

## **Tree Commission 2012 Annual Report on the state of Forestry in Duluth**

**2012 Tree Commissioners:** Jim Lemmermen, Chair, Jim Larson, Christine Penney, Liz Johnson, Jeff Busse, Caleb Anderson, Anthony Ross and Janet Nelson. City of Duluth Staff: Shawna MullenEardley, MN GreenCorps Urban Forestry Specialist and Judy Gibbs, Trees and Trails Coordinator.

The Tree Commission met once a month at its regular time, the third Tuesday of each month at 7pm in Rm 106A of City Hall. The tree commission also held monthly work meetings that were open to the public as well.

### **Tree Commission Major Work**

During 2012, Tree Commissioners have undertaken the development of the Urban Forest Management Plan which includes sections on pine plantation management, street tree inventory, and invasive species management.

### **Forestry Department Report:**

- 761 volunteers giving 3,036 hours (for a total value of \$67,199.55)
- 1,631 trees planted (by volunteers and City Staff)
- 3500 trees pruned
- 185 fruit trees were planted as part of an Edible Landscape initiative
- \$4.43 per capita was spent on tree-related activities (planting, tree removal, administration, equipment, employee trainings, pruning, volunteer time, etc.) in the year 2012. The minimum required by the Arbor Day Foundation in order to be a Tree City is \$2 per capita.
- The City of Duluth was awarded a MN GreenCorps member for a third year to complete street tree inventory.

### **Duluth Celebrates Arbor Day**

2012 marked the 24<sup>th</sup> year of Duluth being a Tree City USA. Mayor Ness was joined by others, including some Tree Commissioners for the ceremonial planting of the Arbor Day tree and the unveiling of the Tree City USA signs in Duluth. The event was held in Chambers Grove. A month later, the June flood nearly inundated the tree, but it did survive. The new Tree City signs were put up: one on HWY 23 at the St Louis River and the other on Highway 2 entering Duluth from Proctor. In addition, several hundred school students planted seedlings in various locations throughout the city. Shawna also applied for and the City received for the first time the "Growth Award" from Tree City USA. In addition, initiatives in 2013 will qualify the City for the same award going forward into 2014.

**ReLeaf Duluth.** The city has funding from various sources for its tree planting program. One source is a line item in the Parks Fund budget. Another is the MPCA grant (see more info later in report.) Another is a MN DNR grant for up to \$25000 for creating diversity within our street tree population. The last is a citizen driven program whereas a homeowner can jump into the 'line' of trees planted by the city Forestry Staff by a cost-sharing program. Citizens can pay \$25 and choose a tree to be planted on their boulevards. These are planted by city staff.

### **Tree Inventory Training**

Volunteers assisted the City of Duluth with its Tree Inventory Project! Two dozen volunteers were trained on basic tree identification, tree health and condition rating. They were under supervision of Shawna MullenEardley. The inventory is an integral part of the Urban Forest Management Plan as it will give important data about number and location of tree planting spaces and what species dominate our landscapes. Shawna did the bulk of the inventory work in 2012.

### **City of Duluth Builds a Gravel Bed**

Park Maintenance staff under the direction of MN GreenCorps Urban Forestry Specialist, Shawna MullenEardley, built a gravel bed for bare root trees. Trees can be in a gravel bed, and with watering, will develop a bushy root mass and can be planted in late summer and into fall.

### **Boulevard Trees Planted in September**

Duluth residents were invited to take part in Tree Planting Parties throughout September in various neighborhoods around Duluth. The Tree Planting Parties were sponsored by the City of Duluth and the Minnesota GreenCorps. By the end of September, the City had planted nearly 100 trees throughout Duluth with 87 volunteers. These included the Lincoln Park Boys and Girls Club, students from UMD, N.E.R.C.C., Latter Day Saints, and community members. The volunteers planted maples, oaks, Japanese tree lilacs, and crabapples in the boulevards of Endion, East Hillside, Central Hillside, Lincoln Park, and Morgan Park. Tree Commissioners accompanied all of the plantings to lend their expertise.

**The City of Duluth partnered with Community Action Duluth** and one of its programs, the Duluth StreamCorps. The City of Duluth worked with the StreamCorps for tree planting projects, including large white pines and storage of tree planting materials. Judy Gibbs also served on their advisory board, the Habitat Action Team. Several projects were established across the city with various partners, including the Duluth Audubon Society and Hartley Nature Center. Some of these projects included removing many invasives such as buckthorn and honeysuckle in 20 acres of the upper reaches of the forest near Kingsbury Creek with the planting of 2000 trees. A similar project was nearly 5 acres

along Tischer Creek in Hartley Park with several hundred trees planted. 2000 trees were planted in Chester Park along the creek in areas damaged by the June flood and another planting of several hundred trees along 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave E Creek with East High School Forestry students in the East High School School Forest. Most of the DSC's projects were on private lands, but they worked with us when they could, including help us assess damages immediately following the June flood.

**The City of Duluth received a grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency** to plan for resiliency in the future of climate change. The grant provides for trees, watering bags and other supplies, as well as the development of a Citizen Forester program. Trees will be planted along city-owned buildings to increase shade and to serve as wind breaks. Trees will also be planted along designated bike routes and paved bike pathways. The grant is a two-year reimbursement grant.