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TO PRESERVE, RENEW AND
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FORESTS

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CO Cities to Get 2,000+ New Trees in 2015 Thanks to \$50K in Grants

BROOMFIELD, CO – The Colorado Tree Coalition (CTC) is awarding nearly \$50,000 in grants to seventeen Colorado communities and organizations to help fund the planting of more than 2,000 new community trees in 2015. A diverse array of tree planting, maintenance and education projects is receiving funding. Communities receiving grants include Alamosa, Mancos, Trinidad, Rocky Ford and Pueblo.

One project receiving funding this year is an initiative to improve tree health in the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt while encouraging environmental stewardship in special needs students. The Institute for Environmental Solutions (IES) in Denver is receiving \$2,000 in support of the project. IES Executive Director Carol Lyons says the greenbelt is highly valued by the community and houses a wide variety of wildlife species.

Drought, extreme weather, and limited municipal resources, though, have resulted in ecological decline within the greenbelt. "The CTC grant-funded program will reverse this trend," Lyons says, "and make it possible for 30 disadvantaged and disabled high school students to learn about and participate in tree planting and stewardship in their local open space."

Another group receiving 2015 funding is the Yampa Valley Sustainability Council (YVSC) in Steamboat Springs. YVSC is receiving \$2,000 for their ReTree Steamboat 2015 event. The annual event, which began in 2010, aims to replace trees killed by the mountain pine beetle epidemic. Sarah Jones, executive director for YVSC, says 350,000 acres of Routt County have been affected by the epidemic, impacting watersheds, timber production, wildlife habitat, and recreation.

"We were thrilled to learn of our grant approval," Jones says. Tree planting is critical to diversifying and beautifying Routt County's forests, she says, and it "connects people with their local forests and the natural world around them." YVSC, along with 300 volunteers, will plant and care for 800 new trees at various locations in Oak Creek, Steamboat Springs, and Yampa.

While grant recipient projects vary, a few will add trees to parks, trails, schools, and downtown areas. Many are also focused on countering the threat posed by emerald ash borer (EAB), a non-native pest discovered in Boulder, CO, in 2013. EAB attacks and kills ash trees, which make up about 15% of the state's urban trees. Grant-funded EAB projects this year will plant native and diverse trees beneath existing ash, preparing for their likely eventual decline as EAB spreads across the state.

Each year, the CTC awards thousands in grant money to Colorado communities to help preserve, renew, and enhance one of Colorado's most valuable resources: its urban forest. Aside from aesthetic benefits, urban trees protect the air and water from pollution, save energy by shielding homes from summer sun and winter wind, increase property values, and improve the economic viability of commercial areas.

Colorado Tree Coalition President Mike McGill says the grant program has been key to accomplishing the CTC's mission of preserving, renewing and enhancing Colorado's community forests. "This program is a great way of passing the generous sponsor funding we have received along to the Colorado communities that have the greatest need for new trees as well as a solid plan for caring for them long-term." CTC grants are made possible through the support of the USDA Forest Service, the Colorado State Forest Service, Xcel Energy Foundation, Xcel Energy Vegetation Management, Colorado Public Radio and our members. Since 1991, the Colorado Tree Coalition has awarded 484 grants totaling more than \$800,000. As a result of these grants, more than 69,670 trees have been planted throughout the state.

The Colorado Tree Coalition is a volunteer-driven non-profit organization leading statewide efforts to preserve, renew and enhance community forests. Programs administered by the CTC include, among many others: Trees Across Colorado,

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ReForest Colorado, the Select Tree Evaluation Program, and the 5th Grade Poster Contest. [Learn more about Colorado Tree Coalition programs.](#)

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