

CITY OF SANDPOINT HERITAGE TREE PROGRAM

Recognition + Education

Heritage Tree Program

The City of Sandpoint Heritage Tree Program is a voluntary recognition program that celebrates trees and groves that contribute to the community's environmental quality, history, character, and sense of place. The program is intended to promote public education and awareness of the value of Sandpoint's urban forest by highlighting trees that are meaningful to the community because of their history, size, rarity, ecological value, or contribution to the landscape.

The program is honorary and non-regulatory. Designation as a Heritage Tree does not restrict removal, pruning, or development, does not create permit requirements, and does not impose maintenance obligations on the City or property owner.

Why Heritage Trees Matter

Heritage Trees help tell the story of Sandpoint. Some are valued because they are associated with historic places or events. Others stand out because they are exceptional examples of their species, are rare within the local urban forest, provide ecological benefits, or form a grove that helps define a neighborhood, park, or corridor. Recognizing these trees creates an opportunity to educate the public about the importance of the urban forest and the role trees play in community character, environmental stewardship, and quality of life.

Eligible Categories

A tree or grove may be considered for Heritage Tree designation if it meets one or more of the following categories:

- **Historical**
A tree associated with or contributing to a historic structure, district, event, person, or landscape.
- **Specimen**
A tree that is exceptional within its species locally because of age, size, health, or aesthetic quality.
- **Rare**
A tree that is uncommon in the local urban forest because of species rarity, limited presence, or unusual form or growth characteristics.
- **Significant Grove**
An outstanding or significant group of trees that contributes to the city's landscape and sense of place.

- **Ecological**

A tree that provides a unique ecological benefit or service to the urban environment.

To be considered, a tree or grove should be in fair or better condition and visible from a public right-of-way.

How the Program Works

Nominations may be submitted by property owners, community members, City staff, or members of the Urban Forestry Commission. Nominations should include photographs, a description of the tree's significance, and property owner consent if the tree is located on private property.

The Urban Forestry Commission may assist with nomination development and public education and may review nominations as part of the recognition process. The Urban Forester or designee is responsible for confirming consistency with the program criteria and maintaining the program records.

Recognition

Designated Heritage Trees may be recognized through the City's website, maps, educational materials, public presentations, certificates, or other public-facing features. The goal of recognition is to share the story and significance of these trees with the community and encourage greater appreciation of Sandpoint's urban forest.

Submit a Nomination

To nominate a Heritage Tree, please complete the nomination form and submit the required materials to the City of Sandpoint Public Works Department.

Required materials include:

- nomination form
- photographs
- description of significance
- property owner consent, if applicable

[Download Nomination Form]

Questions

For more information about the Heritage Tree Program, please contact the City of Sandpoint Public Works Department.

Heritage Tree Program – Q&A

What is the Heritage Tree Program?

The Heritage Tree Program is a voluntary, non-regulatory program that recognizes trees and groves that contribute to Sandpoint's environmental quality, history, and community character. The program is focused on education and awareness, highlighting the role trees play in shaping the community's identity and environment.

Does this program regulate trees or private property?

No. The program is honorary only. Designation as a Heritage Tree does not restrict removal, pruning, or development, does not create permit requirements, and does not impose obligations on property owners or the City.

Is participation required?

No. Participation is entirely voluntary. Property owner consent is required for any tree located on private property.

Who can nominate a tree?

Nominations may be submitted by property owners, community members, City staff, or members of the Urban Forestry Commission.

Who decides if a tree is designated?

Nominations are reviewed by the Urban Forester for consistency with the program criteria. The Urban Forestry Commission may review and recognize nominations as part of the program. Designation is an administrative determination confirming the tree meets the program criteria.

What types of trees qualify?

Trees may qualify if they meet one or more of the following categories:

- historical
- specimen
- rare
- significant grove
- ecological

These categories reflect adopted definitions and focus on trees that are meaningful to the community.

Why is the program non-regulatory?

The program is designed to promote education and community awareness without creating property restrictions or additional permitting requirements. This approach allows the City to recognize significant trees while respecting private property rights and keeping the program simple to administer.

Why involve the Urban Forestry Commission?

The Commission provides a valuable role in community engagement, education, and visibility of the program. Their involvement helps highlight significant trees and supports public awareness of the urban forest.

Why doesn't Council approve individual trees?

Council's role is to establish policy and provide direction, not to review individual nominations. Keeping designation at the administrative level ensures the program remains efficient and avoids creating a formal approval process.

What is the City's role in maintaining Heritage Trees?

The City does not assume maintenance responsibility for Heritage Trees. Property owners remain responsible for trees on private property, and the City maintains trees in the public right-of-way as part of its regular operations.

What happens if a Heritage Tree is removed?

If a designated tree is removed or declines significantly, it may be removed from the program. Because the program is non-regulatory, removal of a Heritage Tree does not require City approval.

What are the benefits of this program?

The primary benefits are:

- increased awareness of the urban forest
- recognition of significant community features
- support for environmental stewardship
- reinforcement of community character and identity

Does this create a future requirement to regulate trees?

No. This program is separate from any regulatory framework. If the City were to consider regulatory approaches in the future, that would require a separate policy discussion and Council direction.

What is the cost to implement this program?

Costs are minimal and can be managed within existing staff resources. The program primarily involves nomination review, recordkeeping, and public communication.