



Media Release

City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks

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Department of Recreation and Parks Forestry Division Receives Best Urban Forestry Program Award

November 7, 2007 The City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) Forestry Division received the Best Urban Forestry Program award from the California Urban Forests Council.

The award, presented at the 2007 California Urban Forest Conference this past weekend, was presented to the City for exceptional leadership, innovation, growth, and community involvement in creating a consistent and well-managed urban forest.

Nominated by environmental nonprofit TreePeople, the award addressed the Department's leadership role in Los Angeles Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa's Million Trees LA Program. The Department embarked on a plan to plant 300,000 of the million trees on public parkland, in alliance with local youth and family volunteers. Over the last year RAP partnered with the non-profit TreePeople in order to engage local residents in these tree planting and care projects, and together they focused in two regions of LA which traditionally have been economically disenfranchised and environmentally underserved – the Harbor, and the northeast San Fernando Valley.

On learning of the award, Jon Kirk Mukri, General Manager of the Department said, "The Department has an urban forest of over 1 million trees and our role in the Million Tree Initiative will play a major role in helping shape Los Angeles future and we're delighted to be recognized for this program."

According to TreePeople's founder and president Andy Lipkis, in undertaking this project RAP has adopted an approach which is ground-breaking to the field of urban forestry: RAP's strategy is to work alongside TreePeople to create volunteer-led tree planting and care projects in parks, by providing needed resources in the form of tools, staffing, expertise, facilities, land, and trees; also, use these events as a launching point for citizen reforestation, by involving volunteers to lead planting and care events on city streets, school campuses, and in heavily urbanized areas across LA.

Lipkis added, "The Department's approach is both innovative and unique in that it realigns their resources to support community engagement and leadership in the long-term stewardship of LA's trees – instead of just planting the trees themselves – and thus ensures greater success and viability of the entire urban forest for generations to come."

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