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# PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release from October 12, 2016

## ***Media Note/Photo Ops:***

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| <b>10/13/16, 12 p.m.</b>   | Trees For Missoula Volunteers will be at the Urban Forest Gravel Bed at the Missoula Wastewater Treatment Plant to gather trees for Thursday's planting. |
| <b>10/13/16, 2:15 p.m.</b> | Volunteers, including 20 students from UM's College of Forestry & Conservation, will be meeting at Wapikiya Park, 134 Tahoe Drive, to plant trees.       |

## **City's new Urban Forest Gravel Bed is a cost-effective way to plant more street trees**

About 55 young oak, crabapple, sycamore and maple trees are getting new homes in City parks and boulevards this fall, courtesy of a local urban forest advocacy group and Parks and Recreation's Urban Forestry Program. The trees were purchased last spring and spent the summer bulking up their root systems in the City's new Urban Forest Gravel Bed.

The bare root trees are the first crop to be planted from the new gravel bed housed at the Missoula Wastewater Treatment Facility. The bed safely holds bare root stock for up to 3-6 months and allows young trees to dramatically increase their root volume—making them much more likely to thrive when planted in the fall, says Urban Forester Chris Boza. "Greater root volume combined with early fall planting decreases transplant shock and increases survivability of the tree," he says.

Boza says starting bare root trees in a gravel bed is a cost-effective way to supplement the urban forest. "Bare-root trees cost up to 75 percent less than a typical nursery tree, allowing us to make the most of our planting budget. We also save on labor and equipment costs when planting the lighter bare root trees, and we can purchase a wider variety of species from bare root stock."

Trees for Missoula, a non-profit formed to support the urban forest, has contributed volunteer labor and about \$2300 for equipment and materials to construct the new gravel bed. The trees are irrigated with the same treated wastewater used at the treatment plant's Hybrid Poplar Tree Project.

Bare root trees are lighter and easier to plant, making them ideal for a volunteer project. "We are excited to be part of this innovative project," says Trees for Missoula Executive Director Karen Sippy. "It provides an opportunity for volunteers and groups who would like to physically do something to help out Missoula's urban forest by planting trees." Sippy will be working with 20 students from UM's College of Forestry & Conservation this Thursday afternoon to plant trees in Wapikiya and Whitaker Parks. Volunteers and urban forestry staff have already planted 13 of the young trees along South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street West and several more in Playfair Park and Russell Park West.

Trees for Missoula hopes to have more businesses and organizations involved with the plantings next year. "I think this is a great way to get the community interested, invested and involved in the future of our urban forest," Sippy says.

Boza is optimistic about the future success of the gravel bed. He predicts the project will eventually allow the Urban Forestry program to plant about 100 additional trees each fall. The City will continue to plant larger, more mature trees each spring and fall to ensure the age and species diversity of the urban forest. "Next year we'll again be planting about 200 traditional nursery trees. An aggressive reforestation program is the cornerstone of the City's urban forest management plan, and we're always on the lookout for methods to plant more trees and increase their survival rate," Boza added.

The Urban Forestry Division offers Cost Share Tree Planting and Memorial Tree programs. Trees are purchased in March of each year for planting in the spring. Urban Forestry staff will help residents select the right species and location for their tree. Visit <http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/234/Plant-a-Tree> for more information. To learn more about Trees for Missoula, visit <http://treesformissoula.org/>.

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