

Outstanding Urban Forestry Project- Emma Shenton, Parkland Gleaning Project, Billings

Emma Shenton, an AmeriCorps/Vista volunteer, arrived in Billings in March of 2020 and took over a “gleaning project” that provides a means for the Billings Parks and Recreation Department to play a positive role in addressing hunger and food scarcity by allocating a portion of park space to growing fruit trees, the fruit of which will be used to decrease food insecurity in Billings. Under Emma’s stewardship, this program grew from 50 trees in 4 parks to 104 trees in 7 parks. As importantly, Emma grew the program from having only a conceptual plan for long-term care and eventual fruit distribution to having a schedule of annual activities required for their care with specific people assigned to each task. She created maps of the trees planted with trees identified by species along with a long-term maintenance plan that provides important information such as tree care tips, and identifies common tree disease and insect pests. The guide also describes the process required to update information into an overarching “gleaning” website (fallingfruit.org) that will keep this program relevant. This program has been under-promoted because of the lag time between project implementation and harvest of the (literal) fruits that will one day come from it. Because of Emma’s efforts that went above and beyond the requirements of her position this program is not only sustainable in Billings, but replicable to other cities interested in starting a similar program in their towns. For all of these reasons, the parkland gleaning project advanced under Emma’s leadership, is recognized as Montana’s Outstanding Urban Forestry Project of the year.

Outstanding Urban Forestry Volunteer- John Matthews, Missoula

“John has been volunteering hundreds of hours since the Fall of 2016 to formatively prune and now crown raise the trees in his neighborhood HOA. John has formatively pruned to date approximately 1500 trees and returned over the last 3 years to crown raise approximately 1100 trees yearly. Each year John sends me an email to check out a ladder and start his account with our compost facility. He also regularly emails me to know his progress as well as any issues he sees. Due to some species issues in this area, we have also lost several trees to structural defects. We have come to count on John to give us an update on the trees after storms roll through. We generally have staff deployed to a tree failure before we are contacted by the homeowners, due to his diligence and reporting.

John has also walked the neighborhood talking with homeowners and helping to spread the good word about trees and the importance of proper care. Without John’s tireless efforts, it is highly likely that these trees would have received very little or no pruning care. John is a tireless advocate for trees.”

Outstanding Urban Forestry Media- City of Bozeman, Bozeman

In response to 900 trees killed by an early cold snap in the fall of 2019 the Bozeman Forestry Division developed two pieces of media, “Frost Bites” and “Leaf It to Us,” to explain to residents what occurred and how the Forestry Division would address the problems of removing dead material and planting new trees. The media campaign developed was very professional, informative and served to effectively communicate response plans and alleviate citizen anxiety over the significant loss of urban canopy that occurred.

Outstanding Urban Forestry Community- Cascade

Cascade continues excellence in all aspects of urban forestry. Cascade has made significant improvements in diversifying the community's forest. Cascade has a tree inventory. Cascade's dedication to urban forestry makes them a great selection for this year's Outstanding Urban Forestry Community of the year award. Cascade's commitment to its urban forest now will be enjoyed by citizens of future generations.

Outstanding Urban Forestry Corporation- Rob Dillon Tree Service, Missoula

"Mr. Robert Dillon has been a strong voice for Urban Forestry in Missoula as well as Southwest Montana for over 20 years. His Business (Robert Dillon Tree Service) has been serving these areas for 26 years, and counting. Rob has been a member of AMTOPP for 18 years, 12 of those 18 years he has served on the board and was also a past president. He is also very active in wildfire mitigation in the urban/rural interface. Rob is very active in the safety side of arboriculture; he's done numerous projects to help raise safety awareness among Urban Forestry community. For the reasons above and also many other reasons that are not listed here, I believe Robert Dillon is deserving of this award."

Outstanding Urban Forestry Leader- Linda Yount, Roundup

Linda has been a strong advocate of the Roundup Tree Board for years. She has a vision for public trees in Roundup. She has written and administered numerous urban forestry grants leading to Roundup having a progressive urban forestry program. She has taken it on herself to learn the tree inventory process. At 74 years old she continues to educate herself about arboriculture, recently purchasing the ISA Certified Arborist study guide in preparation to take the ISA CA test. Her dedication to urban forestry in Roundup makes her a great selection for this year's Outstanding Urban Forestry Leader of the year award.