



**Agenda Item A.4
PRESENTATION
Meeting Date: June 10, 2026**

TO: Public Tree Advisory Commission

SUBMITTED BY: Luz “Nina” Buelna, Public Works Director

PREPARED BY: Simone Albuquerque, Management Analyst

SUBJECT: Urban Forest Climate Adaptation Project Status Update

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file a report and presentation on the Urban Forest Climate Adaptation Project.

BACKGROUND:

On October 12, 2023, the City of Goleta received a letter of intent to award a \$1,000,000 grant from the United States Department of Agriculture’s Urban & Community Forestry Program (USDA UCF), managed by GreenLatinos, a non-profit organization contracted by the federal government to oversee grant implementation. On October 15, 2024, City Council approved the appropriation of grant funds and the scope of work. The USDA UCF grant-funded project includes a variety of urban forestry management activities that address short-term maintenance, community education and stewardship, and longer-term urban forest planning and management, including:

- A comprehensive park tree inventory
- Tree risk assessments and maintenance
- A City-wide tree canopy map, analysis, and findings report
- Development of master tree planting plans for up to ten City parks
- Planting and care of 250 new trees
- Community tree planting events

City Council approved an annual contract with West Coast Arborists (WCA) on December 2, 2025. The USDA UCF grant funds approximately \$386,000 for tree maintenance and risk assessments, as well as a digital park tree inventory.

City Council approved a professional services agreement with the Urban Forest Institute (UFI) on June 2, 2026, to complete the city-wide tree canopy mapping and analysis. UFI,

in coordination with the CalPoly San Luis Obispo Department of Landscape Architecture, will also complete the master tree planting plans for up to ten City parks.

DISCUSSION:

USDA UCF grant activities represent a comprehensive and coordinated approach to improving and expanding the City's urban forest. The project includes tree inventory and risk assessment, establishing a clear baseline understanding of existing conditions and needs. This data will inform advanced analyses of canopy and plantable space, which will guide the development of new maps and tree-planting plans. Planting plans support targeted tree planting and the creation of a young tree care program to ensure their successful establishment. At the same time, the USDA UCF grant funds support the purchase of supplies for tree propagation, the coordination of community tree-planting events, and improvements in tree maintenance. The proposed scope of work is outlined below:

Tree Inventory & Asset Risk Assessment

A comprehensive inventory of trees in parks and open spaces will be conducted in accordance with industry best practices. This effort will document tree characteristics and conditions while incorporating International Society of Arboriculture Tree Risk Assessments for trees that are within fall distance of fixed park assets or exhibit obvious signs of decline. The resulting data will support informed tree management decisions, including immediate maintenance actions.

Maintenance Improvements

Using the results of the inventory and risk assessments, the project will implement maintenance improvements focused on reducing risk through pruning or removals, when warranted for public safety. Additional supporting work funded by the grant includes nesting-bird surveys conducted by qualified biologists and coordination by the City's contract City Arborist.

Canopy Analysis & Mapping tool

A Citywide canopy and plantable space analysis will be conducted using high-resolution remote sensing data to assess existing tree coverage and opportunities for expansion. Additional analysis on urban forest age structure, species diversity, and other metrics will be performed. A public-facing, web-based map and prioritization tool will be developed that integrates multiple datasets, including tree inventory data, environmental layers, and socio-economic information.

Park Tree Planting Master Plans

This task includes developing data-driven tree planting plans informed by canopy analysis and tree inventory results. Planting plans will be created for up to 10 parks, identifying specific tree locations, species selection, sizes, and planting specifications, as well as establishment and maintenance requirements. General design criteria will be established for all parks and open spaces, including a Parks and Open Space Tree List to inform tree-planting decisions. Once the planting plans reach the 60% design level, City staff will host

a community event to receive public feedback. The plans will also be presented to PTAC for input, which will be considered as part of the City's review process.

Tree Planting & Young Tree Care and Maintenance

This task includes planting 250 trees in priority areas, particularly within disadvantaged communities, and establishing a young tree care program to ensure their successful establishment. Maintenance activities will include watering, mulching, weeding, staking, stake removal, and structural pruning as needed.

Community Tree-Planting Events & Outreach

This task includes hosting tree-planting events that share information about the benefits of trees with residents and provide opportunities for residents to get involved. The grant initially included improvements to the annual Arbor Day Celebrations. Due to changes to the project timeline, these have been updated to weekend community tree-planting events.

All grant tasks are designed to build on the others and contribute to a data-driven urban forestry program. Tasks include short-term hazard and maintenance mitigation, planting trees in high-priority areas, and producing data products to inform long-term planning and maintenance strategies, with community input and engagement. All activities will contribute to a more resilient urban forest that guides tree planting, management, and canopy expansion.

Next Steps:

Pending City Council approval of the consultant team, the City will work with the consultant team to assemble the necessary data to inform canopy map development. Student landscape designers will conduct a pilot landscape architecture design for one park to illustrate design elements and iteratively update the format based on City Staff input.

Tree maintenance and risk assessments are ongoing and part of the City's annual tree maintenance program. Community tree-planting events are also ongoing and are currently focused on Ellwood Mesa. Upcoming events are listed here:

<https://bucketbrigade.volunteerhub.com/vv2/lp/ellwoodmesa>

Approved By:



Luz "Nina" Buelna
Public Works Director

ATTACHMENTS:

1. USDA UCF Grant Update - Presentation

ATTACHMENT 1

USDA UCF Grant Update – Presentation

USDA Urban & Community Forestry Grant Update

Simone Albuquerque, Management Analyst
Public Tree Advisory Commission
June 10, 2026



Overview

Grant
Overview

Project Tasks

Status
update



Urban & Community Forestry Grant



GREENLATINOS
Luchando por la Liberación Ambiental



City of Goleta USDA UCF Grant Project

- Park Tree Inventory & Risk Assessment
- Park Tree Maintenance
- City-wide Canopy Analysis
- Park Tree Planting Plans
- Community Events
- Tree Planting & Young Tree Care




Park Tree Inventory

- Provides data on individual trees, including:
 - Location
 - Age
 - Species
 - Health
 - Maintenance
- Supports annual and long-term work planning across an estimated 12,000 trees in City parks and open spaces



Park Tree Inventory



<--Prev Next-->
SelectTree

[Site on 4 open lists](#)
[Site on 2 closed lists](#)

[Edit Tree Site](#) - [Insert History](#) - [Calls](#) - [Street View](#) - [Photos/Docs \(1\)](#) - [Notes \(0\)](#)

[Create a list](#) - [Add site to list](#)

Site Detail (34.445539400000,-119.843026200000)(WCA InventoryID: 4375968)

District	Address	Location	Species	DBH	DBH (in)	Height
4	316 X ALEX PL On: 6264 COVINGTON WY	SIDE-1	Fraxinus velutina 'Modesto' MODESTO ASH	19-24	24	60+

Maintenance	Condition	Est. Value	Utility	Stems	Comments
Grid/Routine Trim	Good	\$3,040	No	1	

Priority	Valid	PW Type	Parkway	PlantHealthConcern	CanopySpread
N/A	Yes	Parkway	4	None	40

<input type="checkbox"/>	Crew	Date	Work Type / Comments	Job # / Acct #	Invoice#	Amount
<input type="checkbox"/>	WCA	01/14/2026	Prune Backup - Crew	91196	238932	Hourly
<input type="checkbox"/>	WCA	01/14/2026	Req Hardscape Damage Inspection	91196	238932	Inspection
<input type="checkbox"/>	WCA	12/17/2008	Annual Tree Pruning	12438	56858	\$51.85
<input type="checkbox"/>	WCA	11/30/2007	Svc Rqst Pruning 19-24 DSH	10888	50221	\$188.50

Thank you



Park Tree Risk Assessment & Maintenance

- Science-based decision-making
- Standardized ANSI/ISA protocols
- Improved park visitor safety
- Reduced risk and liability

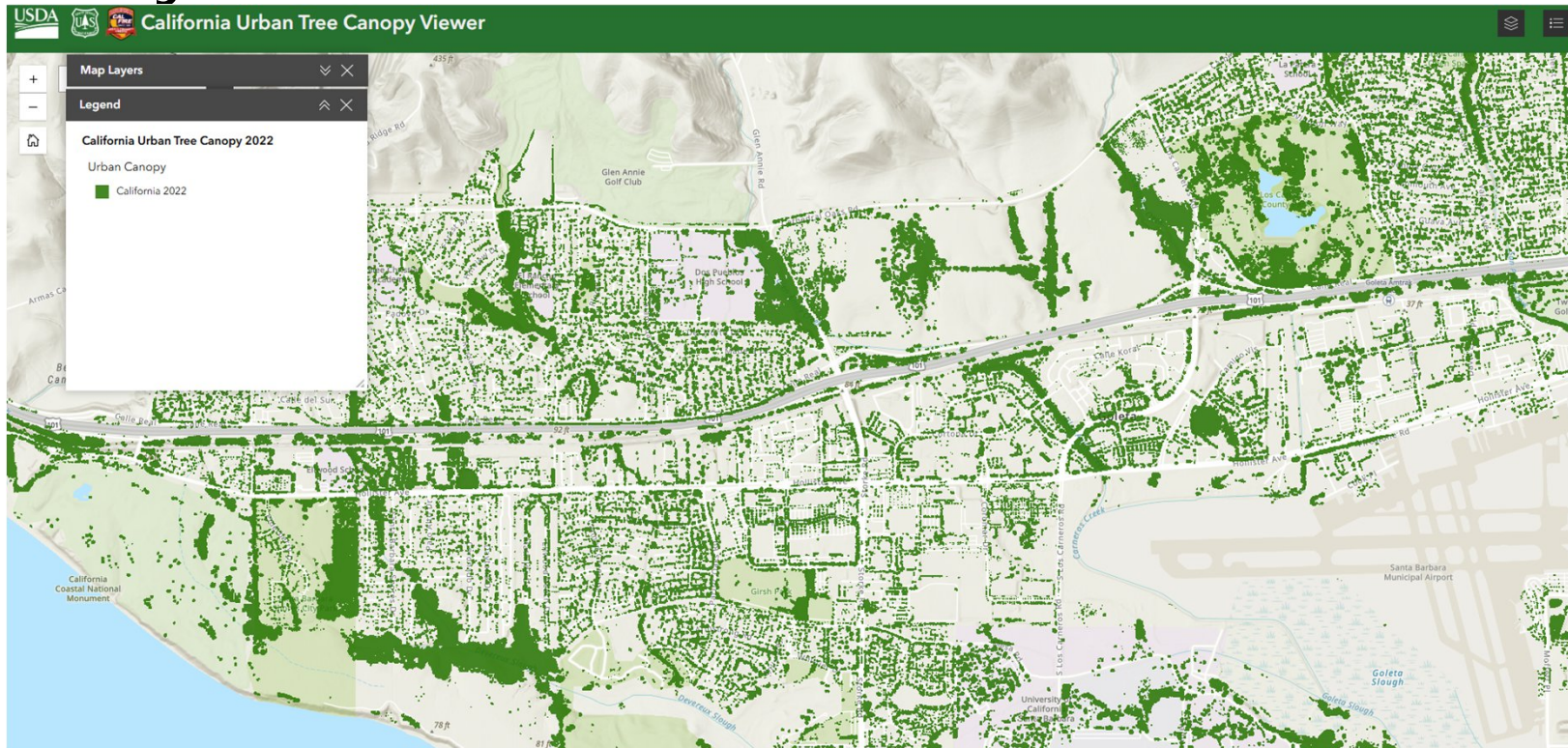


City-wide Canopy Map & Plantable Space Analysis

- Existing canopy cover
- Changes over time
- Planning opportunities
- Canopy age structure
- Canopy species diversity
- Canopy climate resilience
- Equity of distribution of canopy
- Ecosystem benefits from canopy

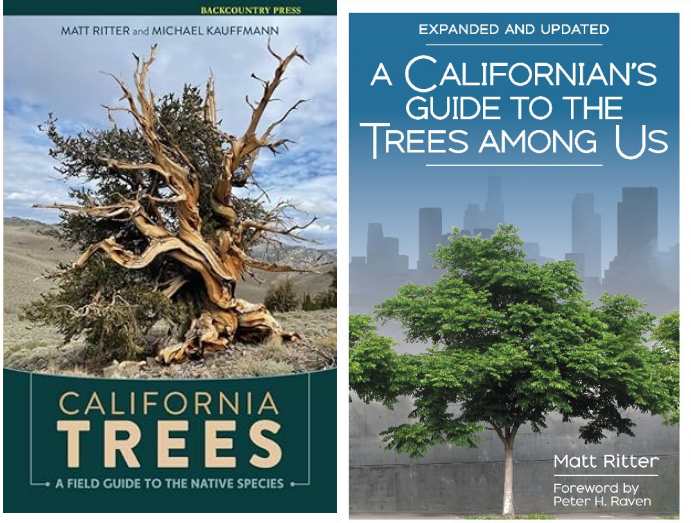


City-wide Canopy Map & Plantable Space Analysis



Partners

- Strategic tree planting
- Science-based decisions
- West Coast Arborists
- Urban Forest Institute
 - Dr. Matt Ritter
 - Dr. Jenn Yost
 - Cami Pawlak, MS
- CalPoly
 - Professor Joseph Ragsdale
 - Landscape design students



BACKCOUNTRY PRESS
MATT RITTER and MICHAEL KAUFFMANN
CALIFORNIA TREES
A FIELD GUIDE TO THE NATIVE SPECIES

EXPANDED AND UPDATED
A CALIFORNIAN'S GUIDE TO THE TREES AMONG US
Matt Ritter
Foreword by Peter H. Raven

UFEI

SelectTree

A TREE SELECTION GUIDE

Enter a tree name...

SEARCH PACIFIC ISLANDS | SEARCH CHARACTERISTICS | SEARCH TREE LISTS | APPRAISALS

BEST MEDIUM TO LARGE-SIZED TREES FOR SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S CLIMATE FUTURE

Matt Ritter Updated 2025-12-20 118

Which trees will persist as California becomes hotter and drier, with less irrigation? These trees will! These are large-canopied species expected to survive and perform well in Southern California over the next 40-70 years, based on climate modeling, drought tolerance, and expert input. The list is evolving and will be updated as we learn more. Comments and suggestions are welcome at mritter@calpoly.edu.

Regions: All of California
Curated List, Public, climate

1. CHINABERRY
Photo: aenderson
2. CANARY ISLAND PINE
Pinus canariensis



Park Tree List

- Drought tolerance
- Temperature tolerance
- Pest resilience
- Damage resilience
- Debris
- Maintenance required
- Habitat provisions



Park Tree Planting Plans

- Tree-focused landscape designs for up to 10 parks
- Design criteria for all City parks and open spaces
- Designs will
 - Enhance the existing unique character of the park
 - Optimize tree benefits
- Draft designs will be shared with PTAC and at a community meeting for feedback



Status Update

- Park Tree Inventory & Risk Assessment & Maintenance 12/2/25 – 6/30/28
- City-wide Canopy Analysis 6/8/26 – 11/30/27
- Park Tree Planting Plans 6/8/26 – 5/21/27
- Community Events Tree Planting & Young Tree Care
 - Online Calendar of Volunteer Opportunities



Questions?