

Tree E-News

Colorado State Forest Service

April 2013

Urban and Community Forestry

Arbor Day 2013: Since 1889, the third Friday in April has been set apart and known as “Arbor Day” in Colorado. This year Colorado’s official Arbor Day will be April 19th and marks the 124th year that this tree planter’s holiday will be celebrated in this state. The last Friday in April is the traditional Arbor Day for the whole country. This year that date is April 26th. Celebrating Arbor Day is a requirement for being a Tree City USA and a Tree Campus USA in good standing.

Since 1977, the Arbor Day Foundation (ADF) has been acknowledging towns and cities across America for their efforts on behalf of trees. In the spring of 2013, 91 communities will be acknowledged as Tree City USA communities in Colorado for their community forestry efforts accomplished in 2012. Colorado communities spent almost \$20 million dollars on trees in 2012, with an average community expenditure of \$215,635. This year *Grand Junction* will be celebrating their 30th year as a Tree City, while *Fort Collins* will be celebrating its 35th year as a Tree City USA. The following Western Slope communities have reached milestones (*years*) as well: *Lake City* (25th), *Fruita* (20th), *Dillon* (15th), *Silt* (15th). Congratulations to all of these cities who have made a concerted and consistent yearly effort to maintain trees as an integral part of their community.



Why Trees? There are numerous websites that elaborate on the benefits of trees. An internet search for the “benefits of trees” yielded 109,000,000 results that run the gamut of sites from professional tree organizations to educational institutions. There is no lack of sites that expound on tree benefits. The CTC website www.coloradotrees.org has a section entitled, “Why plant a tree?” that examines the social, environmental, and economic benefits of trees and provides links to other groups and organizations with a similar approach.

However, there is one site hosted by the Society of Municipal Arborists (SMA) that is all inclusive: http://www.urban-forestry.com/assets/documents/bmp/links_1_why.pdf. This SMA site has over 40 links to other sites with tree benefit information. Here is what you can find on the SMA site:

- 1) Traffic Calming and Public Safety – 4 sites
- 2) Property Values, Tax Bases – 5 sites
- 3) Drainage & Flooding – 12 sites
- 4) Air Quality – 5 sites
- 5) Health & Quality of Life – 6 sites
- 6) Energy Savings – 10 sites

There is some redundancy on the SMA site, but the beauty of the site is that each link has a short description of what is contained on that particular site. For example, downloadable document from the I.C.L.E.I. – Local Governments for Sustainability site has seven fact sheets on the various benefits of trees, case studies of three communities with successful programs, and an overview of tools available to communities for quantifying the impacts of urban forestry.