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Trees for Missoula now a program of Climate Smart Missoula

MISSOULA, Mont. – Trees for Missoula (TFM) is now officially a program of Climate Smart Missoula!. After twelve years of vision, service, and education, Trees for Missoula's founder and volunteer Executive Director, Karen Sippy, is passing the torch of this wildly successful program to Climate Smart Missoula.

"Karen grew an amazing program, benefitting our whole community, and we are honored to to carry on Trees for Missoula's mission of promoting a healthy and sustainable urban forest through planning, planting, stewardship, education, and advocacy," said Amy Cilimburg, Climate Smart Missoula's Executive Director.

Of this transition, Karen Sippy notes: "I know the program I launched is now in excellent hands, and the TFM fans and volunteers will no doubt continue to build an equitable and thriving urban forest that our community can be proud of. Whether downtown, along busy thoroughfares, or in any neighborhood, let's all plant and care for the trees we all love. I"ll be here to help."

Since 2011, Trees for Missoula has assisted the city's Urban Forestry department in their work to plant, maintain, and advocate for public trees. TFM lent financial and volunteer support to plant and prune trees, conduct an inventory of public trees, build a gravel bed nursery to hold bare root trees for future plantings, and engage in outreach and advocacy efforts on behalf of the urban forest. In 2015, Trees for Missoula installed a suspended pavement system at the Missoula Art Park in downtown Missoula. The site was Montana's first demonstration of suspended pavement, a technology that provides the necessary underground space for tree roots to grow and thrive. Along with Climate Smart and local partners, TFM helped to install two "shade shelters" – fabricated from reclaimed lumber from City trees – along the Bitterroot Bike Trail (2019) and at Bellevue park (2021).

As Climate Smart brings Trees for Missoula into their programmatic work, they will increasingly address the needs of and opportunities for urban trees given the climate crisis. Urban trees provide numerous ecological, social, and economic benefits and play a vital role in building a resilient community. Urban trees aid in carbon sequestration and storage, mitigate the urban heat island effect, protect against extreme weather events, and reduce energy use and associated costs. Maintaining a healthy urban forest is one of the best ways to build resilience to climate change impacts.

Susan Teitelman, Climate Resilience Specialist with Climate Smart Missoula, adds: "At Climate Smart, we're eager to build upon the work of Trees for Missoula. We're grateful to Karen and her volunteers for creating and growing a highly successful initiative, and we aim to have the

same dedication as we advocate for a healthy urban forest that will benefit the entire Missoula community."

For twelve years, Trees for Missoula received fiscal sponsorship and dedicated support through Friends of Missoula Parks. This sponsorship gave TFM the ability to apply for foundation grants and offer tax benefits to their donors. Climate Smart is grateful for their assistance and leadership.

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Climate Smart Missoula builds and accelerates climate solutions for Missoula and beyond, through collaborative programs, advocacy and catalyzing diverse climate leadership. Since its inception in 2015, Climate Smart Missoula has collaborated with government entities, community groups, individual advocates, and grassroot organizations to create crucial networks, fostering a resilient Missoula and Montana, for this generation and the next.

Trees for Missoula is committed to the belief that a healthy urban forest is a critical element of a livable urban environment. Our mission is to promote a healthier and sustainable urban forest through community planning, planting, stewardship, education, and advocacy.