

# IDAHO

## Idaho Department of Lands

The state of Idaho is a wildly diverse state, both in geography and climate. There are vast tracts of forested land, high mountain desert, and agricultural land. Idaho has 21.5 million acres or 85,557 square miles of forested land, 10th in the nation. There are 202 incorporated cities in the State. The largest Tree City USA is Boise (41 years), whose population is 227,000. The smallest Tree City is Samaria (13 years) with a population of just 182. Idaho's highest city, Stanley, sits at 6,253 feet in elevation and enjoys 66 non-consecutive, frost free days. The lowest city, Lewiston, boasts Idaho's only seaport.



**Boise's canopy, the City of Trees.**  
Photo Credit: Brian Jorgensen

Varied Idaho landscapes and ecological settings provide diverse urban forest programs and tree species. Cities in northern Idaho have an abundance of native firs and pines within the urban canopy. Foresters in Coeur d'Alene and Post Falls maintain native conifers and encourage the planting of an array of deciduous species to harden the canopy against the possibility of emerald ash borer (EAB) and other pests.

Cities in southern Idaho, such as Boise and Twin Falls, are located within the Northern Great Basin and their urban canopies are dominated by non-native deciduous trees such as elm, maple, and ash. Like many communities in the Intermountain West, Colorado blue spruce is a popular choice for homeowners in southern Idaho. Cities and municipalities in central Idaho, such as Moscow and Lewiston, focus on planting trees that thrive within the Palouse region.

Due to the diversity in Idaho, and the different levels of urban and community forestry (UCF) programs, distinct tactics of program implementation are required to achieve desired program outcomes. The process used to achieve program outcomes in individual communities requires a tailored approach that is sensitive to the needs of the community. Many communities have established community forestry programs, while others are just beginning. Informed community forestry resource managers recognize the benefits of trees and canopy as functional infrastructure and the need to maintain this resource to maximize long-term value. The Idaho Community Forestry program's assistance efforts emphasize strategic capacity building, inventories, planning, planting, maintenance, and funding to address critical issues-air and water quality, stormwater management, energy conservation, recreation, community forest health, and more.



**Boise Tree Steward volunteers.** Photo Credit: Debbie Cook, Boise Community Forestry

Treasure Valley in southwestern Idaho contains much of the state's urban population, about 650,000 people. Issues in the Treasure Valley include heat island effect mitigation, water conservation, and tree canopy increase. Idaho's UCF program assisted in the establishment of the Treasure Valley Canopy Network. This network is comprised of public and private sector professionals who recognize and work to enhance the value that an urban forest provides.

Boise, the largest city in the Treasure Valley, offers programs intended to provide quality living space and attractive business districts. Known as the "City of Trees," Boise has established "Tree Walks," a series of self-guided walks for citizens to learn about the trees in Boise's parks. "ReLeaf Boise" and "NeighborWoods" are annual planting programs where volunteers help plant trees on public right of ways and front yards near streets. The planting of trees in these programs happens every April. The number of 1 1/4" caliper trees available is limited but there is no charge. Tree-lined streets contribute to property values and the quality of life in Boise.



**Volunteers planting trees in Samaria, Idaho, population 182.**  
Photo Credit: Karalee Waldron

In Samaria, programs are in place to increase tree diversity and canopy cover. A partnership has been established with Nucor, a large steel mill near the town. Nucor has planted 32 trees this year, with the help of volunteers. This gives Nucor Carbon Credits and helps a small community with a limited budget improve their park and streets.

Volunteers are key to the establishment of a successful UCF program. They serve on Tree Boards, work to plan and implement projects, prune and maintain trees in parks, plan Arbor Day celebrations, and influence elected officials to fund and support tree programs. Whether in the smallest or largest city, or any in between, people willing to serve the communities in which they live make the community livable.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Idaho Department of Lands  
Idaho Community Forestry Program  
<https://www.idl.idaho.gov/forestry/community-forestry/>