

Contact: Chris Boza
Urban Forester
Missoula Parks and Recreation
Phone: 552-6270
cboza@ci.missoula.mt.us

600 Clegg Lane
Missoula, MT 59801
www.missoulaparks.org



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release, December 2, 2013*

*Updated info from Nov. 5 press release

City's Urban Forestry Division to replace 98 high-risk street trees

Missoula's urban forest is getting some much-needed attention this winter as City arborists work with residents to replace 98 dead or dying boulevard trees in neighborhoods throughout Missoula. Adjacent property owners have been notified the failing trees will be removed in December, 2013 and January, 2014. Missoula Parks and Recreation's Urban Forestry Division will plant replacement trees in the spring of 2014.

As part of the City's urban forest renewal program, the failing trees will be replaced with fast-growing species like linden, honey locust and bur oak which are better suited to Missoula's arid climate and boulevard growing conditions. Many of the replacement trees are slated for the University District and the Slant Street neighborhoods, where the first boulevard maples were planted in the early 1900's. The average lifespan of a maple tree in an urban setting is about 60 years, according to City Urban Forester Chris Boza.

"The trees selected for removal have reached the end of their natural lifespans and show significant die-back or damage to more than 50 percent of the tree," says Boza. "In this weakened condition, boulevard trees represent an unacceptable level of risk to citizens. High-risk tree removal is an important part of urban forest management. When we're required to remove a high-risk tree, we make every effort to plant an appropriate replacement tree as soon as possible." City arborists will work with adjacent property owners next spring to ensure the new replacement trees are properly sited and cared for.

The City Council and neighborhood representatives understand the importance maintaining the urban forest and are supportive. "Missoula's urban forest is one of our city's wonderful features, and we need to take care of it. Unfortunately a lot of the trees are dying all at the same time. Although it is hard to see, we need to take out the dying trees to make room for the young trees. The urban forest will be healthier and more resilient if there is more age diversity," says Marilyn Marler, Ward 6 city council representative and botanist at UM.

CITY'S URBAN FORESTRY DIVISION TO REPLACE 98 DEAD OR DYING STREET TREES

The project will begin the week of December 2 and will take approximately six to eight weeks to complete. Residents can expect minor traffic delays and limited restriction of on-street parking to protect motorists, property and people between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., weekdays.

The Urban Forestry Division cares for Missoula's approximately 32,000 trees in public right-of-ways and parks through a comprehensive planting, pruning and risk management program. "The Urban Forestry Division's mission is to maintain a healthy urban forest for the maximum benefit of city residents," says Boza. Residents can learn more about planting and caring for street trees at www.missoulaparks.org. In addition, the Urban Forestry Division has a Cost Share Tree Planting program to help property owners plant new boulevard trees.

Trees For Missoula, a non-profit citizen advocacy group which supports Missoula's urban forest, welcomes new members at www.treesformissoula.org. Trees For Missoula also accepts tax-deductible donations of any amount to support tree planting throughout the Missoula valley.

This urban forest renewal project is funded by the annual city Park District assessment as allocated for pruning, risk management and tree planting. A map of the scheduled removals is available at www.missoulaparks.org. For more information about the project, phone Urban Forester Chris Boza at 552-6270.

(end)

MEDIA NOTE: PLEASE SEE ATTACHED PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET

2013 URBAN FORESTRY TREE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

UPDATED 12/2/13

For more information, please contact:

Chris Boza

Urban Forester, Missoula Parks and Recreation

Phone: 552-6270 cboza@ci.missoula.mt.us

www.missoulaparks.org



Who manages the urban forest?

Missoula Parks and Recreation's Greenways and Horticulture Division cares for Missoula's approximately 35,500 trees in public right-of-ways and parks through a comprehensive planting, pruning and risk management program. The Division's mission is to maintain a healthy urban forest for the maximum benefit of city residents.

What's this project all about?

The City plans to replace 98 failing street trees in various neighborhoods.

Certified arborists with the Greenways and Horticulture Division have evaluated hundreds of public street trees and located 98 trees throughout the city which show significant die-back or damage to more than 50 percent of the tree, making them structurally unsound. These 98 trees represent an unacceptable level of risk to citizens and property, and have been scheduled for removal and replacement.

Some of these trees include Silver and Norway maples which were planted in boulevards throughout the City over 100 years ago. There has been a marked decline in the condition of many of these centurion trees over the last several years as they reach the end of their natural life span, which averages about 60 years in an urban setting.

How does the City decide which trees to replace?

City arborists use nationally accepted ANSI and International Society of Arboriculture tree-risk guidelines in making the replacement recommendations.

Trees containing large deadwood and structural flaws such as internal decay and root rot create an unacceptable level of risk to the adjacent roads, private property, and residents using streets and sidewalks.

When will these trees be replaced?

The trees identified for removal will be replaced in May and June, 2014, with fast-growing species like linden, honey locust, sugar maple and bur oak which are better suited to Missoula's arid climate and boulevard growing conditions.

The Greenways and Horticulture Division replaces all trees removed from city boulevards whenever space allows.



Missoulian photo

Does the property owner play a role?

The City's Urban Forester has notified adjacent property owners of the removals and replacements, and has conducted second site visits and additional evaluations where requested by property owners.

City arborists will work with residents next spring to make sure the replacement trees thrive in their new homes. City ordinance requires that property owners water boulevard trees adjacent to their property and report any disease or defect. Learn more below.

Can't some of the older trees be saved?

Older trees can sometimes be treated for disease or defect, but like all living things, trees have a natural lifespan. Boulevard trees often have shorter lifespans due to the harsh urban environment.

Trees grow weaker with age. Older trees have a longer time to develop defects like decay, bark inclusions, and cracks, and they're often the first to be damaged in a storm. While young trees can be placed on a preventive program to help them develop a sustainable structure, older trees are placed on a "track and treat" program as needed to manage risk.

What's the timeline on this project? How is it funded?

The tree removal operation will begin December 2, 2013 and will continue for six to eight weeks. Minor traffic delays and daytime restrictions prohibiting on street parking are expected to protect motorists, property and people from tree work hazards. This project is funded by the annual city Park District assessment. A map of the scheduled removals is available at www.missoulaparks.org. For more information about the project, phone Urban Forester Chris Boza at 552-6270.

How can I prolong the life of the street trees near my property?

The most important thing you can do for your street tree is to water deeply using a hose or irrigation system. In Missoula's semi-arid climate, trees need water from May to November. This will encourage strong roots and healthy tree.

- A mature street tree needs about two inches of water a week during the summer. Check soil moisture by inserting a garden trowel into the ground to a depth of 2", and then move the blade back and forth to create a small narrow trench. If the soil is at 2" moist to the touch, your tree is sufficiently watered.
- Sprinkling the lawn under your tree is not enough. Most irrigation systems designed for lawns are poor at watering trees.
- New trees need more water to become well-established. Visit www.missoulaparks.org for more information.
- Report any damage or signs of disease to the Greenways and Horticulture Division at 552-6270.

Can I prune or plant boulevard trees?

Yes. The City has a block pruning program and prunes a few hundred boulevard trees each season. If your block is not up for this season's pruning, you may choose to hire a certified arborist to prune your boulevard trees. Find a list of certified arborists at www.missoulaparks.org. The arborist must then contact the Urban Forester for a tree pruning permit.

- You may also purchase and plant a tree in the boulevard, with prior approval of species and site from the Urban Forester.
- The Greenways and Horticulture Division has a Cost Share Tree Planting program to help property owners plant new boulevard trees.
- Learn more about planting and caring for street trees at www.missoulaparks.org.
- **Trees For Missoula, a non-profit citizen advocacy group which supports Missoula's urban forest, welcomes new members and also accepts tax-deductible donations to support tree planting throughout the Missoula valley at www.treesformissoula.org.**