

2010 02 24 Alamosa Trees
by Marilyn Loser

New Trees for Cole Park

Yahoo! Alamosa and the Alamosa Tree Board received a \$1500 grant from the Colorado Tree Coalition (CTC) for “Cole Park Revitalization.” The Department of Parks & Recreation will contribute another \$3000, as well as time and equipment, to plant 26 new trees this summer. We’ll be calling on community members to help plant and to learn about our new trees.

As most *Courier* readers know, Alamosa is Spanish for “grove of cottonwoods.” Cole Park has 64 cottonwoods, 75 Siberian elms, and 21 willows. Most of them were planted in 1937. Unfortunately, these trees are nearing the end of their lifespan.

The goal of the project is to revitalize Cole Park by initially planting a species-diverse variety of 26 deciduous trees, 24 of which are on the Alamosa Tree Board approved list. These will be trees that tend to have longer lifespans, be more xeric and better suited for sustainability than many of the original trees, which were planted for quick growth and ease of procurement.

The plan is to start at the south end of the park near the proposed new city complex. Once trees are in full leaf this summer, a certified arborist will assess the existing trees in that area. Then planting sites for the new trees will be selected.

All trees will have labels so we can check their progress through the years. Four each of the following six species are on the planting list: “New Horizon” Elm, Hackberry, “Shademaster” Honeylocust, “Autumn Blaze” Maple, Bur Oak, and Ash (perhaps “Oak-leafed”). Specimens of each species are growing in town and seem to be doing well – most were planted in the last few years. As an experiment, two Kentucky Coffee trees are on the list. I don’t know of any currently growing in Alamosa – please let me know if you do!

Species selection is extremely important, but so is tree source. The City will procure trees from Alamosa vendors, who provide stock that is grown in an environment as similar to ours as possible.

I thank Heinz Bergann, Director of Alamosa Parks and Recreation, for his enthusiasm, time and fine work on the grant application.

It’s windy today as I write this, so bare tree limbs thrash about outside my window. I think of the grand trees in Cole Park and of how much so many people enjoy the summer canopy of green leaves. I want our children and grandchildren to have a similar wonderful experience, so it’s time to look towards the future and start replacing trees that are near the end of their lives.

We’re not the only small community in Colorado experiencing the need to remove/replace old trees and plant a wider variety of species. Our neighboring towns of La Veta and Poncha Springs, as well as the western slope community of Olathe, also received CTC grants (only 14 were awarded state wide).

Poncha Springs will remove “11 large, old cottonwoods that are creating a hazard to the community due to their condition of health.” La Veta needs help in removing old Boxelders (I don’t believe

Cole Park has any, but there are some in downtown) and pruning of large limbs broken during an early 2009 fall snowstorm.

The town of Olathe will remove three cottonwoods and a willow from Lion's Park and replace them with six species not growing there. Hackberry and Kentucky Coffeetree are on their list as well as ours. I don't think the other four species would not be hardy enough for Alamosa.

One of their listed goals is "to demonstrate that other species of trees besides cottonwoods and elms will grow in Olathe." By planting trees in such a highly visible location they hope "to set an example for developers, business owners and citizens to follow." Hear! Hear!

Other tree news: Alamosa is a Tree City for the 20th year! Alamosa will be celebrating Arbor Week from April 25 – May 1. Stay tuned for the schedule.

If you have comments or questions please email me at marilyn@alamosatrees.net . Visit the tree list at alamosatrees.net to find out more about the listed species. And please follow the blog at alamosatrees.net/blog, and contribute to the discussion.

"A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in."
Greek proverb