

BLURB for SW News, April 2017 edition

Our neighborhood has seen many large trees removed over the last year, so much so that some of us have a growing sense of unease regarding the protection of our urban canopy from burgeoning development in our part of Southwest Portland. With many questions about City of Portland's tree code and its recent press coverage, the neighborhood association wanted to hear from Urban Forestry to learn in particular about ways to preserve the trees in Collins View.

Therefore, at our last CVNA meeting on March 1, we had three guests on hand to discuss the city tree code: Nikhilesh Desai, Botanic Specialist I, Portland Parks & Recreation Urban Forestry, his Urban Forestry colleague, Kasey Yturalde, an entomologist who recently obtained her Ph.D. in Forest Science from Northern Arizona University, and Jennifer Cairo, City Forester, who has extensive experience in natural resources and parks management, along with an MS in Forestry from State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, in addition to numerous other achievements. There wasn't a seat to spare, a clear sign of the level of interest in this subject within our community.

For the better part of an hour, Nik, Jenn, and Kasey talked about the tree code and how it applies to residences within the city, and answered audience questions. Nik's presentation was centered about tree preservation, the circumstances under which tree removal is appropriate and the tree removal permitting process, and mitigation efforts accompanying tree removal.

Here are a few of the points made in Nik's presentation: (text supplemented from Trees/Do I need a permit to remove or prune a tree?)
<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/trees/article/516381>

- Pruning a Private Tree does not require a permit unless the property is located in an environmental or Pleasant Valley Natural Resource overlay zone. The City will evaluate requests to remove large Private Trees when the tree is 20 inches in diameter or larger or for five or more trees 12 inches or larger.

- Trees that are dead, dying, or dangerous (including those too close to a building) will be issued a permit for removal. Healthy trees will be evaluated based on the Standards and Review Factors in Title 11 Trees, including but not limited to the objectives of the property owner, the potential impacts on public safety, and the character of the neighborhood.

- If a neighbor takes down tree w/out permit, go online see if it is permitted; Portlandmaps does include tree permits, and lists these at a given address. Report non-permitted cutting. There is a \$250 permit penalty fee.

Nik also introduced us to Portland State University's Sustaining Urban Places Research Lab, whose canopy analytics tool allows the user to investigate the tree cover around the city - even one's own back yard. <https://climatecope.research.pdx.edu/canopyanalytics/>

Given the constraints of this newsletter, we can only urge the reader to visit the urban forestry website and explore as much as possible there. The main Urban Forestry site is easy to remember: www.portlandoregon.gov/trees. As Nik said many times over the evening, call before you cut. The Urban Forestry web site is well-organized, with direct links to the tree code, tree removal permits and FAQs, the TreeBark newsletter, the neighborhood tree steward program, and the tree inventory project itself.

Thank you very much, Nik, Jenn, and Kasey for a very useful hour. It was clear to us in the audience that all three of you share a passion for nature, a deep love of trees especially those within the city environment, and a real commitment to sharing your knowledge with the community.