

City/Utility Company Tree Removal and Replacement Agreement Model Available

Utility companies utilize City rights-of-way for the purpose of locating, operating and maintaining transmission and distribution power lines. Conflicts often arise when utility companies need to remove problem trees (trees that are dead, diseased, constitute a hazard, or are a public nuisance) growing within the City rights-of-way. The Montana Urban and Community Forestry Association (MUCFA) has developed a model City/Utility Company Tree Removal and Replacement Agreement.

The model is based on an agreement negotiated between the City of Helena, MT and NorthWestern Energy Company in 2013. The Agreement provides a model for cities/towns, and utility companies to negotiate and define roles and responsibilities for eliminating problem trees and planting new trees suitable to the location.

MUCFA is making the model Agreement available for use by city/town officials and utility companies. The Agreement is available on the MUCFA website at:

<http://dnrc.mt.gov/Forestry/Assistance/Urban/mucfa.asp>

Jason Herberger, City of Helena arborist says "The agreement we put together with NorthWestern Energy has greatly improved our working relationship with the power company and their contractors. It allowed us to be very well informed about the tree work they were doing on city-owned trees. Additionally, it helped the community feel better about the removal of said trees and their replacement. It has worked out great for all involved."

Scott Bernhardt, Manager of Vegetation Management for NorthWestern Energy says, "This agreement has resulted in a win-win for both the City and NorthWestern. The boulevard trees that were removed needed to be constantly trimmed by both the city to provide sidewalk and street clearance and the utility to provide required clearance to the power line. Over time, with this program, I hope we are able to increase public awareness of the importance of the right tree in the right place."

If you have any questions or comments about the Agreement, please call Patrick Plantenberg, MUCFA Chair: 1-406-431-4615 or m2andp2@mt.net