Oklahoma City Parks Tree Inventory Frequently Asked Questions

What is a tree inventory?

For well over a century, foresters have counted trees and taken inventory of their sizes in order to estimate lumber quantities and harvesting potential. Urban tree inventories have been documented throughout the 1900s in an effort to identify tree counts and variety diversity. Many urban tree inventories were used to specifically track street tree declining populations during the Dutch elm disease outbreak of the 1930s, 40s and 50s. In addition, individual park and campus tree inventories have routinely been conducted as part of master planning efforts. Tree inventories using sampling methods over an entire area are much more common than those that specifically locate and identify individual trees to compile the inventory.

Does a tree inventory only count trees?

In the past, many tree inventories have only provided tree counts or aerial photography samplings of canopy cover across a park, campus, community or region. With today's technology, individual GPS locations, laser validated tree heights and canopy spreads and environmental benefits are all possible and attainable.

What is the purpose of the Oklahoma City Parks Tree Inventory?

The Oklahoma City Parks Tree Inventory Project has many purposes. It provides an accurate tree count, GPS location and variety identification for each of the trees located in the developed and usable areas of the 135 parks within the Oklahoma City parks system. It also identifies the height, spread and condition for each of the individual 19,632 trees inventoried. The data allows for more proactive planning to protect, preserve and grow this valuable urban forest. The inventory also enables strategic decisions to replace trees noted as poor condition, inferior varieties, invasive species or diseased trees over a given period of time. The data can also be used to plan replacement selections across the entire park system rather than focusing on one park at a time.

Why was this tree inventory limited to Oklahoma City parks?

The 135 identified neighborhood and regional parks offered a reasonable starting place for the inventory. Future tree inventories are possible for other city properties, including but not limited to street trees, water reservoirs, the Oklahoma City Zoo, the University of Oklahoma medical complex, etc. Additional tree inventory data can be added to the urban canopy forestry map and layered together to create a more comprehensive analysis of a larger area of the city or region.

How many parks and how many trees were inventoried?

The inventory includes 19,632 individual trees located within 135 neighborhood and regional parks.

What tree experts were used to collect and compile the data?

The nationally recognized Davey Resource Group gathered the data and produced the tree inventory report with the assistance of a local tree experts committee assembled by the Oklahoma City Community Foundation and Oklahoma Forestry Services.

Who funded the tree inventory project?

The project was funded by the Oklahoma City Community Foundation with an additional contribution provided by Oklahoma Forestry Services.

Why did the Oklahoma City Community Foundation choose to fund this project?

Since 1991, the Oklahoma City Community Foundation has invested in beautifying and improving public lands in central Oklahoma through our Margaret Annis Boys Trust and our Parks & Public Space Initiative. The inventory project was identified as an area of need in the Oklahoma City Parks Master Plan and aligns with priorities of our Parks and Public Space Initiative.

How long did it take to collect the data and produce the report?

Davey Resource Group began collecting data in June 2016 and finalized the report in February 2017.

Does the Oklahoma City Parks Tree Inventory include neighborhood parks?

The inventory includes both regional and neighborhood parks. It does not include specialty parks like the Oklahoma City Zoo, Martin Nature Park or Myriad Gardens. It also does not include golf courses, designated trails, median parks or natural /undeveloped park land in Bluff Creek and Trosper parks.

Has Oklahoma City previously conducted a tree inventory?

Past tree inventories have been conducted for the Oklahoma City Zoo and the Margaret Annis Boys Arboretum at Will Rogers Park properties. Inventories of other parks have been limited to occasional tree lists as part of a park planning or renovation project. To the best of our knowledge, a comprehensive tree inventory of the entire Oklahoma City park system has never been conducted.

Can this tree inventory ever be updated or is it static for 2016?

The software purchased through the tree inventory project is designed to be a fluid, tree management system and is fully capable of being updated with new tree plantings, tree removals, work orders and storm damage notations.

Who is responsible for updating and managing the tree inventory now that it has been created?

At this time, the forestry division of the Oklahoma City Parks & Recreation Department is responsible for updating and managing the tree inventory database.

What happens when trees die or are removed because of storms?

Any tree removal, limb modification or tree addition is entered into the tree inventory database. The ability to review park activity over a period of time will be a great benefit to short and long-term planning by the parks department.

How do you know when a tree has been removed or added to the inventory?

Any tree added or removed from a park property will be noted in the inventory. Each tree has an individual identification number that is automatically assigned when entered into the inventory. All maintenance activity is entered and tracked for each tree by its corresponding identification number. The number stays with each tree in the inventory and is never removed or reused.

What other cities have conducted tree inventories?

Kansas City, Dallas, Denver and Austin have all conducted recent comprehensive tree inventories. In Oklahoma, the cities of Tulsa and Enid, as well as the Oklahoma State University campus have completed some version of a tree inventory. The Oklahoma City Parks Tree Inventory is the first inventory conducted with Davey Resource Group's newest version of i-Tree Eco.