

Introduction

The NeighborWoods' Vision

When we imagine a forest in stories, discussions or even dreams, we imagine wild mountains with flowing streams and boundless wide-open spaces with diverse plant and animal life. For many of us this forest vision offers a sense of inspiration. For those of us in cities and suburbs, it evokes a longing for nature and a sense of connection with something larger than ourselves.

Our vision of NeighborWoods is based on a similar image: a beautiful community of tree-lined streets, shaded parks and school grounds, and full-canopied neighborhoods. We believe our urban downtowns, suburban neighborhoods and rural communities provide a valuable opportunity to discover the forest in which we live. In fact, there is a forest just outside your door and around the block.

NeighborWoods is based on the importance of trees and community action. A successful NeighborWoods effort begins with community members who can imagine, plan and work together. It results in neighbors learning together, supporting one another, and sharing an understanding of what it takes to make a forest thrive.

We offer this Guidebook to help you discover your forest. How you embark on this journey is your decision. There are, however, some important choices:

- You may choose to embark on any of these activities by yourself. For individuals, this guidebook offers rewarding opportunities to learn about and discover your local forest. You may select activities in whatever order appeals to you. Like a cookbook, each entry in this Guidebook offers something uniquely flavorful and worthwhile.
- You may choose a deeper journey into your own NeighborWoods. This choice requires you to work your way through the Guidebook's five sections with your neighbors and other supporters. This journey leads to stronger communities *sharing* healthier forests.

Five Steps to NeighborWoods

Learning & Exploring: *Your community and its forest*

This section focuses on discovering what already exists. Whether you are a beginner or a seasoned community forester, these activities will help you explore the forest outside your door.

Joining Together: *Creating the capacity for NeighborWoods*

This section leads you and your neighbors to engage in community action. Activities range from inventorying your trees, to walking your NeighborWoods with your local arborist. You may find yourself leading a neighborhood project or even establishing a NeighborWoods group.

Moving Forward: *Taking action to care for your forest*

This section provides activities for a sustained NeighborWoods effort. Projects include neighborhood planning, forest stewardship and resource attainment. These activities offer a menu of opportunities for long-term forest care and community involvement.

Spreading the Word: *Sharing your success with others*

This section offers a range of learning-focused activities. These steps help you share the value of trees with schools, businesses and neighbors. Spreading the word in your neighborhood will result in broadened support and interest.

Moving Beyond: *Supporting action beyond your NeighborWoods*

This concluding section serves as an invitation to expand beyond your neighborhood. Building from your knowledge and experience, activities include ways to affect change in other neighborhoods, your city, county and state.

To Help You Get Started

As you venture out, remember the Sacramento Tree Foundation will eagerly support you. We offer the following programs and services to help your efforts:

- **NeighborWoods Training**

Tree Foundation staff works with your group in a single or a series of workshops tailored to your neighborhood. Topics include assessment of local trees, identifying needs and available resources, determining priorities and establishing strategies for action.

- Local Forest Tours**
 Custom tours of your local forest are created in partnership with Tree Foundation staff. Tours include common species, tree history, landmark trees, local tree lore, local tree pests and diseases, and an opportunity for questions and discussion.
- Outreach to Local Schools**
 Our Community Shade program offers classroom presentations and shade trees for public school grounds. Our *Seed to Seedling* curriculum helps to teach elementary school students the importance of native oaks by growing them from acorns.
- NeighborWoods Resource Center**
 Located at the Tree Foundation office, we have a wealth of references and information to support every section in this book. We are building a database of information and maps on all neighborhoods in Sacramento County.
- Sacramento Shade**
 Through our partnership with the Sacramento Municipal Utility District, we offer a comprehensive energy-saving, shade tree program for your residence. We provide trees, stakes, ties and instruction on placement, planting and stewardship. These trees, commonly planted by individual homeowners, may be planted across entire neighborhoods through collaborative community efforts.
- Information and Classes**
 Tree Foundation staff is available to answer questions on tree stewardship, offer training on specific tree care such as pruning, and help advocate on behalf of threatened native, heritage or landmark trees.
- NeighborWoods Network**
 The NeighborWoods Network is comprised of representatives from neighborhoods across Sacramento. Support is offered to network groups of all sizes by helping to find funding, providing answers to technical questions and sharing struggles and successes between groups.



Planting the Seed

Before you continue, pause five to ten minutes and write what your local trees mean to you. Try to recall a moment when you noticed something memorable about the trees in your yard or neighborhood. Also make a note of one activity you might imagine sharing with one, or more, of your neighbors.

How do you ultimately know what a successful NeighborWoods project looks like? Like a good meal, every NeighborWoods project is different, based on different community needs (appetites) and different projects undertaken (recipes). What is true for any successful project is that neighbors develop stronger relationships, residents become more aware of their surrounding forest and neighborhood leaders ensure a thriving NeighborWoods.

This Guidebook is an invitation to imagine. As you progress through these pages, remember that accomplishments, great and small, are built upon simple appreciation and actions like those you have noted.

As one last thought, we ask that you keep us informed of your progress. Share your lessons, questions, successes and frustrations as we grow NeighborWoods together.

Good luck in your ventures. May you plant the seed that blossoms into a more beautiful, thriving and united community.

