1977
Sacramento County Tree Task Force created.

1978
Proposition 13 passes, limiting taxes for state, city and county services. Tree and park budgets receive low priority.

1980
Sacramento County Tree Task Force draft Oak Tree Preservation Ordinance for adoption by City and County of Sacramento.

1980
Parking Lot Shade Tree Ordinances adopted by City and County of Sacramento.

1981
Mayor Phil Isenberg and Supervisor Illa Collin host meeting of 150 civic and business leaders to begin nonprofit Sacramento Tree Foundation (STF).

1982
STF established as community-based educational nonprofit.

1985
STF’s “Year of the Oak” campaign plants 10,000 native oaks and creates award-winning “Seed to Seedling” curriculum.

1989
STF launches “Trees for Tomorrow,” campaign to plant 1 million trees; endorsed by the City and County of Sacramento.

1990
STF launches Save the Elms Program (STEP) in response to Dutch elm disease.

1990
Sacramento Shade established by Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) in partnership with STF to plant 500,000 energy saving shade trees.

1993
U.S. Forest Service Center for Urban Forest Research opens its doors on the U.C. Davis campus.

1993
Lawrence Livermore Berkeley Laboratory determines that direct shading results in a 30% reduction in summer energy consumption.
1996
STF launches “NeighborWoods,” a program to inspire community action.

1998
STF awarded Urban Heat Island Study by USEPA, NASA and Lawrence Livermore Berkeley Laboratory.

2000
STF produces “State of the Trees Report,” which details the value of optimizing urban forest benefits and calls for regional management of urban forests.

2001
Millennium Tree Celebration in Cesar Chavez Park marks 1 million trees planted during the Trees for Tomorrow Campaign.

2005
“Greenprint,” STF’s regional urban forest framework, adopted by 22 cities and 4 counties.

2005
STF and Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) begin policy and research development for trees to be included in the region's air quality plan.

2005
The Home Depot Foundation and National Alliance for Community Trees adopted STF’s NeighborWoods for national application.

2005
STF hosted its first national workshop “Sharing the Greenprint Model.”

2006
STF hosted its first national workshop “Sharing the Greenprint Model.”

2007
Sacramento Shade partnership with SMUD celebrates more than 400,000 trees planted for energy savings.

2007
STF celebrates 25th anniversary.

2007
STF celebrates 25th anniversary.
We are sharing this history of the Sacramento Tree Foundation in celebration of 25 years of building the best forest for the Sacramento region.

In many ways our model Greenprint initiative is the culmination of 25 years of pursuing the simple fact that in every neighborhood and community, people need trees and trees need people.

The Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) has been instrumental in understanding and investing in the important relationship of trees to summer energy savings, volunteerism and tree stewardship. Today, partnering with the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District, we have defined the region’s urban forest even further. In 2007, we conducted a volunteer-led science-based, regional Tree Census and the early results show us that our urban forest is comprised of 102 species of trees; 12% canopy cover and 14 million spaces for new trees.

On March 7, 2008, California Arbor Day, we announced a campaign to add 5 million trees to our region’s urban forest. This campaign will get us close to reducing the number of bad air quality days in our region by half, save us over $10 million annually in summer energy costs and significantly clean our air.

This campaign, over the next decades, will rebuild and reshape the quality of life in our neighborhoods and communities for generations to come. We invite you to continue this journey with us.

Tree Cheers,

Ray Tretheway
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
1840 City on the Plains
Sacramento, which today is known as “The City of Trees,” was actually “City on the Plains” after it was settled in 1839. The valley floor was mainly covered in grasses and tules. It was only the lush riverbanks that were densely populated with willow and cottonwood, Oregon ash and sycamore, and California black walnut and valley oaks. Trees were an exception to Sacramento’s original landscape.

1849 Downtown’s First Public Squares and City Parks
John Augustus Sutter, and other early settlers of the City on the Plains, valued the practical public health and shade benefits of early tree plantings. In 1849, when Sutter laid out the 900-block grid of streets that became the City of Sacramento, he designated 12 public blocks as city parks. Three years later, James L. Warren issued a nursery catalog offering fruit and ornamental trees for sale from his New England Seed Company.

Late 1800s Trees Revered
By 1857, The Sacramento Bee editor James McClatchy lauded “the thousands of trees that (were) being planted” and predicted that “in a few years… our city (would) almost appear a forest.”

The first trees to be intentionally planted along Sacramento’s streets were California sycamores planted in the 1850s along J Street.
In the 1870s, civic leaders launched a planting program that introduced the American and English elms which grace downtown streets with their arching, and now aged, branches.

In 1877, at the recommendation of the president of the Board of Health, 4,000 exotic eucalyptus trees from Australia were planted to dry up low-lying areas of stagnating water in order to reduce the habitat for disease carrying mosquitoes.

1920 First City Gardener
Early in the 20th century, a flurry of civic engagement brought an increase of trees, parks and gardens to the city and resulted in a city gardener position, a street tree ordinance, and a parks board.

The tree boosters responsible for this impressive public commitment included C.K. McClatchy, son of James McClatchy and editor of The Sacramento Bee. C.K. McClatchy was such an outspoken advocate of trees that he published front-page obituaries for individual specimens killed by vandals or slated for development.

1955 One Hundred Thousand Trees
In 1936, Sacramento cared for just 60,000 public trees. Between 1940 and 1955 the number of city street and park trees nearly doubled to 100,000. The ratio of one tree for every two residents easily bettered Paris, whose world-renowned street trees amounted to a mere one tree for every 10 residents. Despite these bragging rights, funding for the city’s tree program began a gradual fiscal decline that continues today. On top of dwindling public funds, the number of public trees planted in the city began a downward slide after the 1950s.

During this same period, county park districts acquired open space land and created public parks that often removed native oak stands and planted ornamental trees.
1970s Trees Get Political
In the mid to late 1970s, Illa Collin was actively involved in Sacramento political campaigns. Always an advocate for trees, Illa Collin learned that the Board of Supervisors would be hearing the issue of cutting down heritage oak trees that graced Elk Grove Boulevard. Illa Collin knew these trees well from frequent bicycle trips from her home. She lobbied hard for the trees, and garnered the votes of both Supervisors Pat Melarky and Ted Sheedy, but fell one vote short of saving the trees.

The trees were cut down. Illa Collin decided that night she was going to run for County Supervisor. Never underestimate the power of a tree to create a candidate! Illa Collin won her bid for Supervisor in 1977 and she retired 30 years later in 2007.

1977 Tree Task Force Born
That same year, the Sacramento County Public Works Department, then responsible for tree care in the county, cut down a number of trees on Auburn Boulevard. There was a huge public outcry against the “butchering” of the trees and newly elected Supervisor Illa Collin responded with the creation of the Sacramento County Tree Task Force.

Bringing together activists including chairwoman Beth Ikemire, Ann Kohl, Jo Smith, Jane Hagedorn, Vagadu Willmarth, Heather Fargo, Ted Robinson and Peggy Krause Kennedy, the Tree Task Force members were committed to:

- creating an ordinance to protect our community trees;
- implementing a policy for shade over parking lots; and
- beautifying Sacramento by planting street trees.

1978 Proposition 13 Limits Tax Dollars
The combination of fewer funds and fewer trees was accentuated by the passage of Proposition 13 by California voters. This revenue limitation forced city and county administrators to prioritize their services. Tree and park maintenance was typically given low priority.

1980 Title 19, Oak Tree Preservation Ordinance
In October 1980, the Tree Task Force was successful in drafting and passing Title 19, an Oak Tree Preservation Ordinance. With the lobbying help of the Tree Task Force, Supervisor Illa Collin also successfully implemented the passage of the Parking Lot Shade Ordinance that set County standards for parking lot shade. The City of Sacramento passed a similar ordinance later that year.

1981 Ugliest Street Contest
The third area of the Tree Task Force’s interest garnered the most media attention. The Tree Task Force members were concerned over the lack of sign controls and prevailing attitudes that signage was more important than street trees. To publicize their efforts...
to alleviate the signage problem, they came up with a campaign entitled, “The Ugliest Street Contest.” Standing at the intersection of contenders for the Ugliest Street Award, the Tree Task Force members held signs encouraging drivers to honk their car horns to register their vote. The Sacramento Union newspaper had a field day with the Ugliest Street Contest, generating a lot of press about the ugliest streets. Beth Ikemire put together a slide show with some of the most hideous examples of poor signage and presented her work to the Board of Supervisors. Ann Kohl remembers the Board of Supervisors being appalled at the pictures of their tree-less streets. Illa Collin remembers how mad the Supervisors were when a street in their district was voted the ugliest! Fair Oaks Boulevard “won” the ugliest street distinction, and the Tree Task Force held a tree planting to help change the image of the street.

In early 1982, the Sacramento County Tree Task Force won the prestigious National Arbor Day Foundation’s award for its “Ugliest Street Contest.”

**Phil Isenberg and Illa Collin: Two Visionaries**

Assemblyman Phil Isenberg, then the Mayor of Sacramento, and his wife Marilyn were in Israel when they noticed a plaque that read: “Israel has planted a million trees.” Phil Isenberg returned home determined to plant trees and beautify Sacramento.

Back from Israel and inspired by the vision of the trees planted by the Israeli government and citizens, Mayor Phil Isenberg called Supervisor Illa Collin. Illa Collin and Phil Isenberg agreed to host a meeting of the Tree Task Force and other Sacramentans interested in beautifying Sacramento, creating a nonprofit dedicated to planting and protecting trees.

**1981 Call to Action**

Joining forces, Illa Collin and Phil Isenberg compiled a list of 350 Sacramentans they believed would share their interest in trees and invited them through a jointly signed letter to a meeting to talk about the future of Sacramento’s trees. Their letter called for the creation of the Sacramento Tree Foundation. One hundred and fifty people gathered and, in Supervisor Illa Collin’s words, “a lot of sparkplugs that were willing to be involved showed up.”

At the meeting, Illa Collin and Phil Isenberg shared their vision of a beautiful Sacramento and catalyzed the development of a five-year plan of action for this new nonprofit.

At the end of the day, Mayor Phil Isenberg passed the hat and the group pledged $17,000—an impressive sum in 1981! A steering committee was formed with Linda Budge as the Chair. It was an auspicious group...
of activists including Ann Kohl, Ray Treheway, Jane Hagedorn, Phil Isenberg, Illa Collin, Roger Dickenson, Jean Runyon, Angelo Tsakopoulos, Archie Hefner and Heather Fargo.

1982 Sacramento Tree Foundation
Certified as a Nonprofit
The steering committee worked hard for the next 10 months. By March, they had 40 members on their Board of Directors, led by newly elected President Jane Hagedorn, a five-year plan, and over $60,000 in the bank. On Sunday, March 7, 1982, Ray Treheway, Jane Hagedorn and Carl Durling drove Secretary of State March Fong Eu to her downtown office. She officially certified the new nonprofit on California Arbor Day!

First Tree Plantings
On August 6, 1982, the first planting of the newly formed Sacramento Tree Foundation was held at Sutter's Fort. Landscape designer Marc Askew had taken cuttings of the fort’s dying landmark cottonwood tree, believed to be the oldest street tree in Sacramento. Sutter’s Fort folklore held that John Sutter Jr. had planted the old cottonwood to establish the street grid for the new city, modeled after the tree-lined streets of Philadelphia. The cottonwood had an uncanny similarity to the wizened face of an old man. A poster of the old tree, created by Tom Whitney, became an early iconic image for the fledging Tree Foundation.

The second planting was held on Fair Oaks Boulevard between El Camino Avenue and Manzanita Way. Determined to continue the good work of the now disbanded Tree Task Force, the Tree Foundation was anxious to put the oaks back on Fair Oaks Boulevard.

The Board of Directors made the street trees on Fair Oaks Boulevard their first priority. President Jane Hagedorn addressed the County Board of Supervisors in 1982 declaring that 400 new trees would be added to the Sacramento landscapes in the Tree Foundation’s initial years. The plan was held as a grandiose vision. Planting more than one tree a day for a year was viewed as incredibly unrealistic. Little could they imagine where their initial efforts were to lead.

Jane Hagedorn remembers knocking on business doors to get permission for volunteers to plant trees along the road. “Car horns beeping and blaring, we planted 50 new shade trees along Fair Oaks Boulevard, discovering that it was easy to plant a tree, the hard part was keeping the trees alive.”

Stewardship Trumps Planting
The Fair Oaks planting resulted in the Board of Directors’ appreciation of the stewardship of trees. It was one thing to plop trees into the ground beside Fair Oaks Boulevard and receive a lot of media coverage, it was another to keep the trees alive and thriving in this hot, asphalt dominated environment.

In addition, staff was needed to organize, train and
recognize the vital contributions of volunteers. In order to thrive, trees needed stewardship and care. In the same way, the Board of Directors realized volunteers needed stewarding, training, and recognition.

Ray Tretheway Hired
In mid 1982, a new, paid, part-time position was created and a young community activist and consultant for solar energy by the name Ray Tretheway was hired to initiate a stewardship plan to care for the newly planted trees and organize the volunteers. Ray would go on to become the visionary leader of this nonprofit for the next several decades.

Ann Kohl Volunteers as Executive Director
Community leader and tree activist Ann Kohl volunteered the guest room in her home as the Tree Foundation's first office. For the next eight years, Ann served tirelessly in a volunteer capacity as the first Executive Director. Ann set the tone for the hundreds (and soon to be thousands) of volunteers that stepped up to place trees forefront on Sacramento's agenda. Generations of Tree Foundation board members will always be grateful for Ann's extraordinary generosity, time and commitment to nurturing the early years of the Sacramento Tree Foundation.

“I remember that first summer, watering the 30 new trees on Fair Oaks Boulevard. I contrived 2, 50-gallon drums with a hose spigot, placed them in the back of my 1952 Dodge Truck and twice a week hauled hoses from the drums to water the trees.”
Ray Tretheway, Executive Director, Sacramento Tree Foundation

Five Areas of Action
Always moving forward, the Board then instituted five areas of action:

- technical advisory;
- education;
- planting trees in schools, parks and streets;
- fundraising; and
- community awareness.

Technical Advisory Committee
One of the early successes was the tremendous talent, experience and knowledge offered by the Technical Advisory Committee. Giants in the field of trees formed the committee: Austin Carroll, Marty Hughes, Marc Askew, Roger Poulson, Mike Weber and John Nicolaus. The purpose of this committee was to ensure that the Sacramento Tree Foundation would employ best practices and the latest science. From this point forward, every policy, practice and project was first vetted through this prestigious committee.

Education Committee
Another area that received early success was the Education Committee. Ann Kohl and Mike Weber were insistent that a curriculum be written for valley oak acorns to be planted and cared for in the classroom. Kay Antunez was hired to develop this curriculum, entitled “Seed to Seedling.” Jo Smith, a graphic
designer with an emphasis in scientific illustration, and member of the Board of Directors, volunteered to illustrate the curriculum. Now in its fourth printing, the Seed to Seedling curriculum has been adopted for use in schools across the nation.

The Education Committee also implemented the annual Poster Contest. Open to all Sacramento school children, the winning posters were used to educate the public about the importance of trees with themes that included: beautiful schools, cool neighborhoods, native oaks, saving energy, and cleaning our air.

**1985 Year of the Oak**
In 1985, Mike Weber, educator and native tree advocate, suggested the “Year of the Oak” to celebrate Sacramento County’s natural trees and landscape. The County and City of Sacramento joined the campaign for a yearlong celebration that culminated in the planting of over 10,000 new native oaks.

**1989 Million Tree Campaign**
It was New Year’s Eve 1989, and Assemblyman Lloyd Connelly and Jeanie Shaw were at the home of Councilmember Kim Mueller. Kim Mueller had a sketchpad on her refrigerator and asked Jeanie and Lloyd to write down a dream for the last decade of the millennium. Jeanie Shaw took the pen and wrote, “plant one million trees in Sacramento by the year 2000.” The 1984 Olympics were still fresh in the minds of Californians, and Andy Lipkis and his nonprofit Tree People had made headlines inspiring Angelinos to plant one million trees in the Los Angeles area in honor of the Olympics. Kim Mueller decided that she would make planting one million trees her project on the City Council. Needing Supervisor support, Kim Mueller called upon tree champion Illa Collin who immediately agreed to co-sponsor the million tree goal.

**Steering Committee**
A steering committee of Illa Collin, Kim Mueller, Jeanie Shaw, Rosanna Herber, Ray Tretheway, Doug Roberts, and Gary Van Dorst was created for the million tree campaign. The committee determined its mission would be: plant one million trees in Sacramento by the year 2000 and assure the trees would be maintained.

In addition, they established three goals:
- involve the youth of Sacramento in tree planting and maintenance;
- involve neighborhood groups in tree planting and maintenance; and
- raise funds to initiate and maintain the campaign.

The vision was officially named “Trees for Tomorrow, a Gift to the 21st Century.” Councilmember Kim Mueller, Supervisor Illa Collin and Jeanie Shaw chaired the Trees for Tomorrow campaign, bringing together community leaders. On February 28, 1989, the
Sacramento City Council and the Sacramento Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution endorsing the Trees for Tomorrow vision and campaign.

As the vision of planting a million trees in Sacramento was taking root, another dream was taking shape in President Bush’s oval office. Under the banner of “America the Beautiful,” the president urged the nation to plant 200 million new trees in the coming decade.

**California ReLeaf**

In the San Francisco offices of the Trust for Public Lands, a fledging networking group of California-based nonprofit tree groups called California ReLeaf dreamed to plant 20 million trees in California by the new millennium. ReLeaf groups from across the state, including the Trees for Tomorrow Steering Committee, officially kicked off the 20 million goal on April 29, 1989 with ten simultaneous plantings.

Sacramento’s effort was a 100 tree kick-off event at the Peter Burnett Elementary School and the surrounding residential area. Over 200 volunteers joined in the planting of new trees and mistletoe removal from mature street trees. Sponsoring businesses and organizations included Chevron USA, the Sacramento Local Conservation Corps, the City and County of Sacramento and the Sacramento Municipal Utility District.

**Seed Money Raised**

Fundraising dinners were hosted by Judy Reynen, Tree Foundation Board Member, and her husband John and by Angelo Tsakopoulos, founding Board Member, and his wife Sophia. These special dinners in their homes raised important seed money to spearhead the campaign.

**Kindred Spirits**

As the Trees for Tomorrow campaign moved forward, it was clear that the Tree Foundation and Trees for Tomorrow shared the same vision and goal. In the spring of 1990, at the Tree Foundation’s annual Board of Directors retreat, the by-laws were amended to give a place on the Executive Committee to the chair of the Trees for Tomorrow campaign. The future of the two groups was now officially united.

**1990 Sacramento Shade Established**

In 1990, a Texan complete with a ten gallon hat and a huge vision landed in Sacramento as the new General Manager of the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD). David Freeman came with a promise to renew Sacramentans’ trust in their public utility and to lower their customers’ energy costs. He also came with a Texas-sized commitment to conservation.
Jeanie Shaw approached Freeman with a proposal to partner with SMUD in the goal of planting one million trees. Tree Foundation Board President, Bill Fobes and Executive Director, Ray Tretheway later met with Freeman and agreed to partner in the delivery of 500,000 shade trees for energy conservation, and the Sacramento Shade program was born.

Reduce the Consumer’s Energy Bills
Under the direction of Winston Ashizawa, Sacramento Shade (or Sac Shade as it became known) represented a major component of SMUD’s larger Energy Solutions Program, a commitment to the community to help citizens save energy and reduce utility bills.

Sac Shade was beautifully simple in its design. Customers could select a tree, at no cost, from a menu of tree species that were pre-selected by the Tree Foundation’s Technical Advisory Committee to thrive in the Sacramento climate, grow quickly and provide maximum shade. The Tree Foundation would then teach SMUD customers the basic principles of siting the tree to maximize energy savings and best practices for stewardship of the young trees.

Rodger Poulsen, Director of Sac Shade
Arborist Roger Poulsen was hired by the Tree Foundation to serve as Director of Sac Shade, the liaison with SMUD for the new, wildly popular fledgling partnership.

In the first Sac Shade contract period, Roger and his team exceeded the tree planting goal, under budget and ahead of schedule.

It became clear that the Sac Shade program had touched a core value with Sacramentans. And, as more neighborhood plantings were held and the tree numbers increased, SMUD was able to show customers that the investment in trees was paying off. As Sac Shade matured, the numbers proved that conservation through trees was also working.

Energy Conservation and Clean Air
Shade trees not only contribute to the clean energy future of Sacramento, they also offer significant clean air benefits to the community.

Since its inception, the Tree Foundation has highly valued science and best practices in developing its policies, programs and services. The Technical Advisory Committee was the reliable architect for tree selection, planting methodology and tree care for Sac Shade. Their hard work paid big dividends as the tree recipients learned to grow their trees 20 to 30 percent more quickly, thanks in large part to Roger Poulsen’s revolutionary tree hole technique which addressed Sacramento’s clay soils, while advancing root growth.
As the Tree Foundation moved toward planting and maintaining an urban forest rather than individual trees, they kept their initial commitment to partnering with the scientific and technical communities.

In a study sponsored by SMUD in 1993, the Lawrence Livermore Berkeley Laboratory conducted experiments to monitor the impact of trees on energy consumption in buildings by measuring the direct effect of shading and the indirect effect of shading an entire neighborhood.

In the study, the Livermore lab determined that direct shading resulted in a 30 percent reduction in cooling energy consumption.

1990 First Full-Time Executive Director
In 1990, committed environmentalist Ray Tretheway was promoted to the position of the Tree Foundation’s first full-time Executive Director.

Tretheway contended that, “the urban forest is the dominant indicator of the quality of life in Sacramento.” It had always been Tretheway’s vision to connect people to their environment, especially the environment right outside their doors and down their streets.

He strongly believed that the Tree Foundation’s vision was to “involve all parts of the community: nonprofit, business, public, service and education, so that together we can stimulate informed citizen interest and action in the making and care of Sacramento’s urban forest.”

1990 Dutch Elm Disease Hits Sacramento
At about the same time, Dutch elm disease was detected in Sacramento elms. In the early 1990s, a citizen group quickly formed to combat this disease that had no cure once a tree was infected.

With support from SMUD, the City of Sacramento and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, the citizens committee came under the umbrella of the Tree Foundation’s Save the Elms Program (STEP). Citizen volunteers were trained to survey elms, report on suspected diseased elms and help educate their neighbors. This fast response helped to stem the spread of Dutch elm disease in Sacramento’s downtown signature trees- the American and English elms. Traditional approaches to Dutch elm disease include the immediate removal of all elms. Sacramento, on the other hand, joined a handful of cities that chose a proactive community collaborative. This tactic is paying dividends, as the rate of loss is an average of only 35 to 45 majestic elms a year.

The Tree Foundation also partnered with UC Berkeley and the City of Sacramento Tree Services on a three-
year study of elm leaf beetle infestations. After decades of applying toxic insecticides to our elm trees, the study successfully demonstrated how a non-toxic program helped to reduce the pesky and messy infestations.

1992 12,000 Trees Planted
The initial goal of the Tree Foundation was to plant 8,000 trees in its first decade. Instead, the Tree Foundation planted over 12,000 trees principally in parks, schools and along Sacramento streets!

1993 U.S. Forest Service Center for Urban Forest Research Opens
When the U.S. Forest Service was looking to locate a new site for their Center for Urban Forest Research (CUFR), Congressman Vic Fazio, U.S. Forest Service Scientist Rowan Rowntree and Ray Treheway were determined to locate the Center in the Sacramento area. The work of the Sacramento Tree Foundation and the strong SMUD partnership gave Congressman Vic Fazio the science and community support he needed. In 1993, the Center for Urban Forest Research opened its doors on the campus of UC Davis. Dr. E. Gregory McPherson was assigned lead scientist for the new Center.

1994 Scientific Cost-Benefit Analysis
A year later, SMUD hired the U.S. Forest Service Center for Urban Forest Research to develop a new formula for evaluating and justifying the Sac Shade program. Led by Dr. E. Gregory McPherson, a “present value benefit” formula was adopted based upon the size of a tree, location of a tree and the distance a tree was from a building.

SMUD now knew the savings from the program in terms of peak summer energy not produced or purchased. This scientific cost-benefit analysis would be translated by SMUD Shade Tree Manager, Misha Sarkovich into a national shade tree energy saving calculator for adoption by other utilities.

1996 Urban Forest Ecosystem Study
In 1996, Dr. E. Gregory McPherson and Dr. Jim Simpson of the U.S. Forest Service Center for Urban Forest Research and their colleagues completed an exhaustive, $1 million study of Sacramento’s urban forest. Even today, this study represents the most thorough urban forest investigation and cost-benefit analysis of any urban forest in the nation.

Their three years of work, called the Sacramento Urban Forest Ecosystem Study, provided revealing data for
the Tree Foundation’s first State of the Trees Report. With contributors from city, county, state and federal agencies, it summarized the collective knowledge and current condition of the ways in which the urban forest was contributing to the health of its community.

1998 National Heat Island Study
In the spring of 1998, the Tree Foundation petitioned the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to include Sacramento in their national pilot study of urban heat islands.

On a clear June day, a NASA Learjet used a variety of sensors and imaging cameras to map the ground and ambient air temperature of the region from an altitude of 16,000 feet. On that day scientist Dr. Jeff Louval and the Tree Foundation coordinated and trained over 100 school children to record similar ground data to compare results with the flyover. The public’s interest in this project was very high and helped give the region another view of its urban forest and the potential benefits that awaited future investments.

“Air pollution from Sacramento’s ecosystem flows to Sierra Nevada watersheds, and this pollution may come back to haunt us by reappearing in our drinking water. If you add more trees in Sacramento, you will reduce the pollutant load on the Sierra Nevada watersheds serving urban areas.”

Dr. Rowan A. Rowntree, National Program Leader for the U.S. Forest Service Research Program

2001 State of the Trees Report
Just after the turn of the 20th century, the Tree Foundation achieved two major goals. It completed the planting of one million trees, meeting the challenge laid down 10 years earlier. And it published the second State of the Trees Report.

Published in the fall of 2000, it charted the history of Sacramento’s urban forest. It analyzed the extraordinary benefits of the six million trees that make up Sacramento’s urban forest - $50 million in annual environmental benefits, for example, plus millions more dollars in social and economic benefits. It cited significant threats, including the aging City of Sacramento canopy, the lack of public resources, and inadequate replacement of dying trees.

The State of the Trees Report then offered a vision for the future: “We, the citizens of the Sacramento region, recognize that trees are a precious resource upon which we depend for the quality of our lives. We know that Sacramento, because of its climate, reaps benefits from a healthy urban forest – particularly in improving air quality and saving energy – that far exceed the costs. Therefore, we will guide our community and neighborhood development to maximize those benefits and in so doing make the Sacramento region a model for the world for generations to come.”
Eric Douglas, newly elected President of the Board of Directors, was one of the authors of the report. “We were thinking big,” he said. “The report captured that vision and carved a new path for the Tree Foundation.” “It was a turning point,” said Ray Tretheway. “Our focus shifted to the entire region.”

Regional Approach
The State of the Trees Report (2000) called on the elected officials of the region to develop and adopt a Sacramento Regional Urban Forest Management Plan. Ray Tretheway and his staff began planning to optimize the benefits of trees on a regional scale. Rob Kerth, a former Sacramento City Councilmember, was hired to lead the effort to convene elected representatives from the 22 cities and 6 counties in the Sacramento region to sign a regional compact. “We had to call in a few favors,” said Rob. “But the majority of elected officials seemed to be waiting for this call to action on behalf of their trees and urban forests.”

In 2001, a regional urban forest compact was adopted by the elected officials and the Tree Foundation began an extensive education and outreach program to share the regional urban forest vision and goals. All this was happening as the million tree campaign was about to celebrate its huge benchmark.

2001 Millionth Tree Planted
National Arbor Day, 2001, marked the successful completion of the campaign to plant a million trees in Sacramento. Dozens of school children joined Mayor Heather Fargo and Supervisor Rodger Dickenson in celebrating the accomplishment. A celebratory marker was placed in Cesar Chavez Park, across from City Hall. The millionth tree – a native valley oak – was planted right next to it.

As the millionth tree was going into the ground, the staff and Board were planning for the next five million trees. With the regional compact signed, the next step was to get all the City Councils and Boards of Supervisors in the region to formally adopt the framework for this campaign – no small task.

Connie Gallippi was hired as a full-time staff member to coordinate the effort. She and Rob Kerth made presentation after presentation. Their aim was simple: Get the local elected governments to embrace the vision of investing in a regional urban forest.

“You have to understand the genius of this,” said Dr. E. Gregory McPherson, lead scientist for the U.S. Forest Service Center for Urban Forest Research. “Building an urban forest on a regional scale had never been tried before.” But it made sense. The trees know no boundaries. And if an urban forest were optimized to serve an entire region, the net benefits would be in the billions of dollars.

The Greenprint
During this time, Eric Douglas chaired the board committee that oversaw the framework. “We were talking about how clunky the name was – by this time
it was called the Sacramento Regional Urban Forest Framework,” he said. “Ray Tretheway came up with the idea of calling it ‘Greenprint’ instead.”

The name was an instant hit. It resonated with people, mainly because of the successful “Blueprint” led by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) a year earlier. And it made sense. “The benefits of the urban forest needed to be imprinted in everyone’s minds,” said Eric Douglas.

Connie Gallippi, now the Greenprint Director, was making the rounds to local jurisdictions with a Greenprint DVD. Professionally produced, it highlighted the value of a tree – and the value of a million trees. Millions of dollars in benefits each year in water quality, air quality, energy savings, and property values – Sacramento wins big when it plants trees. That was the message.

2005 Greenprint Endorsed
In the fall of 2005, the final jurisdiction endorsed Greenprint. Funding to support Greenprint began to flow from SACOG, the City of West Sacramento, SMUD, and the City and County of Sacramento. The focus shifted to canopy assessments for each jurisdiction.

The City of Elk Grove was first. STF conducted a tally of its street trees and determined the health and species mix. Then the city identified potential planting sites. Most importantly, the City of Elk Grove incorporated Greenprint principles into its planning processes. It proudly proclaimed itself a Greenprint Community, and announced plans to plant thousands of trees.

Grant Funds Urban Forest for Clean Air
Around this time Connie Gallippi and Ray Tretheway approached SACOG for funding to propel Greenprint goals, specifically to improve the region’s air quality. While trees had been considered a potential tool, they hadn’t been taken seriously. But Larry Greene saw things differently. As the Executive Director of the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District, he thought that planting millions of trees on a regional scale could pay off big. The result was a $730,000 grant to the Tree Foundation. This was a breakthrough – the first time that the state of California and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency invested in trees to improve air quality. “This was another huge moment in the history of the Tree Foundation,” said Ray Tretheway.

2006 Dreams of an Urban Ecology Center
In 2006, the Board of Directors of the Tree Foundation held its annual retreat. The major topic was Greenprint. Its success was causing an internal tug-of-war. One camp argued that the Tree Foundation needed to become a regional nonprofit. The other camp wanted to stay focused on its traditional turf – Sacramento County and its seven cities. There were good arguments on both sides and a decision was reached.

“Connecting people with the trees around them also addresses other needs such as safety and the preservation and enhancement of neighborhoods.”
Ray Tretheway, Executive Director, Sacramento Tree Foundation

“Connecting people with the trees around them also addresses other needs such as safety and the preservation and enhancement of neighborhoods.”
Ray Tretheway, Executive Director, Sacramento Tree Foundation
"In the end, we agreed we need to be a catalyst for the region," said Ray Tretheway. "We stressed the importance of local investments and activities when it came to trees – and that we need to encourage local support for Greenprint. But we couldn’t wait for it to happen."

In essence, the Tree Foundation decided that it would be a supportive leader in implementing Greenprint region-wide. At the same time, its programs and services would continue to focus on Sacramento County. To mark the 25th anniversary of the Tree Foundation, it revised its strategic plan.

"Building the best urban forest for the region is both our purpose and our vision," the plan read, and "Greenprint is our roadmap for achieving that vision."

The strategic plan contained another visionary project: the building of an Urban Ecology Center where youth could come and learn about the workings of the urban forest – and its multiple benefits. It would also be the region’s address for tree and urban forest workshops, symposiums and resources.

**2007 25th Anniversary**

The Tree Foundation celebrated its 25th anniversary year with a full calendar of events.

In January, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger turned to the Tree Foundation to plant his inaugural redwood tree during his second inauguration ceremony. As part of the event, 200 young volunteers planted acorns in pots and learned the value of trees at our state capitol.

In April, the nationally recognized Sacramento Shade partnership with SMUD celebrated the planting of its 400,000th energy saving shade tree. The energy saving urban forest dream was realized and the program was operating at an all-time efficiency rate.

The partnership of a public utility and a nonprofit tree group garnered national attention, especially among energy scientists, electrical utilities and policy makers.

In 2008, Congresswoman Doris Matsui [Sacramento] penned legislation calling on the nation to adopt energy conservation programs modeled after the successful Sac Shade partnership.

The Tree Foundation marked another milestone by putting on its first national “Sharing the Greenprint Model” workshop. Nonprofit leaders, local officials and staff from cities such as Denver, Boston and Chicago came to learn about Greenprint. They toured SMUD. They listened to Larry Greene talk about air quality and trees. Rob Kerth and Ray Tretheway talked about working with elected officials. Attendees left the three-day workshop armed with Greenprint plans of their...
own, ready to implement around the country. “It was incredible,” said Ray Thretheway. “All these leaders came to Sacramento to learn from us. What a long way we’ve come.”

On April 27, 100 volunteers planted 100 trees at Carl Johnston Park for National Arbor Day, in an event sponsored by the Home Depot Foundation. The National Arbor Day Foundation and the City of Sacramento Urban Forest Services helped the Tree Foundation coordinate the tree plantings, which provided much-needed shade for a children’s play area.

Also in April, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) granted the Tree Foundation nearly $500,000 in Proposition 40 monies to develop educational materials to advance the Greenprint initiative. Three major projects are already scheduled to be completed early in 2009.

The momentum of the 25th anniversary year kept going into the spring. At its annual awards luncheon on May 7, Breathe California presented the Tree Foundation with the Clean Air Award in the Citizen Group category. The award recognized the Tree Foundation’s Greenprint initiative, as well as its ongoing contributions to improving the quality of life in the Sacramento region.

The Tree Foundation’s annual Tree Hero Awards ceremony drew its largest-ever attendance in 2007, honoring an individual, an organization and a wooded landscape for their special contributions to Sacramento’s urban forest. The Tree Foundation also honored its founding Board members on the occasion of its 25th anniversary.

James McClatchy Park was the site of the Tree Foundation’s first Urban Forest Festival, “Keeping Cool in Oak Park.” Held on July 28, the event brought together community groups and performers to educate Oak Park residents about the benefits of trees and introduce them to the Tree Foundation’s offerings.

In the summer, 45 volunteers conducted Tree Census 2007, surveying 300 randomly selected landplots throughout the Sacramento region. The Tree Foundation learned more about what kinds of trees make up Sacramento’s urban forest, as well as their age, location, and state of health. The findings will help guide STF’s future tree-planting efforts.

On September 21, Professor Wangari Maathai, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and founder of the Green Belt Movement, read from her memoir, “Unbowed,” as part of the California Lecture Series. “Unbowed” tells the story of Maathai’s efforts to mobilize the planting of 30 million trees in her native Kenya. The Tree Foundation
helped organize Maathai’s visit to Sacramento, including the planting of a valley oak at Capitol Park. Parkway Estates helped the Tree Foundation kick off National NeighborWoods Month by planting its 100th tree in Royal Park. This was the first of many NeighborWoods tree planting events held in October. Throughout the month, over 500 SMUD shade trees were planted along streets and in schools, parks and yards.

The Tree Foundation also marked the 5th year of its partnership with Bufferlands with its 5th annual “National Make a Difference Day” tree planting. The event was held in the Sacramento County Regional Sanitation District Bufferlands, located south of the city. For its Greenprint initiative, the Tree Foundation won the Governor's prestigious 2007 Environmental and Economic Leadership Award. The Tree Foundation accepted the award on behalf of all 22 cities and 4 counties in the Sacramento region that have signed on to the initiative.

To wrap up the celebration, over 500 people attended a lecture at the Crest Theatre to hear author Richard Louv describe the growing disconnect between children and nature. His book “Last Child in the Woods; Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder,” and his nonprofit Children and Nature Network are building momentum for a national movement to reconnect kids to the outdoors.

It has been wonderful to look back and pull together a small glimpse of the passion, commitment, sweat and inspiration shared by so many who have become friends and supporters of Sacramento’s urban forest. It is a truly remarkable story of the transition from trees to urban forests, from volunteerism to community actions, from ugly streets to a model regional initiative.

Now is the time to redouble our efforts in order to meet the extraordinary Greenprint promise of greater neighborhoods and better communities throughout the greater Sacramento region. And yes, as all great endeavors this one has already begun…way back in 1981 when elected officials met with civic leaders and agreement was unanimous to begin the Sacramento Tree Foundation.
Honorary Groves

U.S. Constitution Grove —
*American River Parkway, Ethan Way access*

Gene Robinson Grove —
*Arcade Creek Restoration Project*

Archie Hefner Grove — *Natomas Oaks Park*

Rotarian Grove — *Discovery Park*

Hagedorn Family Grove —
*American River Parkway, Estates Drive access*

Mayor Anne Rudin Grove —
*Robertson Community Center*

Bill Fobes Grove

Austin B. Carroll Grove

Mark Askew Grove

Sandy Smoley Grove

*The intersection of Watt Avenue and American River Drive*

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This history is written to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Sacramento Tree Foundation. From its inception in 1982, the Sacramento Tree Foundation has been an organization dependent on the work and vision of its volunteers. We dedicate this history to all the volunteers, whose tireless work has stewarded one of the top urban forests in the nation.

Our thanks to Board Members Jeanie Shaw, Eric Douglas and Executive Director Ray Tretheway for compiling this important piece for our celebration.
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