



Moving Beyond

*Supporting community
action beyond your
Neighbor Woods*

Share your success with other communities

Stories of your success speak more clearly than the words in this Guidebook ever could. With your first-hand experience in caring for your NeighborWoods, you offer the spark to ignite action in other neighborhoods.

Directions: Create a means for summarizing the success of your group. Remember, “A picture tells a thousand words.” Three effective avenues are scrapbooks, slide shows or multi-media presentation. Organize a set of photographs telling the story of what you and your neighbors have been doing. Write the story either as captions in the scrapbook or as a script in the slide show or multi-media presentation. Be sure the story captures the challenges you faced and the ways you overcame them. Finish with the challenges you continue to face.

Share your scrapbook or slideshow with organizations in other communities. Let the Sacramento Tree Foundation know you have developed a scrapbook or slideshow.¹ We will connect you with other communities who can benefit from your wisdom and experience.



¹ All local forest groups are encouraged to contact the Sacramento Tree Foundation and join the NeighborWoods Network.

Areas of Interest:

Networking, Teaching

Ingredients:

Photographs of your group's efforts,
Slide projector, Photo album



Urge your city to become a Tree City, USA

The National Arbor Day Foundation grants Tree City, USA status through your state forester's office. Tree City status recognizes the city's commitment to its trees. The designation continually reminds city officials of their commitment to the urban forest. The status supports further education, has positive impact on a city's image, builds pride among citizens and helps cities receive financial assistance in tree-related activities.

Directions:

To become a Tree City, USA, there are 4 criteria your city must meet:

- 1. Establish and maintain a city tree board or tree department.** A tree board is a group of concerned citizens, usually volunteer, charged to develop and administer a comprehensive, tree management program. Tree boards usually function with the aid of professional foresters. In communities with a population of more than 10,000, city forestry departments with salaried employees are often feasible. These departments may or may not be supported by advisory boards or administrative commissions.
- 2. Implement a municipal tree care ordinance.** Designate the official tree board or tree department and give them the responsibility to write and implement the annual community forestry work plan. The ordinance should determine public tree-care policies for tree planting, maintenance and removal.
- 3. Maintain a community forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita.** The essential, ongoing activity for the tree care along streets, in parks and other public places is the community forestry program.
- 4. Celebrate Arbor Day with an annual observance and proclamation.** An Arbor Day ceremony can be simple and brief, an all-day or all-week observance.

For more information, contact the National Arbor Day Foundation,
100 Arbor Avenue, Nebraska City, NE, 68410. 402-474-5655

Areas of Interest:

Connecting to government, Networking,

Ingredients:

Initiative, Determination



Make your voice heard in your state legislature

Our state legislators create bills from gun control to medical care to the future of our schools. Among these high profile issues, the value of trees often gets overlooked. Each voice reminding elected officials of our community trees' importance has impact.

Directions: Look up the state offices of your State Senate and Assembly in the front of the yellow pages under "Government Officials." Call the offices of your elected officials to verify you are in their district, the spelling of their names and addresses. Describe three areas of interest you have regarding trees and urban forestry.

The Internet is an excellent tool to gain up-to-date legislative information. Once on-line, choose your favorite search engine (www.askjeeves.com, www.yahoo.com, www.altavista.com, etc.) and enter a search including the name of your state and the term "legislature." You might simply look up the web page for your state. When you arrive at the web site for your state legislature, search out keywords such as "urban forest," "community forest," "city trees," "canopy" or "vegetation."

When you find proposed legislation affecting the urban forest, read it over and consider its implications. It may be attached to legislation having nothing to do with urban forestry. Talk it over with friends. Contact your local urban forestry group to obtain their thoughts. Contact California ReLeaf¹ to learn what current efforts are being undertaken on a statewide level. Then contact your legislator – by phone, fax, mail or email – and share your opinion. Believe you can make a difference.

¹ See Appendix B: Helpful Organizations

Areas of Interest:

Technology, Connecting to government, Writing

Ingredients:

Computer with Internet access, Telephone



Create a regional organization or city tree board

Care of our urban forests requires leadership, initiative and imagination. Local urban forestry organizations provide trees for community tree planting efforts, offer local residents education and advocate on behalf of the local canopy. Tree boards exist as oversight committees to review the municipality's urban forest plans and actions.

Directions: Take a look at your local forest and determine the two or three highest priority issues. Discuss these issues with the people around you and see what thoughts others hold. Pursue government agencies, members of the local green industry and members of community-based non-profits who hold similar interests and concerns. Invite interested people to form an exploratory committee.

As you progress, consider what type of organization you want to create. It might be a tree board sanctioned by your municipality with an official advisory status.¹ You might create an independent tree group enlisting community involvement in local urban forest projects.²

Contact those urban forestry organizations closest to you³ to find out how they are organized. Contact state and national urban forestry organizations to obtain additional resources and support in founding a local urban forestry group. When ready, create a board of directors, a mission statement and a set of initial goals and objectives.

As a new urban forestry organization, encourage everyone you know to become members and to volunteer. As a new tree board, put together a survey to assess the community's interests. To build solid community support for trees, make a commitment to include the broadest base of interest, opinions and participation you can.

¹ Contact the National Arbor Day Foundation to receive their "Handbook for Tree Board Members."

² California ReLeaf offers extensive support to community groups seeking to create a community forest organization.

Areas of Interest:

Connecting to government, Networking, Thinking & Investigating, Writing

Ingredients:

Dedicated partners, Commitment to your forest



Imagine the ideal community forest

To create the ideal community forest, we must have a thorough knowledge of how things are and a clear vision of how we want things to be. This effort demands collaboration between citizens, local government, community-based organizations, tree and landscaping businesses (green industry) and research scientists.

Directions: Write a short proposal of your initiative. Explain what you would like to do, who should ideally be involved, why these actions should be taken and what the benefits will be. Invite people to form a steering committee.

Review urban forestry assessments from other cities and, if possible, contact people who coordinated those efforts. Work with your steering committee to identify the key areas needing assessment.¹ Assign subcommittees to key areas of investigation. As you progress, continue to recruit and involve as many people as possible.

Create a task list for each subcommittee. When each subcommittee has completed its tasks and prepared a written report, build the combined committee reports into a single report.

When your report is complete, move to the next step. Having identified your city's urban forest strengths and deficits, work with local officials to create a Master Treescape Plan. Use the same subcommittee approach to identify strategies for meeting the urban forest's needs. Your challenge is to find the balance between being ambitious (big plans yield big results) and being realistic (your participants' need to experience success from their work). The trees in your city, along with generations to come, will thank you for your efforts.

¹ Possible areas: Citizen, government and business involvement, local policy, urban forest health and biodiversity, open space, water use, human health, older residential developments, new residential developments, air quality, carbon sequestering, energy conservation, storm water management.

Areas of Interest:

Connecting to government, Looking around, Thinking & Investigating, Walking

Ingredients:

Local government support, Vision of an extraordinary forest

