Editor’s Note

With this issue I bring you bad news and good news. The bad news is that the initial attempt to re-fill IDL’s urban and community forestry program manager position, vacated upon David Stephenson’s retirement, was unsuccessful. The good news is that a new search has begun and the program is alive and well.

I hope you will agree that another part of the good news is that permission was granted for this newsletter series to continue uninterrupted. It has been my privilege to serve as editor since its inception in the fall of 1996. Here we are at Number 88! Our little quarterly newsletter has served to keep every city and county in Idaho informed about the activities of the Idaho Department of Lands—Community Forestry Program. We try hard to provide news from the state’s two community forestry coordinators, exemplary events taking place in Idaho communities, and new ideas that might encourage communities to improve stewardship of their tree resources.

As I drive through Idaho, I see some really good examples of healthy community forests. I see pruning done properly, innovations like structural soil being used to provide for root growth beneath new sidewalks, species being installed that are appropriate to the site, and so much more that speaks of community leaders that appreciate the importance of landscape trees. Unfortunately, I also see topped trees, new trees with bark scraped open by mowers or trimmers, trees removed without replacement, and other indications that we still have an educational job to do.

I’m grateful to all who appreciate their community trees and are working to keep them a valued part of the city’s infrastructure. I hope the information we provide is helping to move all in that direction and I welcome any suggestions on how we might do even more to help.

-- Jim Fazio, Editor

Idaho Community Trees
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Early attempts at locating trees in the parks by GIS were awkward, Drinkard admits, and so the conversion of the existing park trees inventory in an Access DB to Tree Plotter were “fuzzy.” Drinkard and an independent contractor the city hired, Nina Eckberg, are gradually updating the parks’ trees. There are about 1,200 trees to inventory. Once he has the trees inventoried, he will turn over his report and plan to Sandpoint’s parks director and urban forester with recommendations. He also intends to meet with the city’s parks commission and involve them in identifying tree issues that should be resolved. “Plans need as much buy-in as possible for them to be usable,” says Stephen, and he is a master at involving stakeholders in all his efforts.

The community forestry assistant for the southern part of Idaho is Gerry Bates. He will be featured in a future issue of the newsletter. Both forestry assistants welcome inquiries from communities in their areas. For contact information, see the masthead box below.

Volunteers Can Get It Done

Volunteers are already busy people and in all cases they have hearts of gold and a sincere desire to make the world a better place in which to live.

-- The Arbor Day Foundation

Americans contribute millions of hours each year -- The Arbor Day Foundation

Many cities in Idaho are tapping this population to help with planting and maintaining their public trees in healthy condition. Young people, too, often seek ways to productively contribute and they not only can help, but at the same time learn about the benefits of trees and the care they need.

Community Forestry offers many opportunities for volunteers. Lay people can plant trees and shrubs, spread mulch, water, prune young trees, distribute doorknock hangars, staff information booths, help with inventories and provide a number of other valuable services.

Twenty years ago, Boise Parks and Recreation launched their Tree Steward program, and the program is stronger than ever today. For the past two decades dedicated tree enthusiasts have volunteered their time to help maintain trees in Boise’s rights-of-way. The volunteers are trained by professional arborists from Boise Community Forestry to prune and train Boise’s young trees and do other maintenance activities. Stewards with more experience mentor new people in the program. In 2017, Boise’s Tree Stewards worked 697 hours and pruned 1,297 trees. The service they provide is invaluable in helping to grow strong healthy trees that reduce maintenance costs later and contribute to the Treasure Valley’s tree canopy for years to come.

If you are not currently using volunteers in your tree program, please consider initiating a program like Boise’s or one of the other communities that are doing this effectively. Contact one of IDL’s community forestry assistants for contact information or assistance in setting up a new program. If you already use volunteers, don’t forget to thank them! Take time to recognize your volunteers and let them know how much they are appreciated. People working in your community don’t expect much in return, just don’t waste their time and do find ways to provide recognition and thanks. This can be as simple as being mentioned during a city council meeting, or something more elaborate like a BBQ or an annual article in the local newspaper. You can find other ideas in Arbor Day Foundation’s Tree City USA Bulletin No. 36, How to Work with Volunteers – Effectively (www.arborday.org).

Words Make a Difference

It is more than “political correctness” to adjust words we use at times in words. Words convey meaning, so it is important to be as accurate and timely as possible in how they are used. Here are two examples in the field of urban forestry:

Trimming and pruning are not the same. We trim hedges, like mustaches, but we prune trees – or should! The difference is that trimming, or shearing, is the indiscriminate removal of unwanted parts of the plant so that it conforms to a desired shape. Pruning, on the other hand, is the selection of specific branches to be removed for some specified reason.

Another term that has been changing in recent years involves hazards. What was once called hazard tree evaluation is now better termed risk evaluation. In the former, there seemed to be an assumption that hazards exist. This may or may not be true. Instead, a different concept is a bit like crossing a street – there is almost always some risk involved, but how much? The purpose of a tree examination is to determine the level of risk compared with the level of tolerance for that risk given the specific circumstances such as size and nature of defects if any, the tree’s location, value of the tree, the presence or absence of so-called “targets” (people, buildings, etc.). As evaluations become more sophisticated and the stakes from damage become higher, it is increasingly important to use qualified personnel to do the work. There are now training avenues available that lead to what is called TRAQ (Tree Risk Assessment Qualification) credential. Here are two examples of courses that are listed in the calendar.

Community Forestry offers many opportunities for volunteers.

DON'T JUST STAND THERE PLANT SOMETHING

Idaho Community Trees is published four times a year by the Idaho Department of Lands—Community Forestry Program.

Field Contacts
Northern Idaho: Stephen Drinkard, Comm. For Ass’Ts, Ph: 208-610-9990; email: drinkard.e9@gmail.com
Southern Idaho: Gerry Bates, Comm. For Ass’Ts, Ph: 208-681-5964; email: plantingidaho@gmail.com

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Fall/Winter 2018-2019 Events Calendar

November 5 – 6
Society of Municipal Arborists Conference, Irvine, CA — Visit www.urban-forestry.com for more information and to register.

November 7 – 8
Partners in Urban Forestry Conference, Irvine, CA — Visit www.arborday.org/programs/pcf for more information and to register.

TREACH Qualification and Renewal Workshops
For additional information, including Canadian locations, visit www.pnwisa.org and click on ‘education and events.’

November 14-16
Seattle, WA
November 14
Boise, ID (Renewal)
January 28-30
Seattle, WA
February 11
Oregon City, OR (Renewal)
February 13-15
Oregon City, OR
March 25-27
Seattle, WA

December 12
Report Writing for Arborists, Oregon City. For information, visit www.pnwisa.org.

December 15
Tree City USA applications due at office of Idaho Department of Lands—Community Forestry Program in Coeur d’Alene! Information is available at www.idl.idaho.gov/forestry/community-forestry/index.html.

January 16-18
Idaho Hort Expo, Boise, Idaho. For information, visit: www.inlagrow.org.

Invest in Tree Education
Few people who work with trees have an innate knowledge of how to best care for them. Also, science and experience are always adding new findings. Whether college-educated in arboriculture or working up in the ranks of field work, everyone needs continuing education to best serve the interests of their community. Here are four good ways to economically invest in the continuing education of tree board members, workers and supervisors:

☐ Provide funding for attendance at one of the conferences or workshops that are listed on this page.

☐ Participate individually or as a group in webinars.

☐ Purchase and share texts on arboriculture or urban forestry.

☐ Purchase and share a complete set of Tree City USA Bulletins available at www.arborday.org/trees/bulletins/purchasing-options.cfm.