

### California Initiative to Reduce and Limit Emissions 3.0 (CIRCLE 3.0) Project Report

















## **Executive Summary**

The California Initiative to Reduce Carbon and Limit Emissions 3.0 (CIRCLE 3.0) is the third installment of a CAL FIRE Urban and Community Forestry grant awarded to the California Urban Forests Council (CaUFC), in partnership with the Western Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture (WCISA), and West Coast Arborists, Inc. (WCA, Inc.). This project included a component never been done before. In addition to planting 2,000 public trees, we took on the task to provide 2,000 trees to private property homes. On top of that, we were limited geographically because of our focus on CalEnviroscreen 3.0 disadvantaged communities within a 25 mile radius of the High Speed Rail's proposed phase 1 corridor. Through much adversity and navigation of uncharted territory we were able to institute a model that was successful in reaching our program deliverables.

The CIRCLE 3.0 grant authentically engaged over twenty municipalities, and over 2,000 volunteers and residents statewide. We appreciate CAL FIRE's continued support in accomplishing unprecedented projects.

### **RESPECTFULLY**,

Nancy Hughes Executive Director

2018-2020

## **Municipal Partners**





### An Invest From the Ground Up Campaign

In a special cycle of grant funding, the California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) opened solicitation for their Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program. The California High Speed Rail Authority (HSR) provided funding to CAL FIRE's program in order to mitigate emissions from the construction of their proposed project. The California Urban Forests Council (CaUFC) saw this as an opportunity to expand their current community forestry grant program, CIRCLE, into what was being asked by the HSR. The California Initiative to Reduce Carbon and Limit Emissions (CIRCLE) grant model is a partnership with the Western Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture (WCISA), and West Coast Arborists, Inc. (WCA, Inc.). The programs main goal stayed the same, plant trees and educate California communities, prioritizing those located in CalEnviroscreen 3.0 Disadvantaged Communities. The team expanded the projects scope based on the increase amount of funding available. We planted 4,000 trees in cities statewide, within a 25 mile radius of the proposed phase 1 of the HSR. 2,000 trees were planted in public property, adopted by municipalities. The other 2,000 trees were adopted by private residents for their property throughout seventeen California cities.

This project could not have been successfully without the partnerships from each city, community group, volunteer, and tree adopter.

This project tasked cities with not only tree maintenance, but reaching out to their community in ways not previously done. Our partner cities saw the importance of expanding their urban forest and went out of their comfort zone to help us deliver this program.

Through tree planting events, tree giveaways, watering agreements, and educational workshops, we brought an entire urban forestry program to each community. Similar to our other projects, we required a watering agreement for each tree planted. Watering agreements were completed by either the city or the resident adopting the tree. Additionally, the cities agreed to incorporate all trees planted on public property into their inventory and long term maintenance plan.

A portion of trees did succumb to our urban environment and after our replanting efforts, 3,843 trees have established in the public and private urban forest.

We witnessed a great survival rate in the trees planted on private property. Approximately 1,000 residents adopted one or more trees for their property.



City of Buena Park Arbor Day

2018-2020

## **Geographic Spread of Trees**



Graph based on original 4,000 trees planted.

## **Tree Planting Events**

The CIRCLE team, partner municipality, and local community groups worked together to coordinate tree planting events throughout the state. The planting season was kicked off in February of 2019 with two tree plantings on the same day in the City of Los Angeles! Tree planting events continued through the Spring and into the Fall of 2019. With the support of WCISA, we were able to have ISA Certified Arborists help facilitate the tree planting events to ensure trees were planted to industry standards.

Tree planting events served as a great learning opportunity. In addition to the brochures, stickers, and flyers, we were able to come together at the beginning of each planting and share why planting trees is more important than ever. Elected officials, and city staff helped convey the role trees play in improving our communities and mitigating climate change.

In all, over 1,000 volunteers played a role in improving their urban forests. Our volunteers came from various backgrounds. Companies, churches, high schools, and conservation corps were some of the many groups that volunteered their time to benefit the community.





2018-2020

## **2,000 Trees for Private Property**



In an effort to capitalize on our success, we expanded our scope of work to include the planting of 2,000 trees on private property. Our CIRCLE team partnered with 17 cities that fit our geographic criteria across the state. A statewide initiative to get trees planted on private property had not been done before. Through some trial and error, we were able to implement a program that got trees adopted and efficiently planted for homes across the state.

The Arbor Day Foundation's Community Canopy portal played a large role in our success. The Community Canopy software allowed for residents to sign up, select up to three free trees, chose a pick up location, and make residents aware of the tree benefits. On our team's end, we used the software to track orders, contact residents, and export the data to manage planting logistics.

Our CIRCLE team took on the responsibility of planting trees for the residents. Entering on to private property to plant trees posed many logistical concerns as we needed to create an efficient model to replicate in over 15 cities.

For each city, we hosted a flag pick up event. The flag pick up event provided us with verification that the resident wanted a tree and allowed us to coordinate any logistical concerns posed by the resident. Residents would then use the irrigation flags they were provided to identify the location they would like the tree planted. This made it easy for WCA planting crews to identify the planting location as they went house to house, using a list of addresses that was sorted to minimize travel distances.

2018-2020

#### CIRCLE 3.0 HSR

## **The Trees We Planted**

### **Top 15 Species**



Our CIRCLE team has always operated with the goal to ensure the maximum amount of environmental benefits from the trees we plant. Ultimately, site conditions dictated the species planted. We coordinated species selection with city staff to ensure the trees planted would diversify their current forest. We planted a total of 47 different species. We understand that to create a resilient urban forest it must be comprised of a diverse forest, especially as we face increased risk to pests and drier conditions.

iTree Planting helped us to quantify species benefits and narrow down a list of trees. It was important to prioritize atmospheric carbon reduction to meet the grant guideline goal of mitigating the effects of climate change.

Residential tree species were selected in collaboration with city staff as well. Residents were given an option of five species to select from. The graph above is representative of the most common species selected by residents. Many residents wanted small to midsize trees. In addition, many wanted a tree native to the area, making the coast live oak a popular selection. Common residential concerns included potential root damage, litter, and width size.

## **Public Tree Statistics**

### Number of Trees per City



### Percentage of trees planted in each DAC rank



## **Private Tree Statistics**

### Number of Trees per City



### Percentage of trees planted in each DAC rank





It is important to our CIRCLE team that the projects we work on are both scalable and replicable.

We are excited to say that our third campaign to get trees in public spaces adopted, was a success. In addition, cities that participated in our previous two campaigns have continued to implement our outreach model to get trees adopted in public right of ways, coordinate volunteer events, and plant trees.

With the completion of this private property tree campaign, we believe planting beyond public areas on a large scale can be successful. Having a highly functional GIS software and great tree crews was instrumental in our operation. The key to our model was becoming familiar with the community. By understanding the community, our team was able to anticipate elements such as the number of trees ordered and geographic spacing of tree orders. The logistical challenges can easily be overcome with proper planning, but most of our time troubleshooting was spent dealing with the variety of people that would receive a tree. One way to get ahead of the resident issues, is to ensure every person is contacted from the time they submit their order to the week prior to planting. For us, that contact came in the form of email reminders, tree education workshops, and phone calls.

It is not only feasible but important, 90% of the urban forest is on private property. Private urban forests are an untapped land resource, especially as cities are becoming limited in space and funding. Furthermore, we were able to continuously educate a tremendous amount of people. This program gave us multiple teaching moments to share the benefits of trees, urban forestry, and hands on training.

2018-2020

CIRCLE 3.0 HSR

### **Quantifiable Outcomes**



3,843 trees



1,030 volunteers



21 cities



6,878,551 pounds



44,844,496 pounds



137,731 pounds



28,649 MMBtu



6,590,415 kWh



7,905 pounds



26,120,147 gallons



82,047,605 gallons

2018-2020

#### CIRCLE 3.0 HSR

## **Closing Statement**



CIRCLE 3.0 was a demonstration of how successful community forestry can be when the entire community is involved. Community forestry poses a unique way to engage the community and provide quantifiable benefits. We encouraged municipalities, partner organizations, and ourselves to go out of our comfort zone in an attempt bring an entire urban forest program to multiple communities, statewide. Hosting tree planting events, educational workshops, and private tree plantings were not in many of the scopes of our partners prior to this project.

We are thankful to CAL FIRE and the HSR for entrusting us to use funds in their best possible application. This project allowed us to demonstrate our geographic presents by requiring that our project take place within a 25 mile radius of the proposed phase 1 of the High Speed Rail. Our CIRCLE team's statewide reach allowed us to capitalize on bringing community forestry to over twenty cities. Prepared by:

California Urban Forests Council caufc.org (415) 479-8733

West Coast Arborists, Inc. westcoastarborists.com (714) 404-8877



