

Community Forestry Assistant



Newsletter June 2008



Northwest
Management, Inc.

St Maries Conducts its First Ever Street Tree Inventory



Nestled along the banks of the shadowy St Joe River, St Maries has a long and proud history associated with forestry and the forest products industry. The timber industry still forms the economic backbone of the community, one of only a handful of communities left in Idaho that can still make that claim. But what does that have to do with community forestry programs? Thanks to an energetic group of community volunteers, St Maries has expanded the challenge of managing forests not only in the surrounding landscape, but within the community as well.

In many ways, St Maries is similar to other small Idaho communities in trying to get a sustainable community forestry program up and running. Like elsewhere, everyone in town likes their trees, but resources do not exist to provide dedicated staff or funding to get things done and other higher community priorities always seem to take precedence. Also, like elsewhere, a small



group of dedicated individuals took it upon themselves to make their community a better place to live.

In a town that truly recognizes the value of trees and has a high number of resident foresters and loggers, Arbor Day has been celebrated for years. When the informal tree group that led the annual Arbor Day effort helped secure a 2004 CTE grant as a component of a downtown revitalization project, people in town took notice. This led to the formalization of a St Maries Tree Committee (SMTC), a tree care ordinance, and recognition as Tree City USA by 2006. The SMTC has helped coordinate and prioritize efforts for tree care within the city.

Searching for ways to prioritize limited tree care funds, demonstrate the value of city trees, and develop a long term approach to management of the city tree resources, the SMTC decided to pursue a street tree inventory in 2007. Nearly 100 years after the first forest inventory was conducted in the surrounding forest, St Maries conducted its first ever street and park tree inventory on May 17, 2008. Foresters from the US Forest Service, Idaho Department of Lands, Potlatch Corporation, Forest Capital Partners and Northwest Management, Inc. as well as other community volunteers participated along with 15 enthusiastic 4th graders. Several of the major streets, the city park, the Benewah County Fairgrounds, and the cemetery were inventoried. The effort was so well received, there is no doubt other streets will be inventoried in the future.

The SMTC hopes to take advantage of I-Tree software outputs to help demonstrate the value of trees for stormwater abatement, heating and cooling, dust control, and added property values. The group believes the real data generated from the inventory will cause folks in town to notice and perhaps become more supportive of the community forestry program. The next step in the process will be to develop a management plan that will outline community forestry goals and integrate these with other city functions, describe current conditions, and develop prescriptive priorities for tree removal, replacement, and maintenance.

If you would like more information, please contact your local Idaho Department of Lands supported North Idaho Community Forestry Assistant, Jim Colla at Northwest Management, Inc. at 208-772-8554.