



NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Sarah Beckman
sarah@balboapark.org, 619-331-1109

For immediate release
Images available on request

Balboa Park Conservancy, City Park and Recreation Announce Joint Urban Forestry Project of More Than \$700,000 Conservancy Receives \$378,297 State Grant to Plant 500 Trees in Balboa Park

San Diego, CA; June 29, 2017 — The Balboa Park Conservancy has received a \$378,297 state grant to plant 500 trees in Balboa Park over the next two years, helping restore the park's depleted tree canopy. The project, titled Tree Balboa Park, was officially announced today by San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer at a press conference in front of Balboa Park's historic Moreton Bay fig tree.

Funded by CAL FIRE, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Tree Balboa Park was selected as part of CAL FIRE's urban forest expansion and improvement initiative through the state's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF). The project is in partnership with the City of San Diego Department of Park and Recreation, whose significant participation and in-kind contributions are \$337,702 for a project total of \$715,999. Adding 500 trees to the region's largest urban park represents a significant contribution to the city's Climate Action Plan, a core component of which is its Urban Tree Canopy Plan, whose goal is sustaining a resilient urban forest.



The grant helps reestablish Balboa Park's historic tree canopy, badly depleted, in part by the recent drought. Drought-tolerant trees will be planted to maximize greenhouse gas reduction and provide other environmental benefits, including improved air quality and reduced storm water runoff. Energy-efficient irrigation will be installed as part of Park and Recreation's in-kind contribution. The project also includes a Tree Stewards volunteer program, developed by local nonprofit Tree San Diego, that can be replicated throughout the park. Urban Corps of San Diego will provide trained youth workers to assist with tree planting. The project also includes extensive outreach activities to educate schoolchildren, park visitors, and the public about the importance of healthy urban forests and the role of trees in environmental sustainability.

In announcing the grant, John Melvin, CAL FIRE Staff Chief, Resource Protection and Improvement, stated, "We are pleased to award this grant to the Balboa Park Conservancy, which demonstrated a strong commitment to re-foresting Balboa Park. The park is an important regional urban forest resource that all San Diegans can enjoy. Along with its educational and volunteer components, this project will help achieve the state's goals of greenhouse gas emission reduction."

Tomás Herrera-Mishler, Balboa Park Conservancy CEO, accepted the award on behalf of the organization dedicated to improving the park: “Balboa Park is a precious environmental as well as cultural resource. This major award from the state demonstrates the Conservancy’s proactive stewardship as well as our charge to partner with the City of San Diego to advance the sustainability of Balboa Park.” Conservancy Board Chair Carol Chang added, “The CAL FIRE grant is an example of the Conservancy’s leadership and ongoing commitment to collaborate with all park stakeholders to achieve our collective mission of ensuring Balboa Park’s future as one of the world’s great public parks.”

“With each new tree we plant, we are making Balboa Park greener and our air cleaner,” said Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer. “This partnership is another example of San Diego’s strong commitment to addressing climate change by taking action at the local level.”

California State Senator Toni Atkins, whose district includes the City of San Diego, stated, “As a member of the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee, I wholeheartedly support California’s efforts to maintain its leadership on climate change. This collaborative project represents the remarkable progress that can be made when the state works with municipal governments and nonprofit agencies, like the Balboa Park Conservancy, to bring about significant improvements to our treasured park spaces while reducing carbon emissions.”

“The State of California and the City of San Diego share a commitment to implement carbon-reducing measures that will fight climate change,” said California State Assemblymember Todd Gloria. “This grant funding from CAL FIRE is a tremendous investment in our city’s crown jewel, and will greatly assist the Balboa Park Conservancy in filling out Balboa Park’s tree canopy while also serving as a powerful tool in the city’s continued efforts to achieve our Climate Action Plan goals.”

The Tree Balboa Park project is part of California Climate Investments, a statewide program that puts billions of cap-and-trade dollars to work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, strengthen the economy, and improve public health and the environment, particularly in disadvantaged communities. The cap-and-trade program also creates a financial incentive for industries to invest in clean technologies and develop innovative ways to reduce pollution. California Climate Investment programs include affordable housing, renewable energy, public transportation, zero-emission vehicles, environmental restoration, more sustainable agriculture, recycling, and much more. At least 35% of these investments are made in disadvantaged and low-income communities. For more information, visit <http://www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov/>.

The **Balboa Park Conservancy** was established in 2011 to ensure the preservation and enhancement of Balboa Park’s natural, cultural, and historical assets for future generations. A privately funded nonprofit organization, the Conservancy provides expertise, resources, and advocacy to envision, enhance and sustain Balboa Park for all visitors in partnership with the City of San Diego and in collaboration with other organizations in the park and the community. For more information, visit www.balboaparkconseervancy.org.

###

