

# Nevada Shade Tree Council 2011 STRATEGIC PLAN Adopted February 4, 2011



Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF), the Nevada Shade Tree Council (NSTC) and others interested in urban forestry met in April 2007 and developed a Logic Model that included identification of Urban Forestry (UF) issues, inputs, outputs and outcomes that would guide not only NSTC, but also the state Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Program. These issues are communicated here, and the role that NSTC will play by communicating strategic outcomes in the next 5 years to help educate and assist the great State of Nevada.

## THREATS/ISSUES AFFECTING NEVADA'S URBAN FORESTS

Many threats to Nevada's urban forests, which are primarily landscaped and irrigated trees on both public and private lands, are a result of interacting factors starting with 20 years of rapid population growth, building and changing demographics, followed by a declining economy, unemployment, housing foreclosures, vacancies and rentals, increased water costs and water conservation programs.

- 72% of the state's population is in Clark County and another 15% in Washoe County. Clark County accounts for 79% to 87% of the state's growth each year
- Minorities increased by 273% from 1990 to 2000 (254,353 to 695,256) (2000 census)
- The Hispanic rate of growth 1990 to 2000 was 216%
- National economic decline has hit Nevada harder than any other state.

**Population Growth.** Starting in 1987, and for all but one of the next 20 years, Nevada was the fastest growing state in the union with population increases of 66.3 percent from 1990 to 2000 and 74.6 percent from 2000 to 2009. Las Vegas had population increases of over 6,000 people per month during the height of the growth, with a net population increase of over 4,000 per month. This former influx of newcomers to the state and the nature of a transient population make it impossible to provide adequate tree care outreach and education to the population and results in improperly maintained trees. NDF staff is insufficient, by itself, to outreach to and educate a majority of Nevada's citizens on how to grow and care for trees in a rapidly growing population.

**Green Industry Demographics.** The Hispanic population is considered the fastest growing minority group in Nevada and it is estimated that up to 40 percent the green industry workers are Latino. Based on 2000 Census, jobs in the green industry were expected to increase by as many as 800 new jobs every year. Many Hispanics/Latinos are drawn to the green industry (nursery, landscaping and landscape maintenance), because English speaking skills are not essential to do the work. However, according to a green industry survey conducted by University of Nevada Cooperative Extension (UNCE), many Latino's do not possess basic English or horticulture skills to perform their key tasks.

**Water Conservation Programs.** Southern Nevada Water Authority, serving the municipalities in the Las Vegas Valley, started a turf removal program in 2006 in an effort to reduce outdoor water consumption. It pays customers a rebate for every square foot of grass removed and replaced with desert landscaping. Although the final mature landscape must have at least 50%

plant cover, trees that only received water from turf irrigation are dying from lack of water at an unknown rate. Further canopy study analysis, with a baseline from 2006 should be studied to determine the effects of landscape programs as well as home foreclosure landscape loss.

Another water conservation program in Northern Nevada, from the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA), requires its customers to convert to water meters by the end of 2010. The TMWA service area includes the cities of Reno and Sparks and the urban areas of Washoe County within and surrounding the cities. As these conversions occur and water bills increase, homeowners, and especially renters, have cut-back on watering and as a result, trees are dying from lack of water or are in poor vigor and susceptible to insects and diseases.

**Nevada's Economy.** Nevada has been hard hit by the declining economy and was reported to have "hit bottom", but without "any signs of a turnaround" according to a May 2010 report from the Center for Business and Economic Research, University of Nevada Las Vegas. This is having an effect on the watering and care of both public and private trees. All urban forests, whether in rural communities or large urban areas are affected.

- As of April 2010, as many as one in every 69 housing units received a foreclosure filing
- Las Vegas' foreclosure rate is the highest in the country and one in every 19 Vegas home defaults on a mortgage

- Landscapes that are no longer watered because of vacancies, rentals or foreclosures, or as a result of cost-cutting measures that include reduced watering, are evidenced by the number of brown lawns and declining trees throughout residential areas.
- Municipalities and the state government have reduced their budgets for parks, and tree and grounds maintenance. One Nevada community has reduced its parks staff by as much as 25%. Others haven't reduced permanent staff, but have reduced costs by not hiring their normal quota of summer seasonal parks maintenance staff. One city eliminated the City Forester position in 2009 and with the position, eliminated all UF related community outreach and training services. Other municipalities have no budgets for hazard tree removal or new tree planting.

**Lack of expertise, limited funding.** Nevada's small rural towns typically do not have adequate financial resources or the expertise to support municipal forestry programs. Most are under county government and do not have a budget for their own parks or street trees and the tree maintenance department may be located hours away. Improper tree care, planting, pruning, watering and tree selection issues are prevalent throughout Nevada on both public and privately owned properties.

These issues affect our overall state urban forest well being, and have diminished not only the stock of the urban forest, but also the people who care for them. It is the intention of the Nevada Shade Tree Council to fulfill their mission, to educate the public about tree care. NSTC has developed this strategic plan for 2011-2015, and will be implemented to help homeowners and municipalities that care for trees. The plan provides opportunities for proper information for the care of trees, but provides the members themselves with opportunities for education and exposure to western state as well as national issues associated with urban forest decline. This interaction should result in partnerships and education of members providing new ideas for implementation in Nevada.

**Nevada Shade Tree Council**  
**5 Year Strategic Plan. (2011-2016)**  
**STRATEGIES**  
**Adopted by the NSTC Board on February 4, 2011**

**Nevada Shade Tree Council (NSTC)** is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization with representation from municipal parks, tree advocacy groups, Nevada Cooperative Extension, arboreta, arborists and citizen volunteers. The Council's mission is to offer assistance and promote the awareness of proper tree care and to provide leadership, development, and support in community forestry programs across the state. The council also serves as the advisory board for the NDF Urban and Community Forestry Program. The U.S. Forest Service and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and Development Agency (RC&D) and NDF participate in Council activities as ex-officio members. The goals set forth in this plan were approved by the full Board of the Nevada Shade Tree Council, and will be implemented and completed by the Council by 2016. Strategies offered will be action items accepted by the Council, and will be implemented upon completion of this plan. Items associated with this plan will be reported within the President's Annual Report for review by NDF. This plan will be reviewed annually by the executive board.

**Increase and leverage resources through partnerships to meet the existing need for technical assistance, outreach and education.**

- A. Diversify board memberships across the State for a more representative membership which includes the green industry, non-traditional partnerships, and geographic and ethnic diversity.
- B. Identify tree advocacy groups and solicit new members.
  - Poll members to identify current volunteer groups and partners.
  - Poll members about what their communities' needs are perceived to be.
  - Develop a list of potential target groups.
  - Catalog NSTC outreach (individually or collectively) to provide a database of work by members annually.
  - Keep accurate database of workshop attendees
- C. Educate Council members and Nevada communities.
  - Organize and implement workshops across the State at least once a year in each region (North, South and East), depending on regional needs and interest.
  - Offer annual training in each region for certified arborist basics.
  - Encourage annual specialized training in every region for arborists, educators, homeowners associations, developers, property managers, realtors, and others.
  - Promote and support professional development of NSTC members by sponsoring leadership training and networking opportunities at both the local and national level.
    - Consider International Society of Arborists, Western Chapter ISA, Municipal Forestry Institute, Society of Municipal Arborists, Alliance for Community Trees, etc as opportunities for growth and education of membership and community leaders in urban forestry, as budget allows.

**Extend assistance to communities statewide to develop and manage Urban Forestry Programs.**

- A. Provide guidance to communities implementing or updating tree inventories, canopy analysis, tree benefit models, tree species guides, tree ordinances, policies, and community forestry management plans, utilizing forestry management tools to guide communities.
- B. Participate in regional forestry initiatives when appropriate.
- C. Encourage qualifying incorporated communities and counties to become a Tree City USA.
- D. Market the results of inventories, canopy studies and benefit analyses to teach communities the value of trees.

**Establish consistent funding sources and provide funding to support projects.**

- A. Provide funds annually for Arbor Day and Nevada Shade Tree Week (NSTW), and report annually.
- B. Pursue other sources of grant funding.
- C. Encourage communities to increase their funding sources for urban forestry and think of creative ways to fund urban forestry projects.
- D. Find traditional and non-traditional sponsors within each NSTC member community.

**Promote proper tree planting and care.**

- A. Organize right tree, right place planting events.
- B. Use the results of tree benefits analyses to encourage planting trees to mitigate the effects of urban growth and stormwater runoff, improve air quality and energy conservation, and increase and maintain the urban tree canopy.
- C. Use completed canopy and tree inventory assessments to promote tree planting initiatives and canopy goal setting.
- D. Promote proper and sustainable tree maintenance practices.

## Partners

Nevada Division of Forestry  
Nevada Non-profit Tree Advocacy Groups  
    Desert Green Foundation  
    Nevada Landscape Association  
    Southern Nevada Arborists Group (SNAG)  
Local Tree boards and Beautification Committees  
    Ely Tree Board  
    Carson City Shade Tree Council  
    Reno Urban Forestry Commission  
    Henderson CBB  
Tree Advocacy Working Groups  
    Truckee Meadows Community Forestry Coalition (TMCFC)  
    Southern Nevada Regional Urban Forestry Working Group of the Southern Nevada  
        Regional Planning Committee  
City Foresters: Henderson and Reno  
City and County Parks and Recreation Departments  
Davey Resource Group  
Southwest Trees and Turf and Stone Peak Services  
University of Nevada Cooperative Extension  
Nevada Conservation Districts  
Natural Resources Conservation Service and Resource Conservation and Development Councils:  
    High Desert RC&D  
    Da Ka Doiyabe RC&D  
NV Energy  
Nurseries  
National Arbor Day Foundation  
Southwest Trees and Turf and Stone Peak Services  
US Forest Service  
Western Chapter International Society of Arboriculture  
Subgrantees