

City of Hailey Urban Forestry Plan (2020- 2022)



Arbor Day 2019, McKercher Park – HTC and friends

Background of the Hailey Urban Forestry Plan

The Hailey Tree Committee (HTC) is an appointed volunteer group which assists the city of Hailey in many ways. One of the HTC commitments to the city is to prepare a strategic 3 year Urban Forestry Plan (UFP) to be presented and adopted by the Mayor and City Council. The last UFP was prepared in 2015 and was used through 2019. The Hailey Urban Forestry Plan (UFP) has been written every three years since 2009 to help guide the HTC and the city of Hailey in planning programs.

A history and timeline of the Hailey Tree Committee (HTC)

Several Hailey citizens and certified arborists gathered in the mid-1990s to draft the first Hailey Tree Ordinance. This first ordinance was not approved when presented in 1998 to the Hailey City Council and mayor. Without a tree ordinance, Hailey could not become a Tree City USA. The same group (they called themselves *Trees for Hailey*) did write an Idaho Department of Lands Urban Forestry grant to print the first **Wood River tree guide**. The **first Hailey tree inventory was completed in 1997** by a Forest Service Community Forester and several volunteers. Much of the original language of the draft ordinance was used for the first **Hailey Tree Ordinance adopted in 2008**. The **Hailey Tree Committee bylaws were adopted in 2008 establishing the first Hailey Tree Committee**. The Hailey Tree Committee serves as a recommending body to the city of Hailey in issues relating to city trees. Arbor Day celebrations **started in 2008** and are held annually. The initiation of **ArborFest** extended the Arbor Day theme to a day full of family activities at Hop Porter Park. Hailey was **first recognized as a Tree City USA in 2009** and a **Tree City Growth Award was received in 2010**. In 2018 the Hailey Tree Ordinance was updated to incorporate language including professional ANSI standards of tree care.

Vision for the Hailey community forest

The **Hailey Tree Committee** envisions achieving the goals of a **diverse, healthy, and sustainable** Hailey community forest and that citizens and community leaders of Hailey will value the community forest.

Assessment of the present Hailey community forest

Before settlement, the site of the city of Hailey was primarily sagebrush, grasses and cottonwoods growing along the Wood River corridor. Pioneers started to plant trees for food as well as to help shade homes. Today the Hailey community forest is extensive and creates a verdant Hailey with tree lined streets, schools, parks and yards.



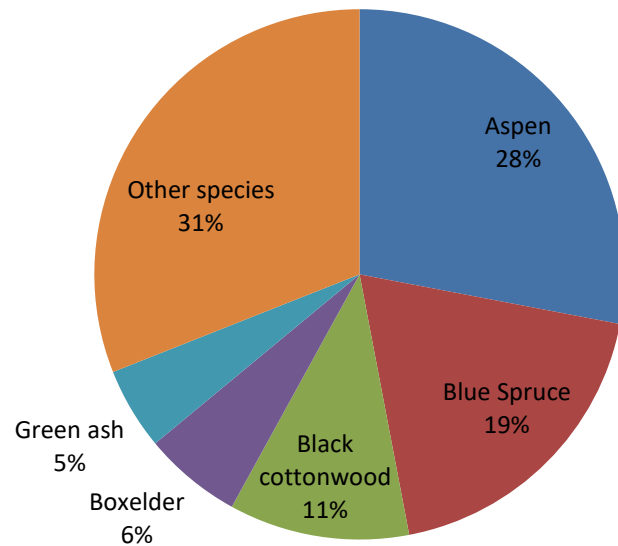
On left, Carl Hjelm standing by Autumn Blaze maple planted at McKercher park 1997, Carl by same tree in 2019

Inventory – a tool for assessment of the community forest

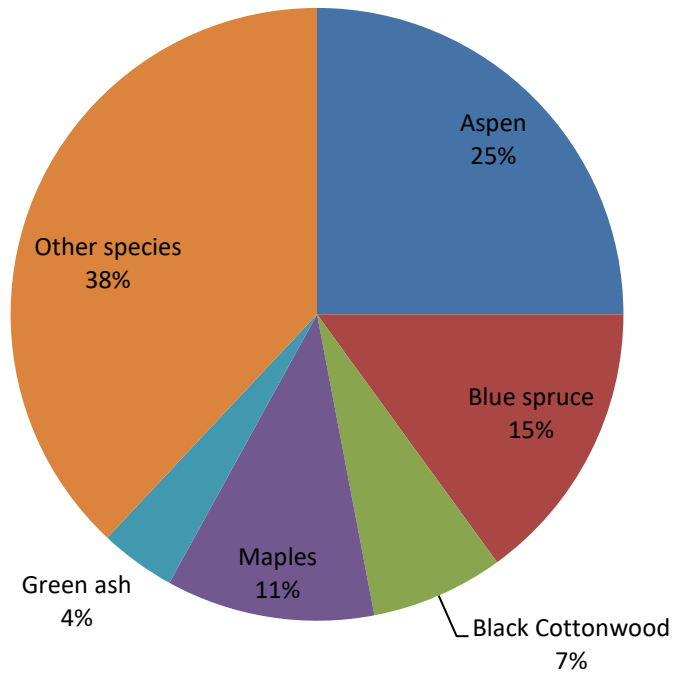
The first tree inventory of the trees in Hailey was done by volunteers in 1997. They used the software *TreeKeeper Jr.* to assess the Hailey community forest. The volunteers measured about 80% of all public trees in right of ways and parks. The top trees counted were: aspen 28%, blue spruce 19%, black cottonwood 11%, boxelder 6%, green ash 5%, Norway and other maples 5%.

A contractor hired by the City of Hailey used the software *TreeWorks* for the second inventory. This inventory was started in 2009 and continued until 2015. This second inventory sampled about 35% of the city public trees. The top 7 trees counted were Aspen 25%, Colorado blue spruce 15%, black cottonwood 7%, Norway maple 7%, green ash 4%, freeman maple (autumn blaze cultivar) 4%, boxelder 4%. Since the second tree inventory is less complete than the first one, these two inventories can't be compared directly. However, it is evident that **over 40%** of the species in the right of way and public areas for both inventories are two species - **aspen and blue spruce**.

1997 Hailey Public Trees



2015 Hailey Public Trees



Health and sustainability of the Hailey urban forest

Aspens planted over the last two decades have already died or are now stressed and failing. Blue spruce for the most part are surviving but as summer temperatures continues to rise and watering restrictions are increased, blue spruce will suffer from stress and become susceptible to various pests and diseases. It is worth noting that the overall percentage of tree species in the entire Hailey canopy is much higher for aspen and possibly for spruce, as many of these are **not in the right of way**.

There are many challenges to achieving a diverse, healthy and sustainable Hailey community forest. One of **the greatest threats is changing land use by homeowners & developers**. These changes include tree removals, construction impacts on existing trees, hardscape changes, poorly planted trees, improper maintenance – i.e. pruning & watering, pests and disease, soil compaction, over use of salt application and salt spray, physical abuse by mowers & weed trimmers, vehicles and people, girdling by Christmas lights left on trees, and inappropriate pesticide use. All of these impacts play a part in how successful we can be in keeping trees alive and healthy.



Proud tree planters at Hailey elementary!

Steps to achieve these goals

A Strategic Plan for Hailey Community Forest

1. **Increase diversity of species with climate appropriate trees** and cultural treatments (watering, improving soils, fertilizing). Strive for less than 15% of any one species used in plantings. Choose **diverse tree species for Arbor Day and other city tree plantings** to demonstrate species that are under planted in Hailey but that are excellent choices.
2. **Increase tree canopy in Hailey. Plant in locations where trees have been removed, whenever appropriate.** Plan tree replacements for dying trees on Main Street, city core, and parks.
3. **Update street tree list and write construction standards for Title 18 of the city code.** Distribute tree guides and planting information widely including to nurseries, city offices, city website, and at local workshops.

4. **Educate landscapers and tree workers** to use proper planting and pruning methods and use pest and disease treatments that do not threaten pollinators and wildlife. Emphasize the need to pick the right tree for the site, prepare the site and plant correctly. Use less turf around trees and pick the right irrigation for trees.
5. **Assist City of Hailey by recommending tree species, tree management, & preservation standards.** Write recommendations on a regular and timely basis for specific projects and share with Planning & Zoning, Mayor and City Council, and appropriate city staff.
6. **Expand public outreach for adults and children.** Educate about historic trees and other trees of interest as well as climate change, drought tolerant species and firewise landscaping. Enhance ArborFest to focus on tree care.
7. Increase **collaboration** with Planning & Zoning, City Council, and other city boards and committees.
8. Create **volunteer opportunities** for the public and professionals. Possible volunteer opportunities would be tree planting, tree pruning, and removal of sod around trees.
9. **Update inventory** and input tree maintenance by location and date. Monitor for insect and disease outbreaks yearly. Evaluate trees after extreme weather events.
10. **Emphasize a city budget for trees** that is cost effective and benefits the priorities stated in this strategic plan. The city will choose certified arborists for any public tree care to model good tree care practices.

Actions by HTC and City of Hailey to implement the goals of the UFP

- **City of Hailey staff** – annual Tree City USA application and Arbor Day grant
- **City of Hailey staff** – annual Hailey tree budget and management plan
- **HTC and city staff:** Updated tree list. Construction standards for developers (Title 18 of city code) . Tree friendly options when replacing sidewalks. Work with nurseries to coordinate tree selection options.
- **HTC and staff:** Offer hands-on tree care workshops and walk-about town tree tours.
- **HTC** - Prepare an Emerald Ash Borer strategy which could be applied to other invasive species.
- **HTC** – celebrates successes and recognizes examples of good tree care.
- **HTC & city staff** - Public outreach - annual ArborFest, the monthly Tree Tips in the *Our Town* newsletter and tree care workshops.

Measuring success by monitoring goals of UFP

1. **Decreased tree removals** in business development. **Track tree retentions and removals.** Work with city to appraise value of trees removed so they can bill businesses.
2. **Increased ownership and interest by the public** of the community forest.
3. **Increased diversity in trees and better overall tree care.** Monitor with basic inventory (drive by).

4. **Increased tree health and life span** – especially in city core and on Main Street. (inventory trees yearly in downtown core and on Main Street)

Collaboration with partners

To accomplish the goals of the HFP we will work with many partners.

Active partners:

- **Hailey Tree Committee (HTC)** – HTC functions as a recommending body to city staff on matters of tree care, planting, and conflicts with trees by developers and homeowners. HTC also functions to help coordinate annual Arbor Day plantings, and ArborFest celebration as well as provide education to the public about trees.
- **Hailey city staff:** (city arborist, parks department and city engineers)
- **Elected and appointed officials:** Hailey Mayor and City Council, Hailey Planning and Zoning Commission, and members of city boards including Art and Historic Commission, and the Parks and Lands Board.

Potential partners:

- **Local nurseries**
- **Tree professionals (Arborists and certified landscapers)**
- **Landscape architects**
- **Local non-profits**

This UFP was approved by Hailey Tree Committee on May 9th, 2019.