



WESTERN FORESTRY LEADERSHIP COALITION



BUILDING EQUITY Through Community Forestry Connections

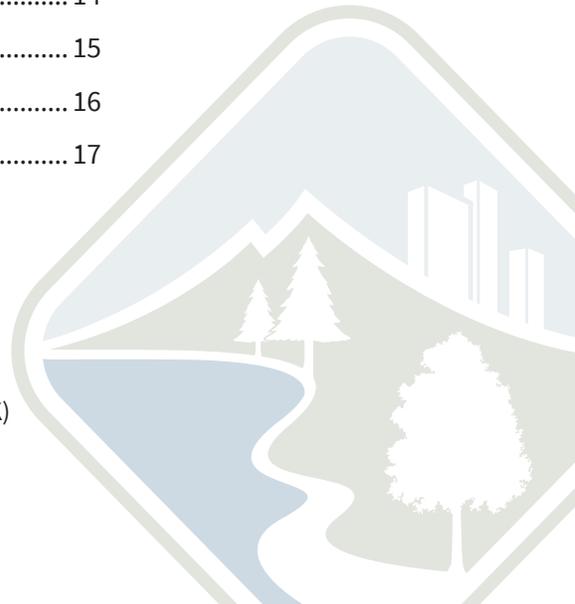
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Top Left: Lynn Lougary (KS), Top Right: Amy May (UT), Bottom: Brad Muir (AK)





INTRODUCTION

Building Equity Through Community Forestry Connections

We are proud to share a collection of stories from the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition's (WFLC) Western Urban & Community Forestry (WUCF) Committee.

This publication is centered around the themes of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, along with the interrelated topics of environmental and social justice. These topics are important to the WUCF Committee and to those we serve. Collectively, we are adapting, learning, growing, and working to initiate meaningful change.

Diversity is less about what makes people different, and more about understanding, accepting, and valuing those differences. Equity starts with creating fair access, opportunity, and advancement for all people. Inclusion centers around whether people feel a sense of community, connection, contribution, and a shared sense of purpose with others they live with and around.

There are a number of lessons that can be learned from this publication and the featured stories submitted by western Urban & Community Forestry Coordinators. Enjoy the success stories and know there is much more work to be done.

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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ALASKA

Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry

In 2016, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry (DOF) received a Landscape Scale Restoration Grant from the USDA Forest Service for a project in Anchorage titled “Fish Need A Forest: Restoring Campbell Creek and Creating Low Impact and Sustainable Access.” The grant's project goals and objectives were to reduce runoff, improve water quality, create low-impact access, restore streambanks, and install green infrastructure. Over five summers, project partners installed elevated light penetrating walkways, conducted streambank restoration, planted trees, installed interpretative signs, and removed invasive species.

Running through the heart of Anchorage, Campbell Creek flows from the Chugach Mountains to Cook Inlet. The 70-square mile watershed is home to five species of salmon, rainbow trout, moose, bear, and beaver. Criss-crossing back and forth along 7.5 miles of the creek is the popular Campbell Creek Greenbelt multi-use trail.

In the winter, cross-country skiers, snow-bikers, and walkers enjoy the trail. During the long Alaska summer days, families walk and bike the trail while canoeists, kayakers, and packrafters fish and float the Class I waterway.

Schools, picnic areas, and restaurants adjoin the creek along with residential, commercial, and industrial areas. There are negative impacts to this high use. The loss of vegetation, increased impervious surfaces, and polluted runoff degrades aquatic and wildlife habitat and increases flooding risks. The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) classified the creek as impaired due to the pollutants, sediment, and high temperatures that can harm fish and other aquatic life.

The Alaska Community Forestry Program was awarded a USDA Forest Service Landscape Scale Restoration Grant and partnered with DEC, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Municipality of Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department, the Anchorage Park Foundation, and the Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) program to implement the project goals and objectives.

Key goals and objectives included reducing runoff and flood risks, improving water quality, creating low impact and sustainable access, restoring forest buffers, restoring streambanks to prevent erosion and sedimentation, and installing green infrastructure.

Over the course of five summers, project partners went into action and installed elevated light penetrating walkways, restored over 600 feet of streambank, held community events to plant trees, led student field trips, designed and installed three interpretive signs, and removed invasive trees. Much of the work was conducted by teenagers in the YEP program.



(Left) "Fish Need A Forest" interpretative panel installed at Campbell Park along Campbell Creek in Anchorage. Photo: Jim Renkert

(Right) An Anchorage Youth Employment in Parks crew planting white spruce trees as part of the Campbell Creek "Fish Need A Forest" restoration project. Photo: Brad Muir

AMERICAN SAMOA

American Samoa Community College Agriculture, Community and Natural Resources Division

American Samoa Community College, Agriculture, Community and Natural Resources Division Forestry Program hosted and celebrated the 2021 Arbor Week. The celebration was complete with presentations, a morning wave, and outreach to youth participants.

The Forestry Program hosted and celebrated the 2021 Arbor Week, from April 19 - 23 in American Samoa.

The program initiated the Arbor Week celebration with an outreach presentation at the Kanana Fou High School (25 Senior students) and Elementary (32 students in Level 3 and 24 students in Level 4). The DPS – Fire Bureau assisted with the presentations. The Forestry Program then hosted a morning wave at Utulei, from 7:00 – 8:00 a.m., in honor of Earth Day. Various agencies such as the National Park Service, Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources, Environmental Protection Agency, and others participated in this wave to promote the environment. The Forestry Program then conducted an outreach presentation to a total of 48 students at Matafao Elementary, and another presentation to a total of 19 youth group participants at the Faga'itua Catholic Church.

The Forestry Program also conducted outreach to a total of 26 students at Aoa Elementary and 23 youth group participants from the Matu'u CCCAS Church. All presentations focused on native and urban trees, climate change, deforestation, fire safety, forest protection, and more.

To complete the Arbor Week celebration, the Forestry Program, in collaboration with Finafinau, planted a total of 75 native and fruit trees in a Forestry client's land in the village of Vaitogi. The Forestry Program has successfully completed the 2021 Arbor Week celebration.



(Left) Department of Safety - Fire Bureau celebrated Arbor Week with a wildfire prevention and safety presentation. Photo: Sam Solaita

(Right top) Finafinau and Forestry staff members planting native and fruit trees to conclude the Arbor Week celebration. Photo: Sam Solaita

(Right bottom) Forestry Program staff celebrating Earth Day and Arbor Week at a morning wave. Photo: Sam Solaita

ARIZONA

Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management

To promote environmental equity in Arizona, the Department of Forestry and Fire Management's Urban and Community Forestry program directs resources to underserved populations to engage communities and increase their access to green space. A project in the City of South Tucson addresses these issues well as it is an economically disadvantaged community with less than a single acre of designated park property. The City of South Tucson's Greenway project connects municipal, state, and nonprofit partners to increase local tree canopy, engage the community in beautification events, and connect the public to larger areas of green space.

The City of South Tucson is an economically disadvantaged community, with up to 46.2% of residents living below poverty. The City of South Tucson has limited green space of less than a single acre of park property. Per the Trust for the Public Lands (TPL), only 1% of South Tucson's city land is used for parks and recreation, compared to the national median of 15%.

In 2010, underserved community residents from the City of South Tucson came together in a series of meetings to offer their support for a new trail project along the abandoned El Paso and Southwest (EP&SW) railroad track that would help address the lack of access to green space. Subsequently, the El Paso & Southwestern Greenway Master Plan (Greenway) was completed and adopted by the City Council in 2012. The Greenway envisions a continuous non-motorized, active transportation vegetated corridor connecting the City of South Tucson (population 5,652), to the City of Tucson's (population 545,975) downtown. The Greenway will also connect City of South Tucson residents to over 128 miles of

Pima County multi-use trails for improved alternative transportation and recreational opportunities.

Through its Community Challenge Grant program, the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management has partnered with the City of South Tucson and Tucson Clean and Beautiful to conduct bilingual outreach through community events, connect with schools and support Youth Tree Leaders, and plant native trees along the Greenway.



(Left) Volunteers, community members, and partners help plant trees for the South Tucson Greenway project. Photo: Tucson Clean and Beautiful

(Right top) About 65 trees will be planted by the completion of the project. Photo: Tucson Clean and Beautiful

(Right bottom) The South Tucson Greenway project includes tree planting and beautification events. Photo: Tucson Clean and Beautiful



HAWAII

Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife

Love of the land and service to people are the foundational elements of two model tree projects that Kaulunani, Hawaii's Urban & Community Forestry Program, partnered with in 2021. Both organizations, MA'O Organic Farms and Uluniu, are dedicated to social justice and community empowerment through promoting food security and cultural revitalization.

MA'O Organic Farms (MA'O) is on the west side of O'ahu, in the Wai'anae region. It was traditionally abundant and self-sufficient, as illustrated by archaeological remains of hundreds of acres of terraced food production; however, Wai'anae is now a food desert, home to a population mired in intergenerational poverty fueled by a historic severing of land and people, and perpetuated by a lack of educational attainment and economic opportunities. Wai'anae reflects the challenges faced by Hawai'i at large: a crisis in cost-of-living, the highest per capita homeless population in the nation, a lack of resiliency in the face of climate change, and a vulnerable food system dependent on imports. Native Hawaiians have high rates of preventable diseases, including diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers.



MA'O was established to develop systemic solutions: to empower and educate Wai'anae youth to lead the community to a healthy and prosperous future through the creation of a culturally-rooted sustainable food system that contributes to health and education outcomes while creating a locally vibrant economy.

With support from Kaulunani, MA'O partnered with Aloha Arborist Association (a nonprofit that connects people who care about Hawaii's trees with the knowledge and resources to care for those trees) to train a cadre of young farm interns in basic arboriculture for orchard trees (pruning, pest management, safe tool use, etc.). The

results have been inspiring! Already in the first six months of the year, MA'O produced almost double the amount of orchard fruit as in the same period last year. In addition to increased orchard productivity, the project has enhanced the capacity of youth and promoted food security.

The Uluniu Cultural Agroforestry Project, also located on the west side of O'ahu at the University of Hawai'i West O'ahu, is a creative collaboration that focuses on Indigenous-based tropical agroforestry practices to address food security and cultural revitalization within climate-change needs and conservation priorities. At the center of their work is the niu (coconut), known as the 'tree of life' for its many uses and sacred associations in Hawai'i. With support from Kaulunani and in partnership with more than ten community groups, Uluniu deepened Indigenous agroforestry knowledge and practices across O'ahu; established three coconut nurseries; grew 1200 coconut seedlings; and planted ten dwarf coconuts. In the process, they strengthened relationships with food security practitioners, gardeners, students, faculty, staff, and the wider community, including MA'O, who received 220 coconut seedlings from Uluniu.

The project notes its most important success, however, has been to cultivate and grow the understanding of the true need of kumu niu (coconut trees) as the tree of life, which also strengthens Hawaii's sustainability goals and restores it as a central part of Hawaii's cultural landscape and well-being.



(Left) Desiree Page, Kaulunani Advisory Council Chair and Aloha Arborist Association Chair, instructs MA'O farmer interns on pruning techniques. Photo: Chelsie Onaga

(Right) MA'O farmer interns practice pruning techniques on mango. Photo: Chelsie Onaga

IDAHO

Idaho Department of Lands

Urban tree canopy (UTC) coverage in Idaho's major cities is lower in historically underserved communities. This lower UTC often results in higher heat-island effects and health issues for underserved communities and groups. The Idaho Department of Lands' Urban and community forestry program (IDL UCF) is addressing this equity issue by utilizing canopy assessment data to expand educational outreach to historically underserved communities and groups. IDL works closely with regional canopy networks, like the Treasure Valley Canopy Network (TVCN), and local municipalities to identify and promote further UCF educational outreach to underserved socio-economic, gender, and ethnic groups.

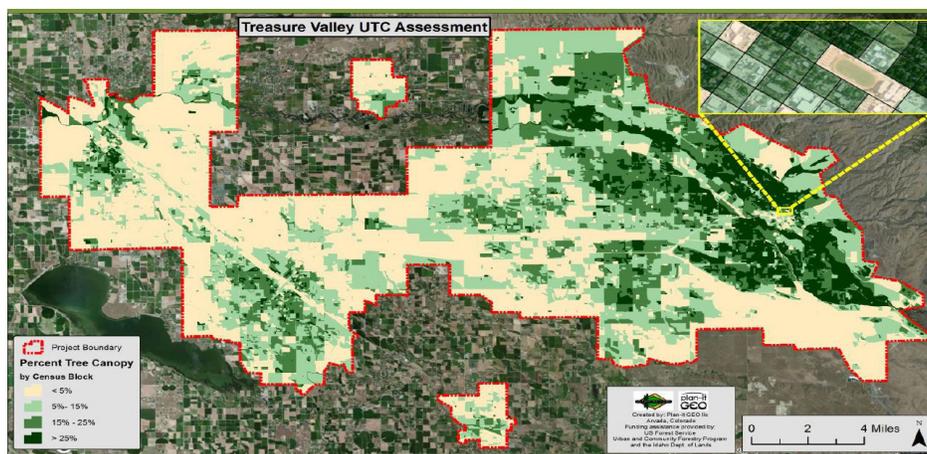
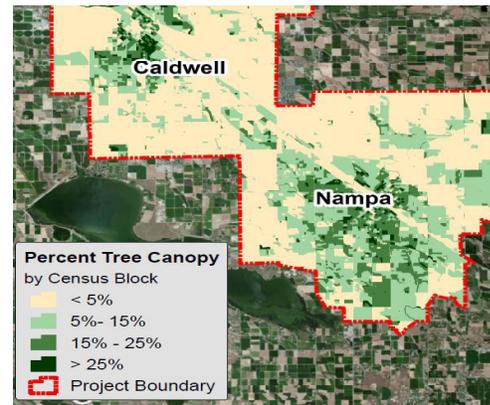
The Idaho Department of Lands' Urban and Community Forestry program advances equity within Idaho's urban and community forests by utilizing data from several Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) grant-funded tree canopy assessments to identify equity gaps within the program. IDL currently utilizes data from three LSR funded canopy assessments to identify areas within municipalities that lack urban canopy coverage, shade trees, and access to open spaces. IDL utilizes the tree assessment data and neighborhood census data to identify project focal areas in disadvantaged communities.

Identifying these disadvantaged communities recently resulted in the funding of a direct grant from the USDA Forest Service to the TVCN. The TVCN will utilize IDL's tree assessment data to complete an equity analysis of Boise's tree canopy. This equity analysis will more closely examine tree canopy cover, urban heat indicators, human health, income, housing inequities, and potential tree planting locations within Boise's disadvantaged communities.

IDL also promotes equity within the urban and community forestry program by sponsoring a diversity candidate to the Municipal Forestry Institute (MFI) each year. The IDL UCF program provides outreach to minority and female

arborists to assist them with the application process and encourage them to apply to this Society of Municipal Arborist's program. Recent successful attendees from Idaho's community forestry programs included arborists from underserved Hispanic communities.

The IDL UCF program is also committed to increasing opportunities for women in the arboriculture and the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields, and will be sponsoring a scholarship for an attendee at SMA's MFI leadership development workshop.



(Left) IDL's UCF program utilizes urban canopy coverage data from the fiscal year 2010 LSR grant to identify census blocks with historically underserved groups that have inadequate canopy coverage. Photo: Plan-it Geo/Idaho Department of Lands

(Above) Idaho's Canyon County cities (Caldwell and Nampa) are a focal project area for IDL's UCF equity outreach due to low urban canopy coverage and large historically underserved Hispanic populations. Photo: Plan-it Geo/Idaho Department of Lands

KANSAS

Kansas Forest Service

The Kansas Forest Service Community Forestry Program partners with the Heartland Tree Alliance, in the Kansas City Metro Area, on tree planting and maintenance projects that focus on underserved areas and populations.

The Unified Government of Wyandotte County includes over 82,000 acres stretching from the Missouri state line west. This area includes the City of Kansas City, Kansas, and major highways, farmland, and urban space. Utilizing i-Tree data, the overall tree canopy coverage for the entire county is 21%. This area has seen a significant loss of canopy by way of emerald ash borer in the past ten years, and it is only getting started. Heartland Tree Alliance (HTA) focuses its work in areas of low tree canopy coverage, which often coincides with low-resourced neighborhoods.

With the guidance of the Kansas Forest Service and partnership of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County, HTA identified three neighborhoods where additional trees would provide multiple benefits. Neighborhoods were selected either because of low canopy coverage or high loss of ash trees. In one of the neighborhoods, the Rosedale area, the median age is 32.7 years old, median income \$45,024, people of color represent close to 40% of the residential population, and 19% of families are below the poverty level. With the help of 19 trained volunteers from Rivus Energy and Youthbuild KCK, new species were planted along city streets to diversify the streetscape and replace canopy cover.

A recently funded State Urban Forest Resilience grant project to reforest community landscapes devastated

by emerald ash borer continues the work of the Kansas Forest Service and its community partners. The cities of Bonner Springs and Overland Park will plant and establish 500 diverse and adaptable trees over the next three years in areas where canopy cover is lacking or was lost due to emerald ash borer. The project will establish canopy cover in parks and neighborhoods to benefit multiple demographics within their communities. This effort places new trees where people can benefit from the numerous health and economic benefits of canopy cover along city streets and in community parks.



(Left) Volunteers plant trees in Kansas City, KS. Photo: Lynn Lougary

(Above) Volunteers learn from HTA and KFS staff about proper planting techniques. Photo: Amanda Gehin

MONTANA

Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation

The Montana DNRC Urban Forestry Program is fostering a tree equity initiative in three “starter” communities. Funded by a USDA Forest Service Sustainable Urban Forest Resilience (SUFR) grant, the project focuses on high-risk neighborhoods to create a healthier, resilient, and equitable urban forest. This highly anticipated project will strengthen community ties, promote social capital, and put the reinvestment back into the neighborhoods that have traditionally not received support from their local agencies. Working together to create tree equity starts at the ground level, creating a ripple effect that will bring adequate environmental services to all.

Montana Urban Forestry is implementing an innovative project through the Sustainable Urban Forest Resilience grant program, funded by the USDA Forest Service. The project is a joint effort involving three of Montana’s larger population centers: the City of Missoula, the City of Kalispell, and the City of Helena.

The project has three overarching objectives:

1. Establish growth space for plant propagation program:

The City of Missoula will develop nursery space to grow large-sized trees and expand their successful gravel bed for more bareroot stock. Kalispell will partner with Missoula to utilize this space for growing trees for their community. Helena will utilize a holding space for their incoming stock through an ongoing partnership with the nearby City of Townsend, MT.

2. Mapping community need: Cities will identify and prioritize areas for tree planting using multiple map layers and data to address tree equity issues. The City of Missoula recently partnered with local health and climate experts to create an interactive map showing high-risk neighborhoods. Kalispell and Helena will follow suit towards this model for prioritizing tree planting efforts. Ideally, this process could be replicated and/or integrated into the statewide urban tree inventory to serve communities throughout the state.

3. Local outreach and education for tree equity: A seasonal employee will coordinate citizen outreach and

develop meaningful relationships within residential areas, prepare and distribute educational materials, and help tell the project’s story through social media. This individual will assist volunteer efforts and develop consistent and effective messaging regarding tree equity. The progress of this work will be communicated between Missoula, Kalispell, Helena, and DNRC to ensure close cooperation and collaboration. All educational resources and information will be made sharable to partner communities throughout the State of Montana.

This work will build a shared understanding of the value of urban forests and encourage planting proper species, watering, and care in underserved and disadvantaged neighborhoods. It could also influence policy change towards more environmental action and attention to these areas for improving infrastructure and green space. This work will hopefully gain momentum and help guide urban forestry efforts across cities statewide, ensuring that all urban forestry activities are conducted through an equity lens.



(Bottom left) Map and layers developed for deciphering high-risk areas and needs. Photo: J. Kirby DNRC screenshot of map. Source: <https://gis.missoulacounty.us/mcchd/healthmap>

(Above left) A planting partner readies a tree for the shelter plantings. Montana Urban and Community Forestry Association (MUCFA) granted funds to the Missoula Poverello Center, a homeless shelter, for tree planting. Photo: MUCFA Grant Summary Report

(Above right) Courtyard area with new trees planted from MUCFA and local partners. Photo: MUCFA Grant Summary Report

NEBRASKA

Nebraska Forest Service

The Nebraska Forest Service and the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum found ways to break down barriers to come up with a successful new tree planting grant program. Perhaps even more important than getting trees in the ground, together, they introduced an underserved audience to tree planting and the importance of the community forest.

The Nebraska Forest Service (NFS) and partner, the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum (NSA), have been managing a variety of tree planting grants for years. Some time ago, they realized that their typical grant process, often targeted at larger projects, didn't work well for smaller projects and could be seen as intimidating for less experienced applicant organizations. They heard from enough potential applicants that they decided to try something new, and the mini-grant program was born.

To reduce barriers and better accommodate the less experienced and underfunded groups, their mini-grant program offered:

- A simple, one-page application
- Up to 10 pre-selected trees for free
- Delivery to community or regional pick-up site
- Outreach materials and templates
- Detailed guidance

The tremendous response quickly made it clear that the new program was a success. What was offered was substantial enough to motivate “first-timers” to try a project, but easy enough that they weren't overwhelmed. The number and size of trees were enough to have an impact, but small enough to manage. The match requirement—volunteer planting/care and outreach activities—allowed those with limited funds to contribute what they did have—time, effort, creativity, and enthusiasm.

NFS and NSA are extremely happy with the results. Although the projects are relatively small, the large number of projects and outreach requirements helped spread messages to a broader, more diverse audience. The smaller projects have helped bring in many communities and groups, often in underserved areas that hadn't been able to participate before, including small villages, inner-city neighborhoods, and Native American communities. In addition, the emphasis on species diversity has resulted

in a wide variety of underused species to be introduced to communities. The resulting trees planted and the broad audience throughout Nebraska that has been educated and inspired make it clear that this was an idea worth pursuing.

Year	Trees	Communities	Projects
2018	598	47	64
2019	577	49	62
2020	591	56	76
Average	588.67	50.67	67.33
Totals	1,766	152*	202

**Not unique communities because of some duplication from year to year.*



*(Left) In a Lincoln neighborhood with declining canopy, a gap is filled.
Photo: Nebraska Statewide Arboretum*

*(Right) An enthusiastic, next generation tree-planter.
Photo: Nebraska Statewide Arboretum*

NEVADA

Nevada Division of Forestry

In the small town of West Wendover, NV, a grassroots effort spearheaded by a high school student garnered enough statewide support to test new technology that could change plantings in the cold desert, particularly in areas where infrastructure is lacking. The Nevada Division of Forestry is proud to have helped this effort get off the ground. This first-of-its-kind public tree planting in West Wendover has sparked a regional discussion about the benefits of trees and engaged Nevadans of all ages and life stages to help grow the community tree canopy.

As the driest state in the U.S., establishing a tree canopy in urban and populated areas of Nevada is no easy task. Recognizing the tremendous value and benefits that trees bring to our communities, more attention has been devoted to cultivating tree canopies in all corners of the state, particularly in historically underserved and marginalized communities. Unfortunately, tree canopy cover is often lacking in these communities, due to the exceptional effort required to establish and maintain a robust tree canopy in the arid environments.

Located on the Utah border, West Wendover, NV, is a town of just over 4,000 people, with a 65% minority-majority population and a median household income half that of the state as a whole. This Great Basin Desert community sees an average rainfall of only 4.5 inches annually, presenting challenging conditions for growing a tree canopy.

Local high school student Anthony Collazo discovered the many benefits that trees provide to his community, and made it his personal goal to establish more trees in the abundant open space and areas with the potential to become parks. Recognizing the challenges of establishing young trees in arid regions, he researched techniques and tools for establishing trees on sites before installing irrigation. He found a product on the market called the Groasis Waterboxx, a product rarely used in the United States, and advocated to give it a try in West Wendover.

With technical support and trees provided by the Nevada Division of Forestry State Tree Nursery and seedlings from the Arbor Day Foundation, coupled with Anthony's successful volunteer and fundraising efforts to purchase Waterboxxes, mentorship from teachers, and community support, nearly 300 trees were planted in West Wendover in spring 2020. First-year survival rates over 90% far exceed rates generally seen in similar harsh environments. The City has committed to installing irrigation to support the trees as they grow, and will develop usable open space for local families, residents, and visitors to enjoy in the years to come.

Additionally, the successful trials introduced a new tool for tree establishment in harsh environments that serve as a model for similar tree canopy initiatives throughout the state.



(Above) High school student Anthony Collazo showing urban forester Andi Porreca the mechanics of how the Waterboxx harvests water for slow delivery facilitating seedling survival in the arid environment. Photo: Cayenne Engel



(Left) Anthony Collazo led the recent tree planting effort in West Wendover. Photo: Gary Reese

(Right) Seedling planted in experimental Waterboxx facilitating seedling survival in arid environments. Photo: Andi Porreca

NORTH DAKOTA

North Dakota Forest Service

River Tribes were displaced from the Missouri River bottomlands with the creation of dams in the 1940s for flood control and hydropower. In North Dakota, Standing Rock Indian Reservation is working to re-establish community gardens and to plant fruit-bearing trees and shrubs to restore access to healthy foods. Living snow fences help keep roads passable during snowy winters.

Imagine being swept from your home and your way of life. Generations ago - in the interest of normalizing the Indigenous peoples of the newly forming United States - Native Americans were forced onto designated reservations. More recently, River Tribes were displaced from the Missouri River bottomlands with the creation of six dams in the 1940s. More than 300,000 acres of tribal land were lost – along with the riparian resources that were used for fuel, food, and wood to build homes. Gone were the productive community gardens grown in the fertile river bottomlands and native medicinal plants. Elders speak of the beautiful landscape and scenery that was destroyed and recall the once-abundant cottonwoods, which depend on the river’s flood pulses to regenerate.

Relocated to the higher ground of the prairies, livestock, homes, and residents are subject to harsh elements of the Northern Plains. The North Dakota Forest Service is engaged in a new series of listening sessions to hear the needs of the vast collective community of Standing Rock Indian Reservation. Carefully placed living snow fences help protect roads from snow deposition, but many of these plantings have deteriorated and are being assessed for renovation. Community gardens in the communities of Cannonball and Porcupine are supported with an Extension-based program, “Nutrition for the

Elderly.” There is interest in supplementing these gardens with native fruiting trees and shrubs, like chokecherry, juneberry, plum, and buffaloberry. Powwow celebrations are culturally significant social gatherings that bond communities, and there is a desire to plant native trees to provide shade for powwow spectators.

Communities of Standing Rock Indian Reservation are among the most underserved communities in the state. They deserve thoughtful attention and assistance to restore the physical, mental, spiritual, and environmental health of this rich culture.



(Above) As depicted on this Community Garden sign, the native culture respects the environment as well as community members. "Be organic. No chemicals. Have respect for others' hard work." Photo: ND State Historical Society



(Left) Women working in Poor Dog Garden. Community gardens were moved from the fertile Missouri River bottomlands to the higher prairie in the 1940s. Photo: ND State Historical Society

OREGON

Oregon Department of Forestry

Spurred by the observations of a high schooler that the language on a state Heritage Tree plaque was dated and insensitive, the Oregon Heritage Tree committee (HTC) has undertaken an intensive analysis of its Heritage Tree line-up. Over the past year, the HTC has been reviewing its signage texts, has introduced a new award program to recognize Tree Heroes, and has taken steps to increase the number of stories and histories of underrepresented people and groups told by Oregon's Heritage Trees.

Oregon's Heritage Tree Program is the oldest of its type in the United States, having been initiated in the early 1990s by a renowned Oregon storyteller, amateur historian, and tree lover. Today the Oregon Heritage Tree Committee (HTC) includes tree advocates, arborists, historians, documentary filmmakers, foresters, and educators. Each member is committed to honoring trees that reflect Oregon's cultural, socio-economic, and environmental history from the perspective of all peoples, cultures, and groups that have lived and currently live in Oregon.

Last year, the Oregon Travel Information Council received an email from a teenager who had visited the giant spruce of Cape Perpetua, an Oregon State Heritage Tree. Their thoughtful email pointed out that the tree's plaque used Christopher Columbus' North American landing as an age indicator for the tree. The email further explained that this was insensitive, especially since the plaque continued to convey Indigenous history but didn't acknowledge the great harm Columbus did to Indigenous people. Every HTC member was appreciative of the gentle but clearly communicated "Calling In" this email expressed.

These observations not only motivated the HTC to change this tree's plaque, but also to review the text copy on all the state's heritage tree plaques and, when necessary, improve those few with insensitive wording. Also, the HTC looked carefully at the groups and people whose stories are told by the state's heritage trees. They realized that relatively few non-white groups and people were represented, despite their significant influence and impact on Oregon's history. This awareness has prompted the HTC to revamp its Heritage Tree nomination form to make it easier for non-white and under-represented groups to nominate trees for consideration. The form also explicitly encourages the inclusion of trees that represent historic and cultural ways of life, rather than the achievements of individuals. To build awareness of the people who promote the importance of Heritage Trees in their communities, the HTC also introduced the Tree Hero Award. The Oregon Travel Information Council, which supports the HTC,

will also be updating its website and the histories of the state's most cherished trees to reflect increased cultural sensitivity.



In August 2021, in a moving ceremony with city residents and local tribal members, the HTC inducted the first Oregon Heritage Tree with an Indigenous name. Nuuk'wii-daa-naa--ye', (pronounced "Noo Kwee DAH Nah Yay," and meaning "Our Ancestor" in the Siletz language), is a giant [400-year-old Sitka spruce tree](#) in the coastal town of Lincoln City, OR. The Oregon HTC still has a lot of work to do but looks to a bright future when more Heritage Trees reflecting the history and diversity of all Oregon's residents are inducted into the program.



(Above) Heritage Tree plaque for Nuuk'wii-daa-naa--ye'. Photo: A. VonDomitz, OTIC

(Left) Lincoln City community and local tribal members celebrating the induction of the Heritage Tree Nuuk'wii-daa-naa--ye' in August 2021. Photo: A. VonDomitz, OTIC

SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota Department of Agriculture, Division of Resource Conservation and Forestry

Urban tree inventories are a critical part of a city's ability to manage and equally spread the benefits of trees throughout a community. The City of Spearfish is currently undergoing a comprehensive inventory that will allow them better target problem trees in lower-income neighborhoods as a part of their effort to prepare for a future emerald ash borer infestation. The city currently offers cost share to all citizens to help them with the financial burden of removing and replacing trees.

The City of Spearfish is currently completing a comprehensive inventory of all publicly owned trees within the city limit. This inventory is being completed to better understand the current diversity of the city's trees and, specifically, how many ash trees are growing in the community.

This inventory has been funded in part with cost-share from South Dakota's Urban and Community Forestry Challenge Grant program. The state uses this grant program to provide funding to smaller communities in order to equally spread the benefits of community forestry to all South Dakotans. This project stands out given the use of grant funds to create a complete tree inventory that will help the city prepare for the impact of emerald ash borer (EAB).

"Having an inventory of our urban forest is an incredibly valuable resource. By understanding what species we

currently have and where they are growing, we can make informed decisions on what trees to plant in the future to increase diversity in the urban forest," said Rex McDonald, Parks, Recreation & Forestry Superintendent of Spearfish. "We can track trees that have lower condition ratings and monitor them more frequently to mitigate potential hazard trees within our community. We can track information over time and assess planting sites within our City that may have historical issues with pests, diseases, or complications with the soil."

To date, the inventory has cataloged around 2,500 trees, with 22% percent of those being ash. This information will be incredibly valuable to them as they implement their EAB management plan and strive to build a healthier and diverse community forest.



(Left) Downtown Spearfish street trees. Photo: Joshua Larson, Resource Conservation and Forestry

(Middle) Rex McDonald assessing tree canopy. Photo: Rex McDonald Parks, Recreation & Forestry Superintendent Spearfish SD



(Right) Rex McDonald measuring diameter at breast height (DBH). Photo: Rex McDonald Parks, Recreation & Forestry Superintendent Spearfish SD

UTAH

Utah Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands

TreeUtah, a nonprofit volunteer tree planting organization, partnered with the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands, generating diverse tree planting projects throughout the state, often focusing on underserved areas in the community. One of the largest underserved areas in the State of Utah is on the west side of Salt Lake County. This is generally a lower-income area and has a diverse representation of cultures.

In September of 2020, Utah was hit with a severe hurricane-strength windstorm, which leveled over 2,500 trees throughout Northern Utah. Many of those trees were 60 to 100 years old. This loss was felt in all areas but was especially devastating in urban areas on the west side of the county, already struggling to build a healthy tree canopy as the lower-income area of the Salt Lake Valley.

Due to this loss, and the need in general, TreeUtah has planted more large park trees in the west side of the Salt Lake Valley in 2021 than any other planting season. While it will take some time before newly planted trees will be able to replace decades-old trees, this new emphasis will continue to inform plantings going forward and will add to the urban forest where it's needed most to establish a more equitable tree canopy. What we plant now will have an impact for generations to come.

Every year TreeUtah, with the support of community partners and the help of more than 2,500 energetic community volunteers, plants over 10,000 trees. This past spring, TreeUtah engaged people throughout the state in diverse neighborhoods. Twenty of the fifty-five total events were in parks and schools on the west side of Salt Lake County, which will help mitigate generations of neglect but also help address the immediate need from the trees lost in the storms of September 2020.



(Left) Family Planting in Rose Park, Salt Lake City. Photo: Amy May

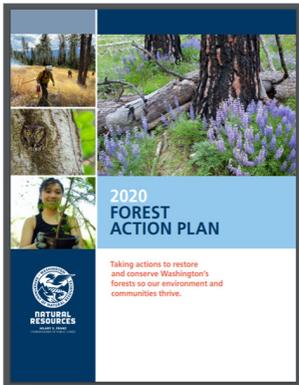


(Right) School Planting at Rosewood Park, Salt Lake City. Photo: Amy May

WASHINGTON

Washington State Department of Natural Resources

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources' Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Program and the Washington Community Forestry Council (WCFC) are centering equity and environmental justice in their work. The program and the council have taken steps in recent years that have culminated in the passage of new legislation for urban forestry in Washington State. This new legislation recognizes urban forestry as a tool to address issues of social and environmental equity and provides 2.68 million in new state funding to accomplish that work.



In 2020, the WCFC assisted the UCF program with setting goals for inclusion in the Washington State Forest Action Plan. The first of four urban forestry goals outlined in the plan is to “Advance the equitable delivery of program services to address urban forestry needs in communities or neighborhoods that may be particularly vulnerable

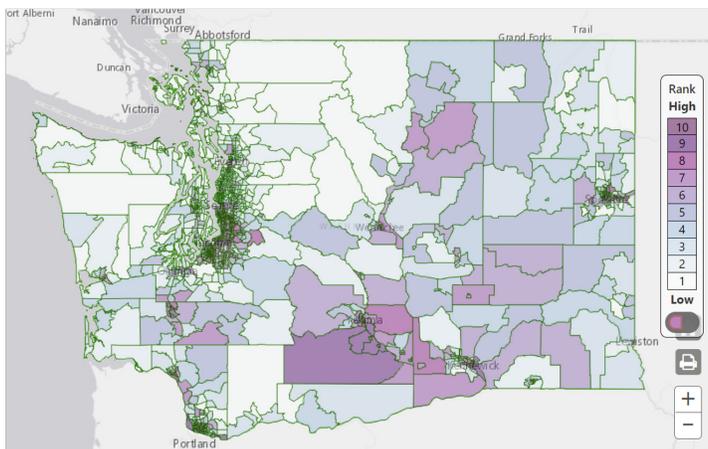
to the effects of climate change.” Both the program and the council are currently pursuing a number of identified subtasks that will reshape how the program delivers services to constituents, prioritizing equity and environmental justice in the process.

The WCFC was also instrumental in advocating for new legislation that would help the UCF Program provide increased levels of urban forestry assistance to Washington communities. Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1216 (E2SHB 1216) passed both houses of the Washington State Legislature and was signed into law by Governor Jay Inslee on May 11, 2021, though this would not have been

possible without the hardworking efforts of the WCFC.

This legislation provides 2.68 million dollars of new state funding to help communities develop tree inventories, tree canopy analyses, and urban forest management plans. To receive funding in the form of pass-through grants, applicants will be required to consider equity as a factor when analyzing data and prioritizing future investments in urban forests. Applicants will also be required to engage local residents in urban forestry planning processes. The UCF Program is obligated by the language in E2SHB 1216 to dedicate 50% of funding to support urban forestry work in “highly impacted communities.”

Highly impacted communities are those communities with census blocks having a ranked score of 8, 9, or 10 according to the Environmental Health Disparities Map, published by the Washington State Department of Health. The environmental health disparities map considers socioeconomic and demographic data, as well as data on exposure to a large number of environmental health hazards by census block. This web-based mapping tool will aid the UCF program in identifying areas of need for prioritized investments in urban forestry throughout the state.



(Top left) The Washington State Forest Action Plan is a five year plan outlining goals for a number of state forestry programs. Source: https://dnr.wa.gov/publications/rp_2020_forest_action_plan.pdf. Photo: Washington State Department of Natural Resources

(Bottom left) The Washington State Environmental Health Disparities Map is an interactive web-based mapping tool that ranks census blocks with a score of 1-10. High scores (purple) indicate areas of relatively high health disparity, whereas low scores (light blue to white) indicate areas of relatively low health disparity. Source: <https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/wtn/WTNIBL/>. Photo: Washington State Department of Health



WYOMING

Wyoming State Forestry Division

The Wyoming State Forestry Division Community Forestry grants program provided nearly \$100,000 for 10 community food forest projects to aid in efforts to reduce urban food deserts, provide locally sourced fresh fruits, as well as create educational opportunities to community members. Partnering with the University of Wyoming Extension offices across the state and Master Gardener programs, these community gardens will be well-tended and boast fruitful harvests in the coming years.

Food deserts are areas where large proportions of households have limited access to a variety of healthy and affordable food, typically seen in areas with low income, inadequate transportation, and limited food retailers with affordable prices (Dutko et al., 2012). Between the years of 2007-2009 to 2017-2019, Wyoming had a statistically significant percentage point increase and increased average prevalence of food insecurity per household (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2019). Food deserts are not uncommon in rural states like Wyoming.

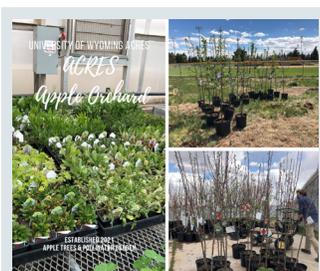
In spring 2021, to make locally sourced fresh produce more accessible, Wyoming State Forestry Division (WSFD) provided funding to create, enhance, and implement Community Food Forests/Urban Orchards. These projects primarily included planting fruiting trees and shrubs and incorporating pollinator friendly plants to promote pollinator habitat. These development grant projects were required to have an educational component.

WSFD partnered with the University of Wyoming Extension to work with the Master Gardener (MG) programs across the state. By working with MG volunteers, these projects have and will gain exposure to a like-minded community network of volunteers, provide public beautification, and offer numerous training demonstrations for the public, local interest groups, and MGs. These trainings could include class topics such as proper planting, identification, pruning, harvesting, clean up, and propagation. Harvested produce will be made available to those in need - by being donated to those who come to harvest on their own or by donations made to local food banks.



Community Food Forests and Urban Orchards located in communities across Wyoming. Map by Tara Costanzo, Wyoming State Forestry Division

In an effort to reduce the reliance on imported fresh fruits, ten urban orchards were installed in Buffalo, Casper, Cheyenne, Gillette, Laramie, Lingle, Rawlins, Sheridan, and Worland. The variety of fruiting tree species included: peach, apricot, cherry, pear, plum, and apple. In total, the local community efforts and volunteer hours plus the WSFD Community Forestry program pass through grant funds provided over \$96,000 with match.



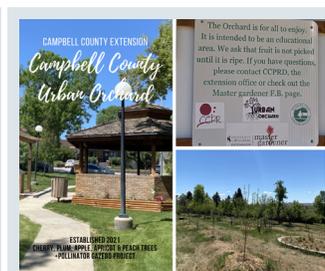
The University of Wyoming in Laramie planted numerous fruiting trees and plants at one of the research gardens on campus. Photo: Chris Hilgert, University of Wyoming Extension



Buffalo, WY community orchard planting project was installed with the help of the Boys and Girls Club of Buffalo, the First Lady and Governor of Wyoming, and community volunteers on June 1, 2021. Photo: Jessi Dodge, Buffalo Bulletin



Laramie County Master Gardeners along with Laramie County Conservation District planted an urban orchard at the Laramie County Community College in Cheyenne, WY on May 22, 2021. Photo: Tara Costanzo



The Campbell County Master Gardener program improved their gazebo area and planted many new fruiting trees near Complex Park in Gillette, WY. Photo: Mandy Reynolds, University of Wyoming Campbell County Extension

Citations: Coleman-Jensen, Alisha, Matthew P. Rabbitt, Christian A. Gregory, and Anita Singh. 2020. Household Food Security in the United States in 2019, ERR-275, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/99282/err-275.pdf?v=4337.3>. Dutko, Paula, Michele Ver Ploeg, and Tracey Farrigan. Characteristics and Influential Factors of Food Deserts, ERR-140, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, August 2012. https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/45014/30940_err140.pdf.

Wyoming State Forestry Division | Community Forestry
<https://wsfd.wyo.gov/forestry-assistance-programs/community-forestry>

Wyoming State Forestry Division is a division of the Wyoming Office of State Lands and Investments.



WESTERN FORESTRY LEADERSHIP COALITION

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