



PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland



Exhibit A: Urban Forestry Commission 2009 Annual Report

February 2010

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Urban Forestry Commission:

Brian Krieg, Chair
Michael McCloskey, Vice-Chair
David Odom
Stephen Peacock
Joe Poracsky
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A schoolyard transformed! The Urban Forestry Commission's Communication and Outreach Committee works with Portland Parks and Recreation's City Nature staff to install School Arboreta on school grounds. This transformation at Creative Science School at Clark turned a bleak scene of turf and asphalt into a Learning Landscape with large shade and native trees for the benefit of classes yet to come.

INTRODUCTION

The Urban Forestry Commission is a citizen-volunteer group that advises the City Forester, Parks Director and the Commissioner-in-Charge of Parks and Recreation on tree-related issues. Members of the 11-person group are appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council.

This annual report, as required by 20.40.030-D, reports on the activities of the Urban Forestry Commission during 2009. The work presented in this report is a result of volunteer commitment to the betterment of Portland's urban forest. It begins with a summary of the UFC's work during 2009 followed by key issues to be focused on in 2010. This is followed by appendices A-C which provide background on the UFC, detailed reports on UFC Committee work and other key urban forest related activities that occurred in Portland during 2009.

This report is accompanied by *Exhibit B: Urban Forest Action Plan - 2009 Implementation Update*. Exhibit B was prepared by City staff and is their annual progress report of the City bureaus in achieving the goals of the Urban Forest Action Plan.

Urban Forestry Commission 2009-2010

Brian Krieg, Chair, *President of FocusPoint Communications*

Michael McCloskey, Vice Chair, *Author and former national Executive Director of the Sierra Club*

David Odom, Secretary, *Neighborhood Trees Specialist at Friends of Trees; ISA Certified Arborist, Municipal Specialist*

Stephen Peacock, *Owner of Peacock Tree Preservation, ISA Certified Arborist*

Joe Poracsky, *Professor of Geography at Portland State University*

Dick Pugh, *former Teacher with Portland Public Schools*

Meryl Redisch, *Executive Director of Portland Audobon Society*

Diana Shervey, *Portland General Electric*

Kendra Smith, *Ecologist and Director of Willamette Model Watershed Program, Bonneville Environmental Foundation*

John Warner, *Landscape Architect*

Deb Wechselblatt, *Conservation Professional with Trailkeepers of Oregon and Winter Wildlands Alliance*

SUMMARY REPORT

Portland's Urban Forestry Commission underwent major changes in 2009, with five new members joining UFC filling vacant positions or replacing members completing their terms. The backgrounds of the Commission members now range from leaders of environmental organizations, professional arborists, and educators to experts in ecology, landscape architecture, and social marketing. They all have in common an interest in maintaining and enhancing the urban forest as a key element in the quality of life of Portland

The new members have already provided significant leadership, energy and support for the Commission's activities and launched several successful new projects in partnership with Portland Parks and Recreation's Urban Forestry division and other City staff.

The primary focus of the UFC during 2009 was assisting with the multi-bureau effort to review, revise, and update the City's tree codes. The Citywide Tree Project made significant progress during 2009 and accounted for the dominant amount of the Commission's time and efforts. The following is a brief summary of key activities in 2009.

Citywide Tree Project - Our Highest Priority

The Citywide Tree Project has presented a once-in a quarter-century opportunity to reorganize and rethink City code and policies to reflect a unified view of trees in the urban environment. UFC members have actively participated in this project since its beginning in 2008 through to the current date. The Commission met with planning staff on numerous occasions, including two extra meetings of the full UFC, to specifically work on this project and provide input and review. The UFC's Chair also testified at the Project's first presentation to the Planning Commission last spring. This resulted in many UFC members putting in extraordinary volunteer hours and attending twice the number of meetings as usual. This level of commitment will continue into 2010 as the project moves forward to its conclusion.

The Citywide Tree Project generated significant discussion within the UFC regarding policies, procedures and the roles of various City staff with tree responsibilities. It is vital that significant code changes are made to create a clear, consistent, and comprehensive approach to trees in Portland. The project has also provided impetus for the Commission to take a hard look at its own mission and roles. Seeing this project through to a successful conclusion will continue to be our number one priority.

Annual Retreat and Structural Changes

An outcome of the discussions about the Citywide Tree Project was the holding of a very successful off-site retreat to discuss the future role of the UFC and its internal structure. The all day meeting was held at the Audubon Society's offices and included a volunteer facilitator. The Commission agreed that its priority for the next year is to continue to work on the Citywide Tree Project while at the same time restructuring to focus primarily on urban forest policy issues - and spend less time on specific projects. To enable this new focus, a new meeting structure was developed and several committees were consolidated to streamline the Commission's activities and make more efficient use of the time of the volunteer members and staff.

Policy Outreach - Tree Canopy

The impact of development on Portland's overall tree canopy is of vital concern to the Commission. Of particular concern is the continuing loss of large evergreens in the city and the lack of a significant policy to provide for their replacement. In 2009 the proposal to site a minor league baseball stadium in Lents Park was a prime example of this issue and prompted the Commission to take action. In a letter to City Council, the UFC voiced its unanimous opposition to this project based on the significant negative impact on the community. The loss of mature evergreen tree canopy, particularly in an area of the city that is noted for its lack of canopy, would have caused irreparable harm. Fortunately the Lents Ballpark proposal was withdrawn. However, the issue of the need for a stronger policy for protection and planting of evergreens remains.

Budget - Trees are the Answer

The impact of the ongoing recession on the City's budget has had an effect on the urban forest with reduced funding for maintenance, staffing, and outreach during the past year. At the same time the inter-bureau team has identified many opportunities for the urban forest to play a major role in accomplishing goals of many of the City's plans, such as the Portland Plan, the Portland Watershed Management Plan, the Portland/Multnomah County Climate Action Plan, and Portland's Urban Migratory Bird Program. To accomplish these goals, in the long run, there will need to be more funds allocated to enhancing and maintaining our urban forest. The issue of the capitalization of trees came up during numerous Commission discussions as a key element in achieving further funding.



Preserving mature trees, particularly evergreens, is key to protecting canopy within the City.

Appeals Board

One of UFC's duties is to conduct appeals hearings to address citizen requests for tree removals that have been denied by the City Forester. It should be noted that the PP&R Urban Forestry staff continue to do an excellent job in reviewing tree removal requests and working with the public. In 2009 staff revised the permit application process for street tree removals. The new process clearly conveys that street trees can only be removed if they are dead, dying, or dangerous. As a result, applications for street tree removals have decreased, along with subsequent appeals. In 2009 the UFC heard only two appeals and upheld staff decisions on both cases.

Working with City Staff

During 2009 the City Forester brought numerous issues before the Commission including reports on the Elm Protection program and the Street Tree Cost Assessment study done in collaboration with the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. This information included briefings on developments that have significant tree canopy implications such as the Burnside/Couch couplet on the eastside, the Lents Ballpark and tree mitigation plans for the Powell Butte reservoir projects. The Bureau of Transportation also provided information on several of these projects.

Bureau of Environmental Services staff regularly attended and presented at the Commissions meetings and worked with our various committees. The Grey-to-Green Initiative has provided much-needed support for tree planting and the City's education and outreach efforts to assure that there is community support not only for planting trees, but for nurturing to maturity these growing parts of our infrastructure.



UFC members contributed 1,500 volunteer hours throughout 2009 via committee work, meetings, and events.

UFC Committees

Much of the Commission's work is undertaken through committees that work on specific projects with staff and representatives of community groups interested in advancing the protection and expansion of the urban forest. As noted earlier, the number of committees was consolidated down to six in 2009. A report of their accomplishments, membership and specific duties is included in Appendix B of this report.

Of particular note, the Communications and Outreach committee took a lead role in revitalizing the Neighborhood Tree Steward program by developing and conducting an extensive new training program for the stewards. This training was a big success. Also, the Heritage Trees

committee selected 12 trees to be added to the City's collection which were subsequently approved by City Council.

School Arboreta Program

The School Arboreta program (Learning Landscapes) continued to expand in terms of number of schools and students participating.

The program is now well on its way to supporting 5 to 6 projects per year. Trees are planted on or near school grounds by children who participate in planting and maintenance and thus acquire valuable and dramatic hands-on experience in the building of a green community. Many of our Commissioners assist in these plantings. Years hence these children will be able to visit these sites and proudly point to the trees they helped to plant and care for.

OBSTACLES, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

Many action items from previous *Implementation Updates* have blossomed into active programs. Some key challenges remain, however, and greater support is needed to achieve all the goals set forth by the *Urban Forest Action Plan*. Please refer to Exhibit B's sections on Key Challenges and Opportunities for details articulated by City staff members who work daily with our city's trees.

Unlike many elements of traditional grey infrastructure, 'green infrastructure' needs time to grow, even when provided with ample resources. For this reason, it is critical to cultivate a shift towards long-term vision, stewardship, and commitment for our urban forest.

Key challenges to achieving the goals of the *Urban Forest Action Plan* include:

- Recognizing that, as Portland's population continues to increase, direct competition for space between trees, or green infrastructure, and buildings, or gray infrastructure, will also increase.
- Committing to investing resources in urban forest management now, rather than deferring maintenance. Trees are living creatures; if we are to enjoy their benefits, we need to care for them now or we will lose those benefits and incur higher costs in the future by deferring current maintenance.

FOCUS AND KEY ISSUES FOR 2010

1. Completion of the Citywide Tree Project

The UFC's desire is that the Citywide Tree Project will be completed in 2010 and result in a comprehensive, consistent, and cohesive vision of the urban forest that is coupled with an organizational framework that will make it easier to make that vision a reality. The Commission eagerly looks forward to being engaged in the next phases of this important project and is open to outcomes from it that may change the role and focus of the UFC and urban forestry. As part of this process the UFC will hold a public hearing in 2010 regarding proposed code changes and will be working with the Portland Planning Commission on final recommendations to City Council.

Key Elements of the Citywide Tree Project the UFC Strongly Supports:

- The establishment of a single city tree code
- The development of a tree manual

Key Elements Still Under Review:

- Regulation of trees on private property

2. Capitalization of Trees

The Commission believes that a shift to recognizing trees as capital assets, recognizing their full value as part of the City's capital infrastructure, is crucial to enhancing and maintaining the urban forest and solving many of the City's other quality of life related goals. Work to achieve this will be a policy priority in 2010.

3. Increased Outreach and Interaction with the Various Organizations Involved with Urban Forestry Issues

In 2010 the Commission, as it plans to become more engaged in policy issues, plans to reach out to other local organizations involved with urban forestry issues to develop greater synergy in policy and outreach. From our viewpoint we are entering a time period when there is a rapidly growing understanding by both the public and policy makers of the central role played by the urban forest. A healthy and expanding urban forest has a huge impact on the livability of our community – both now and in the future – and visionary leadership will be critical to maximizing its potential. The UFC is a body that needs to become a leader in the community.

4. Continuing the Reorganization of the UFC and Prioritization of its Activities as Identified during the 2009 Annual Retreat

During 2010 a number of actions will be taken to set the UFC up for the future including:

- Formalizing the new committees
- Development of a Master Calendar for the year to schedule presentations and reports, focus discussions and invite greater public involvement
- Revise draft bylaws into operating guidelines
- Elect new officers for a two year cycle.

CONCLUSIONS

2009 was a year of significant change for the Urban Forestry Commission. The large turnover of Commission members was an opportunity to strategize on the role and purpose of the Urban Forestry Commission. Additionally, the Citywide Tree Project and the City budget crisis demanded much time from the Commission, and members put in significant additional hours to address these pressing issues. This has continued into 2010 as the Citywide Tree Project prepares to present the draft tree code for public review.

The City Council can look forward to working with a committed Urban Forestry Commission in 2010. We look forward to working with you to reach the City's urban forestry goals.

APPENDIX A: UFC COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Much of the Urban Forestry Commission's work is conducted by its committees. After the annual planning retreat, the Urban Forestry Commission reorganized itself into six committees. A summary of each committee's major accomplishments for the past year is reported below.

APPEALS COMMITTEE

Joe Poracsky (Chair), Michael McCloskey, David Odom, Stephen Peacock, Dianna Shervey

Committee Role: Deal with disagreements between a City forestry ruling and a citizen's wishes.

A variety of situations may arise, but most frequently appeals involve denial of a request to remove a tree in the right-of-way. As provided for by City Code, the Urban Forestry Commission serves a quasi-judicial role to adjudicate these disputes. The Appeals Committee acts for the full Commission and hears both sides, debates and weighs the evidence, and makes a ruling based on what they see as simultaneously in the best interests of the individual, the city and the tree. Should the situation be especially complex, it may be heard by the full Commission. Throughout the year, an average of just less than one appeal per month is heard.

COMMUNICATION & OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Joe Poracsky (Chair), Karl Dawson (staff), Angie DiSalvo (staff), Kristine Karnezis (ex-officio, former UFC member), Autumn Montegna (staff), David Odom, Dick Pugh, Greg Tudor (Friends of Trees)

Committee Role: Develop and implement programs to inform the public about the values of urban trees, recruit and train citizen-volunteers to actively support urban forestry issues, and recognize individuals and groups that have made notable contributions to urban forest health and expansion.

Neighborhood Tree Steward Program

In Fall, 2009, the Neighborhood Tree Steward Program was reconstituted and provided 23 hours of training on a variety of tree-related issues, including tree benefits and values, planting, disease and decay, pruning, regulations, and organizing local projects. Central to

the training was time donated by 17 volunteer instructors. The 23 newly-trained Tree Stewards came from 16 different neighborhoods, and brings the total number of Tree Stewards trained to over 170.

Dig-It Event

The 2009-2010 planting season was kicked-off at the second annual Dig-It event, and was jointly-sponsored by the Urban Forestry Commission, Portland Parks and Recreation City Nature, Friends of Trees, and the Bureau of Environmental Services. Held at Mt. Tabor Middle School on Saturday, October 24, a key part of the event was the planting of 28 trees at the school. A second key part of Dig-It was a brief graduation ceremony for the 23 new Neighborhood Tree Stewards. Thirdly, the Communication and Outreach Committee presented Chad Honl, a teacher at Vestal Middle School, with the Naito Award. The Naito Award is given annually to an individual or organization that has made a notable contribution to the promotion and practice of sound urban forestry in the City of Portland. The Naito Award is named in honor of Bill Naito, founder of the UFC.

School Arboreta

The School Arboretum program seeks to increase the number and variety of trees growing on school grounds. During the 2008-2009 planting season, 185 trees were planted at 5 schools throughout the city, a significant increase in the number of plantings over previous years. Approximately 30% of the planted trees represent natives of the Portland area and an increasing percentage are evergreens, which work to filter air and noise during the school year, when deciduous trees are largely without leaves.

New Communication and Outreach Committee Issues in 2010

In addition to continuing work on existing projects and programs, the committee anticipates pushing ahead in the following areas:

1. Expanding the Neighborhood Tree Steward program by identifying and seeking additional partnerships with other organizations and providing increased assistance to the Neighborhood Tree Stewards.
2. Increasing education about proper tree care.
3. Promoting the planting of large-growing trees and the discouraging of planting columnar trees, except where site conditions require.
4. Working with the Bureau of Environmental Services and Friends of Trees to assist in meeting the planting goals of the Grey-to-Green program.

HERITAGE TREE COMMITTEE

Michael McCloskey (Chair), Joe Hintz (staff), John Warner, Ed Washington (ex-officio, former UFC Chair)

Committee Role: Identify, evaluate and nominate distinctive trees for designation as Heritage Trees. To date 297 trees have been designated Heritage Trees in the City of Portland.

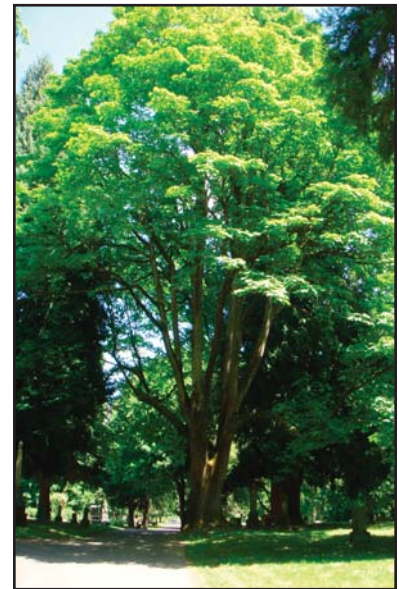
Twelve New Heritage Trees Designated

On July 29, 2009, City Council approved designation of 12 new Heritage Trees. The trees had been identified as potential candidates by the Heritage Tree committee, in conjunction with the City Forester and his staff. They were then recommended to the Urban Forestry Commission and nominated by the full Commission. Half of the trees were on private land and half on public property. For the first time, trees on Metro properties were identified. Four of the trees represent new species added to the Heritage Tree system. This addition brings the City's total to 297.

Process Improved

In 2009 the Heritage Tree Committee made improvements in its processes and policy. Key results were a clearer written description of the process of investigating nominations and improvements in the process to enable designations to be recorded on property titles. Attention was also devoted during the year to orienting new staff members who supported the work of the committee.

The committee decided to have City Arborists verify the health and vigor of nominated trees before the committee would inspect them and to determine whether private owners were interested in the designation. They also decided to make more active use of the Trees of Merit designation in cases where the tree is impressive and deserves to be noted but does not meet all the criteria for Heritage Tree status. Criteria regarding whether a nominated tree needs to be visible from public property was also revised. The committee decided while such visibility is desirable, it should not be regarded as essential for a tree to be designated.



Standing 90 feet tall and 11 feet in circumference, this native bigleaf maple at Lone Fir Cemetery was designated a Heritage Tree in 2009.

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Dianna Shervey (Chair), Stephen Peacock, Dick Pugh, Meryl Redisch, John Warner, Deb Wechselblatt

Committee Role: Assist City Forester with review of UFC applications and provide guidance for officer selection each year.

2009 brought much change to the Urban Forestry Commission, with five new members joining the eleven member group. In March, Joe Poracsky, Meryl Redisch, Kendra Smith, and Deb Wechselblatt were sworn in. In November, David Odom joined the Commission. Together, the new members represent a wide array of experience, and come from backgrounds representing non-profits, academia, arboriculture, and government.

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Brian Krieg (Chair), Michael McCloskey, David Odom, Deb Wechselblatt

Committee Role: Represent UFC during Portland Parks and Recreation's budget process, serve on the Bureau's Budget Advisory Committee, set monthly agenda, write the annual report, plan annual retreat, and other operational issues.

Chair Brian Krieg represented UFC during PP&R's 2009-2010 budget process, and will do so again for the 2010-2011 budget process. The committee advocates for urban forest issues during budget planning.

The Committee also identified the fact that the Commission had a wide variety of projects under way and needed to identify major topic areas and prioritize efforts. The idea of a planning retreat arose and, after some discussion, was adopted. That full-day retreat was held September 17, 2009. At the retreat, committee structures were revised, resulting in the formation of the six committees reporting here.

POLICY COMMITTEE

Kendra Smith (Chair), Harry Auerbach (Ex-Officio, City Attorney's Office), Margot Barnett (Ex-Officio, former UFC member), Stephen Peacock, Meryl Redisch, Dianna Shervey, John Warner

Committee Role: Prioritize, promote and monitor activities that relate to City policy and regulations concerning trees.

The Policy Committee focused heavily on the Citywide Tree Project, the tree policy and regulatory improvement project headed by the

Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. The code rewrite is expected to take the form of a new Title 11 of City Code, and will replace most of the current Title 20 and Title 33. The Committee met multiple times with the inter-bureau Citywide Tree Project team to identify major areas of concern regarding policy shift in the proposed tree code. Drafting of the new code language is well under way and will be available for public review early in 2010. Policy Committee work included:

- Review of the newly proposed Title 11 draft code language pertaining to the UFC with the UF Division staff.
- Finalizing the draft of the proposed UFC by-law language. The draft is being held for approval by the UFC until the City Wide Tree Policy Review is complete to accommodate any further adjustments to the by-laws.
- Continuing to participate in the stakeholder committee process of the Citywide Tree Policy Review and Regulatory Improvement Project.
- Begin to participate in the discussions for the initial proposals being formulated by the BOP Tree Policy Review and Regulatory Improvement Project for Title 11 of the Code, The Tree Manual, and the T1/Landscape Standards. This effort will continue into the first two months of 2010.

APPENDIX B: BACKGROUND ON THE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

The Urban Forestry Commission is a citizen-volunteer group that advises the City Forester, Parks Director and Commissioner-in-Charge of Parks and Recreation on tree-related issues. Members of the 11-person group are appointed by the Mayor and City Council to serve 4-year renewable terms. Commission members represent a wide range of skills and backgrounds, but all have in common an interest in maintaining and enhancing trees as a key element in the quality of life in the City.

Urban Forestry Commission meetings are held the third Thursday of each month (except December) in the Lovejoy Room of City Hall. Meetings usually run from about 7:30 till 10 AM. Members of the public who wish to attend, observe and/or comment are welcome. Commission activities generally fall into three categories. The first activity is to review and comment and/or testify on tree-related aspects of specific projects. Examples include streetscape redesign for light-rail expansion, the currently-underway City tree Code Revision, and occasionally testifying at design reviews for proposed projects.

The second Commission activity is detailed work on specific issues and concerns generated by the Commission itself, or brought to the Commission by the City Forester. These activities are generally performed in committees that include staff, representatives of community groups, and interested members of the general public. The UFC has six standing committees:

- Appeals
- Communication and Outreach
- Heritage Trees
- Nominations
- Operations
- Policy

The third Commission activity is to serve as an Appeals body when an individual is unhappy with a ruling by the City Forester. Most frequently this involves denial of a request to remove a tree in the Right-of-Way. These cases are heard by the Appeals Committee.

APPENDIX C: OTHER URBAN FOREST-RELATED EVENTS IN 2009

While the Urban Forestry Commission and Portland Parks and Recreation Urban Forestry has had a busy year, it has by no means been at the center of every urban forest-related activity. Among the events that occurred in 2009 separate from formal Urban Forestry Commission involvement are the following:

1. The Bureau of Environmental Services initiated its Grey-to-Green program, with the goal of planting 83,000 trees in the city over the next five years. The Urban Forestry Commission has worked closely with Jennifer Karpis, BES staff, to stay apprised and support the Grey-to-Green effort.
2. Geoff Donovan, research forester for the US Forest Service, completed a review study of existing research examining economic valuation of urban tree benefits. In addition to a written report, he made several presentations on the topic during the year.
3. The National Arbor Day Foundation for Community Trees, a Washington, DC-based urban tree advocacy group, held their National Meeting in Portland November 9-11. Over 300 people attended from all over the U.S.
4. Friends of Trees celebrated their 20th Anniversary of tree-planting and promotion of proper tree care. They continue to be one of the premier grass-roots (or perhaps “tree-roots”?) organizations in the country focused on urban trees.
5. The Portland State University Center for Spatial Analysis and Research published a map of the Trees of Laurelhurst Park. Former Urban Forestry Commissioner, taxonomist, and co-author of *The Trees of Greater Portland*, Phyllis Reynolds, was instrumental in identifying nearly 1,000 trees in one of Portland’s most distinctive parks.