

# CALIFORNIA Trees

Exploring Issues In Urban Forestry

## URBAN FORESTRY MAKES OLYMPIC DEBUT

By Jane Braxton Little

When the world tunes in to the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics in February, people around the planet will see thousands of freshly planted trees: quaking aspens and blue spruce gracing the grounds of newly constructed skating facilities; ash and hornbeam dignifying communities that are hosting events; and 175 sequoias, cedars, and junipers lining 300 South, a major transportation artery in downtown Salt Lake City.

Urban forestry is making its Olympic debut this year as a signature program of the International Olympic Committee, which in 1994 added "Environment" to "Sports" and "Culture" to form the three principles of Olympic commitment. The Salt Lake games are the first to incorporate the environmental principle into all planning and construction. That makes urban forestry the first environmental issue to be highlighted at the Olympics from start to finish. For urban foresters, these Winter Games offer an opportunity to increase worldwide awareness of the importance of trees to community health, happiness, and economic vitality.

"We actually believe we can change the world," says Pepper Provenzano, a Salt Lake City journalist and urban forest advocate who helped influence the Salt Lake Olympic Committee to highlight urban forestry. Provenzano is also the founder of TreeUtah, a 12-year-old nonprofit urban forestry group based in Salt Lake City.

By the time the Olympic torch is carried into the stadium and the



The 2002 Winter Olympics is bringing more than athletes to Utah—thousands of trees have been planted around Olympic venues and in host cities in preparation for the Games.

flame lit, more than 18 million trees will have been planted worldwide in the name of International Olympics. More than 5,000 of them are in Utah, where TreeUtah coordinated over 1,000 volunteer tree planters in 41 different projects.

Several hundred of these newly planted trees are in Kearns, an unincorporated suburb of 40,000 residents on the western slopes of Salt Lake County. Kearns is the site

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## CALIFORNIA TREES

*California Trees* is the quarterly publication of California ReLeaf, a statewide campaign to expand, enhance, and preserve urban and community forests in California.

California ReLeaf promotes alliances among individuals, organizations, industries, and government, encouraging each to contribute to the livability of our cities and the protection of our local and global environment by planting and caring for trees.

California ReLeaf is a project of The Trust for Public Land, a national land-conservation organization dedicated to preserving public open space.

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**ReLEAF**



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## ◀ Olympics, from Page 1

of the Utah Olympic Oval, the world's highest altitude indoor skating facility. The Oval will be used for 10 events in men's and women's speed skating. Construction, which was completed just in time for the World Championships last spring, left several hundred feet of exposed dirt.

TreeUtah worked with schools and county and state officials in Kearns to transform the area from a burgeoning weed patch to a landscape of shrubs and native trees, says Meryl Redisch, executive director of TreeUtah.

In Heber City, gateway to the biathlon and Nordic skiing events at Soldier Hollow, newly planted trees line the main street and surround the railroad depot. TreeUtah has held spring and fall planting projects in Heber City for the last two years.

Kearns and Heber City are among the sites where TreeUtah mustered local volunteers to use the Winter Olympics as an incentive to plant trees. In addition to the aesthetic and social amenities they bring, trees offer residents of host towns a way to mitigate the impact of the arrival of thousands of people into something positive, says Redisch. "People feel connected to the Olympics through the trees they have planted," she says.

TreeUtah distributed \$500,000—allocated by Congress to mitigate the impact of the Olympics on host and gateway cities—to local groups that submitted proposals for tree plantings. TreeUtah awarded funds to projects that included a long-term watering

program and identified a person or group responsible for ongoing maintenance and care, says Redisch. All of the projects used local nurseries to supply their stock.

These were not special planting guidelines introduced for the Olympic Games, says Redisch. TreeUtah has always made tree quality and survival its priorities, and it has always depended on its



*Aspens and conifers grace the Olympic Welcome Plaza in Park City, Utah.*

partnerships with local suppliers and the communities that volunteer to plant and care for trees in their neighborhoods. "After the Olympics, we'll still be here. It's crucial for us to maintain our relationships with the local people who are our partners," Redisch says.

These standards have occasionally put TreeUtah at odds with Olympic organizers, who sometimes seem more interested in quantity than quality, she says. But they

have worked together on Plant an Olympic Family Tree, a program that makes trees available at a 20 percent discount from a variety of

city installs trees as if they are parking meters, they're not going to be owned by the community. When you have a community that grows

who also coordinates TreeLink.org, an online urban forestry information and networking site.

In Utah, the trees planted in the name of the Salt Lake City Olympic Games will earn lasting profits in many towns, says Redisch. Communities that may have valued trees for their sheer beauty now have a better understanding of the diversity of species available and how to plant and care for their investment.

Through planting trees together, they also know each other better. "We've brought people and communities together around the Olympics and connected them with their environment," she says. "That's what urban forestry is all about." ■

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## *We've brought people and communities together around the Olympics and connected them with their environment.*

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nurseries statewide. With each purchase, buyers receive clip-coupons with tree facts and a mail-in card for a free Olympic Winter Games pin. TreeUtah gets \$1 per tree purchase. Families and community groups have planted more than 40,000 trees through the program, says Redisch.

Olympic coordinators began six years ago with a goal of planting two million trees in the name of these games, says Diane Conrad Gleason, director of environmental programs for the Salt Lake Olympics. They have exceeded the goal nine times over through Plant It Green, a program designed to extend the committee's urban forestry platform to a world stage.

Some of these 18 million trees are in cities halfway around the world. American Forests, one of several Plant It Green partners, has planted more than 20,000 trees over the last couple of years in Sarajevo, host of the 1984 Winter Olympics. Working with Park Sarajevo and Debbie Armstrong, the 1984 American gold medalist in the giant slalom, the Washington, D.C., conservation organization has funded plantings on hillsides denuded during the war years of the early 1990s. The ultimate goal is to plant 300,000 slope-stabilizing trees and 3,000 urban street trees.

American Forests selected Sarajevo as its commitment to the Olympic urban forestry effort because of the overwhelming need and the promise of long-term care by local residents eager to restore their neighborhoods, says Deborah Gangloff, executive director. "If a

the idea of planting trees, the trees will survive. And so will the community," Gangloff says.

Other urban forest programs coordinated by the Salt Lake Olympic Committee used third-grade classes throughout Utah to plant over 5,000 trees on school grounds and supplied over 10,000 trees and shrubs to various venues, including Utah Olympic Park, where the opening and closing ceremonies will be held. The committee has also worked with NASA to plant trees in urban heat islands to reduce the outside air temperature and summer air pollution. All of the programs are part of the legacy that will remain in Utah after the athletes have left, says Gleason. "We're all gone once the Games end, but the trees stay. They have already created more of an awareness of urban forestry than I ever anticipated," she says.

The Olympic platform has helped vault urban forestry to the attention of policymakers around the world who are grappling with population growth and its social, environmental, and economic impacts. It has linked communities to the environment, increased funding, and changed the understanding of urban forestry in the corporate world from "an oxymoron" to "a green infrastructure with very tangible benefits that only appreciate in value," says Provenzano,

*Jane Braxton Little is a freelance writer based in Plumas County, California.*



*TreeUtah and West Valley City staff brave the elements to plant trees in West Valley City, a venue city for Olympic Ice Hockey.*



*Residents of Kearns, Utah, turn out in droves to plant trees along bare slopes surrounding the Olympic Speed Skating Oval.*

# THE CALIFORNIA RELEAF NETWORK: A DECADE OF ACTION AND ADVOCACY

By Julie Soller

Beverly Gingg of Santa Margarita Community Forestry envisioned a demonstration forest in her town—and it grew. Jean Nagy of the Huntington Beach Tree Society was successful in her quest to stock local school libraries with tree books and to plant new trees in the city's parks. Roger Cole of Streaminders envisioned young city trees carefully pruned by community volunteers—to date, more than 3,400 street trees have been pruned through his program. Meanwhile, urban forestry groups across the state have involved 400,000 volunteers in the planting of more than 550,000 trees. These groups are all members of the California ReLeaf Network, which celebrated its 10-year anniversary in 2001.

In the 10 years since the California ReLeaf Network became a formal alliance, creative visions of planting, stewardship, education, and community involvement by urban forestry groups have resulted in greener California communities. The Network has created fertile fields of empowerment that nurture not only trees but also the thousands of volunteers who advocate for, plant, and teach others to care about trees.



FILE PHOTO

The seven-member California ReLeaf Network Advisory Council meets twice yearly to provide input and guidance to California ReLeaf staff on Network programs and services. Pictured is the current council with California ReLeaf staff: (left to right) Amelia Oliver, Roseville Urban Forest Foundation, Jean Nagy, Huntington Beach Tree Society, Martha Ozonoff, California ReLeaf, Rick Hawley, Greenspace: The Cambria Land Trust; (in front) Elisabeth Hoskins, California ReLeaf, Rick Mathews, Atascadero Native Tree Association, and Scott Wilson, North East Trees. [Not pictured: Rhonda Berry, Our City Forest and Susan Stiltz, Tree Fresno.]

## How It All Started

In 1989, long-time urban forestry and parks advocate Isabel Wade brought the idea for a statewide urban

***“The Network was started as a way for individual groups around the state to use their collective power to improve their own communities.”***

forestry program called California ReLeaf to the Trust for Public Land, a national land-conservation organization based in San Francisco. Wade left the organization in 1991, but the California ReLeaf Network—which began under Wade as a loosely

organized coalition of 10 community-based “tree groups”—went on to become a successful alliance of 65 urban forestry groups. (See page 6 for a complete list of California ReLeaf Network members.)

According to Genevieve Cross, director of California ReLeaf from 1991 to 2000, the California ReLeaf Network was started “as a way for individual groups around the state to use their collective power to improve their own communities.” Cross recognized the value in strengthening the informal network started by Wade, and in 1991 membership criteria and an application process were established. Membership was open to any group with 10 or more active members whose primary focus was urban forestry.

## From Competition to Cooperation

About the time the Network was

deal with the new federal funds was brought to the table. Tree groups had a choice: compete with each other for the same pot of money—with new groups less likely to have the legislative know-how to access the funds and with the probable result that just a few of the larger groups would get the bulk of the money—or try a different approach that would allow as many groups as possible to benefit from the new funding. In the end, the groups agreed that the money should be used to pay for California ReLeaf’s core programs—designed to assist community-based tree groups of all sizes (whether the groups were Network members or not)—and to administer a competitive grant program through which all groups would have an equal chance for funding. The spirit of cooperation demonstrated at that first, formal meeting of the Network in 1991 has been a critical factor in the strength of California’s urban forestry movement over the past decade.

becoming more formalized, federal funds for urban forestry were being made available to state forestry departments. The influx of money presented somewhat of a dilemma for California groups, which ranged from fully staffed organizations in business for 10 or more years to all-volunteer groups started just months earlier.

At a watershed meeting of Network groups in 1991, the issue of how best to

## Success At the Grassroots

As administrator of the federal urban forestry funds for the State, California ReLeaf not only distributed grants to tree groups, it also made sure (and continues to do so) that the legislators and agencies responsible for supplying the money saw results. ReLeaf collected data from Network member groups and grant recipients to demonstrate to Congress, the Department of Agriculture, the Forest Service, and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) just how effective community groups were at getting things done. The message and the data were clear: Money to the grassroots is money well spent.

And that has meant more than just planting trees. Looking back on almost 10 years of coordinating the California ReLeaf Network, Cross notes some of the ways in which the Network and its member groups have been responsible for focusing more attention on trees in urban areas:

- Most groups that began with the solitary goal of planting trees have gone on to include education and public awareness in their programs, as well as the message of stewardship.
- Network groups have long supported the need for trained personnel in the tree care industry and have helped the public understand the role and

importance of certified arborists.

- Network groups have advocated for changing the way urban trees are pruned and many have carried out “no topping” and other proper pruning campaigns in their communities.
- Groups have also helped raise awareness of the need for better quality standards for nursery-grown trees in the state.
- Network members have been at the forefront of pushing urban forestry into the broader realm of urban environmentalism, raising the status of trees from that of aesthetic amenities to critical components of the urban infrastructure.

Martha Ozonoff, who spent seven years as the director of TREE Davis before becoming director of California ReLeaf in July 2000, has seen the Network from a number of perspectives. “When I worked for a small, locally-based tree group, the Network was invaluable to our efforts. From grant funds to networking, much of our work depended on support from California ReLeaf. And now that I’m the director, I feel like I can see things from both sides—my heart and soul are with the local groups and I’m so pleased to help communities across the state make a difference locally.”

Will Rogers, president of the Trust for Public Land, has long been a supporter of the California ReLeaf program. “From TPL’s perspective, urban forestry groups—



GAIL SLAWSON-EICH

1996 California ReLeaf Network Statewide Meeting—Roger Cole leading pruning demo (Santa Clara University)

with their sense of pride and ownership in public open spaces—are important and inspiring conservation partners,” Rogers notes. “The groups in the California ReLeaf Network have made remarkable progress and have shown us all, through their planting and caring for trees, what stewardship is all about.”

## A Model Alliance

The Network is a model of a group sticking to a simple but effective mission. According to Ray Tretheway, whose Sacramento Tree Foundation has been around longer than the California ReLeaf Network, it’s an unusual accomplishment: “I have long admired how the staff at California ReLeaf have always held the Network first. This is not typical of groups that are formed to represent other groups, which can often become separate from their original intent.”

Part of this success is due to the fact that early on California ReLeaf established the California ReLeaf Network Council, an advisory board



FILE PHOTO

Genevieve Cross describes to participants at the 1999 California ReLeaf Network Statewide meeting how grassroots tree groups fit into the “big picture” or urban forestry.



#### NETWORK MEMBERS

The groups listed here share the common goals of planting and protecting trees in their communities, fostering environmental stewardship, and promoting citizen involvement. If you would like to reach any of these groups, or you are with a group that would like information on Network membership, call California ReLeaf, (916) 557-1673.

Arroyo Seco Foundation  
 Atascadero Native Tree Association  
 Atherton Tree Committee  
 California Oak Foundation  
 California Urban Forests Council  
 Canopy: Trees for Palo Alto  
 Community ReLeaf  
 Coronado Street Tree Committee  
 CREEC  
 Desert Hot Springs Tree Advisory Board  
 Fair Oaks Beautification Association  
 Fallbrook Land Conservancy  
 Friends of the Urban Forest  
 Goleta Beautiful  
 Greenspace: The Cambria Land Trust  
 Huntington Beach Tree Society  
 Ivey Ranch Park Association  
 Keep Riverside Clean & Beautiful  
 L.A. Community Forest Advisory Committee  
 Magic  
 Marin ReLeaf  
 Mendocino County ReLeaf  
 National AIDS Memorial Grove  
 North East Trees  
 North Hills Landscape Committee  
 Oak Habitat Restoration Project  
 Oakland ReLeaf  
 Ojai Valley ReLeaf  
 Orange for Trees  
 Our City Forest  
 Pasadena Beautiful Foundation  
 Patricks Point Garden Club  
 People for Trees  
 Petaluma Tree Planters  
 Professional Tree Care Assoc. of San Diego  
 Redwood Recovery Inc.  
 ReLeaf Costa Mesa  
 Roseville Urban Forest Foundation  
 Sacramento Tree Foundation  
 San Mateo Park Association  
 Santa Barbara Beautiful  
 Santa Barbara County ReLeaf  
 Santa Margarita Community Forestry  
 Seal Beach Tree Committee  
 ShadeTree Partnership  
 So. San Francisco Beautification Committee  
 Stewards of Slavianska  
 Streaminders  
 TREE Davis  
 Tree Foundation of Kern  
 Tree Fresno  
 Tree Musketeers  
 TreePeople  
 Trees for Cayucos  
 Trees for Seal Beach  
 Tule River Parkway Association  
 Urban Tree Foundation  
 Vacaville Tree Foundation  
 Vallemar Conservators  
 Victoria Avenue Forever  
 Visalia Beautification Committee  
 West Hollywood Tree Preservation Society

## RELEAF NETWORK PROFILE

### California Urban Forests Council: Encouraging Dialogue Statewide

By Leah Gastman

As most tree advocates have discovered, developing and maintaining healthy urban forests requires the involvement of, and effective communication between, a broad spectrum of individuals, organizations, and agencies.

Bringing together the stakeholders and providing a platform for communication is one of the main focuses, along with education, of the California Urban Forests Council (CUFC). Founded in 1967, CUFC is one of the nation's oldest urban forestry councils. Back in the "early days" of CUFC, long before urban forestry was a household term, the organization functioned as a loose-knit group of people interested in introducing urban forestry to inner-city kids in southern California. "We weren't really an organization back then," recalls Herb Spitzer, president and 26-year member of CUFC. "It was really just a group of people looking to get city kids into trees." Today, some 34 years later, CUFC's focus remains urban—the organization serves as a source of information and support for urban forestry professionals.

According to Mel Johnson, executive director and sole staff person for the organization, CUFC has focused the majority of its efforts on forming partnerships with local municipalities and legislators to spread the word about the importance of creating and caring for forests in California's cities. "The idea is that if we can help local leaders understand and embrace urban forests then we can help create an environment that is more supportive of urban forest issues," Johnson says.

Over the past three years CUFC's momentum has been building and the group has expanded its reach to include working more closely with community-based urban forestry groups. A pivotal event for CUFC was the

California Urban and Community Forests Summit in 1998, which came about through CUFC's determination to involve a wide variety of urban forestry interests in updating the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's (CDF) five-year urban forestry action plan.

CUFC secured funding from CDF to coordinate and host what was essentially an in-depth conversation among 300 individuals from more than 200 organizations, businesses, and public agencies over the course of a year. The dialogue began in July 1998 in San Francisco at the first of twelve regional caucuses held throughout California.

At each of the caucuses, stakeholders from all facets of urban forestry discussed common issues and developed goals and strategies for their regions. In August 1999 representatives from each region came together at the California Urban and Community Forests Summit in San Marino to meld their regional objectives into a statewide plan. "Stakeholders really liked getting together to talk about the issues they all face," Johnson says. "It gave them a chance to find common successes and obstacles and to learn new ways to approach different issues."

Some of the caucuses were so successful at bringing stakeholders together that participants began to float the idea of getting together on a more regular basis to share regional challenges and solutions. The concept of regional councils became more formalized after the summit. CUFC was able to secure additional funding from CDF to help newly formed councils maintain communication with one another and expand their capacity regionally. "We didn't want to just say, 'Okay, poof! You're a council, have a nice life!'" Johnson says. "We wanted to be sure that the

councils interested in continuing to work together were able to do so.”

For instance, CUFC is helping the Inland Empire Urban Forests Council identify and prioritize regional goals. The group wanted to coordinate a regional Arbor Day celebration in an area that generally sees smaller events planned by individual cities throughout the area. With CUFC’s help the Inland Empire council is pulling together a large-scale celebration slated for March 7, 2002, at Yucaipa Regional Park. The event will include tree plantings and education stations to teach younger attendees about urban forest ecosystems. “We want to educate both children and adults about the importance of trees,” explains Deborah Day, arborist for the City of Fontana. It is the hope of the Inland Empire group that each year a different city or organization within the region will agree to sponsor the celebration, says Day.

Another regional council that took root at the summit, the Bay Area Urban Forests and Ecosystem Council, is getting support from CUFC to develop a comprehensive analysis of the urban forest in the nine San Francisco Bay Area counties. CUFC is helping the Bay Area group with outreach and is maintaining the group’s database, a service CUFC provides other regional councils as well. “It’ll be a ‘State of the Urban Forests Report’ for the Bay Area,” says Ron DeNicola, arborist for the City of Daly City and chairman of the report committee. DeNicola says the goal of the analysis is to provide a regional look at the urban forest in the Bay Area and provide information about the benefits of urban forests to local government and policy-making entities. The group hopes that providing examples of the economic benefits of trees in urban areas will help municipalities make budgetary decisions more favorable to urban forest management. “If [policymakers] have a better understanding of how urban forests and healthy urban ecosystems affect them, they will make informed decisions that benefit urban

forests,” DeNicola says.

In addition to offering support to fledgling regional councils, CUFC continues to develop its own programs. In the past year CUFC offered a workshop on urban wood utilization in partnership with the UC Berkeley Forest Products Lab and a workshop on managing and protecting heritage trees. The popularity of the latter took CUFC a bit by surprise. “We had space for 125; we filled that up and had to turn 100 away,” Johnson says. The workshop was repeated and had 250 attendees, and was repeated again in southern California where 125 people attended. “It was amazing to see such interest, and very exciting,” Johnson says.

CUFC’s financial support comes primarily from conference and workshop registration fees, membership dues, and grants. The group recently received a grant from a private foundation to improve its web site. The improvements will allow people to register for workshops, join CUFC, and pay dues online. CUFC has also received funding from the U.S. Forest Service to work with the Western Center for Urban Forest Research on developing compelling urban forestry messages. “The idea is to figure out how to most effectively

**PROFILE SNAPSHOT**

**California Urban Forests Council**

Headquarters: ..... San Francisco  
 Program: ..... Statewide  
 Founded: ..... 1967  
 Board of Directors: ..... 12  
 How to contact: ..... Mel Johnson  
 Executive Director  
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talk about urban forestry,” Johnson says. CUFC will also develop a ready-made presentation for members to take “on the road” to local agencies to help spread the word about the importance of trees.

With all the disparate organizations, agencies, and individuals that have a role to play in the health of our urban forests, the kind of cooperation and communication that CUFC is working to foster is critical. “I don’t think you can get away with trying to be an island in this business,” long-time member Spitzer says. “You have to work together.” ■

*Leah Gastman is a freelance writer based in Auburn, California.*



*CUFC’s recent urban wood utilization workshop included a demonstration of the portable Wood-Mizer mill.*

CUFC FILE PHOTO

## NEWS IN URBAN FORESTRY

### March 2002 Ballot Includes Urban Forestry Funding

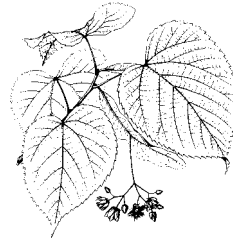
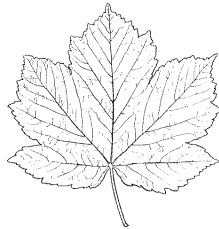
Urban forestry groups swiftly responded to an endorsement request distributed by the Trust for Public Land for Proposition 40—The California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act. More than a dozen urban forestry groups are currently listed as supporters of the \$2.6 billion resources bond including California ReLeaf Network members Tree Fresno, Santa Barbara County ReLeaf, the California Oak Foundation, and the California Urban Forests Council.

If passed off the March 5, 2002 ballot, Proposition 40 will provide \$10 million for urban forestry projects in California. The funds are not earmarked for specific projects, though they may be after the bond has passed and the legislature begins preparing the 2002-2003 state budget. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection will distribute those remaining funds through a granting program similar to that established for Proposition 12 funds earlier this year (see “CDF Awards Grants” below).

For more information on Proposition 40, visit the official campaign web site at [www.voteyeson40.org](http://www.voteyeson40.org).

### 2002 Funding Guide Available

The January through December 2002 edition of *Urban Forestry Funding Opportunities for California* is now available in hard copy and online. Published annually by California ReLeaf, the guide includes application deadlines,



eligibility requirements, program descriptions, and contact information for public and private funding sources for urban forestry projects. For a free copy, contact California ReLeaf at (916) 557-1673, ext. 12, or online at [www.tpl.org](http://www.tpl.org) (click on “local programs,” then “California programs”).

### ReLeaf Awards Grants

Twenty-five community groups received grants for urban forestry projects through the California ReLeaf 2002 Capacity-Building Grant Program. A total of \$120,000 was awarded in December in the categories of Education and Public Awareness, Tree-Care, and Volunteer Development. Individual grants ranged from \$1,550 to \$9,885.

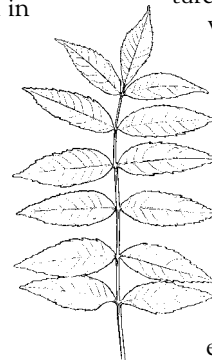
The grant recipients include diverse grassroots groups from across the state. For example, the Spanish Speaking Unity Council is recruiting residents to assist the City of Oakland in planting trees in local neighborhoods, thereby educating homeowners and merchants about the benefits of having trees shade their houses and streets, as well as providing an opportunity for students to learn about careers in the urban forestry field. The Greater Modesto Tree Foundation is planning to start a volunteer docent program for a newly renovated downtown park to teach school children about the city's history and its rich tree tradition.

The Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County is utilizing workers in its low-income employment and training program to remove ivy that is threatening to overgrow stands of coast live oak and Monterey pine in New Brighton Beach State Park.

For more information about California ReLeaf's grant programs, contact the grant coordinator at (949) 642-0127 or email [Elisabeth.Hoskins@tpl.org](mailto:Elisabeth.Hoskins@tpl.org).

### “From Green to Gray” Video Available

Produced by American Forests, this 11-minute video takes a look at the shortage of trees in our urban areas. The film offers a way to reverse the national tree deficit and build a healthy “green infrastructure” for the future. The video is an excellent



resource to share with non-urban forestry colleagues to demonstrate the critical role that trees and forests play in maintaining the environmental and economic health of our communities. To receive a copy, call (800) 368-5748. Volume discounts are available.

### CDF Awards Grants

In December 2001 the urban forestry program of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) announced the recipients of its Proposition 12 and Leaf-it-to-Us grant programs.

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## ReLeaf, from Page 5

comprised of representatives from geographically diverse groups elected by Network members. Although the council has varied in size over the years, the purpose has remained the same: to keep California ReLeaf staff in touch with the needs of Network members. This has allowed ReLeaf staff to tailor



FILE PHOTO

The Tree Hero Award was created by California ReLeaf to provide Network members with a fun and inspiring way to honor local urban forestry advocates. Pictured here is Larry Beaver, Pacifica's Deputy Director of Public Works, who was named a Tree Hero by the Vallemar Conservators, Pacifica's local tree group.

Network programs and services as well as make the needs of local groups known to state and federal agencies and legislators. Knowing they are well-represented by California ReLeaf has meant that Network members don't feel pressured to keep on top of every statewide and national issue.

"I serve on the USDA Forest Service National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council, representing nonprofits," Tretheway says. "Oftentimes when it comes to federal and state programs, that nonprofit voice is left behind. The California ReLeaf Network is used time and time again as a great example of a vehicle to promote and voice the concerns of the local grassroots and nonprofits."

### Legislative Clout

California ReLeaf Network groups have become responsive, well-organized, and well-informed, resulting in more urban forestry legislation. Rachel Dinno, director of government affairs for the

Trust for Public Land's (TPL) Western Region, says, "The Network has been instrumental in educating our decision makers about urban forestry issues and has brought about public funds and programs. For example, in the past decade, we have seen two comprehensive park bonds with money for urban forestry groups as well as bills to create programs for urban forestry."

Chuck Mills, outreach program manager for the Western Region's government affairs department, notes that Network members have achieved tremendous success in building coalitions with key California legislators, and are "just amazing" in generating support for important bills.

The most challenging moment this year was the eleventh-hour rescue of tree money in the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act, which will appear before voters in March as Proposition 40. Urban forestry funding had been stripped from the bond act just days before the tragic events of September 11. "We worked with urban forestry groups to get letters and calls to legislators," says Mills, "While obviously there were other things going on in the country, the legislative session was ending in three days and we needed their help to get the funding back into the park bond." Network members made calls to key legislators and got back the \$10 million in urban forestry funds.

Efforts count when Network members make contact with their legislators at the local level—inviting them out to tree plantings, meeting with them in their offices, honoring them with awards, and including them on their newsletter distribution lists. "It's what makes the difference between getting funding or not. If the legislators don't know about urban forestry issues, it's hard for them to incorporate them into their laws," says Dinno.

### What's Next

In looking to the future of the Network, California ReLeaf Director Martha Ozonoff feels that there is much left to do. "To make a real impact in California, we need to reach into disadvantaged communities and help provide trees and tree care where it's needed most," she says. "Members of the California ReLeaf Network are in a unique position to mentor these communities. I'm excited about the future."

Rick Mathews, president of the Atascadero Native Tree Association and a member of the California ReLeaf Network Council, believes the Network needs to expand in the future. "We have almost 70 members, but there are hundreds of cities and how many urban regions, bioregions, watershed areas?" he asks. "There need to be more local and regional urban forestry organizations in the Network.

"The California ReLeaf Network is one of the most admirable things that I've been associated with," Mathews adds. The idea of stewardship combined with community building—because you *believe* in it—that is what makes a community a better place and the people involved in it, better people." ■

*Julie Soller is a freelance writer based in San Francisco, California.*



"Proper Pruning Pays" was the theme of the first Network-wide project, sponsored by California ReLeaf in 1994. Equipped with donated pruning clippers from Corona Clippers and money bags from Wells Fargo Bank (shown here by ReLeaf Director Genevieve Cross), California ReLeaf Network members spoke before their city councils to drive home the message that poor pruning practices are damaging trees and costing cities thousand of dollars every year.

# CALIFORNIA'S URBAN FORESTS AND THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE

By Linda Romero

I moved to California 25 years ago to attend college. My plan was to finish my education and move back to the East Coast to be near my family. However, while studying biology, geology, and natural science, I discovered the uniqueness of California—a state with the greatest diversity of ecosystems of any state in the Union. I've spent the last 25 years exploring its magnificent redwoods, giant sequoias, lava flows, granite peaks, tidal marshes, deltas, coastal tide pools, and deserts. I never left California and I doubt I ever will.

But much has changed here in the past 25 years. I find myself sitting in traffic jams, breathing polluted air, and suffering from chronic sinus infections. Though I've reckoned with myself over the positive and negative aspects of California living, I can't help but look into the future and see that I have much work before me and little time to accomplish it.

There are 33 million people living in California today. Current



California in just 40 years. What does that mean? Will we have twice as many cars? Twice as much asphalt and concrete? Twice as many houses? Twice as much smog, garbage, and solid waste? In just 40 years? What will the

California is like in 40 years? Well, for one thing, my son will be 65, just ready to retire and start enjoying the golden years of his life. My grandchildren (if I ever have any) will be in their thirties and in the prime of their working lives, battling all these issues. My grandparents immigrated to the United States about 80 years ago in search of a better life. They found it. Most of their grandchildren went to college, have comfortable homes, plenty of food and clothing, and even take vacations.

What do I want for my grandchildren? I'm not worried about whether they go to college. What concerns me is whether they will have clean air to breathe, uncontaminated water to drink, and fuel to keep warm. I want my grandchildren to be as fascinated and intrigued with the natural

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***Maybe, just maybe, if we like where we live, we'll be less likely to flee to the oak woodlands.***

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statistics predict that by the year 2020 there will be another 20 million people and by the year 2040 the population will have reached 63 million. We will have twice as many people living in

quality of life be like in the urban environment? Will the trend towards increased social tensions be reversed or catapulted into an unmanageable crisis?

Why should I care what

wonders of California as I was. I want them to *want* to explore the vast diversity this state has to offer.

California has 380 different biological communities, one fourth of which are rare or endangered. There are 5,891 known plant and animal species in the state, and one fifth of those are endemic. Of the nearly 6,000 species, half are found in California's oak woodlands, a rapidly disappearing ecosystem. There are 44 counties in California that contain significant oak woodlands. Thirty-one of those counties will experience a population growth of 25 percent and 12 will experience a 40 percent increase in population. Urbanites are fleeing the overcrowded conditions of the lowlands and they're heading to the foothills—68 percent of the population of the Sierra Nevada mountains is located in prime oak woodland on the western side of the range. The current population of the Sierra Nevada is expected to triple by 2040.

I must confess, I am guilty. Since I have returned to the Bay Area and am unable to afford the high cost of housing, I too have recently bought a home in Grass Valley in the Sierra Foothills. Families are finding urban life unbearable with the increase in traffic congestion, deteriorating schools, air pollution, and social tension. California cities are less attractive because of the loss of healthy natural communities. These communities are important to the human population because they provide such benefits as clean water, flood control, biological pest control, crop pollination, oxygen production, and greenhouse gas reduction, just to name a few. As much as we'd like to think we can live without the

natural world, the exodus of people from the urban environment is proof that we cannot, and will not.

My friends have said that I am pessimistic, but I believe I am realistic. I believe there are solutions, and as an urban forester, I have an obligation to do all I can. I can play a part in discourag-

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***As much as we'd like to think we can live without the natural world, the exodus of people from the urban environment is proof that we cannot.***

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ing the flight to rural lands by improving life in the urban environment. Every day I talk to landowners and developers, urbanites that constitute the dominant species in the urban ecosystem. I play a role in encouraging private responsibility for land conservation. Local tree protection ordinances, while serving a significant purpose in ensuring the livability of our urban centers, have their drawbacks, and I must be prepared to address them. Where regulation is impractical, education is imperative. That's where you and I come in. Educate, educate, educate!

I have the freedom to be active in local political affairs, a freedom too many Americans take for granted. The future of our urban communities must be politically and ecologically sustainable. Political support must be nurtured, and every opportunity to get elected officials involved in local urban forestry activities must be seized. Active participation on local tree advisory committees can ensure long range planning. Developing strategic plans for the urban ecosystem will preserve and restore natural areas, protect and

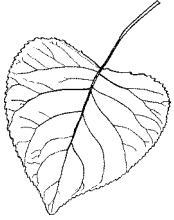
enhance wildlife habitat, buffer land uses and separate development, and protect water quality. I can participate in the planting of our urban forest, thereby moving towards a goal set forth by the National Arbor Day Foundation to have 40 percent canopy cover in every city in California. Through active participation and a grassroots effort, we can all build community support to help ensure the quality of life we have worked to attain in our urban communities. And maybe, just maybe, if we like where we live, we'll be less likely to flee to the oak woodlands.

Although I do as much as I can today, given I only have 24

hours per day, paying the bills always comes first. I want to spend more time with my city council, I want to sit on the board of directors for the California Oak Foundation, and I want to do my part to serve as a working member of the International Society of Arboriculture. Although my day is full, I have a motto: I never say no. If someone asks, and I know I can do it, I *always* say yes. In the meantime, I take every opportunity I get to explore, enjoy, and cherish the grandeur of the great State of California and, more importantly, to educate the public and spread my philosophy for a better life for future generations. ■

*Linda Romero is a certified arborist and registered professional forester. She spent 16 years with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's (CDF) pest and disease management division and was CDF's urban forester for Southern California. Romero also spent 5 years with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. She is currently a consulting arborist for Safe and Beautiful Trees, a private company in the San Francisco Bay Area.*

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A total of \$1,125,000 was provided to 30 communities for tree planting and follow-up care through Proposition 12, the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2000. Approximately \$1,000,000 will be awarded each year for the duration of the Act (funding is expected to be available through 2005).

The Leaf-It-to-Us grant program provided \$45,685 in funding to 24 schools. The intent of the program is to distribute funds for school tree-

planting projects initiated and under-taken by students in partnership with school volunteers. Grants are awarded on a one-year cycle and cannot exceed \$3,000.

For more information on CDF's grant programs, contact Herb Bunt, (916) 651-6423, herb\_bunt@fire.ca.gov.

#### Olympic PSAs

In 1994 "Environment" joined "Sports" and "Culture" as the third governing principle of the Olympics Games (see "Urban Forestry Makes Olympic Debut," page 1). As a result of this initiative, the Salt Lake Organizing Committee has teamed up with the Coalition of United Green Partners to produce two urban forestry public service announcements to air nationally between January 1 and March 31, 2002. The theory behind the PSAs

is that by increasing public awareness of the value of trees and their care, we can help clean our air and water, promote human health, and add to the quality of life—a legacy that will continue long after the 2002 Winter Games. To learn more about the program, go to [www.treesaregood.org](http://www.treesaregood.org). ■

*By Martha Ozonoff and Chuck Mills*



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