



**City of Spokane Park Board
Urban Forestry Tree Committee Meeting**

4:15 p.m. Tuesday, March 31, 2026
Hybrid in-person and WebEx virtual meeting
Katie Kosanke - Urban Forester

Committee Members:

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

Parks Staff:

Katie Sorensen
Steve Nittolo

Guest:

Chris “Copp” Coppen

SUMMARY

- Steve Nittolo presented an Urban Forestry Golf update.
- An IRA Grant update was given by Katie Kosanke.
- Katie Kosanke shared information on Arbor Day.
- An Urban Forestry update was provided by Katie Kosanke.
- Katie Kosanke presented year end financials.

The next regularly scheduled meeting is 4:15 p.m. Tuesday May 5, 2026.

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 4:19 p.m. by committee chair Lindsey Shaw.

Public Comment:

Chris “Copp” Coppen from Friends of Spokane Trees shared that Friends of Spokane Trees was established approximately six to eight months ago in response to concerns on how to balance urban development and clearing land for increased housing and preserving trees in the city core and heritage trees. The group is working on a city ordinance that would help govern and determine what kinds of trees could be cut down and what leeways must be left on properties when a developer wants to clear a lot. He advised city council members Kate Tellis and Paul Dillion are supporting them in writing the ordinance. The purpose is to look at how more trees can be preserved in the city. He advised the group is trying to dissuade clear cutting of lots to preserve some trees while also respecting the right of developers to clear land they need for housing and that they are not trying to stop development just preserve some trees in the development process.

Action Items: None

Discussion Items:

1. **Urban Forestry Golf Update** – Steve Nittolo

Steve works one day a week for golf and 20% of his salary is paid by the Golf Enterprise Fund. Urban Forestry has a partnership with golf and UF provides them with assistance with tree maintenance, pine beetle killed tree removals, pest monitoring, and tree plantings. UF staff also assists with pruning, provides training to golf staff to perform minor pruning for clearance, and creates and updates tree management plans. Golf has also contracted some tree work to implement plans.

Tree management plans have been created for all city golf courses. The plans address issues with play on the course, safety, turf health and tree health. Approximately 120 mature trees, not including beetle killed trees, were worked on in 2025 by Urban Forestry staff. Work included pruning and removal for turf health, playability and safety.

In 2025 a more aggressive approach has been taken to manage beetle infestations. This included UF and golf working with a WSDNR Entomologist to acquire improved ability to identify beetle stressed trees and general knowledge of beetles. UF has been better able to predict what trees have beetles and remove them before the beetles emerge.

Downriver Golf Course had several trees pruned to raise canopy, replacements trees (mostly Western larch) were planted to replace beetle killed trees, Pine trees were monitored and beetle killed or infested trees removed, UF removed and replaced flowering pear trees at the clubhouse and UF purchased 200 – 2-year-old Western larch seedlings to grow for future plantings at Downriver.

Indian Canyon Golf Course had Pine trees monitored, and beetle killed or infested trees were removed, approximately 50 trees were pruned or removed for turf health or other reasons, UF assisted with clearance pruning along course property on W. West Dr., and the Fire Department contracted crews thinned areas designated on tree management plans.

Creek at Qualchan had maintenance of seedlings along Highway 195, canopies of trees raised for turf health, fuels reduction work done on slope above the course, UF staff removed several dead pine trees, and 85 pine trees were planted on the course.

Esmeralda Golf Course had canopy raised on many trees for turf health and playability, several large trees removed, fuels reduction work by the Fire Department, and the UF staff watered, weeded, replaced missing trees and Ponderosa pine seedlings were planted.

2. **IRA Grant Update** – Katie Sorensen

- a. Starting the week of April 6th approximately two hundred trees will be planted within areas covered by the grant. Amber Ramirez is establishing tree planting lists to distribute to the planting contractors and is coordinating utility locates. The homeowner coordination is being done by The Lands Council. A volunteer planting will take place the week of May 5th and more details will be out soon.
- b. The Downtown Spokane Partnership Contract was finalized with the launch of the tree program for downtown. There is a free tree program to prompt replacement trees downtown. DSP will water trees downtown on an emergency basis and alert property owners/tenants of issues. A proactive educational approach and participation of abutting property owners will help prevent costly removals and replacements for property owners.
- c. Urban Forestry is receiving 1,350 seedlings from the Spokane Conservation District for UF programs. Seedlings will be distributed to OnTrack Academy for their Tree Hero Event, senior centers, youth centers, all libraries, at the Shadle library plant swap and at the City's Arbor Day event.
- d. Dead tree removals through the grant are almost finished with one contractor still having some removals to complete.
- e. Urban Forestry will have a table at the Spokane Conservation District's Arbor Day Celebration.
- f. Large signs were made for the Tree Equity Spokane Program with information on the free tree program and sign-ups. The signs will be placed at numerous locations and UF is looking for additional ideas of locations to place signs.
- g. Urban Forestry participated in a Water Wise presentation on trees this week. The meeting was coordinated by SpokaneScape and 87 people attended. UF provided information on the Tree Equity Program, opportunities for planting, and information on properly watering trees.
- h. A beetle workshop was held Saturday March 28th at the Finch Arboretum with Dana Brennan an entomologist with the Department of Natural Resources. Twenty people attended.

It was asked if there had been an update on the state funding for the Community Forestry Program that had been at jeopardy of being cut. Katie advised she had been informed the state Community Forestry Program funding has been reinstated.

3. **Arbor Day** – Katie Sorensen

The Arbor Day Celebration is Saturday April 25th at Finch Arboretum. It is a well-attended event and will be held rain or shine. There will be a compost fair, free seedlings, a climbing demonstration, free coffee/hot cocoa and kettle corn, a Tree City USA ceremony, a ribbon cutting for the Touch and See nature trail, and much more. UF is looking for more volunteers if committee members are interested in volunteering at the event.

Urban Forestry will have a booth for Arbor Day at My Fresh Basket and will give out seedlings the week after Arbor Day.

Tree Hero Event at OnTrack Academy on April 18th. This will be the 5th year they have held this event. The students tree projects will be on display, and they will be giving out tree seedlings. They help with tree plantings finding locations for trees to be planted, especially in the northeast neighborhoods. The school also has Tree City USA K-12 Campus accreditation through the Arbor Day Foundation.

4. **Heritage Tree Nomination Review** - Review of the Heritage Tree Nomination was moved to next month. The committee would like to review program information more thoroughly as it has been some time since the last nomination was received.

Standing Report Items:

1. Citizen Advisory Report – Kris Neely

Kris advised the UFCAC had the same presentations as the UFTC and reported no action was taken on the Heritage Tree nomination, and the tree nomination is being moved to next month's agenda.

2. Urban Forestry Monthly Update – Katie Kosanke

- a. There has been a significant amount of beetle killed trees and removals have been completed at Manito, Lincoln, and Coeur d' Alene Parks, Whitewater Disc Golf Course, Golf Courses, and overall, within the park system. Urban Forestry has been consulting with Dana Brennan an entomologist with the Department of Natural Resources to make sure UF is doing all they can do. UF continues to be proactive and has been able to identify trees that have beetles overwintering in them and remove the trees before the beetles emerge.
- b. The recent windstorm resulted in about a dozen tree failures in the parks and all work has been completed.
- c. Approximately a dozen bald cypress trees will be planted next week at Sky Prairie Park with a juvenile group that UF typically plants with every year. A highlight of their experience with the Parks Department has been planting trees with the UF crew. They have also done work in Riverfront Park and Manito Park and get to see what a parks career looks like.
- d. Urban Forestry is working with Spokane Ponderosa to plant hundreds of seedlings on various sites where trees have been lost, including Hamblen Park, Manito Park, and various natural right-of-way area, such as along Downriver Dr. Planting also continues at Champion Park.
- e. Urban Forestry Specialist Becky Phillips is retiring. Her last day with the city will be April 10th. Becky handled inspections, permitting, and other items including other Development Service items. Staff are incredibly thankful for the public service she provided for many years. Urban Forestry will be moving forward with the hiring process for this position, which is partially funded by Development Services.
- f. Code Enforcement is taking over sending notices for clearance issues over sidewalks and roadways. Urban Forestry previously sent notices for clearance issues in the right-of-way and

took an educational approach. The vegetation code falls under Code Enforcement so they will be sending the notices and enforcing compliance.

- g. Urban Forestry is working on a hiring list for the Arborist position, which is currently filled. Civil Service generally has a list of applicants for positions and if there is a vacancy the list of applicants is accessed. There currently is not a list for the Arborist position and UF is working with Civil Service to update it for if there ever was a need to fill the Arborist position.
 - h. Urban Forestry is working with the Daughters of the American Revolution for a planting of Cherry trees at Riverfront Park. One tree will be planted for Arbor Day possibly, with the rest being planted in a larger 'Never Forget Garden' project in the fall. The plantings are in the planning phase and Parks Planning is working on the design.
 - i. Urban Forestry is providing assistance with tree work for the development of the Meadow Glenn Park, which is in the Indian Trail area. UF will mainly be helping with fuels reduction which will reduce tree work costs of the overall project.
 - j. A deciduous shrub planting day on the bluff took place Saturday March 21st with Nick Jeffries, Friends of the Bluff, and other volunteer groups.
 - k. A Susie Forest tree will be dedicated at the library on April 19th and planted the following Monday.
 - l. There have been many damage claims recently, where people run their cars off the road and hit trees. Urban Forestry invoices for damages and the insurance usually pays the damages and UF can remove and replace the trees. If there is a decrease in value of a tree UF can invoice for those trees in anticipating the shortened life span of the tree. Staff are working to catch up on all possible claims.
3. [Urban Forestry Financial Report](#) – Katie Kosanke

Katie presented the 2025 year-end financial report advising over budget in some areas at year end due to wood disposal costs, but overall Natural Resources came in well under budget at around 93% with savings mostly coming from personnel and benefit costs.

Other Discussion Items: None

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 5:06 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting is 4:15 p.m. May 5, 2026.

Golf Course Tree Management Update

March 25, 2026



Update Overview

- ▶ Urban Forestry/Golf Partnership
- ▶ Areas of Urban Forestry (UF) assistance
 - ▶ Tree Maintenance
 - ▶ Pine beetle losses/removals
 - ▶ Pest Monitoring and Management
 - ▶ Tree Plantings



Urban Forestry/Golf Partnership

- ▶ UF staff assists with some pruning and removals
- ▶ UF staff works to provide training to perform minor pruning for Golf staff that are interested
- ▶ Golf has also contracted some tree work to implement plans. Contractors must obtain a permit for work on trees that are on City of Spokane property.
- ▶ UF staff creates and updates tree management plans



Urban Forestry/Golf Partnership

- ▶ Tree management plans for all city golf courses have been created, are being used for determining tasks, and are updated as tasks are completed
- ▶ Plans include identifying locations for plantings, trees for removal, and trees in need of pruning.
- ▶ Plans address issues with Play on the Course, Safety, Turf Health, and Tree Health.

Tree Maintenance

- ▶ Approximately 120 mature trees (not counting beetle killed trees) worked on in 2025 by Urban Forestry staff; consisting of mostly pruning and removals for reasons of turf health, playability, and safety.
- ▶ Trees removed due to bark beetle death or infestations
- ▶ Watering, pruning, and protecting replacement trees from herbivory - replacement trees range from seedlings to 2” caliper





Pine bark beetle damage

In 2025 UF started taking a more aggressive approach to managing beetle infestations

Working with WSDNR Entomologist Golf and UF staff acquired improved abilities in identifying beetle stressed trees, signs of beetles, and general knowledge of life cycles of the several types of beetles attacking pines

We've been able to better predict which trees are likely to be hosts to the next generation of beetles and remove them before the beetles fly

Still sometimes a difficult decision making process

Course Updates

▶ Downriver Golf Course

- ▶ Pruning of several trees to raise canopies
- ▶ Plantings of replacements, of mostly western larch, for beetle killed trees. Since 2023, 164 trees have been planted on course. Of the 164, 65 were planted in 2025.
- ▶ Tree monitoring and removals beetle killed or infested pines 112 total approx. 76 of those larger than 6" diameter - many older large diameter trees
- ▶ UF staff removed and replaced flowering pears at clubhouse
- ▶ UF purchasing 200 - 2 year old western larch seedlings (2-3') this spring to grow for future planting at Downriver.

TreeWorks Map

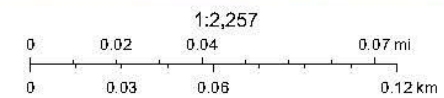


10/21/2022, 12:26:23 PM

TreeWorks_Data

- removal site
- stump
- tree

Sheet 6



Esri Community Maps Contributors, City of Spokane, Spokane County, WA State Parks GIS, © OpenStreetMap, Microsoft, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS,





Downriver Clubhouse tree replacements

Course Updates

▶ Indian Canyon

- ▶ Tree monitoring and removals of beetle killed or infested 101 pines, many older large trees
- ▶ Approximately 50 trees pruned or removed for turf health or other reasons
- ▶ Urban Forestry assisted with clearance pruning along course property along W. West Dr.
- ▶ Fire Department contracted crews thinned areas designated on tree management plans and some others

17 tee, 16 green, 14 green, 15 tee, 11 tee

TreeWorks Map



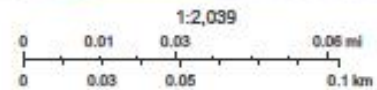
11/1/2022, 2:10:56 PM

TreeWorks_Data

- planting site
- removal site
- stump
- tree

Sheet 3

thinning this area priority



Earl Community Maps Contributors, City of Spokane, Spokane County, WA State Parks GIS, © OpenStreetMap, Microsoft, Earl, HERE, Garmin, SateGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METNAGA, USGS,

TreeWorks User

Spokane Image Consortium, Maxar, Microsoft | Earl Community Maps Contributors, City of Spokane, Spokane County, WA State Parks GIS, © OpenStreetMap, Microsoft, Earl, HERE, Garmin, SateGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METNAGA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau,

Course Updates

▶ Creek at Qualchan

- ▶ Maintenance of seedlings along Highway 195- watering, weeding, mulching, replacing, and applying herbivore repellents performed by UF staff
- ▶ Canopies of trees raised for turf health
- ▶ Fuels reduction work on slope above course continues by Spokane Fire Department contracted crews with UF staff consulting
- ▶ UF staff removed several dead pine trees
- ▶ 85 4-5', 5-6', and 6-7' pines planted on course



Qualchan 4 tee, 4 green, 5tee, 5 green, 6 green, 7 green, 3 green, 8 tee



Qualchan seedlings along 195



Pine plantings at Qualchan



Update for Courses

► Esmeralda

- Many of the golf course trees worked on by UF are at Esmeralda and had canopies raised for turf health and playability
- Several large trees were removed with approval from UF and as per tree management plan
- Fuels Reduction work by Fire Dept. contracted on surrounding areas with UF consultation
- UF staff watered, weeded, and replaced missing Rocky Mountain juniper, lodgepole pine, and ponderosa pine seedling plantings



Plantings Esmeralda





Esmeralda
5 ponderosa
pine planted
on course

Esmeralda north potential plantings



Golf Course Tree Management Update

► Questions?



Natural Resources - Year-End 2025



	Adopted Budget 2025	2025 Remaining Budget Balance	2024 13th Month Actual	2025 13th Month Actual	2024-2025 Monthly Difference	2024 Year-End Actual	2025 Year-End Actual	2024-2025 YTD Difference	2024 YTD % Of Budget	2025 YTD % Of Budget	YOY % Change
Revenue											
Program Revenue	\$ 82,000	\$ 42,897	\$ 657	\$ 683	\$ 26	\$ 86,241	\$ 39,103	\$ (47,138)	94.77%	47.69%	-47.08%
Operating Transfers	\$ 66,000	\$ -			\$ -	\$ 66,000	\$ 66,000	\$ -	100.00%	100.00%	
Total Revenue	\$ 148,000	\$ 42,897	\$ 657	\$ 683	\$ 26	\$ 152,241	\$ 105,103	\$ (47,138)	96.97%	71.02%	-25.95%
Expenditures											
Salaries and Wages	\$ 729,322	\$ 94,594	\$ 16,980	\$ 18,902	\$ (1,922)	\$ 607,521	\$ 634,728	\$ (27,207)	93.88%	87.03%	-6.85%
Temp/Seasonal	\$ 88,582	\$ (8,595)	\$ 1,078	\$ -	\$ 1,078	\$ 71,995	\$ 97,177	\$ (25,182)	83.87%	109.70%	25.83%
Personnel Benefits	\$ 292,943	\$ 63,265	\$ 3,230	\$ 3,460	\$ (230)	\$ 222,692	\$ 229,678	\$ (6,986)	90.26%	78.40%	-11.86%
Supplies	\$ 35,600	\$ (2,294)	\$ 490	\$ 17	\$ 473	\$ 40,130	\$ 37,894	\$ 2,236	112.72%	106.44%	-6.28%
Services and Charges	\$ 139,800	\$ (50,090)	\$ 3,667	\$ 16,023	\$ (12,356)	\$ 189,720	\$ 189,890	\$ (170)	85.38%	135.83%	50.45%
Interfund Payments	\$ 34,090	\$ (12,993)	\$ 2,204	\$ 4,730	\$ (2,526)	\$ 38,405	\$ 47,083	\$ (8,678)	166.98%	138.11%	-28.87%
Subtotal Op. Expense	\$ 1,320,337	\$ 83,888	\$ 27,649	\$ 43,132	\$ (15,483)	\$ 1,170,463	\$ 1,236,449	\$ (65,986)	92.86%	93.65%	0.79%
Transfers Out	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -			
Total Expenditures	\$ 1,320,337	\$ 83,888	\$ 27,649	\$ 43,132	\$ (15,483)	\$ 1,170,463	\$ 1,236,449	\$ (65,986)	92.86%	93.65%	0.79%
Net Gain/(Loss)	\$ (1,172,337)		\$ (26,992)	\$ (42,449)	\$ (15,457)	\$ (1,018,222)	\$ (1,131,347)	\$ (113,125)			