Stewarding Seattle’s Urban Forest: The Tree Ambassador Project

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October 2013
Seattle reLeaf’s Mission

Increase canopy cover on private property by increasing residents’ awareness of the urban forest and engaging residents in urban forest stewardship.
Tree Ambassador

• Grant funding for pilot from USFS
• 40 volunteers
• Training in:
  – Community engagement
  – Forestry basics
• Volunteer-led projects
Partnership

- Strong partnership between SPU, SDOT, and Forterra
- Supports and expands SDOT’s community engagement goals
- Focus on trees and landscapes in the Right of Way
Tree Walks

- Public events led by volunteers
- Self-guided versions available on website
- Very popular!
Street Tree Mulching

• Weeding, stake removal, mulching of young street trees

• Tools, mulch provided
Landscape Renewal

- Publicly owned residential landscapes
- Invasive species removal
- Tools, mulch provided
Volunteer Support

- Jackets, name tags
- Annual picnic
- Awards for outstanding volunteers
2013 Accomplishments

• 8 Tree Walks
• 2 Street Tree Mulchings
• 4 Landscape Renewals
• 2 workshops
• Engaged over 300 people
Urban Forest Stewardship Plan

Tree Ambassador is integral to meeting the goals of the UFSP:

1. Create an ethic of stewardship
2. Improving health of the urban forest
Opportunities & Challenges

• Opportunities: Expansion of the program
  – More volunteers
  – Better geographic coverage
  – Regular public events and communications
  – Deeper engagement of target audiences

• Challenges: Funding
  – Grant funding about to expire
  – 340 of 640 staff hours from Forterra will be lost
Questions?