



**PORTLAND
PARKS & RECREATION**
Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland



Urban Forestry Commission 2012 Annual Report

February 2013

Urban Forestry Commission 2012 Annual Report

February 2013

Urban Forestry Commission (as of January 2013):

Meryl Redisch, Chair, *Executive Director, Audubon Society of Portland*
Kris Day, *Community Tree Planting Organizer, Friends of Trees, ISA Certified Arborist*
Igor Lacan, *Assistant Professor, University Honors, Portland State University, ISA Certified Arborist*
Michael McCloskey, *Author and former National Executive Director, Sierra Club*
Ricardo Moreno, *Landscape Program Manager, Verde*
Catherine Mushel, *Citizen Activist and Garden Designer*
Stephen Peacock, *Owner of Peacock Tree Preservation, ISA Certified Arborist*
Joe Poracsky, Chair, *Professor of Geography, Portland State University*
Dick Pugh, *Retired Teacher, Portland Public Schools*
Dianna Shervey, *Forester, Portland General Electric, ISA Certified Arborist*
John Warner, *Landscape Architect*

Cover photo: *European beech nominated for Heritage Tree status.*

Portland Parks & Recreation
1120 SW Fifth Avenue, Suite 1302
Portland, Oregon 97204
(503) 823-PLAY
www.PortlandParks.org



Commissioner Nick Fish
Director Mike Abbaté

Contents

The Urban Forestry Commission	1
Overview: Moving Forward in a Lean Year	2
People, Committee Work and Public Meetings in 2012	2
Standing UFC Committee Reports and Meeting Summaries.....	3
Key Priorities for 2013	5
Appendix A: Urban Forestry Commission Rotation Schedule	6

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This Annual Report is submitted in accordance with City Code section 20.40.030-D; it reports activities of the Urban Forestry Commission (UFC or Commission) during the 2012 calendar year and other relevant urban forestry information.



Portland received its 35th consecutive Tree City USA Award at the 2012 Arbor Day Celebration.

THE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

The Urban Forestry Commission is a citizen-volunteer group that advises the City Forester, the Director of Parks, and the City Commissioner who oversees Parks & Recreation on forestry related issues. Members, totaling 11 in number, are appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council to serve a four-year term, and may be reappointed to one additional consecutive term.

Commission members represent a wide range of skills and backgrounds. All have a common interest in maintaining, enhancing, and increasing awareness of the benefits of the urban forest as a key element in the quality of life of Portland. Commission members include leaders of environmental organizations, professional arborists, educators, experts in ecology, landscape architecture, and social marketing; they offer leadership, energy and support for the urban forest.

The Commission seeks to balance the diverse needs of the many sectors of the community with that of a dynamic urban forest. The urban forest helps blunt the effects of climate change, improves air and water quality, increases property values, and helps create strong social networks in our neighborhoods.

UFC meetings are held the third Thursday of each month in the Lovejoy Room of City Hall. Other dates and times are scheduled for Committee meetings, where the details of many specific issues are evaluated and then presented to the full Commission. A list of the committee participants and roles is provided in Appendix A.

The Commission's role falls into four major categories – policy and project review, public education and outreach, heritage tree designations, and public appeals.

- Policy issues and concerns are generated by the Commission itself, or brought to the Commission by the City Forester or the Commissioner in charge of Parks & Recreation, or presented to the Commission by another City Bureau. Policy discussions are focused on developing consistent long-term management strategies, or projects that benefit the urban forest. The Commission also reviews and comments on specific development or maintenance projects that may impact the urban forest. The Commission serves an advisory role and seeks to provide constructive, critical feedback to make projects consistent with the urban forestry policy framework.
- Education and outreach strategies developed by City staff are reviewed and commented on by the Commission. Commission members also attend events and in some cases organize events and trainings to offer ongoing support to the public about tree care and urban forestry issues.
- The Commission administers Heritage Tree designations. Members evaluate and approve or reject nominated trees to determine their eligibility as a Heritage Tree.
- The Commission hears appeals brought forth by the public. Appeals occur when there is disagreement between a citizen request and a permit ruling by the City Forester. Most frequently, this involves the denial of a request to remove a tree in the right-of-way.

OVERVIEW: MOVING FORWARD IN A LEAN YEAR

DEDICATION AND IMAGINATION IN 2012

Urban Forestry and its partners, along with hundreds of citizen volunteers sustained the momentum of past years' work throughout 2012. The conversation in the Lovejoy Room often told the story of cuts – to the budget, to staff and positions, to programs. The activity outside the room told another side of the urban forest story – the side of volunteerism, dedication and imagination. Urban Forestry Commission meetings aired this side of the story too, and we ourselves were challenged by the whole story – the lean times and the renewed dedication. Overall, throughout 2012, it was our privilege hear the City Forester report on the remarkable work of maintenance crews and inspectors and to review and participate in the outstanding projects and programs showcasing the public's as well as Urban Forestry's and its partners' commitment to the urban forest.

REALITY-BASED EXPECTATIONS

Volunteers working together build community life. Portlanders famously want to be involved. They love their neighborhoods, their parks, their trees. Yet even stellar volunteer-based programs should tell us something about the need for stable funding. The more volunteer programs succeed and expand, the more direction and staff time they require and the more they require funding. Moreover, as the city grows and changes and becomes more built up, we need to plan for the forest to grow. There are plenty of reasons and motivation to work on behalf of the urban forest: the question that lean times help us to focus on is, what should be the Commission's responsibilities?

PEOPLE, COMMITTEE WORK, AND PUBLIC MEETINGS IN 2012

URBAN FORESTRY STAFF CHANGES

The Commission has been observing numerous changes in staff roles in past years, which culminated with a reduction in total number of staff and positions in 2012. While we recognize that budget cuts have been implemented across the bureaus, we want to underscore the significantly greater responsibilities undertaken by urban forestry staff. These cuts to staffing will have seriously negative impacts in how we manage and maintain our City's Urban Forest now and into the future.

Foremost among the changes in Forestry during the last year is the hiring of Jenn Cairo, first female City Forester in Portland. A good listener, a creative problem solver, and a strong "people person," she has the skills and the energy to face and overcome the many challenges confronting Urban Forestry. The Urban Forestry Commission looks forward to a close and productive relationship with the new leader of Urban Forestry and her staff.

CHANGES IN UFC MEMBERSHIP

David Odom, Vice-chair, passed away in January 2012. The commission, the community and the city's trees lost a valued, knowledgeable and talented friend.

Kendra Smith, Policy Committee Chair, left the Commission in the spring due to a job change. Her uncommonly good common sense and valuable leadership in policy discussions, were important elements during the drafting of Title 11.

Brian Krieg, immediate past-chair, gave up his seat during the fall after serving two full terms on the commission. We will remember especially his service as Chair and his contributions in advancing the Title 11 process and the updating of the UFC By-laws.

Joe Poracsky completed his two-year term as Chair and will continue on to finish out his four-year term as a Commission member.

Meryl Redisch, Director of the Audubon Society of Portland, began a two-year term as Chair of the Commission. Her extensive background in non-profit management, forestry, and city and statewide forestry management makes her an ideal choice to lead the Commission.

Ricardo Moreno, Landscape Program Manager for Verde, joined the Commission during the early spring. Ricardo brings an expertise in non-profit service to low income residents and nearly two decades of experience in managing construction and landscape projects.

BY-LAWS AND COMMITTEE APPENDICES

Following several months work, the Commission voted in January to adopt a basic set of By-Laws. These written guidelines replace a "memory-based" system of procedures. Appendices describing each committee's processes and operating procedures have either been completed or are in preparation.

STANDING UFC COMMITTEE REPORTS AND MEETING SUMMARIES

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

The **Heritage Tree Committee** (Michael McCloskey, Chair), completed documentation of the committee's operating procedures and processes. The committee and Forestry staff conducted two field inspections of possible Heritage Tree candidates, and began examination of several trees recommended for de-listing as Heritage Trees.

The **Appeals Committee** (John Warner, Chair) has clarified and finalized the documentation necessary for each stage of the Appeals process. Forestry staff seeks to settle disagreements between staff and the public in one-on-one discussions, making an Appeal a last resort. Failing that, the Appeals process seeks creative solutions to disputes between property owners and Urban Forestry inspectors. Currently there are about 6 to 10 Appeals per year.

The **Nominations Committee** (Diana Shervey, Chair) in consultation with Commissioner Fish's office, has worked to find suitable Urban Forestry Commission candidates who would complement the knowledge



The Concordia Tree Team accepting the Naito Award at Arbor Day 2012.

and skills of the current commissioners and would provide equitable representation of the city’s population.

There is a proposal to recast the Nominations Committee as the “Recruitment and Nominations Committee,” with the goal of seeking individuals to serve either on the UFC or as volunteers on various committees. Having a number of volunteers on committees would provide a pool of people with UFC experience who might become future Urban Forestry Commissioners.

The *Policy Committee* was extremely active during the drafting of Title 11. This committee will be ramping up again as the date for implementing Title 11 draws closer.

The *Education and Outreach Committee* (Meryl Redisch, Chair), was extremely active during 2012. The E&OC worked with the Neighborhood Tree Steward Program to review projects and chose the Naito Award winners -- David Odom (Posthumously), Phyllis Reynolds (Individual), and the Concordia Tree Team (Group). The Committee has taken on extensive planning for Arbor Month 2013, securing a place in the Portland Farmer’s Market to celebrate the Naito Community Tree Awards. A key focus will be planning events that coalesce around the theme of Heritage Trees.



Commission members examine a tree slated for removal during an interburea field tour.

URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION MEETINGS

The Commission meets on the third Thursday of each month in the Lovejoy Conference Room at City Hall to hear from the public (e.g., announcing an invasive plant removal work day), invited guests (e.g., Gateway Green), and Urban Forestry’s partners (e.g., Friends of Trees, Bureau of Environmental Services, Grey-to-Green), and to be updated on the operations, programs and budget of the Urban Forestry Division (e.g., young tree pruning workshop organized jointly by Friends of Trees and BES, elm-monitoring program, new Neighborhood Street Tree Inventories). Appeals of UF Inspection Program decisions are scheduled and heard at the conclusion of the Commission meetings.

MEETING SUPPORTING BUREAU CONNECTIONS

The September Urban Forestry Commission meeting time was used for an Inter-Bureau and UFC Field Trip, led by City Forester Jenn Cairo. The Commission – joined by personnel from BES, Parks, BDS, BPS, and PBOT–had a first-hand view of the kinds of controversies that arise when trees are weighed against the need for signs, building clearance, sidewalk integrity, multiple uses in the sidewalk zone, and

sunlight for gardens. The Commission came away with a better appreciation of staff duties, including evaluating sites and trees in the ground, educating property owners, and coordinating with other bureaus.

A new and important connection was established when the Parks Board – Urban Forestry’s sister volunteer board – invited the Chair of the Urban Forestry Commission to attend their monthly Parks Board meetings and serve as an ex-officio member. The Forestry Commission looks forward to this new liaison and is very optimistic that it will lead to benefits for both groups.

The Forestry Commission continues to work collaboratively with Friends of Trees and hear regular monthly reports of their activities.

KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2013

The year will begin with a Retreat in the first quarter of the year. This event will help flesh out major and minor concerns and provide a basis for establishing an action plan.

1. Evaluate the currency of the 2004 Urban Forest Management Plan. What is relevant in 2013? What is the plan missing? What actions have not been implemented? What goals still needs to be accomplished?
2. Continue to seek creative solutions to conflicts between the green and gray components of the urban environment.
3. Assist Urban Forestry staff in seeking out ways to generate new funds for special projects and regular programs.
4. Promote improved communication between and within bureaus and between the City and citizens.
5. Consider ways to improve the effectiveness of the committee structure with an emphasis on reaching new and diverse audiences.
6. Advocate for implementation of Title 11, particularly the single point of contact, the on-line tree manual, and the integration of the Urban Forestry and BDS databases.

The Commission will continue to encourage public involvement at meetings, at public events, on Commission committees, and through volunteer service on the Commission. Combined with education about the Urban Forest, the Commission is confident that our combined efforts can achieve the goals of improved health and expansion of the urban forest.

APPENDIX A: URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION ROTATION SCHEDULE

Position ID	Name	Term End Date	Start Date							
A	<i>Kris Day</i>	2016 02 28				2020 02 28				2013 03
B	<i>Igor Lacan</i>	2016 02 28				2020 02 28				2013 03
C	<i>John Warner</i>		2013 02 28				2017 02 28			2000 01
D	<i>Dick Pugh</i>		2013 02 28				2017 02 28			2002 05
E	<i>Joe Poracsky</i>		2013 02 28				2017 02 28			2009 03
F	<i>Meryl Redisch</i>			2014 02 28				2018 02 28		2009 03
G	<i>Mike McCloskey</i>			2014 02 28				2018 02 28		2006 05
H	<i>Dianna Shervey</i>			2014 02 28				2018 02 28		2006 08
I	<i>Steven Peacock</i>				2015 02 28				2019 02 28	2007 01
J	<i>Catherine Mushel</i>				2015 02 28				2019 02 28	2011 05
K	<i>Ricardo Moreno</i>				2015 02 28				2019 02 28	2012 02

- Notes:
1. In this Schedule, "February 28" means "the last day in February," to include February 29 in Leap Years.
 2. Terms begin on 1 March and end the last day of February four years later.
 3. Positions A & B are assumed to have started 1 March 2012, approximately the date they were vacated.
 4. A member may serve two consecutive 4-year terms and then must rotate off for one year(?).
 5. Shaded cells indicate the end of the second 4-year term for that person, i.e., when they **must** rotate off.
 6. Some of the above rules may be bent somewhat to aid in getting the rotation schedule established.
 7. Redisch has a five year initial term to accommodate being Chair for 2 years.
 8. This Schedule should be updated throughout the year to reflect actual changes. When changed, the date in the title should be adjusted to reflect the version.