

VISION 2050
50 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR KERN COMMUNITY FORESTS

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This 50 Year Strategic Plan for Kern Community Forests seeks to influence the future direction of our urban forests and ensure that they are healthy and

sustainable by design and help make our communities more liveable and closer knit while preserving and protecting our diverse natural assets.

A broad range of people from the County of Kern and the City of Bakersfield came together in 1998-99 and formed Kern Community Forest Council to discuss common areas of interest and expertise relating to utilizing trees for urban community enhancement. (See page 5 for a listing of participants and contributors.)

Environmental, economic, social and technical values were articulated and common goals were identified. A great spirit of cooperation helped identify common issues and create solutions that bring together the grass roots movement and City and County agencies and organizations.

Together we designed this 50 year strategic plan to provide technical and educational resources to Kern County residents for the purpose of establishing and maintaining healthy, sustainable urban forests throughout Kern County.

This blueprint will be used by the participants to direct their programs and budgets. The 50 Year Strategic Plan for Kern Community Forests will also be marketed to elected and appointed officials, decision makers, funders, and other interested parties to help guide their urban forestry decisions.

The thrust of the plan is two-fold:

- o Plant more trees for maximum economic, environmental, social and technical benefits and strive for a 30% overall shade canopy cover in our urban areas by 2050.
- o Preserve and protect our urban forests through awareness, education, experience, and enforceable tree ordinances.

2. PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

KERN COUNTY S PAST

Over 200 years ago when Father Francisco Garces entered the San Joaquin Valley, he found a land somewhat different from today. The land was inhabited by the Yowlumne, a tribe of Yokut nation. Large portions of this part of the Great Valley was covered by a swamp fed by the streams of the Sierra Nevada, the most significant of which was the Kern River. Not confined by flows regulated through man-made structures, the River, flowing through many channels, created this swamp which culminated at Buena Vista and Kern Lakes. As the land was settled, the wetland made it difficult to farm. Over the course of time, Col. Thomas Baker began draining the swamp to make the land more usable for agricultural production. In 1879, the diversion of water from the Kern River to the Calloway Canal resulted in redirection of the natural flow of the River into its current route. Litigation ensued involving Miller, Lux, Haggin, Tevis and Carr. In 1886 the state Supreme Court found that it was not in the best interest of the people to return the Kern River to its natural course. Additionally, the discovery of oil and development of some of the world's largest oil fields resulted in significant modifications to the natural regime.

In just over 100 years, the natural vegetation of the southern San Joaquin Valley had been changed. The wetlands that covered a large part of the Valley were gone. Several species of trees disappeared or were reduced in number and location. Cottonwood forests found in what is now known as Kern Delta dwindled as they were replaced by farmland or stressed by a dropping water table. Still, trees began to flourish along the banks of the new Kern River, a testimony to the abilities of nature to adjust to changes brought on by man.

Changes elsewhere in Kern County were less pronounced, though significant, as settlement occurred. Activities in the desert portions of the County resulted in modest yet localized changes in vegetation. Highways and railroads created barriers to wildlife movement and resulted in the sacrifice of thousands of acres of fragile desert. Off-road vehicles and military training also left scars on the land that required substantial time to heal because of climactic conditions. And mining activities caused the stockpiling of tailings and accumulation of hazardous materials used in mineral exploration and recovery. It is significant that the trails created by the famous Twenty Mule Team between Death Valley and the desert in southeast Kern County in the 1800's are still a visible mark on the land.

Tracts of pine and fir existed in the mountains of Kern County. Over the last century, significant amounts of timber have been removed from the Greenhorn, Piute, Breckenridge and Pinos areas of the County. But the most noticeable change to the vegetative community occurred with the construction of Isabella Dam and the creation of Lake Isabella over the confluence of the North and South Forks of the Kern River. Lost was a cottonwood and willow forest, the remnants of which constitute the largest contiguous forest of this type in the State of California.

THE PRESENT

These changes in our natural environment, and a desire to enhance living conditions in the communities of Kern County, resulted in the creation of the Tree Foundation of Kern in 1993. Since 1994, the Tree Foundation, with the assistance of private organizations and companies, public agencies and individuals, has inspired the planting of over 6,500 trees in more than 250 locations in the County.

In its centennial year (1998) the City of Bakersfield, through the efforts of the City, private citizens and the Tree Foundation of Kern, was awarded a TREE CITY USA designation. The City intends to reapply annually, demonstrating it cares about its urban forest and about having a vibrant, liveable urban community.

TREE CITY USA requires tree ordinances and a Tree Advisory Board. Two Tree Foundation directors were appointed to the Citizens Advisory Committee and were asked to review and revise tree ordinances. VISION 2050 ad hoc task force was formed in summer of 1998 to develop a long term plan for our urban forest. This plan is the basis for developing and recommending seamless tree ordinances for the City of Bakersfield and the County of Kern.

By early 1999, the ad hoc task force grew to include the participants listed on page 5 and became Kern Community Forest Council whose mission it was to provide and coordinate technical and educational resources to Kern County residents for the purpose of establishing and maintaining healthy, sustainable urban forests. The vision was to have healthy, sustainable urban forests in all Kern County communities.

THE FUTURE

Tree Foundation of Kern activities are consistent with nationwide and worldwide grassroots movements to preserve and protect Planet Earth and get reconnected to nature and each other through awareness, education and the experience of planting trees. As government and funding decrease, there are opportunities to leverage volunteers to beautify their communities with trees, and close the urban forest ownership loop by promoting long term tree care.

Selected and planted correctly, a tree can live 50 or more years and yield over \$50,000 in economic and environmental benefits. Over the next 50 years the Tree Foundation of Kern's programs will yield \$5 billion in value. These long and sizeable cycles need long term plans.

Kern County is on the verge of explosive population growth with a dramatic changes in population mix. In 1998, County population was 640,000. By 2010 the population is projected to be 958,000 and will double to over 1.2 million by 2020. Long term planning can ensure that we have healthy and sustainable urban forests conducive to vibrant, liveable, close-knit communities.

3. KERN COMMUNITY FOREST COUNCIL
1998-1999

PARTICIPANTS

Dana Adams	Executive Director, Tree Foundation of Kern (TFOK)
Bob Addison	Director, Kern County Parks and Recreation
Ken Delfino	Tech Advisory Committee Chair, TFOK
Mike Doyle	Bakersfield Parks & Recreation
Jack Hardisty	Director, City of Bakersfield Planning Dept.
Rick Hewett	Vice President, TFOK
Suzan Hopper	Board of Directors, TFOK
Pauline Larwood	Board of Directors, TFOK
Dave Rickles	Kern County Planning Department
James Scrivano	City of Bakersfield Solid Waste Management
Fred Simon	Landscape Architect
Ruth Simonson	Downtown Business Association
John Wilbanks	Kern County Roads Dept.

Facilitator:

Linda Romero	Urban Forester California Dept. Forestry & Fire Protection
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CONTRIBUTORS

Stan Grady	City of Bakersfield Planning Dept.
Ted James	Kern County Planning Dept.

4. MISSION/VISION/VALUES

MISSION

To provide and coordinate technical and educational resources to Kern County residents for the purpose of establishing and maintaining healthy, sustainable urban forests.

VISION

To have healthy, sustainable urban forests in all Kern County communities.

VALUES & BENEFITS

ECONOMIC	Increased economic stability - insurance Increased property values - wealth
ENVIRONMENTAL	Lower temperatures - increased comfort Clean air - better health Green corridors - human & wildlife continuity Open space & green corridors - noise reduction Reduced energy consumption - lower utility bills Significant and distinct ecosystems - biodiversity Watershed management - better water, less erosion Wildlife habitat - equilibrium
SOCIAL	View preservation - aesthetics and beauty Shaded parking lots, streets, school playgrounds - increased comfort & decreased exposure to sun Bike & pedestrian friendly - user friendly & smart transportation Visual barriers - aesthetics and beauty Cultural & historic significance - pride Community pride - image & reputation Increased awareness & appreciation for community forests - protection & preservation of a public utility
TECHNICAL	Fire safe - safety pays Species & age diversity - insurance Appropriate species (natives; to human scale) - sensible Trees properly maintained - health, longevity & sustainability

5. RECITALS

1. The name of this ad hoc group is Kern Community Forest Council.

2. The goal of Kern Community Forest Council is to develop a 50 Year Strategic Plan for community and urban forests in Kern County. The plan will be in the form of a document available for distribution.
3. It is important that the 50 Year Strategic Plan compliment both the City of Bakersfield and the County of Kern 2010 General Plan relative to landscaping, preservation and open space.
4. Values are compatible with each other, have equal weight and contain no contradictions.
5. The plan will treat all three climate zones found in Kern County - valley, mountain and desert.
6. The plan will have a phase-in program. The first and main focus will be the City of Bakersfield. The ten remaining cities and other unincorporated areas will be phased in systematically.

ADDENDUM

At the conclusion of this planning session, the Tree Foundation of Kern was designated the best positioned to market this 50 Year Strategic Plan for Kern Community Forests.

6A. COMBINED ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC & SOCIAL GOALS & OBJECTIVES

GOAL #1 To increase tree canopy cover and have shaded residential streets and common areas, sidewalks, parking lots and pedestrian walkways, parks and playgrounds, for purposes of:

- stabilizing economy and increasing commerce
- increasing property values
- lowering temperatures and increasing comfort
- cleaning air for better health
- reducing energy consumption and air pollution
- reducing dependance on automobiles
- promoting fellowship and socialization
- decreasing heat island effect
- minimizing sun exposure and decreasing incidence of skin

cancer

- promoting views, aesthetics, beauty and reducing noise

pollution

OBJECTIVE #1 By 2050, all streets will be lined with high quality, large crowning shade trees, to create feelings of relaxation and well-being and provide privacy and a sense of solitude and security. By 2050, achieve a 50% shade canopy cover for common areas of Metro Bakersfield 2010 (The 50 X 2050 Campaign) and an average of 30% canopy cover overall.

1999 STATUS Since 1982, all new developments are required to install and maintain a minimum amount of landscaping. Average tree canopy cover is estimated to be less than 10%. An inventory of 42 sample blocks in downtown Bakersfield shows that 80% of the trees are less than 15 years old. More accurate estimates require tree inventory and aerial photos.

STRATEGY #1 Create a Tree Advisory Board that advises both County and City on community tree related issues and advances this objective.

TACTICS

- o Review and repeal any existing ordinances that impede the planting of street trees and sidewalk strips.

- Review and revise tree ordinances governing streets, sidewalks and parking lots to ensure that a 50% shade canopy in common areas by 2050 is achievable.

- Identify and promote examples of areas that have targeted shade ratings (ie 50% specifically and 30% overall.)

Tree Foundation, autumn 1999

STRATEGY #2 Create a master plan that establishes major target zones and systematically increases canopy cover by planting and caring for large canopy shade trees.

Include parks, neighborhoods, streets, public areas, thoroughfares, green waste recycling areas, municipal farms, sewer farms, recreational sites (esp. golf courses), businesses, and residential areas.

TACTICS o Create & convene a 50 X 2050 Master Planning Group in autumn, 1999. Draw members from stakeholders in all target zones.

Obtain stakeholder participation in the 50 X 2050 Master Plan.

(Example: Kern County Parks Dept. would agree to draft a plan for their parks and golf courses that would achieve the desired canopy cover by 2050. Similarly for other program participants.)

Coordinate with County and City officials to implement ordinances that require 50% tree canopy cover at maturity in common area (parking lots, sidewalks, new developments.)

Forecast demand for trees and ensure that the community can produce sufficient quantities of acceptable quality.

Launch campaign to replant all existing parkways and empty tree wells and make it easy by reviewing and revising requirements for automatic watering systems. Consider alternative watering options (water truck, hand watering, etc.)

Create a Tree Canopy Corps (TCC) to help implement the plan (along the lines of California Conservation Corps and AmeriCorps.)

GOAL #2 To utilize treescapes to make commercial areas attractive and profitable for businesses, corporations and tourists.

OBJECTIVE #1 By 2050, shopping areas will reduce car dominance and be pedestrian friendly, with parking in 50% shaded parking lots or garages. Shoppers walk to their destination, rather than drive, passing shops not on their agenda.

1999 STATUS All new shopping developments need to comply with City and County specifications (30% shade at 3/4 maturity.)

STRATEGY #1 Develop shade awards for compliance.

TACTICS o Celebrate shade awards regularly.
Next: Tree Foundation Annual Luncheon, October 27, 1999

GOAL #3 Designate and establish 25 major green corridors to provide:
continuity for people and wildlife

wildlife habitat
significant and distinct ecosystem diversity
opportunities for transportation alternatives to car

OBJECTIVE #1 By 2050, establish 25 major green corridors in Metro 2010 Bakersfield, each with a 50% tree canopy cover.

1999 STATUS The following green corridors exist, none of which has 50% canopy cover yet:

Kern River Parkway, 15 miles now, 42 miles at completion
Chester Avenue, 6 short city blocks

STRATEGY #1 Create a new green corridor every two years to comply with the 50 X 2050 Master Plan.

TACTICS o Convene a Green Corridor Group by 9/99 to identify current and future corridor sites, emphasizing diversity, connections, ease of implementation, and tie in to Kern River Parkway.

Enroll the participation of stakeholders in each target zone and obtain their written commitment to implement the plan.

Implement the plan beginning in 2000 with the Panorama Park Project, a 3,100 foot extension of the pedestrian walk way shaded with 200 trees. Make this the Tree Foundation of Kern Arbor Day 2000 event.

5B. SOCIAL GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES & TACTICS

GOAL #1 To develop a significant urban forest that will enhance the image and reputation of Kern County.

OBJECTIVE #1 By 2000, develop programs that will support community pride.
1999 STATUS Jane Gardner does public relations work for Bakersfield Parks and Rec.

STRATEGY #1 Increase community outreach programs. Use aggressive marketing techniques to make nature experiences fun and rewarding. Expand educational opportunities to include careers in nature and with trees.

TACTICS o Establish demonstration areas for tree species, irrigation systems, alternative ground covers, mulching, and proper pruning techniques. Include interpretive signs.
Offer, sponsor and/or subsidize classes on urban forestry topics (tree species, irrigation, care, pruning, revegetation, gardening, composting, permaculture.)

OBJECTIVE #2 By 2001, develop a public awareness campaign of the urban forest through media, participatory projects and awards.

1999 STATUS TREE CITY USA awarded to Bakersfield in 1998 and 1999.

STRATEGY #1 Convene multi-disciplinary Urban Forest Celebration group.

TACTICS o Design Tree Tours to promote recognition of tree species and to identify heritage trees.
Develop quickly accessible infomercials on:
What to do for Storm Damage to Trees (winter)
How to Plant a Tree (spring)
When and How to Prune a Tree (autumn)
How to Recognize and Reduce Heat and Water Stress (summer)
Maintain TREE CITY USA award annually.
Bakersfield Parks and Rec applies annually. Tree Fnd.
organizes Arbor Day event and proclamation. Tree City USA flags fly at Truxtun & Mohawk, Gossford & White Lane.

In 2000, organize an annual Urban Forest Mania event in City or County park and have interactive urban forestry activities at a variety of stations like Removal of Hazardous Trees; How to Plant A Tree; How to Stem Erosion; How To Revegetate an Urban Area.

5C. TECHNICAL GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES & TACTICS

GOAL #1 To have fire safe treescapes.

OBJECTIVE #1 By 2001, establish guidelines for fire safe treescaping.

1999 STATUS Fire safe plans exist for some foothill and mountain communities.

These plans have been crafted by these communities at the urging of either the Kern County Fire Department or the U S Forest Service.

STRATEGY #1 By 2001, create a fire safe treescape model for the various environs within Kern County. This will include information on the biological characteristics of the species (including flammability), appropriate planting zones and recommendations on fire safe spacing around improvements.

TACTICS During 1999, the Technical Advisory Committee will collect available information from the various fire agencies such as the U S Forest Service, Kern County Fire Department (KCFD) and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF.)

During 1999 -2000, obtain stakeholder participation from the affected communities (through ongoing efforts of KCFD). Assist efforts in communities where interest is weak, encourage and advise communities where progress is underway.

Work with the City of Bakersfield as development moves into the eastern foothills. Fire danger in the lower foothills is deceptively high because the native grass is highly flammable.

GOAL #2 To ensure our community and urban forests are healthy and sustainable.

OBJECTIVE #1 By 2000, develop and promote a species list of small, medium and large trees for each of the climate zones - valley, mountain and desert.

1999 STATUS Tree lists, by size and micro environment requirements exist for all California. The urban forestry programs at CalPoly SLO and UC Davis are continuously revising information regarding urban trees including growth characteristics, pest problems, infrastructure issues, energy and water requirements and economic information.

STRATEGY #1 Create a printed list (or series of lists) for the various climate and elevation zones in Kern County which includes tree biological characteristics, and other critical information. The lists will be written in plain English and Spanish. This information will be available on the Tree Foundation web site by 2000.

List is available in English from the Tree Foundation by mail.

OBJECTIVE #2 By 2002 assess the age diversity of key target areas in Kern County with the goal of establishing a future replacement and maintenance schedule.

1999 STATUS It appears that municipal agencies do not currently have an inventory or replacement plan for urban trees. In summer, 1999, Bakersfield Parks & Rec inventoried the trees on their properties.

STRATEGY #1 The Technical Advisory Committee will identify priority areas for a replacement and maintenance plan. This can only be accomplished with the cooperation of the responsible local agency. (It takes continuous annual funding to maintain and replace aging trees.)

TACTICS o During 1999-2000 the TAC will identify the highest priority target areas.

o Work with the responsible local agency to obtain a credible inventory of public and private trees within the target zone.

o Identify the potential cost of maintenance and replacement for the target areas. (Some guides exist.)

o Convince the local agency to adopt the maintenance and replacement plan. Work with the local agency to obtain funding to implement the plan.

o Publicize the plan to gain support for funding.

GOAL #3 To have a quality tree maintenance plan that insures the health and safety of our urban forest.

OBJECTIVE #1 By 2000, establish tree pruning standards.

1999 STATUS Pruning standards do not currently exist. The City of Bakersfield employs a certified Arborist to train pruning crews and oversee maintenance activities.

STRATEGY #1 Obtain pruning information from the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) and make this information available to public and private organizations involved in tree pruning.

STRATEGY #2 Through education and experience, increase public awareness for routine tree care and proper pruning techniques.

TACTICS o In 2000, the Tree Foundation of Kern will launch an educational campaign Proper Pruning Pays targeted at tree services.

o By 2003 establish a site that demonstrates proper pruning.

o During 2001 work with the local county Farm Advisor to establish classes on proper tree pruning.

- o By 2000, City of Bakersfield and County of Kern both adopt ISA pruning standards and hire only tree services that comply with these standards.

- o Lobby PG&E to comply with ISA standards.

OBJECTIVE #2 By 2000, publicize the value of certified arborists caring for trees.

1999 STATUS Pruning information does not currently exist for the general public.

STRATEGY #1 Through education and publicity, increase public awareness for routine tree care and proper pruning techniques.

TACTICS o In 2000, the Tree Foundation of Kern will recommend in print and on the web site that the general public use certified arborists for tree care or tree services that follow ISA pruning guidelines.

- o During winter 2000, Tree Foundation will organize a tree pruning workshop targeted at tree services.

7. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Implementation Plan s first priority is Metro 2010 Bakersfield, followed by ten other cities in Kern County, and finally by unincorporated areas. Once initial material is developed, there is likely to be applications county wide.

IMMEDIATE

1. Create a Tree Advisory Board that is a model of cooperation and advises both the City of Bakersfield and the County of Kern on tree related issues, annually reviews and recommends revisions to tree ordinances and tree care and planting contract specifications to ensure compliance with this long term strategic plan for Kern community forests.

2. City of Bakersfield Parks and Recreation Dept. to reapply for Tree City USA award in autumn for 1999. Tree Foundation of Kern to organize Arbor Day proclamation for Panorama Park Project in April, 2000.

SHORT TERM (autumn 1999 thru 2000)

1. Create and convene a 50 X 2050 Master Planning subcommittee to target areas for achieving 50% canopy cover.

2. Establish target shade ratings and awards program for compliance.
Tree Foundation - Autumn 1999

3. Establish Green Corridor subcommittee to identify existing and targeted green corridors.

4. Organize annually Urban Forest Celebration to promote awareness and pride in our urban forests.
All.

5. Collect, produce and disseminate list of recommended tree species list for small, medium and large trees in all three climate zones.
Tree Foundation Technical Advisory Committee

6. Launch Proper Pruning Pays public awareness campaign and encourage people and city and county to use only certified arborists and tree services that use ISA tree pruning standards.
Tree Foundation - Autumn 1999

INTERMEDIATE TERM (2000 TO 2001)

1. Collect and disseminate fire safe information and obtain shareholder participation in establishing guidelines for fire safe communities, especially in the newly developing northeast.
Tree Foundation - Technical Advisory Committee

2. Promote classes in urban forestry related topics.

3. Prioritize targets to establish basis for age diversification and replacement maintenance schedules and budgets. Hire staff urban forester for City of Bakersfield.

LONG TERM (2001 and beyond)

1. Establish and empower a Tree Canopy Corps to help implement the 50 X 2050 plan.
2. Establish a demonstration site for tree species, irrigation, planting procedures, ground cover alternatives, tree pruning techniques, etc. at Metropolitan Recreation Complex, or Kern County Museum.

8. RECOMMENDED TREE ORDINANCES

Seamless tree ordinances between the City of Bakersfield and the County of Kern are hereby proposed to support the following two goals:

- o To have healthy, sustainable urban forests in all of Kern County conducive to vibrant, liveable, close-knit communities.
- o To increase shade canopy to 50% in common areas* by 2050, and to 30% overall.

* Common areas include streets, sidewalks, pedestrian walkways, parks, play grounds, and parking lots.

Ordinances address tree planting, siting and species selection as well as tree maintenance and preservation for both street trees and trees in new residential and non-residential developments.

TREE PLANTING ORDINANCES

Exhibit 1 Recommended and not recommended fire safe species list, small, medium and large trees for valley floor, high desert and mountain climate zones.

Exhibit 2 Recommended planting procedure, including irrigation and ground cover options.

Minimum spacing guidelines:

Small trees (15 to 30 ft)	Need 9 sq ft or more open space at base.
Medium trees (30 to 50 ft)	Need 16 sq ft open space at base.
Large trees (50 ft +)	Need 25 sq ft open space at base.

Do not plant trees within 35 ft of street intersection, 20 ft within alley corner, or 10 ft of fire plug/hydrant.

Recommended shade ratings & guidelines. Strive for 50% shade canopy at 15 years.

Based on City of Davis' recommendations for parking lots. Peripheral plantings will contain the heat island effect. Together with median plantings, strive for one tree per four cars.

Based on City of Redding's recommendations for new developments.

- One or more 15-gal tree per 500 sq ft of residential living space.
- One or more 15-gal tree per 1,000 sq ft of office/retail/commercial space.
- One or more 15-gal tree per 2,000 sq ft of covered industrial space.

o To ensure fire safety in foothills, approved planting plans for residential and non-residential developments require authorization by licensed landscape architect or certified arborist.

TREE MAINTENANCE ORDINANCES

Follow IAS (International Society of Arboriculture) proposed pruning guidelines.

- o Tree topping is prohibited because it ruins the health and shape of trees forever.
- o Make all cuts at the branch collar to ensure proper healing of the wound.

- o Prune less than 30% of canopy every 3 years on younger trees and less than 20% on older trees to ensure sufficient leaves remain for tree survival.

TREE PRESERVATION/PROTECTION ORDINANCES

- o Define and identify heritage, protected, champion, and registered trees.
- o Develop tree removal guidelines. Limit authorization to remove to property owner.

City of Redding policy re: tree protection during construction is available by mail.

- o Vandalism

ORDINANCE ENFORCEMENT

- o \$1,000 fine per incident (per tree) or assessed value of tree, whichever is greater.

SAMPLE ORDINANCES FROM COMPARABLE CITY

City of Visalia (available by mail on request from the Tree Foundation of Kern.)

9. DISTRIBUTION PLAN

Through the end of 1999, this document will be marketed to 100 elected and appointed officials, community leaders and funders to build support for our long term vision of community forests in Kern County.

Annual meetings will be held with all authors of this strategic plan and other interested parties to evaluate performance to plan and make revisions and adjustments as necessary.

