VOL. 13, NO. 1 SPRING 2002

CALIFORNIA Trees

Exploring Issues In Urban Forestry

REMEMBERING OUR RIVERS

The Rediscovery of California's Urban Waterways

By Joan Schwan

For years we have burdened California's rivers with our wastes, dammed them to provide power, diverted them to send water to faraway places, removed streamside trees and vegetation, paved over much of their watersheds, and built in their floodplains. It's not surprising that our urban rivers have come to be perceived as something of a nuisance, a hazard, or at least not exactly a local treasure. But in recent years, many California communities have been rediscovering their rivers. Like healthy trees, healthy rivers provide countless services that we rely on, and that become even more important as we become more numerous. Urban forestry groups and conservation organizations around the state have been among the first to recognize the value of waterways to the health of our human and natural communities and to join in the process of reviving our rivers.

We've chosen three inspiring urban river projects to highlight here.

MATT O'BRIEN

Though almost three quarters of its 51 miles have been lined with concrete, the Los Angeles River remains a vital resource for the human and natural communities in the region.

DAVID PEEVERS

In the South: Los Angeles River

Historically, the Los Angeles River basin was a broad floodplain that filled each winter to support seasonal wetlands and woodlands, encompassing all of what is today the San Fernando Valley and central Los Angeles. A few days each winter provide most of the watershed's 14-inch average rainfall, leaving the river a dry channel much of the year. As early as 1904, the river and local underground aquifers could no longer quench the thirst of the growing human population, and construction began to bring water from the Sierra Nevada. Ten years later, just as the aqueduct was completed, the river flooded heavily, as it tended to do every few decades. With nearly a million people then living alongside the river, the flood caused almost $10 million in damage, and set off discussions about channelizing the river. In 1930, the Olmsted brothers (sons of Frederick Law Olmsted of Central Park fame) proposed an alternative: purchase the lands surrounding the river, and let them function as both a greenway for people to enjoy and a flood protection zone.

The proposal languished and when the river flooded again in 1938, it was the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that addressed the problem. Their solution used over three million barrels of concrete and took 20 years to complete. Today, more than 400 miles of

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CALIFORNIA ReLEAF

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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 Funding for this newsletter is provided in part by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the National Urban and Community Forestry Program of the USDA Forest Service.

CALIFORNIA ReLEAF

Printed on recycled paper using soy-based ink

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concrete-lined tributaries feed into the main channel—38 of whose 51 miles are also paved. Historian Blake Gumprecht recorded that, "Years ago, a Los Angeles politician campaigned that, if elected, he would paint the bed of the Los Angeles River blue to make it look more like a river."

Incredibly, the river lives on despite these insults. A 1993 study found over 200 species of birds and 19 species of reptiles and amphibians inhabiting the river and its banks, particularly in the 12 miles of oasis where the water table lies too high to allow for concrete. And the human community has not lost hope for the river. In 1991 citizens and agency representatives began drafting a master plan for the river, and five years later, their plan for parks, trails, natural areas, and community spaces all along the 51 miles was approved. The Olmsteds' vision was revived.

Dozens of public agencies and nonprofit organizations have been involved in the plan's implementation. The Trust for Public Land (TPL) has been instrumental in purchasing properties and has helped local nonprofits design and implement park projects. TPL purchases made possible the Elysian Valley Gateway Park, along a "soft-bottomed" stretch of river, and the Maywood Riverfront Park, in one of the most densely populated and park-poor areas of the city. In addition, the City of Pasadena is currently working on a masterplan for the Arroyo Seco, an important tributary to the Los Angeles River. The plan will establish a vision for habitat restoration, recreational access, and public safety.

North East Trees (NET), a member of the California ReLeaf Network, has planted thousands of trees along the river. NET's staff includes professional arborists, horticulturalists, and landscape designers, and a crew of at-risk youth who carry out much of the planting and landscaping. According to Operations Manager Chuck Arnold, "We still plant 1,000 trees each year, but trees are now a tool in larger projects [along the river], like designing and building small parks and greenways." On the Arroyo Seco, NET plans to remove some concrete and plant native trees in its place to help stabilize the banks. Catchment basins will slow the flow and allow water to percolate into the ground. Success there may one day mean less concrete in the main channel. We'll have to be patient—with a decades-long flood cycle, the results won't be evident for a generation, Arnold points out. In the meantime, NET's other projects—such as street tree plantings throughout Los Angeles—help reduce non-point source pollution, slowing oily street runoff and filtering it through the soil rather than allowing it to flow directly into the river.

NORTH EAST TREES

North East Trees crews prep for the installation of a decomposed granite path in Blake Park, one of many neighborhood parks springing up along the Los Angeles River.

In the North: Petaluma River

The Petaluma River, which runs through the one-time "chicken capital of California," isn't your typical river either. Technically, it is a tidal slough, with brackish water that rises and falls with San Pablo Bay's tides. A 1959 act of Congress designated the slough a "river" to ensure that federal funds would continue to pay for dredging the channel, long used to transport eggs and other agricultural products to San Francisco. "Historically, the river has been very impaired by agricultural and urban run-off," according to Sonia Jacques, senior program manager for the Trust for Public Land's Western Rivers Program. Though the river runs right through downtown Petaluma,

warehouses line its banks and—except to see it as a source of costly floods—"the city had long turned its back on the river," says Jacques.

But like the Los Angeles River, the Petaluma River still had promise. Its watershed still supports 40 special status species, like the California red-legged frog, northwestern pond turtle, and steelhead trout. And like other urban rivers, its human community is turning around to embrace it. In 1996 a 19-member citizens' committee wrote a 30-year "River Plan" aiming to restore the river and its wildlife, provide a continuous public trail along the river within city limits, and bring economic benefits to downtown businesses near the river.

The City of Petaluma enlisted help from TPL, whose strategy has focused on acquiring property and converting it to open space uses. As Jacques explains, reducing impervious surfaces near the river alleviates flooding, bank erosion, and channel sedimentation. "Biogeotechnical" methods—reducing steep bank grades, planting willows, slowing flows with "coir fascines" (bundles of branches laid into the stream bed that become settling grounds for sediment and then home to plants)—rather than concrete, will further reduce flood risk.

Upstream, in a tributary of the river, another spectacular success has occurred. Once an important source of water for local residents, Adobe Creek eventually suffered like most of California's urban waterways. The stream still harbored a few steelhead trout, but they were headed fast for extinction—until students from Casa Grande High School stepped in. In 1983 they embarked on an ambitious plan to restore the creek, and by 1996, the city's diversions of the creek's entire flow had been completely removed. The students had planted an average of 1,100 seedling trees along the banks each year to provide the shade essential for fish habitat and restore riparian woodland. They had removed 25 tons of debris from the creek. More than $500,000 had been raised to build a conservation hatchery for the steelhead, and 64 trout returned to the creek to spawn that year—an order of magnitude increase in population from the early 1980s.

SAN JOAQUIN RIVER PARKWAY AND CONSERVATION TRUST

Each year, thousands of students learn about the San Joaquin River through school programs, tree planting projects, and a River Camp organized by the Parkway Trust.

PHIL SCHERMEISTER

Working in collaboration with the Trust for Public Land, the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust is halfway to its goal of creating parks, trails, and open space along a 22-mile corridor of the mighty San Joaquin River.

Central Valley: San Joaquin River

The mighty San Joaquin River drains 32,000 square miles, an area about the size of Maine. It runs 742 miles from its headwaters in the Sierras to its end in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta. Most of its waters never make it that far, though, due to extensive damming and diversions. Dams—including Friant Dam, the second largest in the country—were erected to provide hydroelectric power to growing southern California communities, and to supply water for agriculture in the Central Valley, where farmers were at risk of economic ruin at the end of the Great Depression.

With little of its natural flow remaining to flush it clean, downstream sections of the river have been brutally referred to as "the lower colon of California"—a sewer for farm and city wastes. The river is channelized in places, and lined with gravel mining pits. Nonetheless, bald eagles, mule deer, coyote, fox, beaver, and waterfowl make their homes in the surviving riparian zone as the river heads for Fresno, twenty miles downstream from the immense Friant Dam. A broad floodplain, up to a mile wide, surrounds the river and steep, 150-foot cliffs rise above it in Fresno. According to Dave Koehler, executive director of the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust, public attention turned to this river in the mid 1980s when the city's sprawl had reached the bluffs' edge. "Developers began proposing to build down in the floodplain, and that sounded a wake-up call to the community. Planning and conservation interests came together to develop a river parkway plan."

At first the plan met with opposition from businesses and developers. The Parkway Trust worked to help them see the benefits of a parkway for all. Economists at California State University Fresno wrote a report on the economic benefits of creating the parkway. The river itself helped bring people around. Koehler recalls that heavy rains in January 1997, resulting in a large release of water from Friant, precipitated "a milestone in public perception. People realized that even though the dam had been built, the river and the city were still subject to natural variability. Until then, developers had made proposal after proposal to build down on the floodplain. After that year, they stopped."

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Changes and Challenges in the Quest for Quality Tree Stock

By Brian Kempf

For more than two years now the Quality Tree Committee (QTC), consisting of urban foresters, municipal arborists, nurserymen, academics, and other tree care specialists, has been working to improve the quality of containerized nursery trees grown throughout California. (See *California Trees*, Fall 2000 for a report on the committee's early efforts.) The QTC has drafted specification guidelines for ensuring the production and purchase of high-quality trees.

The process of specification development took many months. Initially there was much debate about what is and is not a quality tree. After lengthy discussion, most committee members have reached a consensus concerning reasonable expectations for quality tree stock. Growers and buyers (buyers include municipalities, nonprofits, contractors, landscape architects, and homeowners) have agreed that improvements in young tree quality can and should be made. The problem lies in how to implement the needed changes.

Supply Versus Demand

Originally the QTC planned to distribute the specifications to tree buyers to help them select or 'specify' high-quality container-grown nursery trees. But the committee identified two major problems with that strategy. First, unless nurseries changed their production methods, there would be very few trees available for sale to meet the demand for improved stock. And even if the nurseries changed their production methods today, it would take two to three years for the changes to take effect. Second, the nursery industry would be hurt financially if buyers suddenly started rejecting large quantities of trees because the trees didn't meet the new standards. This would likely make growers more resistant to changing their production methods. The QTC decided that the most prudent approach was to work closely with the nursery industry to improve production methods over time.

Training for Change

The QTC has focused its efforts on providing workshops for growers to discuss and demonstrate ways to implement needed changes. A number of large, wholesale nurseries including Valley Crest, Orange County, L.E. Cooke, Normans, Boething, Dave Wilson, Frantz, Grover, Mid Valley, Belmont, and Calaveras, have participated in these workshops. The growers are now

PHOTOS BY BRIAN KEMPF

The tale of two Bradford pears: *Tree A (on left) was topped without retaining a leader. The crown has many co-dominate branches, which, if not dealt with, will cause problems down the road (see close up, pg. 5). Tree B (right) was topped but a leader was retained. Vigorous, co-dominate branches have been removed or cut back to a bud growing away from the leader (see close up, pg. 5).*

becoming interested in exploring the possibility of modifying production methods. Additional workshops are being conducted with other growers. The ball is rolling, and nurseries large and small are now talking with each other about making changes. Once new production methods are in place, consumers will also need to be educated, otherwise the plan will likely fail. There must be a demand for the improved product and a willingness to pay a somewhat higher price.

The Major Issues

The current goal is to reach as many growers as possible and provide hands-on training. Upper management as well as field and production people will need to be involved in the process. The following are major issues that need to be addressed:

Caliper versus container. Trees in California are sold by the container size, which is commonly referred to in gallons or inches (i.e., 5-gallon, 15-gallon, 24-inch box, and so on)—unlike many other states in which trees are sold by both the caliper (trunk diameter) and the container size.

The caliper of trees in a given container size varies widely in California. To further confuse matters, a 15-gallon tree does not actually come in a 15-gallon container—the container is 5.7 gallons and should actually be called a "number 15." In Oregon, on the other hand, a buyer purchasing a red oak sold in a number 15 container can be fairly certain that the tree's caliper will range from about 1- to 1-1/4 inches.

Price. In California it is common to pay between $25 and $35 for a 15-gallon red oak of anywhere from 1/2-inch to 2-inches in caliper. In states like Oregon, where tree caliper is consistent with the size of the container, buyers pay between $53 and $58 for a number 15 red oak, with a caliper range of 1- to 1-1/4 inches. California nurseries have created a problem for themselves by underbidding each other. It is difficult to produce a high quality number 15 tree for $30.

Root problems. This critical indicator of tree health is often overlooked when nurseries buy starter stock from outside tree propagators. Most nurseries buy small trees ('liners') from other nurseries that

See **Quality Trees,** *Page 5*

OPEN FORUM

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE: THE ELEMENTAL SOLUTION

By Pepper Provenzano

There's been a lot of talk about sustainable solutions for smart growth. We seek potent antidotes to unchecked sprawl and urban decay. We need tangible energy conservation more than ever. How can we mitigate pollution—of soil, water, air, and society—associated with population growth, unprecedented development, industry, and vehicular traffic? Is there really any way to address habitat fragmentation?

Planners and politicians everywhere are experimenting with strategies for improving urban infrastructure, but there are few strategies that everyone can agree on, fewer still that actually bring people together, and none so simple and painless as the movement known as Urban Forestry.

Urban Forestry Defined

Urban Forestry is a fast-growing movement (no pun intended) that combines strategic planting with environmental stewardship and education to create green infrastructure for sustainable communities. It's a movement that's easy to embrace, fast to grow, and could well put environmentalists and political conservatives on the same page.

Sure and steady, this movement is expanding its myriad canopy of benefits while bringing together a remarkable cross-section of supporters from every segment of society.

- Urban forestry organizations, located in every major metropolitan area and hundreds of growing communities nationwide, are the "Red Cross" of environmental groups, non-controversial, apolitical, and utterly benevolent by nature and design.

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Quality Trees, *from Page 4*

specialize in tree propagation and 'pot up' the trees. The most severe root problems develop when the tree is in the early stages of production. The container growers must develop a better relationship with the propagators and stipulate that liners with significant root problems will not be accepted.

Root cutting at the time of transplanting. Many growers are afraid to cut roots at the time of transplanting for fear of slowing tree growth or even killing the tree. Research conducted 25 years ago has demonstrated that this is not the case. Learning how to cut roots properly at the time of transplanting is critical for developing a quality tree.

To stake or not to stake. Growers feel that they must stake every tree in order to develop a salable product (in keeping with buyers' perceptions that the best trees are those with straight trunks and leafy canopies). The QTC believes that selective staking is better for trees and more cost effective for the grower. Rather than staking a tree from the very beginning, it is far better to allow it to develop improved caliper and taper early in its life and stake the tree later if necessary. Trees grown in this way may not need to be staked when planted in the landscape.

Topping to develop a crown. Growers also feel that they must top young trees to develop a crown so that the trees are salable. The QTC believes that topping a young tree to develop a crown is acceptable, provided a central leader is retained.

Tree A

Tree B

Meeting the Challenges

The changes that the growers must make to produce high quality container-grown trees are fairly simple and need not be overly expensive. The challenge of developing quality trees for California is to reach the growers and persuade them that they play a pivotal role in the health, safety, and longevity of California's urban forests. The growers must be convinced that change will help them and the industry.

We strongly encourage the tree buying public to contact your local nurseries and let them know that quality trees are important to the long-term success of the urban forest. Let them know that a quality tree is one that is free of serious defects, with a central leader, enough taper to stand on its own, and free of root problems. Work with your local nurseries rather than blaming them for the problem.

Brian Kempf is co-founder and director of the Urban Tree Foundation, based in Visalia, California.

To get a copy of the "Specification Guidelines for Container-Grown Trees," go to www.urbantree.org/specs.htm. As you go through the specifications you can click on the links in blue to find out more about a particular section. For more information regarding this project, contact Brian Kempf at (559) 713-0631 or e-mail at brian@urbantree.org.

CALIFORNIA ReLEAF

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
Auburn Area Urban Forest Group
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
Mountains Restoration Trust
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 Slavianka
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
Woodland Tree Foundation

RELEAF NETWORK PROFILE

SANTA BARBARA BEAUTIFUL

By Julie Soller

"A dismal and treeless place," observed Padre Junipero Serra when he first surveyed the future site of the city of Santa Barbara in April 1782. Generations later, the city is lush, green, and one of the most picturesque in the world. Thanks to a history of civic pride and community activism, Santa Barbara's leaders have long held high standards when it comes to civic beauty. Santa Barbara Beautiful, a nonprofit organization founded in 1965, works hard to keep it that way.

ALL PHOTOS SANTA BARBARA BEAUTIFUL

Thanks to a history of civic pride and community activism, the Santa Barbara of today bears little resemblance to the "dismal and treeless place" surveyed by Padre Junipero Serra in 1782.

Early Efforts

The history of Santa Barbara's robust urban forest—some 90,000 trees—is intertwined with the architecture of the Spaniards, an earthquake, and the vision of a dedicated woman.

In 1907 19-year-old Pearl Chase looked with disdain on the shabby buildings and lack of greenery in Santa Barbara, the city she would later call home for seventy years. She left to get her college degree from UC Berkeley, and returned with a deep commitment to community beautification and social justice. From the time of her graduation in 1909 to her death in 1979, Dr. Chase played a key role in the development of Santa Barbara's unique character. Her efforts in conservation, community development, and historic preservation are widely evident in Santa Barbara's architecture, health and building codes, parks, and historic landmarks. A healthy urban forest went hand in hand with her vision for a beautiful city.

In 1925 a devastating earthquake destroyed the downtown area. To Chase and many others, it was a blessing in disguise—a chance to rebuild and improve the city. Spanish Revival became the official architecture, with its distinctive arches, red-tiled roofs, and baroque entry decorations. In the 1960s and '70s, city leaders established additional regulations that cover many visual aspects of the community, including design standards for commercial signs and commercial landscaping.

In 1965 Dr. Chase established Santa Barbara Beautiful with the mission to stimulate community action for Santa Barbara's beauty "as a complement to government and private activity."

Santa Barbara Beautiful's (SBB) programs include a planting partnership with the city, a very successful commemorative tree program, an annual Arbor Day celebration, educational outreach to schools, and monthly and annual awards recognizing outstanding examples of public and private architecture and landscaping. SBB is also branching out to include public art in its canopy of beautification projects, such as the creation of a mural on the backside of an unattractive commercial building.

PROFILE SNAPSHOT

Santa Barbara Beautiful

Location: ..... Santa Barbara
Year founded: 1965
Board of directors: 30
Number of trees planted: ..... 9,000 (since 1977)
How to contact: ..... Santa Barbara Beautiful
P.O. Box 2024
Santa Barbara, CA 93120
(805) 965-8867
www.sbbeautiful.org

Partnering with the City

"Santa Barbara is a very carefully constructed community," says Jacqueline Dyson, vice president of public relations for the group. She recalls how, in the early '70s, civic organizers wanted to plant more trees. They held a big fundraiser with a target of $100,000—and exceeded that goal. Since that time SBB has purchased and helped plant almost 9,000 trees. "It's a very symbiotic relationship we have with the City of Santa Barbara," Dyson says. "Through donations, we purchase trees and donate them to the city. The city plants and maintains them."

Santa Barbara Beautiful augments the city's tree budget of $10,000 with another $5,000 a year, resulting in approximately 250 to 350 new street trees each year. "Compared to other cities our size, it's a good healthy number," says City Arborist and former SBB Board President Dan Condon. "On average we plant double what we lose."

Like many cities in California, Santa Barbara's urban forestry budget has not grown for 10 years. Operating on such a fixed budget presents a problem for maintenance. "You can easily plant a thousand trees, but keeping them all thriving is a big challenge," says Condon. "With the limited resources we have for follow-up maintenance, I believe SBB and the city working in partnership have planted trees at a sustainable, workable level. Our vision is to see 90 percent of our available street planting sites filled. We are now close to 80 percent."

Besides raising money so the city can buy trees, Santa Barbara Beautiful challenges the local government to strive for excellence. Condon says that the city's elected officials and staff "have always been appreciative and challenged by SBB to be the best we can be."

He believes nonprofit community-improvement organizations like SBB succeed when they not only make demands but also participate. He points out SBB's financial commitment, advocacy, and volunteer work to promote the actual implementation of their programs. Thanks in large part to the group's efforts, Santa Barbara has been designated a Tree City USA by the National Arbor Day Foundation for 22 consecutive years. "Our city elected officials take great pride in that. It's not an easy place to cut budgets," he says.

Five elementary schools participated in Santa Barbara Beautiful's tree poster contest. Winning posters, including the one pictured above, were submitted to the National Arbor Day Foundation for competition in the Foundation's national contest.

Getting the Public's Attention

As many tree groups will attest, involving citizens in tree appreciation beyond the usual Arbor Day activities requires creativity and persistence. Santa Barbara Beautiful has found several ways to garner year-round publicity and involvement in its urban forestry and beautification programs.

The organization's Commemorative Tree Program is a public relations success as well as a constant source of funding. For a $185 donation, Santa Barbara Beautiful will dedicate a street tree in memory of a loved one or in celebration of a special occasion. Commemorative trees are personalized with a plaque identifying the name of the person honored and the name of the donor. There are now thousands of commemorative street trees in town.

By publicly recognizing outstanding residential and commercial properties for the past 37 years, Santa Barbara Beautiful has kept itself consistently in the public eye. "There's not a

Santa Barbara Beautiful's Learning Tree Program involves schools and youth organizations in the care of the urban forest through educational talks, school projects, and an annual Arbor Day tree planting.

See **Santa Barbara,** *Page 11*

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Urban Forestry, Conservation Groups Breathe Collective Sigh of ReLeaf

Californians voted in favor of Proposition 40 last month, providing state resource agencies with $2.6 billion for natural resource conservation, including $10 million for urban forestry.

Funds allocated for urban forestry in the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act will be available through competitive grants awarded by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

California ReLeaf Network members played an integral part in developing grassroots support that contributed to the 57 percent "yes" vote the funding measure received on March 5. More than a dozen urban forestry groups formally endorsed the $2.6 billion resources bond.

Congratulations to everyone who contributed their time and hard work to passing this critical resource conservation tool. For more information on Proposition 40, visit the official campaign web site at www.voteyeson40.org.

Transportation Initiative Includes Urban Forestry Funds

A proposed transportation initiative sponsored by the Planning and Conservation League (PCL) would establish a new statewide Environmental Enhancement Fund that will provide $87 million per year for resource conservation, including urban forestry. PCL is preparing to mount a challenging grassroots campaign to place the initiative, entitled the Traffic Congestion Relief and Safe School Bus Act, on the November 2002 ballot.

The initiative would allocate 30 percent of the state share of the sales tax on new and used cars and trucks to a new trust fund for transportation improvements around the state, generating approximately $870 million a year (10% of which would go to the new Environmental Enhancement Fund).

For more information on the Traffic Congestion Relief and Safe School Bus Act, visit PCL's web site at www.pcl.org.

New Speaker, Committee Chairs for the 2002 State Assembly

California's State Assembly voted to replace 2001 Speaker Robert Hertzberg (D-Van Nuys) with Assembly Member Herb Wesson (D-Culver City) as one of its first orders of business in January. Much like Assembly Member Hertzberg, whose term ends this year, Speaker Wesson boasts a perfect 100 rating from the California League of Conservation Voters for his 2000 environmental voting record.

The change in leadership also produced several changes in key legislative committees including new chairs and members for the Assembly committees on Appropriations, Budget, and Water, Parks and Wildlife.

Legislative Information at Your Fingertips

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) produces an annual guide to the State Legislature that includes full State legislative rosters, complete committee assignments, a legislative calendar, charts on the state budget and legislative process, and key legislative information sites on the Internet.

To order your free copy of the *2002 Legislative Handbook*, please call TPL's Sacramento office at (916) 557-1673.

Redistricting Reflects Population Shifts

California's Legislature approved and Governor Gray Davis signed into law in 2001 Senate Bill 802 (Perata) and Assembly Bill 632 (Cedillo) that together provide the redistricting, or reapportionment, plan for California over the next several years. The new boundaries account for population shifts reflected in the 2000 census and incorporate recommendations offered at public hearings in 2001.

Many of the new State Senate and State Assembly districts will have a major impact on how several of California's geographic regions will be politically represented. Other districts may be only slightly redrawn or may even remain the same.

Please take time to learn more about the new districts and determine if you will have a new legislative representative in Congress or at the State Legislature based on the redistricting plan. These new state legislative districts will be utilized in 2002 for state election purposes and will be the new gauge for determining legislative representative boundary lines in 2003.

The reapportionment plan is available on the following websites:

California State Senate
www.sen.ca.gov

California State Assembly
www.assembly.ca.gov

Statewide Database
swdb.berkeley.edu/.

2002 Urban Forestry Legislation Branches Out

California's State Legislature introduced over 2,100 new bills in January and February, including legislation carried by Assembly Member Joe Nation (D-San Rafael) and Assembly Member Helen Thomson (D-Davis) to increase state funds for managing sudden oak death and protecting oak woodlands, respectively.

These bills and other urban forestry-related legislation, including last year's ACA 8 (Keeley) will be detailed further in the next edition of *California Trees* and can be viewed online at www.tpl.org.

—By Chuck Mills, Outreach Program Manager, The Trust for Public Land, Western Region

Rivers, *from Page 3*

The Parkway Trust envisions multi-use trails running through the 22-mile corridor that would include 6,000 acres of public access land along the river. TPL has worked in a joint venture with the Parkway Trust and in collaboration with the state San Joaquin River Conservancy to help achieve this vision. So far, they're about halfway to their goal. Addressing the many diverse interests in land use along the river has not been easy. Land Stewardship Director Don Hunsaker advises, "As Winston Churchill said, 'Never, ever, ever give up.' You go to endless meetings and it can seem like you're having the same old conversations over and over again, but if you keep up the dialog, you get results."

Local high school students have worked hard planting trees along the parkway. Koehler notes that, "In the past, kids weren't coming to the river to learn. They weren't coming to the river at all — a tremendous resource in our backyard was not being used." Now, each year 13,000 kids learn about the river through school programs and the Parkway Trust's River Camp, and are one of the best sources of volunteers. Koehler says, "The kids are terrific; they have fun, get a new experience, and contribute a great deal."

Around the State

These are just a few of many urban river projects across the state. In Sacramento, five million people enjoy the American River Parkway each year, while volunteers and donors "adopt" each mile of the river's banks, planting trees and removing debris. In Chico, California ReLeaf Network group Streaminders promotes the use of tree planting and other bioengineering techniques to stabilize the banks of Big Chico Creek. Along the Russian River in Sonoma County, middle and high school students are helping a team of professionals restore and monitor native habitat. In Orange County, the Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks is working to consolidate existing parks and other open space areas along the lower Santa Ana River. Almost every community with a river running through it is reawakening to the fact that healthy, vital local waterways, large and small, are essential to our lives and assets we must protect. ■

Joan Schwan is a freelance writer based in Palo Alto, California.

You Can Contact

The Trust for Public Land
Western Rivers Program
(415) 495-5660
www.tpl.org

San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust
(559) 248-8480
www.riverparkway.org

North East Trees
(323) 441-8634
www.northeasttrees.org

NEWS IN URBAN FORESTRY

Proposition 12 Funding Available

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) has just announced the availability of Proposition 12 funding for 2002. Approximately $1 million is available for tree planting and tree care projects. City and county governments, as well as nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply for these funds. For more information contact CDF Urban Forestry Program Administrator Herb Bunt at (916) 651-6423 or herb_bunt@fire.ca.gov.

California ReLeaf and CUFC to Host Joint Conference

Mark your calendars for the 2002 California Urban Forest Conference, taking place September 12 – 15 in Visalia, California—gateway to Sequoia/Kings Canyon National Park. Hosted jointly by California ReLeaf and the California Urban Forests Council (CUFC) the conference, entitled "Planning for California's Urban Forests," will include plenary sessions, technical workshops, opportunities for organizational networking, an awards luncheon (see below), field trips to Sequoia National Park and the Kaweah Oak Preserve, and much more. Contact California ReLeaf at (916) 557-1673, x-12, or CUFC, (415) 647-4207, for more details.

Urban Forestry Awards

The California Urban Forests Council is now accepting nominations for its 2002 Urban Forestry Awards, honoring excellence in California urban forestry for the calendar year 2001. Categories include Best Urban Forestry Program, Founders Award (for improving education), Volunteer of the Year, and Outstanding Urban Forestry Project. Winners will be announced and honored at an awards luncheon at the 2002 California Urban Forest Conference (see above). Applications and criteria may be obtained by contacting CUFC at (415) 647-4207 or visiting the web site at www.cufc.org.

Tree Guidelines Available

Tree Guidelines for Inland Empire Communities, *Tree Guidelines for San Joaquin Valley Communities*, and *Tree Guidelines for Coastal Southern California Communities* are now available online! Produced through the Local Government Commission (LGC) in partnership with the Western Center for Urban Forest Research, the documents are available on LGC's web site, http://www.lgc.org/bookstore/energy/index/html, or by calling LCG at (916) 448-1198.

New Urban Foresters Join CDF Staff

Welcome to Darla Mills and John Melvin who joined the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's urban forestry crew earlier this year. Mills works out of CDF's Sanger office and covers central California while Melvin is headquartered in Riverside and will be working on Inland Empire/Southern California issues. Both work closely with residents in their areas to address urban forestry concerns. To contact: Darla Mills, CDF, 210 South Academy Avenue, Sanger, CA 93657; (559) 485-7500 • John Melvin, CDF, 2524 Mulberry Street, Riverside, CA 92501; (909) 782-4140.

—By Martha Ozonoff

OPEN FORUM

Open Forum, *from Page 5*

- Urban forestry councils, required by Congress in order for states to receive federal urban forestry funding under the 1990 Farm Bill, now exist in every state.
- Some three dozen U.S. colleges now offer degrees or courses in Urban Forestry.

Growth and Fragmentation

One thing is clear: No strategy for smart growth is complete without a significant urban forestry element. Consider the following:

1) The number one threat to plant and animal life is loss of habitat, says E.O. Wilson, ecologist, author, and professor of biology at Harvard. Since Wilson made this statement more than ten years ago, no one has refuted it. It serves as a wake-up call to cities, a raison d'être for urban planners and smart-growth advocates.

Why? Because the same principle applies to the habitat of people. No discussion of the effects of growth, urban sprawl, and the associated hidden costs of pollution, is complete without a discussion of the threats to human habitat.

When we hear the term "habitat fragmentation," it is often in close proximity to another familiar phrase, "diminishing species," which begs the question: What next?

2) Population growth is rapidly and radically changing global demographics and affecting us all—there are expected to be nine billion people on this planet by the year 2025.

U.S. Census Bureau figures show 80 percent of the U.S. population living in urban areas. The United Nations World Health Organization predicts that 60 percent of Earth's population will live in urban areas by 2025.

The hamlets become villages, and the villages become towns, and one day we wake up and find that our little hometown has become a city. In the process, the "natural environment" is profoundly altered by impervious surfaces such as blacktop, concrete, and buildings that dominate the landscape.

If a picture is worth a thousand words, satellite photos speak volumes. The tree canopy of Atlanta has diminished 40 percent in twenty years, and nothing shows this better than remote sensing technology, or satellite photos. If you look at satellite photos of a dozen cities from ten years ago, then view shots of the same cities today, the difference is stark.

Every state legislature should be shown these photos. The images are profound and clearly illustrate the expanding stages of sprawl, population density, and urban decay.

No strategy for smart growth is complete without a significant urban forestry element.

The Human Principle

What you *don't* see in the satellite images are the social ills associated with living in urban environments that already have become asphalt jungles for millions of Americans, the underlying ills of social pathology that are clearly emerging in the detached youth in our cities.

3) Scientists define pollution as energy waste—yet another principle that applies to humans. Says Andy Lipkis of Los Angeles-based TreePeople, "People have an immense amount of energy, but for the most part, it isn't being used. The result is a kind of pollution in our cities: despair, frustration, depression, rage, and crime."

If, as the late President John F. Kennedy observed, "Our youths are our greatest natural resource," what then will become of them in these asphalt jungles? What empirical study over how many lifetimes is proof enough to justify investments early and often to connect our youths with our habitat?

4) The number one indicator species of a healthy urban environment is trees. This is not just warm and fuzzy beautification. The current Urban Forestry movement has morphed and evolved in the past 25 years with population growth and urbanization. Green infrastructure is no longer just "nice to have."

The Old Saw

Don Willeke, a Minnesota attorney, former American Forests' president, and champion of this cause for three decades, says "To hell with beautification. We plant trees for economic, social, and environmental reasons."

Think about it. Trees are the only element of the urban infrastructure that actually appreciates in value. Name one other part of the infrastructure that does that! Yet in most cities the urban forest is taken so for granted that trees are not even considered part of infrastructure. In Salt Lake City, Urban Forestry is under the Division of Waste Management. Lots of room for improvement here. Lots of room for growth.

I was a journalist for 20 years, an editor packaging international news, and so I know first-hand that Urban Forestry is not even a blip on the radar screen of the media. But for more than 12 years I have carried a deep conviction that this extraordinary Urban Forestry movement can change the world. It's elemental.

If you have ever seen that bumper sticker that says, "Trees Are the Solution," then I hope to tell you that truer words were never spoken. I use capital letters when I write about Urban Forestry now, because this movement has come of age. Someday it will receive the recognition it so richly deserves. ■

Pepper Provenzano is the founder and director of TreeLink.org, the national web-based information database and networking center for urban and community forestry. He is also the founding president of TreeUtah, and cofounder of the National Alliance for Community Trees and the Utah Urban Forest Council.

Santa Barbara, *from Page 7*

month that goes by that SBB doesn't appear in the local paper for awards they've given or projects they're working on. All civic improvement organizations need to do that," says Condon. "Committed board members need to be willing to spend the time and work with the media."

"Helping out with the beautification of one's community is a soulful experience."

The organization has given a monthly beautification award to single-family residences since 1980. According to Jacqueline Dyson, "People look forward to it. It has absolutely inspired people to keep up their gardens." The award-winning home is written up and photographed for the local newspaper. The trees, landscaping, and gardens receive coverage along with the history and architecture of the residence.

The Annual Awards are SBB's gala event. Recipients include property owners, architects, builders, contractors, and landscape professionals. Nominations for the coveted awards come from SBB members and residents. Judges in the fields of design, real estate, and landscaping vote on nominations in 12 categories, including Open Public Space, Sustainable Landscaping, and Firescape Design.

"We give awards to everyone who really fully participated in the winning property," says Dyson. "A lot of them reciprocate by becoming members or commemorating a tree."

Cultivating Members

Santa Barbara Beautiful has been successful both in fundraising and in attracting members. While the budget varies from year to year, President Mark Whitehurst estimates it at $50,000 this year. The money comes primarily from private donations, businesses, and bequests—the group rarely applies for grants. There is no paid staff, except the recording secretary. Membership has increased fourfold in the past year, from about 40 to 138 members and there are currently 30 board of directors.

"Activating our membership even more is our biggest challenge," says Whitehurst, who hopes to draw new members into committees to donate their time as well as their money. The focus these days is not funding, but training volunteers for the new jobs that open up, and thanking volunteers for a job well done. "Appreciation and recognition is the most important thing in running an all-volunteer organization," Whitehurst explains.

Beautiful trees figure prominently in this park, which received a 2001 Annual Award from Santa Barbara Beautiful in the category of Open Public Space.

As to the ongoing process of attracting new volunteers, Whitehurst reflects, "Helping out with the beautification of one's community is a soulful experience." Finding residents who agree shouldn't be too difficult in this civic-minded town. ■

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

LETTERS

Forest Pests: Profit at a Price

Reading Jane Braxton Little's excellent article "Coping With Forest Pests" (Volume 12, Number 3, Fall 2001), I was prompted to ask, are the "profits" generated by averting the costs of effective phytosanitation actually wealth appropriated from all who share in losses resulting from introduced pests? Are the businesspeople reaping these "profits" "creating value" as they claim, or stealing? Are total losses resulting from exotic pests greater, perhaps many times greater, than gains from activities by which we introduce them?

David Schrom
Magic, Inc.
Palo Alto, California

Send letters to California ReLeaf, 1107 Ninth Street, Suite 1050, Sacramento, CA 95814; or martha.ozonoff@tpl.org.

TIPS FROM THE FIELD

A New Look for Trees in Turf

Young trees planted in turf often face major obstacles to healthy growth. Weed-wackers and lawn mowers can damage the bark and cambium, slowing the growth and potentially killing the young tree. (Turf also competes for nutrients, which can slow the growth of the tree.)

Even if a circular ring of turf is removed from around the tree, maintenance crews often have a difficult time mowing the turf without damaging the trunk. It also takes extra time to mow in this manner because the mower operator must circle the tree. This turf-tree conflict often puts the goals of urban foresters and turf managers at odds. In Visalia we have started experimenting with removing a "cat eye"-shaped ring of turf around our parkway trees. We found that it is far less time-consuming for the mower operator to mow around this shape because the tree does not have to be circled. The operator can simply veer around the tree and still reach all the grass. The tree is better protected and the mower operators can accomplish their goal much faster—a win-win solution for trees in turf.

Tip submitted by Brian Kempf, co-founder and director of the Urban Tree Foundation, Visalia, CA.

Have a "tip from the field" you'd like to share with our readers? Please send a brief description accompanied by a photo or other graphic to California ReLeaf, 1107 Ninth St., Ste. 1050, Sacramento, CA 95814; or email martha.ozonoff@tpl.org.

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