

IDAHO COMMUNITY TREES

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

Coordinator's Column

*Want to spruce up your tree board? Or start one?
See page 2 for a new handbook.*

Trees: A Prescription for Health

What's in your neighborhood?

A year ago, I focused on the connection between increased tree canopy and better air quality, resulting in improved health and lower medical costs. Closer to home, the trees on your block and in your neighborhood—or their absence—directly influences your health.

Consider the obesity epidemic in our country. The number of labor-saving tools has increased, jobs have become more sedentary and electronic devices ever more distracting; all factors in declining levels of physical activity. In 1986, less than 10% of Idahoans were considered obese (body mass index >30). Today, nearly 1/3 of all Idahoans, including children, are in this group. Medical costs directly associated with obesity in Idaho total about \$325 million annually. As a Mayo Clinic doctor concluded, "Sitting is more dangerous than smoking, kills more people than HIV and is more treacherous than parachuting. We are sitting ourselves to death."

Obviously, eating better and increasing physical activity are keys to changing these statistics. Organizations such as Let's Move Idaho and Idaho Smart Growth are creating and implementing opportunities, conditions and policies that lead to positive changes. As well, many transportation departments are adopting "Complete Streets" principles; transportation systems designed for safe and accessible use by pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit in addition to cars.

The reason for these actions is that studies show people are healthier when they live in neighborhoods designed to encourage physical activity. This is where trees come in—including tree-lined sidewalks, access to nearby parks, and other "green" amenities. Researchers have demonstrated a correlation between contact with nature and medical benefits such as lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels, faster recovery after surgery and better survival rates after heart

attacks. While trees won't make people exercise, they create an experience where doing so is easier and more likely. Putting it more bluntly, an Idaho Department of Health and Welfare report suggests that our zip code is more important to our health than genetic code. And because affluent neighborhoods tend to have many more trees than others, access to healthy environments is also an environmental justice issue.



In the book—*Last Child in the Woods, Saving our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder*—author Richard Louv details study after study that demonstrate how imperative and necessary ongoing experiences with the natural world are for childhood development. Experiences as simple as walking beneath a canopy of trees in the neighborhood or on the walk

and from school can mean diminished levels of attention deficit disorder and obesity, fewer incidents of anxiety and depression, improved self esteem, enhanced brain development, higher levels of curiosity and creativity and the list goes on.

The same is true for adults. A study in Toronto, for example, found that when a residential block had at least ten trees, people reported health benefits similar to being seven years younger or having \$10,000 more income. The good news is that the cost of planting trees is much less expensive than the medical costs associated with poor health. Indeed, many doctors are now prescribing visits to parks to address health issues such as ADHD, high blood pressure, asthma, obesity, anxiety, diabetes, and depression.

While not the cure-all for what ails us, the trees in our neighborhoods provide very real and powerful contributions to better health. What's in your neighborhood?

- David Stephenson
Community Forestry Coordinator

Community Tree Management Institute

Every couple years Washington and Oregon host a Community Tree Management Institute (CTMI), a combination of in-person and on-line training covering technical, managerial and administrative aspects of managing trees in cities. City forestry staff from Idaho are also invited to attend this excellent training. The purpose of CTMI is to provide participants with the information, skills, and leadership training to carry out their tree-related responsibilities more effectively. While the program starts in the fall, early registration is now open through the end of April. For more information on CTMI and to register, please visit www.dnr.wa.gov/urbanforestry and look in the body of the e-newsletter or under Recent Posts.



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Permission is hereby given to duplicate and distribute this newsletter for educational purposes.

Revised Tree Board Handbook Available!

Arbor Day Foundation's Tree Board Handbook is a comprehensive guide to help tree board members understand their role and how they can best contribute to the board. It is a helpful handbook for communities that want to create a tree board or those trying to have an improved or more active board serving their community.

This 42-page, full-color publication covers a variety of topics including tips on being an effective tree board member, planning strategies, getting the work done, external communication, celebrating Arbor Day, and finding helpful resources. It is a must read for any tree board member passionate about the community's urban canopy.

The first edition was written by Gene Grey of the Community Forestry Program in Kansas. The revision was authored by Jim Fazio, University of Idaho professor emeritus and editor of this newsletter. Idaho Department of Lands has a supply of copies so please contact us if your city would like one. Additional copies for all board members can be purchased at arborday.org.

NNU in Nampa Becomes Idaho's First Tree Campus USA

Northwest Nazarene University (NNU) in Nampa, Idaho, has met eligibility standards and has become Idaho's first Tree Campus USA. The 90-acre campus serves some 2,000 students and joins 250 other institutions of higher learning throughout the nation to be named for the honor by the Arbor Day Foundation. The award ceremony was made part of the campus' second annual Arbor Day celebration.

Jade Anderson, NNU's Facility Director, said, "Being named a Tree Campus USA means that we are dedicated to taking care of our trees. It means that we are dedicated to educating our students and our community about the importance of tree care, and the important role that trees play in our environment."



The City of Nampa is a partner in NNU's Tree Program. Earl Moran, Nampa's city forester, is a member of the NNU Tree Committee. Nampa and NNU will hold combined Arbor Day celebrations each year, alternating between planting on university and city property. Student volunteers from both the university and grade schools will plant the trees, allowing older students to mentor younger ones and all involved will learn about proper tree planting methods.

Students are an integral part of the Tree Campus USA program. They must be on the campus tree committee, have the opportunity to advise the college on tree related issues, participate in Arbor Day celebrations and be part of a

Service Learning Project. Participating institutions are encouraged to allocate \$3 per full time enrolled student and use those funds towards a campus tree care plan. Specifically, the requirements to qualify as a Tree Campus USA are:

Standard 1: A Campus Tree Advisory Committee

Standard 2: A Campus Tree Care Plan

Standard 3: A Campus Tree Program with Dedicated Annual Expenditures

Standard 4: An Arbor Day Observance

Standard 5: A Service Learning Project.

My Tree—Our Forest®

The National Association of State Foresters is initiating a My Tree—Our Forest® campaign to increase understanding of the benefits of and support for healthy community forests. The first educational materials produced through this campaign are a set of six colorful tree tags that provide valuable messages on how trees make oxygen, keep drinking water clean, save money, make city life fun, and keep streets safe. The tags are 10”x14”, printed on weatherproof material and are pre-drilled with two holes for easy hanging. To see what these look like, go to <http://www.idl.idaho.gov/forestry/community-forestry/index.html>. IDL has a limited number of the tree tags. Please let us know if your city would like a set.



Idaho Tree Plotter Instructional Webinars

A new browser-based tree inventory program called ‘Idaho Tree Plotter’ is available at no cost for use in Idaho communities. Some are already using this new program and we hope you will join them. See the calendar for two one-hour webinars presented by the creators of Tree Plotter – Plan-it Geo.

Spring/Summer 2016 Events Calendar

May 3 and 17

Idaho Tree Plotter webinars. Part 1: The Basics, May 3, 10 PDT/11 MDT (www.anymeeting.com/610-872-719); Part 2: Additional Features, May 17, 10 PDT/ 11 MDT (www.anymeeting.com/647-693-537). Audio call-in information for both webinars is: 213-416-1560; Attendee PIN: 241-9455#

May 13

Report Writing for Arborists, Oregon City, OR. Visit pnwisa.org for information and to register.

May 24

ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ) Course, Bend, OR. Visit pnwisa.org for information and to register.

June 16

Tree Climbing 101 Workshop, West Jordan, UT. Visit www.utahurbanforest.org for more information and to register.

June 27

Tree School, Airway Heights, WA. Learn about tree physics as applied to pruning, cabling, rigging and tree assessments. Visit <http://sccd.org/departments/forestry/tree-school> for more information and to register.

August 13-17

International Society of Arboriculture Annual Conference and Trade Show, Fort Worth, TX. Visit <http://www.isa-arbor.com/events/conference> for more information.

Urban Forest Connections Webinar Series:

Webinars are one hour starting at 10 AM PDT, 11 AM MDT. For information, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/research/urban-webinars>.

- May 11, June 8, July 13, August 10 – Topic TBD—visit website for topics and past webinars
- I-Tree Online Workshops (<http://www.unri.org/treeworkshops>)

- May 18: i-Tree SPECIES
- June 15: i-Tree Roundtable: Answering your i-Tree Questions
- July 20: Introducing i-Tree LANDSCAPE

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

June 4—Lewiston, ID (CA, UA, MS, CTW-written exam)
Sept. 16—Boise, ID (CA, UA, MS, CTW-written exam)

For information or to register, visit <http://www.isa-arbor.com/certification/becomeCertified/index.aspx>



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Tree tip

Virtually all the deciduous trees were recently topped on school grounds in a western Oregon community. Not only does this portend poorly for the trees, it sends an awful message to hundreds of students that this kind of treatment is okay!



Photo by Jim Fazio

Will the Topping Ever Stop?

The malpractice of topping trees has been the focus of educational campaigns for decades. But some folks responsible for trees still don't get it! So the campaign needs to continue.

Why topping is generally a poor decision:

- ☹ Large, truncated limbs cannot seal off the wounds; decay fungi can easily get started.
- ☹ Prolific sprouting results around the periphery of the cuts and are weakly attached, eventually becoming dangerous.
- ☹ To control the regrowth, frequent maintenance is necessary, adding to long-term costs.
- ☹ Tree health is compromised, sometimes leading to premature demise.
- ☹ Topped trees are just plain ugly!