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Jessica Sanders



The Sacramento Tree Foundation announced that it will continue its mission of urban forest advocacy with a new Executive Director, Jessica Sanders, following the retirement of its founder Ray Tretheway. Jessica comes to Sacramento from her position as Director of Science and Policy at the Washington

DC-based nonprofit Casey Trees. An East Coast transplant, Jessica spent most of her youth in the four corners of New Jersey. "I am excited to move to California right at the start of East Coast winter," she laughs. "I can't wait to leave the winter snow and summer mosquitos." She quickly explained that both she

and her husband, Ed, had biked to work, and they will not miss the insects or slippery roadways. Beyond her love of trees, Jessica's hobbies naturally involve the outdoors. "I'm a huge gardener, hiker and traveler, and I'm looking forward to exploring California including its great wine region."

The youngest of four children, Jessica grew up knowing she wanted to study the environment and work outdoors. Ever practical, she took a semester off before attending Richard Stockton College in New Jersey in order to earn her half of the tuition. "Our family deal was that I would pay half, and they would pay half. So I worked in a garden center, at a wholesale produce market and then indoors I taught upright bass lessons, and I knew I wanted to work for the environment."

(right)
Jessica (left) with the folks she worked with at the nonprofit Casey Trees.



While at college, Jessica worked on tree projects. “I felt that nature should be part of our daily lives, and working with urban trees fit that desire,” she concluded. So her path was set, and her doctoral studies

(below)
Retiring Tree Foundation director, Ray Tretheway in the tree grove that has been re-dedicated to he and his wife, Judy.



(above)
Jessica working with volunteers on the East Coast in the DC area.

at Rutgers University in urban forestry also included teaching arboriculture and publishing research on urban tree issues and under-canopied neighborhoods.

Jessica’s love of nature is rivaled with her love of people. “My undergraduate work with power line right of ways — land and plant surveys, meant that I would work for entire weeks

without seeing people. Urban forestry kept me with people.”

Her people skills intersect with her goals for the Sacramento Tree Foundation. “STF has been a star in the field of urban forestry. I am humbled to follow in Ray’s legacy. He realized it is not about just planting trees — but building community.”

Likewise, Ray Tretheway is confident that his successor will continue the effort to grow the urban forest in under-canopied neighborhoods where it will make the most impact. “Jessica has a deep understanding of how to build civic engagement.”

Jessica says she wants to look for non-traditional partnerships. “It isn’t just ‘tree people’. For me, engaging a diverse community with input from the community about trees is fundamental to the infrastructure.

We are very excited and thrilled about the wonderful life we are about to begin in Sacramento.”

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