



**Special Meeting of the
City of Spokane Park Board Urban
Forestry Tree Committee & Urban Forestry
Citizen Advisory Committee**
12:00 p.m. Tuesday February 10, 2026
Katie Kosanke – Urban Forester

UFTC Committee Members:

- X Kevin Brownlee – Chair
- X Lindsey Shaw
- Lee Williams – Alternate (Absent – Excused)

UFCAC Committee Members:

- Tim Kohlhauff (Absent – Excused)
- X Guy Gifford
- X Cindy Deffe
- X Matt Stewart
- X Justyce Brant
- X Ben Kappen
- X Logan Callen
- X Kathryn Alexander

Park staff:

Katie Kosanke
Amber Ramirez

Guests:

Kris Neely
Beth LaBar
Scott Mills
Matt Petre
Nolan Steiner
Sunni Mace
Steve Cox
Tyler Lyson
Cleve Penberthy
Shawn Terjeson
Kevin Bulla
Mike Sanborn
Brit Penberthy
Steve Kern
Lori Bertis
Judith Van Dongen
Sandra Wicht

SUMMARY

- Katie Kosanke provided a staff report.
- Amber Ramirez provided an IRA Grant update.
- Katie Kosanke presented a Pine Beetle Management Community Workshop and Discussion.

The next regularly scheduled UFCAC meeting is 3:00 p.m. Tuesday, March 3, 2026.

The next regularly scheduled UFTC meeting is 4:15 p.m. Tuesday, March 3, 2026.

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 p.m. by committee member Lindsey Shaw.

Public Comment: A citizen attending the meeting ask if the Finch Arboretum is being relandscaped. She indicated about 5-6 years ago she heard the Arboretum was possibly being relandscaped to include different focused areas around the Arboretum and pathways. Katie Kosanke advised there is a Master Plan document which provides a roadmap and future vision for what the community would like to see, but it did not come with any funding and items will be implemented as funding allows.

Action Items: None

Discussion Items:

1. Staff Update - Katie Kosanke

- Arbor Day Celebration planning is in process and will take place the last Saturday in April. The city will receive their Tree City USA award at the event and the mayor will be attending. A ribbon cutting for the new and improved Touch and See trail will also take place.
- The area where the beloved Willow Tree is located at Finch Arboretum will be transformed into an outdoor nature-based playground, as decided through a community survey. Fundraising for the project is under way and in-house design is being worked on for the project. The 1st annual Tree Trot fun run to raise funds for the project took place last fall and the next event will take place on the second Saturday in October. Additional fundraising, grant opportunities, sponsorships and more will be pursued as the project moves forward. One hundred live cuttings from the Willow tree were taken to SCC for the students to grow and they are now ready to be potted in bigger containers. Urban Forestry is considering using these as give aways or for fundraising purposes.

- Urban Forestry is considering a partnership planting project with the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) to celebrate the 250th year of the United States. Flowering cherry trees would potentially be planted around the Vietnam Memorial at Riverfront Park, and possibly other areas of the park. Urban Forestry will meet with the interested parties soon to start planning for a potential fall planting.
- The crew is doing typical work throughout the entire park system, which includes lots of reactive work on a day-to-day basis, pruning, and some removals of dead trees. Several new temporary seasonal employees have recently joined the crew.
- A six-million-dollar grant was received through the Inflation Reduction Act to help increase tree canopy in the community and to help care for existing trees. Work through the grant is taking place in disadvantaged areas which by federal definition includes a significant portion of the city of Spokane. Work on park trees is also in progress.
- Fuels Reduction projects, which are mainly taking place in conservation areas, are wrapping up. Amber Ramirez is involved with these projects and is ensuring that park tree high quality pruning standards are being followed by the forestry crews.
- Many donation tree plantings are planned for the new year, including another 20 Susie Forest trees being planted along Park Blvd (fall).

2. IRA Grant Update - Amber Ramirez

- The city received a six million dollar grant through the Inflation Reduction Act for tree planting, tree maintenance, and educational partnerships.
- Spring tree planting is ramping up with sign-up for trees taking place now. Urban Forestry plans to increase sign-ups and is looking at new ways to reach out to neighborhoods. Tree planting will take place over the whole project area, with emphasis on the Shiloh Hills neighborhood which has the second lowest canopy coverage at around 10%.
- The Downtown Pilot Program started last year to prompt replanting of trees downtown where trees are missing or dead/in decline. Additional trees have been secured for the program for Spring.
- Dead tree removals are almost complete with 425 dead street side trees removed across all project areas. There are approximately 30 dead trees left to be removed through the project.
- Pruning of park trees to remove deadwood and for structure and clearance has been completed at seven parks (Grant, Harmon, Liberty, Wild Horse, Kehoe, Minnehaha, and Nevada).
- Vetting of trees for residential pruning will begin this week in the East Central Neighborhood.
- A subaward was given to Pacific Education Institute. PEI is a nonprofit educational organization which promotes and supports FieldSTEM – outdoor, community-based learning. PEI will be providing community outreach to build enthusiasm and support for ongoing tree planting efforts especially in neighborhoods with lowest canopy coverage, educate teachers and students about the benefits of trees and integrate tree related projects into the classroom and school yard, invite students to participate in how communities address challenges related to extreme heat events and heat island effect, create a curriculum that aligns with Spokane Public Schools frameworks and secure commitment to keep unit in science classes long term and much more.

- A subaward is being finalized with the Downtown Spokane Partnership. DSP will collect and submit free tree requests and locations to Urban Forestry, provide a watering and monitoring program for downtown trees, invest in a DSP employee to become a certified arborist and serve as the tree expert downtown, provide education and outreach services and coordination of cost share tree work program.
- Approximately 30 dead trees were removed from Spokane Public School District properties. Urban Forestry is working with the SPS maintenance staff to determine tree needs on school properties, which was included in the city's grant proposal. Replacement trees will be planted, and additional trees may be planted around school yards to further increase tree canopy.

Katie Kosanke advised that the Spokane Conservation District also received a six-million-dollar grant which included the purchasing of all the trees for the City of Spokane's Urban Forestry's planting program which equates to approximately \$100,000 dollars a year (500,000 over five years). The SCD is acquiring the trees, storing the trees and taking care of the trees, so their contribution is significant. The SCD through their grant are offering free trees to plant on private property through their program Cool Canopy.

3. **Pine Beetle Management Community Workshop Presentation** – Katie Kosanke

Katie Kosanke, City of Spokane Urban Forester introduced herself and provided an overview of the work Urban Forestry does. UF is primarily responsible for caring for park trees. Other areas pertaining to trees UF is involved with include trees in the public right-of-way, permitting, tree service licensing, work with the Development Services Department to ensure landscape requirements are met for new commercial and residential construction, and provide tree scope of work for all street engineering projects to make sure trees are protected or pruned to allow equipment to get through. Abutting property owners are responsible for caring for trees in the right-of-way, however, UF has been able to provide some assistance through the IRA grant, costly work that typically the city does not provide any assistance for.

Pine bark beetles are a native insect pest that have some impact every year and generally invade trees that are already stressed or in decline. There are three types of pine beetles observed most frequently, and it is common to see different types of beetles together. Cold winter weather can help reduce the population of beetles slightly, but due to longer hotter summers the beetles have been able to produce a third generation.

A list of parks impacted, and the approximate number of trees being removed at each park due to beetle kill was shared. It was advised that it is normal to have small numbers and clusters of trees affected, but that trees infested won't recover and must be removed before April, while the beetles are over wintering and before they emerge from the trees.

Urban Forestry is monitoring and performing routine inspections of trees in the parks, looking for signs and symptoms of beetles to catch them while they are still in the tree and prevent them from emerging. UF frequently consults with Dana Brennen an entomologist from the Washington Department of Natural Resources to confirm types of beetles, review work plans and work swiftly to remove the affected trees. UF is also exploring other treatment options, continuing to evaluate proposed projects near trees and working to promote individual tree health and forest health to limit stressors on trees.

Urban Forestry is partnering with Spokane Ponderosa for pine plantings this year. There may also be additional opportunities to plant other native species and shrubs. It was noted that trees will regenerate over time and that natural regeneration generally establishes better than nursery grown seedlings.

Education and outreach is completed in various ways to let the community know of the work being done. Some ways information is shared is through neighborhood councils, the Community Assembly, news articles, the Urban Forestry website and social media, the UF Committee Meeting, and signs placed in parks that are impacted. There will also be a Spring education session about Pine Bark Beetle Impacts, Management and tips for the public on March 28th at Finch Arboretum.

Seventeen community members attended the meeting. Questions and comments were received after the Pine Beetle Management Community Workshop presentation.

1. Q. Would consider planting other species of trees in the area where pine trees are being Removed at Manito Park, such as Douglas Fir or broad leaf trees?
A. Can look at incorporating some other species, however there is no water there. Ponderosa Pines are native species and generally do very well. Larch, Douglas fir and serviceberry could also be planted.
2. Q. Do old snag trees attract beetles? Noticed several old snag trees along the bluff were cut down and there is one at Japanese Gardens hope will not be cut down.
A. If a tree is already dead, it doesn't attract beetles. Urban Forestry does leave a good number of wildlife trees within the park system – which are left unless they are a high risk to the public.
3. Q. Would it be possible to replace the trees in the area trees being taken down at Manito with mature trees to not have such a drastic change to the view?
A. Transplanting larger trees is very costly, and they usually fail to establish. Smaller trees establish well and start putting more growth on. Can look at scaling up from seedlings in some areas but they would need water until acclimated and there is no water there. Perhaps neighborhood volunteers may be willing to help water trees during the hot summer months. Seedlings will be planted this spring and possible planting of something larger would be farther out depending on funding and availability.
4. Q. Any plan to turn the area into a parking lot?
A. No.
5. Q. Due to economy changes individuals may not be able to maintain their trees which could have an impact on the canopy the city maintains. How does involvement or lack of involvement regarding trees impact the UF program?
A. For street trees UF only plants trees were people want them and commit to caring for them. UF committed to caring for trees on parks land. The city receives free seedlings and labor on a lot of plantings through Spokane Ponderosa and grant opportunities. The grant UF received is also providing some relief to citizens for trees with issues in the right-of-way and UF is looking at how to keep important maintenance tasks going well beyond the grant. UF will be doing a presentation with Spokane Scape on the importance of not forgetting about trees when watering less. Also, experimenting with biochar to help keep moisture in the soil and provide nutrients is being done. For trees on private property the DNR has some forestry assistance programs mainly for fuels reduction work and forest

health projects. Various groups such as the DNR and Spokane Conservation District provide free consulting services for best management and can assist in prioritizing tasks.

6. Q. Does the city have a program to compensate homeowners for water usage? Thought there was a program in the past.
A. If during new construction mature trees are retained during development, then would receive a percentage off their water bill.
7. Q. Can Pine Beetles be in firewood people get to use in wood stoves? Is information on this topic shared in education efforts?
A. Typically, they are in very green wood that people don't want to use as firewood. Generally, what is being seen in wood being used as firewood are secondary wood borers that are regular decomposers and people mistake those for beetles.
8. Q. Can UF encourage people to water their street trees?
A. If UF receives a report from citizens about trees that appear not to be receiving water, they can send a friendly watering reminder. For newly planted tree projects UF partners with the Lands Council. They do educational outreach and have a watering component, so people understand their responsibility when they sign up for a tree. They also monitor and do tree checks and send watering reminders as needed. UF also has a watering brochure and is looking at an educational campaign for tree watering.
9. Q. Do bark beetles have natural enemies? Do woodpeckers help keep the tree alive or provide a home for the beetles by making holes in the tree?
A. There are many natural predators. Woodpeckers don't create the holes in the tree for the beetles, the larvae are already in the tree when the woodpecker is after the beetles to eat them. The population of beetles is already there, and the tree is going to die. The woodpeckers likely have little impact on reducing the beetle populations.
10. Q. Are we at too low of an elevation for Larch trees?
A. No, Larch do well in many areas and UF does mix in some for-species diversity. This species can be difficult to establish on a site however.
11. Q. What can people do to help trees be less stressed?
A. Tim Kohlhauff with WSU Extension has much homeowner information on promoting tree health. One of the most important factors is properly watering trees. Generally, viral or fungal infections on trees isn't a major concern in Spokane, however, the WSU Extension could possibly provide information on treatment. The Conservation District offers free inspections in yards and can give advice based on their observations.
12. Q. Does the city have any role regarding trees on private property?
A. No, The City does not get involved with trees on private property. If someone makes UF aware of an issue with a tree that is within striking distance to the street, we can send a courtesy notice advising them of the issue.
13. Q. Trees at Indian Canyon were to be removed this winter. When will they be removed?
A. They have already been removed, but there may be some clean up left to do.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

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Pine Bark Beetle Management

2025 - 2026

About the Pests..

- ▶ Ips Borer
- ▶ Western pine beetle
- ▶ Red Turpentine beetle
- ▶ Native beetles
- ▶ Extra generations (during longer, hotter years)
- ▶ Very cold winter weather can help reduce populations
- ▶ Drought conditions
- ▶ Stressed trees



2025-2026 Areas of Impact

- ▶ Audubon (earlier in the year, dead trees have all been removed)
- ▶ Coeur d'Alene Park (20+)
- ▶ Hamblen Park (30+)
- ▶ Manito Park (40+)
- ▶ Lincoln Park (20+)
- ▶ Downriver Disc Golf Course area (20+)
- ▶ Golf Courses (Downriver (40) and Indian Canyon Primarily (40))
- ▶ Smaller numbers throughout the Parks System



Management

- ▶ Monitoring
- ▶ Routine Inspecting
- ▶ Scope of Works / Work Scheduling with crew (and/or contractors)
- ▶ Consult with WA DNR Entomologist
- ▶ Neighborhood Notifications
 - ▶ Blog Posts
 - ▶ Informational signage at Parks
 - ▶ Neighborhood Council notifications
 - ▶ Neighborhood Council meeting(s)

SELECT TREE REMOVALS PLANNED FOR THIS AREA, DUE TO BEETLE INFESTATION

**BEETLES HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED IN SOME TREES IN THIS
AREA, AND IMPACTED TREES ARE UNFORTUNATELY NOT
ABLE TO SURVIVE. INFECTED TREES NEED TO BE REMOVED
TO REDUCE FURTHER SPREAD.**

**MORE INFORMATION AT
WWW.SPOKANEPARKS.ORG/URBANFORESTRY**

For questions, please call 509.363.5495
or email urbanforestry@spokanecity.org



Management

- ▶ Swift Removals
- ▶ Dispose of wood (\$)
- ▶ Plant Replacement Trees

Other:

- ▶ Explore chemical treatments
 - ▶ Typically not realistic for a high number of trees, costly, preventative only, only recommended for single high value trees, insecticides harmful to beneficial insects, impacts the environment, and more.
- ▶ Explore other treatment methods such as luring beetles (with Entomologist oversight) - CAUTION
- ▶ Evaluate any proposed projects near trees, especially pines, monitor watering, and limit watering changes etc.
- ▶ Promote Individual tree health and forest health to limit stressors



Photo Credit Seattle Tree Care

Restoration Plans

Trees will regenerate over time - existing seed stock

Lower vegetation (serviceberry, elderberry, nine bark, ocean spray, etc) will flourish

Seedling plantings, survival rates decreasing with drought temperatures

In partnership with Spokane Ponderosa:

- Manito - 200 seedlings through Spokane Ponderosa (spring 2026)
- Hamblen - 200 seedlings through Spokane Ponderosa (spring 2026)
- Lincoln Park - 200 seedlings through Spokane Ponderosa (spring 2026)
- Additional planting opportunities of natives and shrubs (in the works)
- Professional & volunteer plantings planned



Education and Outreach

- Presented to Lincoln Heights NC (re: Hamblen Park)
- Community Assembly
- Neighborhood Councils especially in impacted areas
- Spokesman article
- UF Website - Blog
- UF Social Media
- UF Committee meeting - info session (this workshop)
- Spring educational session - March 28th for green industry professionals, homeowners, anyone interested
- Tree work is routine maintenance work

THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Washington Idaho Business Education Photos Further Review

NEWS > FEATURES

Spokane parks to remove 200 trees killed by native bark beetles, including 50 at Manito

Sun., Jan. 18, 2026



Questions and Public Comment Session

