

Heritage Tree Categories and Definitions

In recognition of the benefits of a healthy urban forest, Sandpoint City Council adopted the City of Sandpoint Urban Forestry Ordinance in 2008 with the goal of encouraging and promoting the preservation, expansion, protection and proper maintenance of the community forest of the city. Found in chapter 15 of Sandpoint City Code, the ordinance grants the city authority over planting, maintenance, and removal of trees in public rights-of-way. It aims to manage public tree inventory, improve safety, and promote canopy growth.

Subsection 13 of the ordinance covers the Protection of Public and Private Historic and Heritage Trees. The code provides for trees to be designated as heritage trees for protection based on the criteria in the arboricultural manual. However, the arboricultural manual lacks any mention of Historic and/or Heritage trees.

Therefore, the Urban Forestry Commission has developed a list of five categories to be used as criteria to qualify a tree for Heritage Tree protection. These categories and their definitions were approved unanimously by the Urban Forestry Commission on November 21, 2025.

Based on their recommendation, 7-15-13 of Sandpoint City Code will be amended to read:

7-15-13: - Protection of Public and Private ~~Historic and~~ Heritage Trees:

~~The historic and heritage tree preservation designation recognizes the significance of trees to the city. A tree may be retained beyond its useful life because of its contribution to the environment and city character. A heritage or historical tree may be designated by the Urban Forestry Commission tree committee, in coordination with the historic preservation committee based on the criteria as described in the arboricultural manual.~~ **based on the following criteria:**

- 1. Historical-** A tree which by virtue of its association with or contribution to a historical structure or district, or its association with a historical event.
- 2. Specimen-** Age, size, health, or aesthetic factors may qualify the tree as unique among the species in Sandpoint, Idaho.
- 3. Rare-** One or very few of a kind, or is unusual in some form of growth or species.
- 4. Significant Grove-** Outstanding or significant groups of trees that impact the city's landscape.
- 5. Ecological-** A tree that provides a unique ecological benefit or service to the urban environment.