

# IDAHO COMMUNITY TREES

No. 88  
Fall  
2018

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

## 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



*Need help with your community tree program?  
Read about Stephen and Gerry*

## Here to Help -- Meet a Community Forestry Assistant



*Stephen Drinkard, Sandpoint, ID*

The Idaho Department of Lands—Community Forestry Program contracts with two experienced urban forestry experts to assist communities with planning or improving local efforts on behalf of trees. This includes help with creating a tree board, conducting a tree inventory, celebrating Arbor Day, instruction on planting or pruning, establishing a volunteer group, and other activities that strengthen a systematic, continuous tree stewardship program.

Stephen Drinkard represents the five northern counties in Idaho -- Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai, Benewah & Shoshone Counties. He also oversees the Tree City USA program each year in this area, making presentations and presenting awards to cities like Kendrick, Kellogg, Post Falls, Coeur d'Alene, Hayden, Spirit Lake, Sandpoint and Priest River.

This year his focus has been on inventory and management plans. He has consulted with Katie Kosanke, urban forester for Coeur d'Alene, on her efforts to compose a master urban forestry plan. "The key to any piece of writing," says Drinkard, "is to continuously remind oneself to whom you are writing and for what purpose. If you don't ask and answer those questions you have a plan that sits on a shelf."

As the former urban forester for the City of Sandpoint, Drinkard still has a personal interest in the trees in Sandpoint. To that end, he began last year to inventory trees in the parks, using the state supported Tree Plotter software in the field and a wi-fi enabled tablet.

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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 useable,” 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 to helping with good causes. As more of our population ages, many more good people are looking for ways to spend their time after leaving decades of work for retirement.



Photo by Stephen Drinkard

Scouts, other youth groups, and adult volunteer organizations can make major contributions to any community’s urban forestry program. Here members of Boy Scout Troop 6604 are planting street trees in Priest River, Idaho.

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 volunteerism. Lay people can plant trees and shrubs, spread mulch, water, prune young trees, distribute doorknob hangers, 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

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**DON'T  
JUST STAND  
THERE**



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.arboday.org](http://www.arboday.org)).

## Words Make a Difference

It is more than “political correctness” to adjust words we use as times change. 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) credentials. Some of these workshops are listed in the calendar. Communities are urged to take advantage of this qualification either in-house or when contracting with arborists.

## Fall/Winter 2018-2019 Events Calendar

**November 5 – 6**

**Society of Municipal Arborists Conference, Irvine, CA**—Visit [www.urban-forestry.com](http://www.urban-forestry.com) for more information and to register.

**November 7 – 8**

**Partners in Urban Forestry Conference, Irvine, CA**— Visit [www.arboday.org/programs/pcf](http://www.arboday.org/programs/pcf) for more information and to register.

### TRAQ Qualification and Renewal Workshops

For additional information, including Canadian locations, visit [www.pnwisa.org](http://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](http://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](http://www.idl.idaho.gov/forestry/community-forestry/index.html).**

**January 16-18 Idaho Hort Expo**, Boise, Idaho. For information, visit: [www.inlagrow.org](http://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.arboday.org/trees/bulletins/purchasing-options.cfm](http://www.arboday.org/trees/bulletins/purchasing-options.cfm).



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10-20-30  
5 Percent  
?

## Tree Diversity - The Best Means of Defense

It is difficult to stop the invasion of insect pests and new tree diseases. However, a good way to prevent the devastating loss of community trees is to diversify. It was once suggested that no more than 10% of the trees should be of the same species, no more than 20% in the same genus and 30% in the same family. Now it is suggested that we tighten up on this rule of thumb. A safer diversification recommendation is no more than 5% should be in the same genus.

Attaining this goal will take time but the place to start is with local tree list recommendations and lists of prohibited trees in rights-of-way. More information on this important topic will soon be available in Tree City USA Bulletin No. 94. Visit [arborday.org](http://arborday.org) and navigate to Tree City USA Bulletins.