

IDAHO COMMUNITY TREES

News You
Can Use
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Summer
2015

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF LANDS - COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM AND IDAHO LANDS RESOURCE COORDINATING COUNCIL

Need a powerful, affordable tree inventory program?

Read the Coordinator's Column

Coordinator's Column

Idaho Tree Plotter -- New statewide tree inventory program ready for use

In the last issue of this newsletter, I wrote that the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) was seeking proposals for a browser-based tree inventory system for use by Idaho cities. I am pleased to announce that the proposal and selection process is complete, and Idaho Tree Plotter is now ready for Idaho communities to use.

Idaho Tree Plotter (ITP), developed by Plan-it Geo and tailored for Idaho, is an internet browser-based tree inventory program that IDL is making available at no charge to Idaho cities. ITP works on all standard browsers (Chrome, Explorer, Firefox, etc.) and utilizes web-based maps and easy-to-use menus for mapping and inventorying trees. Users can collect data in the field on laptops or tablets at least 7" in size with an internet connection. Here are some of useful features of ITP:

No software to install. You can access your inventory from any computer with an internet connection. Simply go to the site, log-in, and start using the program.

See your data visually. Trees are mapped geospatially using existing web maps /aerial imagery integrated into the program; no GPS needed. You can view your tree data on a map in a variety of ways: by species, management needs, size class and many other attributes.

Fast data collection. To record information on a tree, simply click or touch it on the screen map. The address populates automatically, and most other data is entered with drop down menus, making field data collection easy and quick.

Ability to export data to Excel spreadsheets or ArcGIS shapefiles for further analysis and integration. Additionally, maps can be created, annotated, printed and saved.

Benefits calculations. Quickly see the value of a tree, set of trees or entire inventory for stormwater mitigation, air quality improvement and energy savings.

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A Heritage Tree Protected in Sandpoint

Over the past two decades, the citizens of Sandpoint have experienced significant growth of their community and at the same time loss of some large, historic trees, mostly but not entirely on private property. For example, the community woke up one day to discover that a huge willow tree – a favorite for many people who grew up with the tree – was suddenly gone. It was removed on the orders of an out-of-state investment company. Many residents felt wounded.

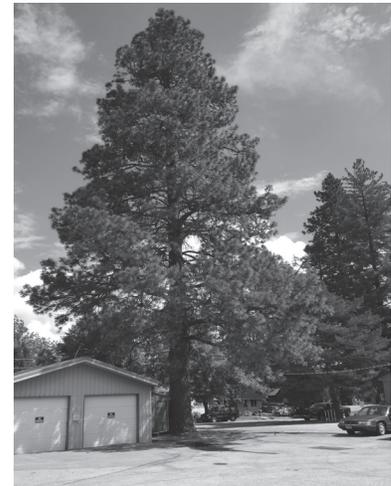


Photo by Stephen Drinkard

Sandpoint's pine saved by will of the people and a design change.

So, when the City of Sandpoint and the Sandpoint Senior Citizens drew up plans recently for a new parking lot on public property and those plans included the removal of a 140-year-old, 53-inch diameter ponderosa pine, many citizens protested vehemently in the newspapers and with phone calls to the Senior Citizens Center. There were no official procedures in place for a review of the planned removal that would mean the end of a beautiful sentinel that had witnessed events from before the city was incorporated in 1907.

Fortunately, the Sandpoint Seniors were willing to look further at keeping the tree, so experts were called in to determine the health of the tree, its life expectancy, and its historical context. The experts then developed a construction plan for the parking lot that would also allow keeping the tree.

The good news is that the mayor of Sandpoint joined with others in deciding that the tree should stay. To

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Increased understanding of Idaho's community forests.

The program allows IDL to roll up, summarize and analyze data from all Idaho cities that use this program. This improves our awareness of the potential impacts of invasive insects or diseases, and helps us understand the composition, age/size, health and management needs of Idaho's urban and community forests. This, in turn, helps us better plan and focus our assistance efforts.

Cities with existing inventories, such as i-Tree Streets, can also use ITP and benefit from the increased functionality. As long as the trees have GIS coordinates, I can convert the inventory to ITP. A number of cities, including Driggs, Nampa and Shelley, are already initiating inventories using this new program. If your city is interested in using this program for a new inventory, or to convert an existing one, please let me know. I can set up an account for your city and provide user accounts for those who will inventory or need to access your city's data, and our Community Forestry Assistants can help you get started with the program.

Take a look at the program at <http://pg-cloud.com/Idaho/>. Note that public access to data is limited, so you will only



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accommodate the additional costs associated with modifying the parking lot work, extra funds are being raised by the community. Perhaps more importantly, the Sandpoint Tree Committee will take up at their next meeting the idea of creating a heritage tree program to address issues like this in the future.

What Does it Take to Establish a Heritage Tree Program?

A heritage tree program reflects the intent of a community to recognize and provide a modicum of protection for trees that are of special importance, usually because of their size, unusual species in that area, or historical value. The trees can be on public or private property.

To create a heritage tree program, criteria defining heritage trees are established, procedures for recommendations are developed, and a review process is set up. Depending on the political and social will of a particular community, there may be legal protections for heritage trees written into the city ordinances, or it may be only a program that recognizes and publicizes the importance of heritage trees.

Without such procedures and policies and/or codes in place, magnificent trees go unrecognized and, worse, are cut down to further another private or public end because it is in some way expedient to do so. For more information and examples of what some communities are doing, visit arborday.org/bulletins and click on Tree City USA Bulletin No. 64, Saving Our Heritage Trees.

Shared Resources – Key to a Successful Pruning Workshop

Good things happen when communities cooperate in their effort to improve tree care. Here is an example.

This past spring, Community Forestry Assistant Stephen Drinkard had an encouraging conversation with Post Falls Urban Forester Preston Hill. During that conversation Hill offered to help nearby communities when he could. Both agreed that it is important to build regional camaraderie. This not only "feels good," Hill said, "but help given will be returned sometime in some way.

Kellogg's tree committee chair, Jan Olson, had asked for a pruning demonstration for her colleagues and also for the city's public works crew, focusing on street clearance. Drinkard coordinated setting a date and time for a workshop, with Hill agreeing to provide the expertise.

Drinkard also told officials at the City of Hayden about the workshop and they asked if they could send two public works crew workers. Likewise, Jan Olsen passed the word to the public works department of the City of Wallace and they asked to send part of their crew.

On March 30, Hill, Drinkard and Olsen met in one of Kellogg's parks prior to the



workshop and mapped out trees suitable for demonstration. Hill then instructed 20 participants, including five members of the Kellogg Tree Committee. Hill focused on small tree pruning for the tree committee members. He also spent much of the workshop showing public works crew members how to prune street trees for aesthetics as well as clearance for vehicles. Drinkard said he was impressed that Hill also focused on how crews can work more efficiently, time-wise, as well as effectively.

Thanks to this successful event, both Hill and Drinkard hope more workshops of a similar nature can be developed in the future.

Idaho Falls Establishes Citizen Review Committees

Because cities aren't private companies, public scrutiny is not just useful, it is desirable and vital. To invite this scrutiny, Citizen Review Committees (CRC) have been established in Idaho Falls to provide a top to bottom review of city divisions and departments. The Park and Recreation CRC consists of a wide variety of citizen volunteers. It's their job to make recommendations on top priorities for the department given the goals of fidelity to law, solving city problems, economic growth and enhancement of city assets. Additionally CRC members identify what the department does well, whether it can achieve any of its goals more effectively, and how public funds can be used.

The committee toured each division facility and met with employees in Recreation, Golf, Zoo and Parks. Each tour was followed by a detailed budget presentation provided by the responsible division manager. A list of general findings and observations, both positive and negative, are being prepared involving administration/budgeting, management, policy and political. However, it was evident that a long term management and maintenance plan is needed, a volunteer coordinator should be hired, and that a plan for employee succession into management positions be clarified. There was a clear consensus of city employees that they are expected to do more with less, that some policies are simply "because we've always done it this way," and that new projects need to come with dedicated maintenance over the long term.

Idaho Falls has a relatively new Park and Recreation Director, Greg Weitzel. One goal that Greg has for his department is to become accredited by the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreational Agencies. This national standard sets the bar for a professional Park and Recreation Department and should be a goal for all Idaho cities.

Diamond Jubilee Issue!

According to Google research, a 75th anniversary is a 'Diamond Jubilee'. So that's the honor we bestow on this issue of the newsletter. *Idaho Community Trees* has been published four times a year without interruption since the fall of 1996. Governor Phil Batt graced that first cover, watching as Samuel Wells of Kuna and his teacher, Jo Ellen Haney, received Idaho Department of Land's award for best Arbor Day poster. Back issues of the newsletter are available by contacting Joyce Jowdy at the IDL office listed in the masthead.

Summer/Fall 2015 Events Calendar

August 15

Spokane County Conservation District's Tree School 2015. Spokane, WA. Visit <http://sccd.org/forestry.html> for more information and to register.

September 9

Urban Forest Connections Webinar Series. Urban FIA: Bringing the Nation's Forest Census to Urban Areas. Webinars are one hour starting at 10 a.m. PDT, 11 a.m. MDT. <http://www.fs.fed.us/research/urban-webinars/>.

September 20-23

Pacific Northwest Chapter ISA Annual Training Conference. Bend, OR. Visit <https://pnwisa.org/event/forces-change-atc-2015-bend-oregon/> for more information and to register.

October 1-2

Northern Rockies Tree School. Livingston, MT. Visit <http://www.livingstonmontana.org/living/trees.html> for more information and to register.

October 7-9

Idaho Chapter American Planning Association Conference. Sandpoint, ID. Visit <http://idahoapa.org/2015-annual-conference/> for more information.

November 17

Society of Municipal Arborists Annual Conference. Denver, CO. Visit <https://www.arboday.org/programs/pcf/partnering-event-sma.cfm> for more information and to register.

November 18-19

National Partners in Urban Forestry Conference. Denver CO. Visit <https://www.arboday.org/programs/pcf/> for more information and to register.

Upcoming Certified Arborist (CA), Certified Tree Worker (CTW), Municipal Specialist (MS) and Utility Specialist (UA) written Exams

Sept 19, 2015—Bend, OR (CTW Climber)
Sept 20, 2015—Bend, OR (CA, UA, MS, CTW Written)
Oct 1, 2015—Livingston, MT (CA, UA, MS, CTW Written)
Nov 7, 2015—Pocatello, ID (CA, UA, MS, CTW)
Nov 17, 2015—Denver, CO (CA, MS)

For information or to register, contact visit www.isa-arbor.com/certification/becomeCertified/index.aspx



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Tree tip



One of 30 young trees at a technology park in Moscow damaged by lawnmower/edge trimmers.

Stop the Plague of Lawnmower Blight

It may be the most widespread cause of death or poor tree health and it definitely is the easiest to prevent! All too often young trees have their lower bark cut or shredded by lawnmowers banging or scraping the tree, or over-enthusiastic weed cutters trying to eliminate grass right up against the tree. What a tremendous waste of planting money and loss of services from the tree! And easily prevented:

- Place mulch around the base to keep equipment safely away. 2" - 4" works well, always keeping it several inches away from the trunk itself.
- Train workers – including summer help – to not touch the base of the tree.