2016
ANNUAL REPORT

FRIENDS of TREES
2016 was a tremendous year for Friends of Trees. The accomplishments of our biggest season yet are highlighted throughout this report, but there are some other major milestones I’d like to share:

More Trees in Portland. We just completed an eight-year contract with the city of Portland, which put more than 26,000 street trees in the ground. We also kicked off our new five-year, 12,000-tree contract with the city, which means more trees in under-canopied, low-income neighborhoods; more trees for families who can’t afford the cost; more outreach and education, prioritizing engaging communities of color; and more work with culturally-specific Community Benefit Organizations, a key component of our equity agenda.

Expansion: We’re now in Clark County, where our work focuses on improved water quality and better stormwater management through planting trees. We also formed a new partnership with Straub Environmental Center, which includes shared office space and a home base for our work in Salem as we continue to grow our presence and strengthen our commitment to this community.

EXECUTIVE LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

More trees have never been more important. The 55,000 trees we planted this season will, when mature, absorb the CO₂ from one year of electricity for more than 100 households. We now know more about trees and health, too. We know that viewing trees reduces stress, improves concentration, and contributes to higher birth weight. Trees help people do better and feel better.

Our new five-year contract with the city means more trees in under-canopied areas, more trees for families that can’t afford them, and more outreach and education in service of our equity agenda.

Please accept my sincere thanks for helping Friends of Trees accomplish all that you will read about in this report. Your investment in our future begins with the simple act of planting a tree, together. Our community grows as our urban forest grows each time you, your friends, your family and those around you take the time to better our neighborhoods and environment. We truly appreciate your time, investment and commitment to growing healthy communities in the Northwest.

Scott Fogarty
FRIENDS OF TREES 2015-16
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ABOUT FRIENDS OF TREES

Friends of Trees empowers people to improve the natural world around them through a simple solution: Planting Trees. Together.

Friends of Trees was founded in 1989 by a community member who loved trees and started planting them with volunteers in Portland neighborhoods.

Today, Friends of Trees is a nationally recognized, regional leader in improving the urban tree canopy and restoring sensitive natural areas—through programs delivered by thousands of volunteers. Friends of Trees greens our region while strengthening our community.

Since Friends of Trees was founded we have planted 600,000+ trees and native plants in 120+ neighborhoods in six counties across two states!
Neighborhood Trees Program

Expanding the urban tree canopy, creating healthy neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Trees is all about planting young trees in urban neighborhoods. We organize the planting dates, deliver the trees, dig the holes, and make it affordable and fun! If someone can’t afford a tree, they still get one. We offer a wide selection of city-approved trees that are appropriate for the space they’ll grow in. And we source from almost a dozen local wholesale tree farms, benefitting the local economy as well as our environment.

Volunteers simply sign up, show up, and get to know the neighbors while making neighborhoods more beautiful and healthy. After trees are planted, Friends of Trees visits and assesses the trees, to ensure those trees are thriving. We even offer a watering plan for the first two summers of a young tree’s life, and we prune more than 1,000 trees every season.

Green Space Program

Restoring habitat, improving watersheds, cleaning our air and water.

From the edge of the Columbia Gorge to the farmlands of Washington County, our Green Space Program restores natural areas, increases habitat, improves watersheds, and plants trees in such quantities (about 1,000 seedlings and native shrubs per planting!) that, when mature, there will be measurable, significant impact on our region’s air and water quality.

But that’s not all. We water. We weed. We mulch. We want all those trees we plant to make it and to thrive, so we spend summer months caring for the trees planted in natural areas—and we and our project partners do this for the first 10 years they’re in the ground.
VOLUNTEER & OUTREACH PROGRAM

Growing community and coming together to plant trees.

How do we get thousands of people, every season, to get up early on a Saturday, venture out into rainy, snowy, gray conditions so they can end up covered in mud? We start with spreading the word, through attending street fairs, school functions, employee events. We communicate, with email, postcards and social media through our friends and partners.

We train leaders. Volunteers come with all levels of experience, or none at all. We have 500 trained Crew Leaders who teach the 1-2-3s of tree-planting and are with volunteers at all times, ensuring successful, fun planting experiences.

And we appreciate and value everyone. We offer our sincere thanks at planting events, after events, and during the year with get-togethers and treats.

EQUITY-DIVERSITY-INCLUSION

Friends of Trees will always strive to be a welcoming and safe place for everyone, regardless of age, ability, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, political views or economic status. Without our volunteers, we are nothing. But together we do amazing things.

This season Friends of Trees’ equity work really blossomed. Our Equity and Diversity Inclusion Committee is a standing committee comprised of board and staff who recommend readings and workshops, organize trainings, and review our programs and materials through an equity lens. Equity plays a major role in our programs, too. For instance, we contract with Verde and Wisdom of the Elders for help with site preparation, tree planting, and maintenance; we use the services of Lara Media Services for focus groups and video; Chemawa Indian School students participate in every Salem-area planting event; Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center youth interns receive stipends for job-training—including leadership opportunities—with Friends of Trees. We use deliberate outreach and communication strategies to ensure a diverse range of volunteers and tree-recipients.
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