

**City of Los Angeles
Recreation and Parks Department**

*Urban
Forest Program*



City of Los Angeles

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URBAN FOREST PROGRAM

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Department of Recreation and Parks

The City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation and Parks (DRP) has developed the Urban Forest Program to raise the level of understanding of our natural ecosystems within the Los Angeles Basin and to elevate a regard and appreciation for our urban forest. This guidebook has been designed for all City staff members -- the gardener, the planner, the administrator, the construction staff, the activity programmer, and the facility director – it is available for everyone, in hopes that they may better understand our most precious natural resource, urban trees. The accompanying **Tree Care Manual** provides useful information regarding the daily supervision, care, and protection of this valuable link to our ecosystem, and is a guide for the custodianship of our ecological community.

An ecosystem is a specific biological community interacting with its physical environment. A community consists of all the populations of living things in a given area, including people. The physical environment includes climate, temperature, soil and light. Both the biological community and the physical environment are continually interacting.



Children at play at Shane's Inspiration, Griffith Park

The physical factors significantly influence the biological community, and in turn the biological community uses and modifies the environment. To assist our efforts in developing successful landscapes, it is necessary to develop an understanding of the many relationships existing between all living things and their significance to the Los Angeles basin ecosystem.



Sharing the environment with all living things....



The Department of Recreation and Parks' Forestry Division is charged with the responsibility to care for and oversee this sizeable portion of our public urban forest, and operates according to their mission:

To provide an attractive, safe, and beneficial urban forest through high quality tree management and maintenance practices that respect the ecosystem, while serving the needs of the Department of Recreation and Parks, the community, and all park visitors.



The Forestry Division cannot sustain an urban forest alone. The future of the Los Angeles urban forest requires the involvement of us all. The Urban Forest Program has been developed as a guide to promote healthy trees through our daily behavior, planning and decision-making, and to ultimately guarantee the sustainability of our urban forest.

Purpose:

The purpose of the Urban Forest Program is to develop a single resource that will provide direction to Department of Recreation and Parks (DRP) staff and promote the sustainability of a healthy urban forest. Since the Los Angeles ecosystem has been changed dramatically to accommodate the needs of a growing population, the natural cycles that govern a natural ecosystem have been disturbed and in some locations completely broken. In order to survive within these altered conditions, trees in City parks must rely on human intervention. The Urban Forest Program manual represents established procedures and standards that encourage tree preservation and enhance an urban ecosystem that is vulnerable to destruction. The procedures and standards include criteria for the removal, maintenance, and planting of diverse tree species, including the care of California native trees.

The Urban Forest Program addresses three following subject matters:

- **Citywide Tree Management:**

- *Recreation and Parks Forestry Division* oversees tree operations within City of Los Angeles parkland. Tree maintenance is performed in two ways: by Department staff supervised by International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborists, and/or by a contracted tree company administered and overseen by Department Certified Arborists. The Forestry Division also oversees proper species selection in the Department's Reforestation Program
- *Bureau of Street Services, Street Tree Division* manages parkway trees along City parks and streets
- *Los Angeles Department of Water and Power* manages pruning near electric utilities
- *Recreation and Parks Planning and Construction Division* advises on proper tree selection for new Department projects and implements trees protection during project construction

- **Urban Forest Sustainability and Tree Planting Programs:**

The DRP implements pruning techniques that prolong tree health and longevity. Special care is given to applying only pruning techniques that reduce the size of the crown, maintain structural integrity and the natural form of the tree, and delay the need for re-pruning. *Crown cleaning, crown thinning* and *crown raising* are the most common types of tree pruning in City parks. If crown reduction is necessary, branches are removed by thinning techniques. Heading and topping are destructive pruning techniques and are neither practiced nor accepted in Los Angeles City parks.

The Forestry Division oversees proper tree selection as a part of its ongoing parks reforestation. The Division also coordinates tree-planting efforts with non-profit organizations, seeks out funds within existing resources and programs (i.e., Trees for Green LA Program funded by LADWP) and seeks new funds through grant writing.

- **Tree Preservation and Management Regulations:**

The DRP adheres to three existing regulations:

- Oak Tree Ordinance – *Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 46.00*
Enforced by the Bureau of Street Services, Street Tree Division
- Landscape Policy – *Los Angeles City Council File Nos. 70-1899; 132989 S-1 & S-2; and 145282 S-1* under purview of the City Planning Department
- R&P Tree Preservation Policy - under enforcement by Forestry Division and Planning and Construction Division

The preceding policies are regulatory tools for the DRP and provide for orderly protection of specified trees in City parks. The **TREE CARE MANUAL** companion and training documents provide information regarding existing codes, technical regulations, standards and specifications necessary to implement the above policies, and contain guidelines for the required and recommended care, removal and replacement of regulated trees.

The DRP Forestry crewmember works at Camp High Sierra removing dead fir trees infested with Bark Beetles

