



**Special Meeting of the
City of Spokane Park Board Urban
Forestry Tree Committee & Urban Forestry
Citizen Advisory Committee
3:00 p.m. Tuesday June 30, 2026
Katie Sorensen – Urban Forester**

UFTC Committee Members:

- X Lindsey Shaw – Chair
- X Lee Williams
- X Kris Neely

UFCAC Committee Members:

- X Kris Neely - Chair
- X Tim Kohlhauff
- X Guy Gifford
- Cindy Deffe (Absent – Excused)
- Matt Stewart (Absent – Excused)
- Justyce Brant (Absent – Excused)
- X Ben Kappen
- X Logan Callen
- Kathryn Alexander (Absent – Excused)
- X Kelsi Caston
- X Eduardo Castillo

Park staff:

Katie Sorensen

SUMMARY

- No Action was taken on the Heritage Tree Nomination Review – 34 W 18th Ave.
- A monthly staff report was provided by Katie Sorensen.
- Katie Sorensen shared information regarding fire damage at Sekani.
- A joint field trip with UFCAC and UFTC was discussed for August.

The next regularly scheduled UFCAC meeting is 3:00 p.m. Tuesday, August 4, 2026.

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

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 3:03 p.m. by Urban Forestry Citizen Advisory committee chair Kris Neely who opened the meeting with introductions.

Public Comment: None.

Action Items: [Heritage Tree Nomination Review – 34 W 18th Ave](#)

Katie Sorensen presented the Heritage Tree Nomination for 34 W 18th Ave. The Catalpa tree was nominated by the property owners. They believe the tree was planted when the neighborhood was first established in 1913 and believe the tree to be 113 years old. It has significant size with a circumference of 158 inches. The property owners said the tree is an example of living history and provides many ecosystem services.

Action on the Heritage Tree Nomination was deferred to the August meeting so committee members can further review the nomination.

Discussion Items:

1. Ceremonies, Appointments, Announcements

- There are two openings on the UFTC committee.

Committee and Reports:

1. Community Assembly – No report.
2. Staff Report – Katie Sorensen
 - Grant Update
 - A seasonal employee was hired to help put scope of work pruning packages together that will be given to pruning contractors.
 - Additional contractors will be added for tree pruning and removals. The bid process is ongoing with a pre-bid meeting taking place last week.
 - All 30 parks within the grant area will have trees pruned by the end of this year.
 - A seasonal employee is helping with education and outreach, providing supplemental watering and water buckets when needed, and providing watering commitment reminders.
 - The Urban Forestry crew continues to remove beetle killed trees with a few more found at Manito, Hamblen, Coeur d' Alene, and Lincoln Parks. These beetle killed trees will be removed over the next few weeks.

- **DAR Never Forget Garden**
 - Urban Forestry is working with the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) to plant ornamental flowering cherry trees at Riverfront Park around the Vietnam Memorial. The flowering cherry trees will be planted around the plaza area, and some in raised planters will be in the distance by an overlook.
 - Riverfront Park staff designed the planting plan and Never Forget Garden, which is a flower bed in the same area
 - The DAR group will commit to volunteer days to help weed the area annually.
 - Some funds will be provided by DAR for plant material and hardscape, as well as volunteer labor for installation.
- One seasonal employee was hired for the tree crew, and Urban Forestry is looking for one more.
- Urban Forestry is coordinating a field day in conjunction with Pacific Education Institute, for high school students through the summer 2026 YESS programs. Participants receive high school credit, a stipend for the 100-hour program, and receive hands on skills and learning experiences. They will tour Finch Arboretum, participate in a tree ID workshop, the Urban Forestry crew will show various tree work, they will tour the fire area at Finch Arboretum and talk about fuels reduction and restoration, receive an overview of Urban Forestry for hands on experience, and volunteer at the Arboretum.
- The HVAC system is being updated at Finch Arboretum, and work should be completed soon.

It was asked how planting is coming through the grant. The goal is to plant 250 trees each spring and fall. Currently planting is a little behind with about 200 trees planted each spring and fall. The Lands Council is contracted to do outreach and sign up, and a seasonal employee is also helping to get the word out and putting up signage.

Old Business: None

New Business:

1. Sekani Fire Damage – Katie Sorensen

Katie walked Sekani with Parks, Fire and DNR leadership to observe the fire damage from a recent fire that significantly affected the Northeast and Northwest portion of the site.

The ground was very barren. While it was a devastating and tragic fire event, Katie advised it was a low fire and that the fuels reduction work done last year on the city property likely helped to keep the fire lower and slower and prevent the fire from going into the crowns of the trees. At first look at the site, it appears some trees may survive, as the fire didn't get to the crowns, but the trees are stressed and may now be more susceptible to beetles.

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will do an analysis to learn more about how the tree thinning may have helped. There was also discussion about the DNR monitoring post fire land re-growth.

Urban Forestry will invite Dana Brennan, an entomologist with the DNR, out to the site to see if she can give specific recommendations and will continue to consult with her to protect the trees.

The area will remain closed. The area was scheduled to be closed for parking lot renovation in two weeks anyhow.

The removal of a very small volume of high-risk trees by the trails will be done and Nick Jeffries with the Fire Department is working with the DNR to help drop several risk trees to the ground.

A post fire restoration plan will be worked on, and access and repair work will be done.

The last burn at Sekani was very intense but had good natural regeneration with some seedlings planted. Urban Forestry may put some native overseeding on the area to hold things in place. The Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance, Spokane Ponderosa and possibly other organizations and volunteers will likely plant seedlings.

Guy Gifford with the DNR noted that criteria to look at regarding soil after a fire is whether it has a high, moderate, or low soil profile. He indicated if you can look under your feet and recognize the burnt material it has a light severity burn on the soil, if can semi recognize the material it has a moderate severity burn on the soil and if can't recognize the material at all or is only ash it has a high severity burn on the soil.

A video to tell the story about Fuels Reduction work, etc. may be made.

Guy Gifford with the DNR noted that treatments to the area in 2000, 2015, and 2025 show long term commitment to management of the area and that the commitment of forest management over 25 years set the area up for success. He would like to see this information shared also if a video is made.

2. Field Trip for August meeting – Katie Sorensen

The committees discussed locations for a possible field trip in August. Katie suggested Polly Judd Park to see the native restoration project being done there. She advised Steve Nittolo with Urban Forestry has done lots of invasive and weed removal. Steve has the Native Plant Society and other groups helping with lots of planting and helping to weed and water the plants. Other possible locations discussed were the Camp Sekani fire area, the Riverfront Park cherry plantings at the Vietnam Memorial and the Riverfront native plant project.

Standing report items:

1. Financial Report - Report not available. Kaite advised the budget is in a good place with no big projects except for the HVAC system at Finch Arboretum which was a planned expense. Some special project funding may potentially be used this fall to do some planting outside of the grant area.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled UFCAC meeting is 3:00 p.m. Tuesday, August 4, 2026.

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



Heritage Tree Nomination Form

Nominator Information

Name: Virginia Lemmex
 Address: 34 W 18th Ave
Spokane, 99203
 Phone: (Day) 425-283-3978
 (Eve) 425-283-3978
 Email Address glemmex@gmail.com

(Property owner must agree to nomination)

Name: Virginia Lemmex
 Address: 34 W 18th Ave.
Spokane 99203
 Phone: (Day) 425-283-3978
 (Eve) 425-283-3978

Property/Tree Owner Information

Designated Neighborhood: Manito/Cannon Hill

Location (Street Address): 34 W 18th Ave

Species of Tree (Common or Botanical Name): Catalpa speciosa

Single/Collection of trees (If Collection, How Many Trees): Single tree

Size: Height (approx.) 60 (feet)

Crown (approx.) measure distance of total spread from one side to other: 50 to 60 (feet)

Circumference (distance around trunk at 4.5 feet from ground): 158 (inches)

Age of Tree (If Known/Estimate): c. 113 yrs

Condition (check all that apply and explain any issues on back of page:

☒

Healthy

☐

Diseased

☐

Pruning/Structural problems

List any historical fact About the Tree (Documented/Estimated)

Was planted during the development of Manito/Cannon Hill neighborhood in 1913

What is most noteworthy about the tree/trees that meets the criteria (check all that apply).

☒

Size

☒

Public

☒

Visibility

☐

Rare Horticultural Value

☒

Aesthetic Qualities

☒

Historical

Explain why you think the tree/trees should be nominated for heritage distinction - use another piece of paper, if necessary. Please include a photograph (black & white or color) and a simple tree location map.

Please see enclosed page.

Submit Nomination Form and Owner's Consent to the Spokane Urban Forestry Program

Spokane Urban Forestry Program • 808 W Spokane Falls Blvd • Spokane, WA 99201 • 509.363.5495

www.spokaneurbanforestry.org

Reasons for Nominating *Catalpa speciosa* for Heritage Distinction

First, the tree has lived through quite a bit of Spokane's growth and development. It was planted c.1913 when our neighborhood was first being established to bring Spokaneites to the Manito Park area. The tree continues to flourish and stands to welcome locals as well as visitors to the Park at the Northwest corner of W18th Ave and Browne St.

The Catalpa is in full view of everyone who drives or walks down the street or is strolling around the Duck Pond. It is stunning when in full bloom- a tree filled with large heart-shaped leaves and fragrant clusters of white, orchid-like flowers. Those who walk by or come to visit the Park often snap a photo and stop to ask, "What kind of tree is this? I've never seen a tree like this before". This tree adds priceless beauty to our street that residents and visitors appreciate and enjoy.

A large tree like this contributes to better air quality, provides shade, shelters birds and squirrels, for example, and helps lower the ambient temperature. In all, a valuable contributor to our health and wellbeing as well as the ecosystem in which we live.

While it may not be a rare tree in the Spokane area, this particular specimen is quite large and is in good health. It is an example of living history—one can only imagine all this tree has witnessed and survived throughout its life.

Thank you for considering our nomination of *Catalpa speciosa* as a Spokane Heritage Tree.

Property Owner Agreement Form

HISTORIC AND HERITAGE TREE PROGRAM

In exchange for the City's designation of the subject tree as a Heritage Tree, the Property Owner agrees to protect, maintain and care for the Heritage Tree located on his or her property. Property Owner agrees to abide by conditions set forth in the City of Spokane Code, Section 12.02.916, particularly:

- A. "A Heritage Tree or collection of trees is retained by the property owner and does not become the property or responsibility of the City – unless the tree(s) are city owned."
- B. "The property owner is responsible for all maintenance and liability issue pertaining to the tree or trees."
- C. Prior to removal of a Heritage Tree, a property owner must notify the Urban Forest Tree Committee/Urban Forest Program. The City **strongly encourages** all Heritage Tree property owners to retain these significant tree(s)
- D. If a property owner removes a heritage Tree or collection of trees, the plaque or identification marker shall be returned to the Urban Forest Program.

Property Owner understands that sponsorships or assistance for care of the tree may be available from the City's Urban Forestry Program. In addition, if the Property Owner may want any advice, it can be offered at no cost by the City Urban Forestry Program (509.363.5495).

Property Owner as owner of the Catalpa speciosa (species) tree now being considered for this distinction, hereby consent to its being designated a Heritage Tree by the Urban Forestry Committee of Spokane, Washington.

Tree Location (Address, Tax Lot): 34 W. 18th ave Spokane 99203

Signed: Virginia Hemmex, Property Owner

Date: 5/22/26

Submitted by Urban Forestry Tree Committee: _____ (Date)

Approved by Urban Forestry Program: _____ (Date)

Approved by Director, Parks and Recreation: _____ (Date)

Filed with Urban Forestry Program and Website: _____ (Date)

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