inventories with current pests such as Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) arriving and slowly spreading throughout the Southeastern corner of the state. South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Division of Resource Conservation and Forestry (RCF) utilized Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding to hire seasonal interns to assist with the completion of street tree inventories throughout the state to identify high-risk and priority areas.

EAB and Street Tree Inventory Data

In 2018, EAB was found and confirmed in South Dakota. At the time, most communities in South Dakota had no formal, complete street tree inventory. The inventories that had been completed indicated a high percentage of Ash trees in South Dakota communities, leading to a need for more inventory data.

Interns Build Capacity

In 2023, RCF hired five interns to meet that need: Mikayla Kolbeck, Jessalyn Anderson, Kira Faust, Marisa Wilks, and Sloan James. This initial intern team was based in Sioux Falls, SD to address the highest priority region of the state as it is where Emerald Ash Borer has been confirmed.

Over the course of approximately 12 weeks, the intern team completed approximately 15 community street tree inventories and assisted in three community tree plantings. Their work was highly valuable in identifying at-risk communities for EAB infestations and the need for future street tree inventories in South Dakota.



Header: Drone photo of interns. **Above:** Mikayla Kolbeck (left), Sloan James (back left), Jessalyn Anderson (left middle), Kira Faust (right middle), John Hartland (back right), Marisa Wilks (right). Photos: John Hartland



GREEN, HEALTHY LANDSCAPES IN PROVO

Provo City has numerous areas in disadvantaged portions of the city that desperately need revitalization, including planting of trees and other vegetation, along with proper irrigation for them to thrive. Additionally, the city is concentrating on water conservation efforts. Using funds from an Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) grant, this project will allow the city to increase its efforts and provide examples for other communities for sustainably foresting disadvantaged communities.

Flagship Transformation

While finalizing all the background documentation and selecting a suitable contractor to assist with the work, Provo City canvassed its disadvantaged areas and found 155 suitable spots to start planting in the fall of 2024.

One of the flagship transformations includes the Fresh Market project, which will transform a park strip directly in the heart of Provo, which has begged for revitalization for some time. This first project will be a showcase for all the project areas that follow it.

Beautify and Conserve

Chaz Addis, Provo City's urban forester, is also working with residents, and businesses within disadvantaged areas, west of this location, to bring new life to the area and hopefully spark new interest in residential involvement within the community. They are advertising a message of hope by asking the residents to help the city plant new trees, drought-tolerant plants, and landscapes that will beautify the neighborhood around them and help conserve water throughout the city.

With the onset of cooler fall weather, they will steam ahead to install these new landscapes. The hope is that it will convey the message that Provo City residents can achieve a green, healthy landscape while conserving water and maintaining a drought-tolerant environment, without removing all vegetation and rocking the strip.



Header and Above: Parkstrip in need of trees. Photo: Chaz Addis



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