

**CITY OF BAYFIELD TREE BOARD REPORT
TO THE MAYOR AND COMMON COUNCIL
FOR THE YEAR 2013**

- The Tree Board consists of the following current members, appointed annually by the Mayor: Art Ode, Volunteer City Forester; Grandon Harris, Howard Paap, Jane Edwards, Sherman Edwards, Gene Brevold, and Beth Cozzi. It meets the fourth Monday of each month at city hall except for December. Meetings are open to the public and we welcome public attendance. Martha Larson and Jessica Zuehlke have resigned due to conflict in scheduling and we thank them for their service. We have asked the Mayor to appoint Jacob Geisler as a new member for 2014.
- The Tree Board training prunes young trees and prunes small ornamental trees that encroach on sidewalks and utility wires downtown and throughout the city. This is one of its major activities. All Tree Board members are trained in the basics of proper pruning and tree care.
- The Tree Board waters newly planted trees in their first several years of growth during drought conditions or when they have been obviously neglected by homeowners.
- All trees planted within the last several years have been fertilized with Jobe's tree spikes, a very slow release fertilizer.
- The Tree Board advises the City on the species and varieties of trees to plant each year. The last few years we have planted an average of fourteen new trees each spring. Homeowners are notified on their water bill and the city web site that trees will be available for planting in the boulevard between the sidewalk and the curb and they may chose either a shade tree or a smaller ornamental tree. Although this may not be an ideal urban forestry policy, it pretty much solves the lake view problem for Bayfield, as homeowners are requested to consult with their neighbors, and if someone does not wish a tree planted in front of their home we do not do so. The Tree Board meets each spring to determine what varieties of trees to plant and makes the final selection for each location. Currently over fifty percent of street and park trees are species or varieties of maples, and this is far more than the limit of ten percent of any one genus of tree as recommended by the DNR and the Forest Service, so we are avoiding planting maples until we have a greater diversity of trees in our inventory. Luckily the Bayfield climate readily supports a great variety of potential street and park trees. Our present rate of planting just about replaces losses due to age, disease and other problems, and is about the limit of the Tree Board's current ability to manage.
- The city's street and park trees are in the main healthy and well cared for, but many are very old and we lose and have to take down a number of them every year. The city crew has the equipment and the ability to fell some of the dead and dying trees but many are too dangerous and must be done professionally. Pruning old trees is also expensive and requires a professional arborist.
- The much feared Emerald Ash Borer, which is fatal to ash tree species, has not reached our immediate area, although it has shown up in Superior. It is probably only a matter of time before it arrives. Our street tree inventory shows only a few ash trees (Mountain Ash is not a true ash species), as does the assessment of the conservancy areas done in 2011, so the city government should not have a great expense when the borer does arrive. There are some large ash trees on private property in the city and we will monitor the situation, but the real impact will be on forested areas outside of the city itself, where there are significant numbers of white, green and

blue ash trees. Insecticides have been developed that can control the infestations, and we will keep an eye on their development and practicality. At this time we have a wait and see attitude towards spraying and are keeping up on all the options. Other tree insect and disease problems are monitored and although there is always maple wilt, black knot of plum, white pine blister rust and minor insect problems, there are no epidemic conditions of any kind currently present in the city.

- The Tree Board, with the volunteer help of Jay's Tree Care, put out two EAB traps supplied by the DNR this past summer. We caught a lot of bugs that looked like the beetle but the USDA entomologist informed us that we had not caught any EABs. We will put out a trap or traps again next year if they are available.
- Art Ode, as the volunteer City Forester, continues to be always available for consultation with the Public Works Superintendent, and we have a good working relationship. Art is a member of the State of Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council, which is advisory to the Governor and the DNR, attends quarterly meetings and keeps up to date on tree problems and grant opportunities through this and other professional groups. He was recently appointed to a third three-year term. He is readily available to meet with homeowners regarding insect and disease diagnoses and general plant questions at no charge as a public service. Art also oversees the planting of new trees and acts as purchaser for new trees, and oversees, with Tom, any contracted tree work. Art attends regional meetings of City Foresters in Wausau as time and funds are available.
- In relation to his Urban Forestry Council work, Art would like remind the Council and Mayor of a changing attitude of the Forest Service and the DNR towards grant funding for municipal forestry projects. It has become apparent that future grant opportunities will mostly emphasize cooperation on joint funding with other area municipalities and non-governmental organizations. There may be significant funding opportunities in the future but they will be difficult to obtain unless in cooperation with other entities. We applied for a major grant for tree planting in conjunction with Ashland, Washburn and Red Cliff last year but were not successful.
- Our current budget allotment for city and park trees is less than adequate but we will be able to function if there are no cuts to it. ***We do need to have the old fire pumper truck repaired before next year so we don't have to carry water for trees in buckets from homeowner's water spigots.***
- At present Art is able to enter data into the computerized tree inventory and is keeping it up to date.
- The conservancy areas of the city are becoming a maintenance problem which is more and more obvious to the public and is becoming an issue with abutting property owners. The city needs a comprehensive approach to maintenance of these areas, which harbor invasive species, unsafe trees, and are often an unwelcome eyesore in a community with a tourist economy. The city needs a comprehensive ordinance to address the desire of homeowners to enjoy their lake view, and in general how to manage these areas.
- The Tree Board is currently evaluating the Tree and Shrub Ordinance to be sure the City has all the authority it needs in the advent of an EAB infestation or any other pest or disease problem. We will present our revisions to the Mayor and Council for their consideration in February.
- Finally, the city has been a Tree City USA for thirteen years and looks forward to the future. We can be justifiably proud of our urban forest.