

Growing Friends of Helena

Mission Statement

(Adopted September 12, 1996)

The purpose of Growing Friends is to enrich the quality of life in the Helena, Montana area with extensive plantings of suitable, attractive, diverse, and well-cared-for trees and shrubs.

Goals

The long-term goals of Growing Friends are to have trees and shrubs:

1. prominently adding to the character and appearance of every residential and commercial neighborhood.
2. significantly enriching every new commercial and institutional development.
3. noticeably enhancing local government properties so that they set a standard for the community.
4. widely understood and valued by Helena area residents.
5. strongly encouraged by local government policies.
6. permanently provided for by public and private funding and other mechanisms.

Activities

Growing Friends works to achieve its goals by funding and conducting planting projects, by educating the public and decision-makers, and by encouraging and assisting local governments.

Planting Projects. Growing Friends conducts its own planting projects, including the Boulevard Tree Program, and makes matching grants to support others through its Grants Program. Growing Friends also recruits and organizes volunteers for planting projects, and provides design and planting advice.

Public Education Projects. Growing Friends educates the public about the desirability of increasing the number of suitable and well-maintained trees and shrubs in the community through its annual Landscaping Awards Program, by producing and distributing educational materials, by co-sponsoring workshops, and by working directly with private sector decision makers.

Local Government Projects. Growing Friends encourages local government decision-makers and staff to assign a high priority to trees and shrubs in the community by participating in the development of community plans and ordinances addressing that subject, by commenting on pending local government decisions affecting trees and shrubs, and by raising money and providing other support for relevant local government

activities.

Criteria

In deciding which **planting** projects to become involved in, Growing Friends assigns the highest priority to projects which best satisfy the following criteria:

The project:

- a. (mandatory) provides significant public benefits and only incidental private ones.
- b. (mandatory) asks for assistance from Growing Friends that is feasible, given its resources.
- c. is unlikely to be conducted without Growing Friends' involvement.
- d. helps Growing Friends to achieve a desirable diversity among its projects.
- e. has education or demonstration value.

The location:

- f. (mandatory) is one through or by which significant numbers of Helena area residents regularly pass.
- g. is one in which Helena area residents can meet and interact.
- h. currently lacks adequate and sufficient trees and shrubs.

The planting:

- i. uses plants and techniques appropriate to Helena's climate and conditions.
- j. includes trees.
- k. is conducted in accordance with a landscaping plan.
- l. will be aesthetically pleasing and increase the attractiveness of its area.
- m. will be adequately maintained and relatively long-lived.

In deciding which **public education** and **government assistance** projects to become involved in, Growing Friends assigns the highest priority to projects which offer the best chance of helping it to achieve its goals and which are feasible, given its resources.

Structure

Growing Friends is nonpartisan and nonpolitical. It is a membership organization governed by a board of directors elected by its members. Growing Friends has no staff or office and, therefore, has a minimum of overhead expenses. The organization is a Montana nonprofit corporation. It is exempt from federal income taxation under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Funding

The financial support for Growing Friends comes primarily from its members and from Trash For Trees, a semi-annual recycling drive. The organization also accepts bequests, and seeks contributions from Helena area businesses. All contributions to Growing Friends are deductible as charitable contributions for federal and state income tax purposes.