

The Faces of Urban Forestry



Gail Lyster
Resident



Forestry Program Leads to a Safer Community

When Gail Lyster and her husband moved to Sandpoint in 1978, they fell in love with the area's natural beauty and the town's mature urban forest. Her passion was so strong she became a member of the Sandpoint Tree Board.

"If we didn't have these trees, I can't even imagine living in Sandpoint because we are so emotionally attached to our trees," said Gail.

But over the years, it became apparent that Sandpoint's trees needed help. Much of the aging street tree population posed a risk to people and property. Many trees required intensive maintenance and, in some cases, removal. The town's urban forester became aware of the Idaho Department of Land's community forestry program and successfully secured U.S. Forest Service funds to complete a tree inventory, an urban forestry master plan and create a strong tree ordinance.

Today, the Town and Tree Board is using these studies and reports to care for its street trees, remove the hazardous ones and begin the process of planting the next generation of trees.

As Gail looks back, she feels good about her role in changing the way the town manages its urban forest.

"It's really about looking up," said Gail. "When I walk around town, it makes me so proud. Where a street had nothing, it now has these lovely newer trees that have caught on and are finally on their own. It gives us hope for the future."

“When we started our high-risk tree list, it was huge. Now it is so much less.”

— Gail Lyster



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A joint project of U.S. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry, the National Association of State Foresters, and the Arbor Day Foundation. For more information visit arborday.org/faces