

CENTURY TREES

FEBRUARY 2010

TREES WRAPPED IN SILK *THE CENTURY TREE PROJECT*

Lake Oswego's Centennial Celebration kicked-off this January. As part of the celebration, you may have noticed some very old trees wrapped in golden silk. This art installation, on display through February 22, is part of an ongoing centennial project, the Century Tree Project.

The Century Tree Project seeks out Lake Oswego trees that are at least 100 years old. The City has asked residents to nominate trees they believe have reached that age. An arborist visits the trees, using historic photos and coring to determine if they are indeed over 100.

So far, 22 trees have been designated century trees. Ten were dressed in silk for the installation, each with a slightly different design. Also as part of the installation, a commemorative century tree ornament, designed and made by Ostrom Glass and Metal Works, will hang on the first twenty nominated and will be given to "the tree discoverers" as a memento thereafter. A century tree plaque with the age of the tree is placed under every 100 year-old tree.

Silk was chosen for the art installation because it conveys the high status of these trees, which are the largest and oldest living beings in the City. These trees are now in their "golden" years, and gold symbolizes their age and status. Some of these grand old trees are a direct link back to the time of the Native Americans, at 150 or more years old. Most also link to early white settlement in the late 1800's.

For more information about this project, contact Nicole Roskos, Community Forestry Coordinator at 503-675-2543 or nroskos@ci.oswego.or.us. Century Tree nominations will be accepted until July 1. Forms are available online at www.ci.oswego.or.us/plan/nature/Century_Tree_Project.pdf or at the Citizen Information Center in City Hall, 380 A Avenue.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CENTURY TREES *LINK TO NATIVE AMERICANS*

"...the Indian trail to Oswego lay like a frayed brown ribbon gently placed between the masses of giant fir trees above the Willamette River..." writes Mary Goodall, the first lines of her Oregon's Iron Dream. At that time, Lake Oswego was a forest of giant old growth trees such as Douglas-firs and Red Cedars.



Mr. and Mrs. Holten marriage photo. Many say the Peg tree is the large tree in the forefront, and some argue that it is one of the trees in the background.



Glenmarrie Sequoia - planted by Parker Farnsworth Morrey.

These trees were essential to Native lifeways: they made canoes from Douglas-firs, and wove fishing nets from its roots. Red Cedars were used for everything from housing to clothing, ropes, blankets, baskets, totem poles, and ceremonial objects.

Three of the trees identified were growing here during the time of the first peoples, the Kalapuyans and Clowewallas. They are all Douglas-firs: the oldest on a trail at the end of Brookside Road (in Iron Mtn. Park), the Peg Tree in Old Town, and the Firwood Road Douglas-fir (see map inside). Two of them were cored to provide more precise ages. The Iron Mountain tree is over 300 years old, and the Firwood Road Douglas-fir is 175 years. The famous Peg Tree has not been cored because its bark is too thick for a standard corer. Through historical data describing it as a meeting place and a Sunday school dating after the 1850's, and analyzing its size on an 1936 aerial photo in comparison to today, the Peg Tree's age has been determined to be at least 200 years. A lantern was hung on the peg to light town meetings in Oswego. The hole is still visible, but the peg is now kept at the Heritage House.

THE BENEFIT OF CENTURY TREES

The century trees are a living tie between Lake Oswego residents today and denizens of the past. Some remind us of the great, ancient forest and native peoples that once were here; others evoke the early settlers who lovingly planted them. Pretty remarkable. Why else do big old trees matter? Besides their historical significance and beauty, they bestow huge health and economic benefits.

Carbon Dioxide absorption

Old trees mean a lot to the reality of global climate change. They reduce and retain carbon dioxide in the atmosphere through direct sequestration into tree biomass. Simply, the bigger the tree, the more carbon stored. About 51,000 tons of carbon lies in Lake Oswego's street trees—that's the same amount of carbon that would be emitted if you drove your car from Lake Oswego to the sun, 93 million miles away. One mature tree alone can absorb almost 50 pounds of carbon dioxide every year.

Air Quality

The bigger a tree, the more it cleans the air. Annually, 32,000 pounds of pollutants (ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and particulate matter among other things) are removed by Lake Oswego trees, greatly improving the city's air quality. The pollution absorbed by 300 trees will counterbalance the air pollution produced by one person over their entire lifetime.

Stormwater Absorption

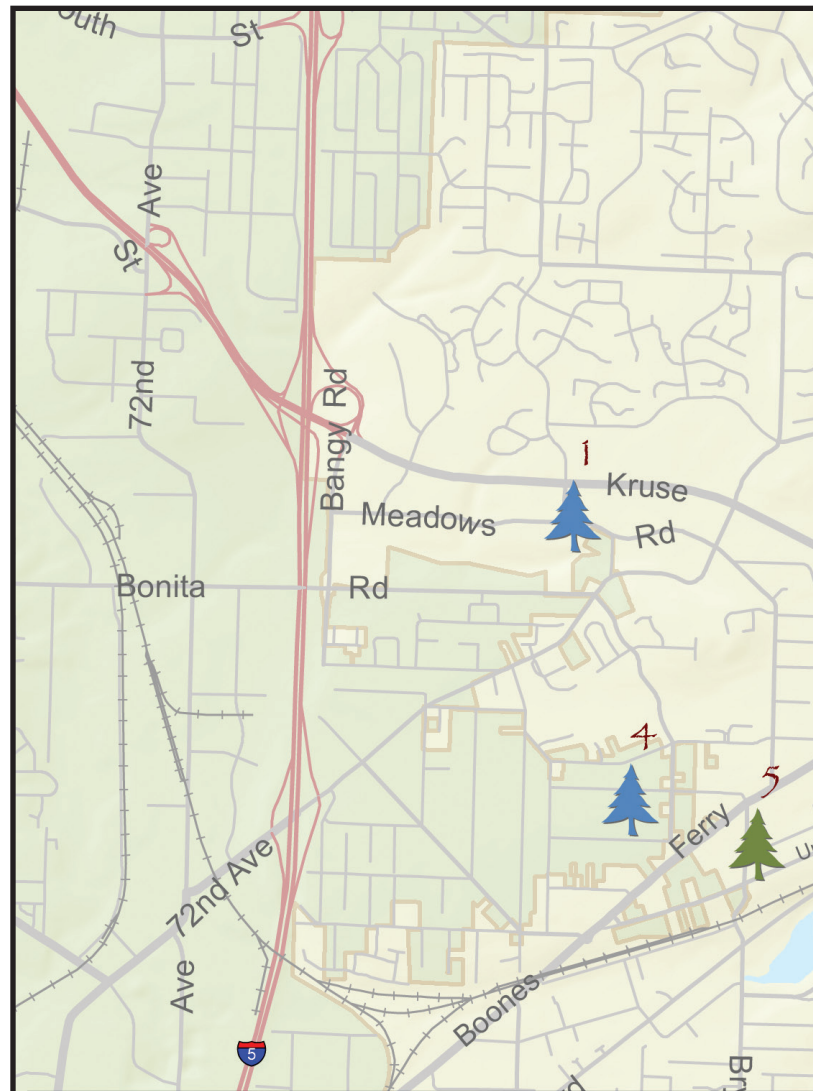
Big trees have a larger leaf surface area, providing greater water services. Besides reducing the need for stormwater facilities, trees act as filters that help purify water and recharge groundwater resource. Lake Oswego's street tree canopy intercepts 31,581,200 gallons of water per year (about 50 Olympic swimming pool's worth), lowering the burden on both streams and the stormwater conveyance system.

Energy Savings

In the summer, trees shade and cool houses and reduce the cost of cooling houses. When planted strategically, they also block wind in the winter, reducing the need for both air conditioning and heating. Electricity saved from trees through the city annually is 1,239 MWh (megawatt hours), enough to power over 100 homes for an entire year. Natural gas savings are 37,221 therms annually—the average annual usage of almost 70 homes combined.

Real Estate Value

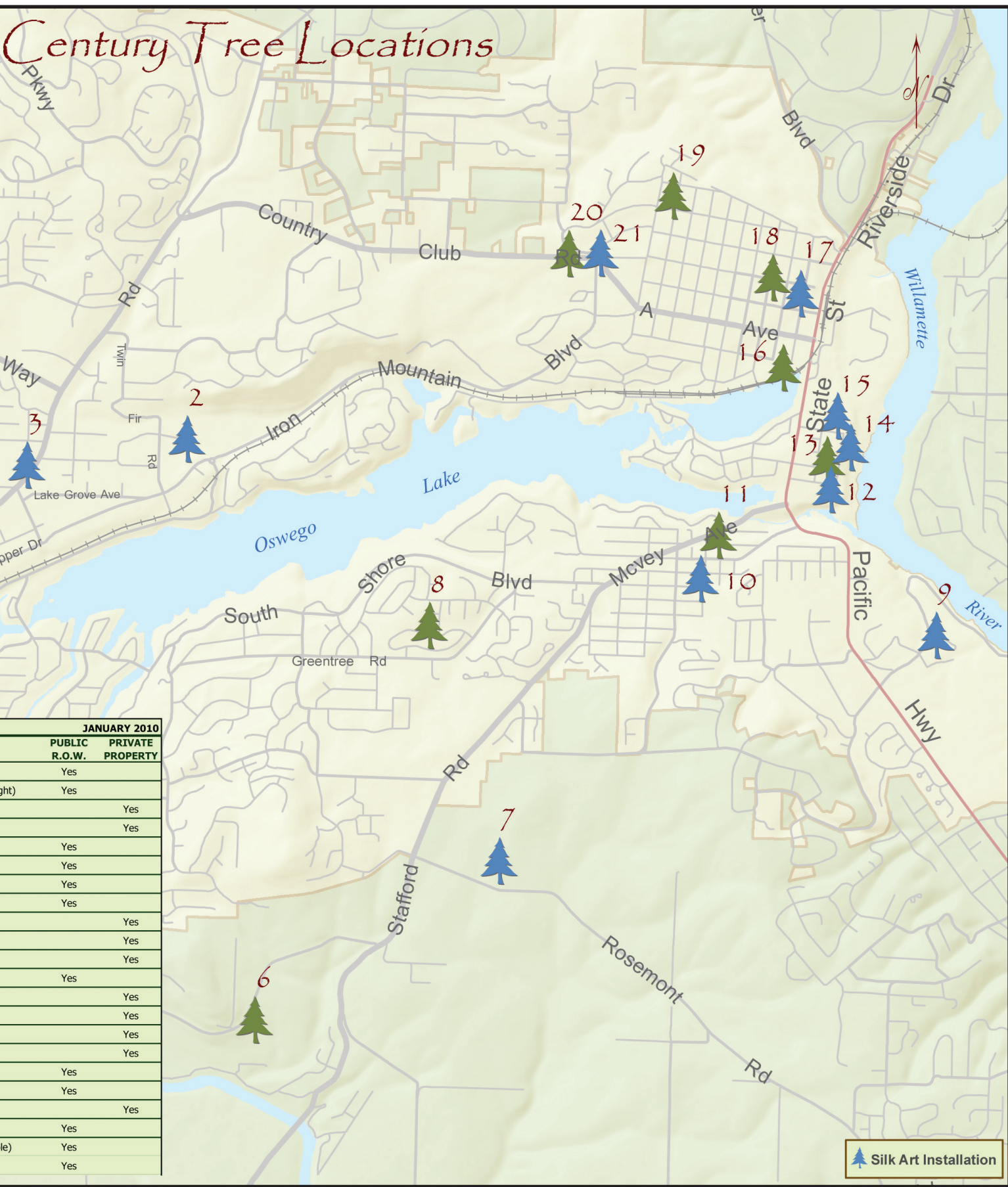
Big trees add value to your property. In Lake Oswego, more than 1.9 million in property resale value per year is due to the presence of trees. According to Northwest Builder Magazine, one mature tree can add approximately \$6,000 to a property's value.



LAKE OSWEGO CENTURY TREES TO DATE

#	TREE SPECIES	AGE ESTIMATE	SITE ADDRESS
1	4 Oregon white oaks (<i>Quercus garryana</i>)	~130	Meadows Road
2	Douglas-fir (<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>)	300+	End of Brookside Road (trail to left, then veer right)
3	Douglas-fir (<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>)	~120	15775 Boones Ferry Road
4	Douglas-fir (<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>)	~175	5030 Firwood Road
5	Douglas-fir grove (<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>)	~115	Bryant Road
6	Camperdown elm (<i>Ulmus glabra</i>)	~100+	2300 Childs Road
7a	giant sequoia (<i>Sequoiadendron giganteum</i>)	100+	195 Rosemont Road
7b	ponderosa pine (<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>)	100+	195 Rosemont Road
8	Oregon white oak (<i>Quercus garryana</i>)	150+	1421 Greentree Circle
9	giant sequoia (<i>Sequoiadendron giganteum</i>)	115+	3025 Stonebridge Way
10	black walnut (<i>Juglans nigra</i>)	130+	1018 Laurel Street
11	redwood (<i>Sequoia sempervirens</i>)	120+	McVey and Erickson
12	2 sugar maples (<i>Acer saccharum</i>)	~130	412 Furnace Street
13	western redcedar (<i>Thuja plicata</i>)	~130	398 Furnace Street
14	2 deodar cedars (<i>Cedrus deodara</i>)	~150	302 Furnace Street
15	Douglas-fir (<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>)	200+	141 Leonard Street (Peg Tree)
16	Douglas-fir grove (<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>)	~110	Millennium Plaza
17	American elm (<i>Ulmus americana</i>)	130+	1st Street between B-C Avenues
18	sugar maple (<i>Acer saccharum</i>)	~130	3rd Street and C Avenue
19	western redcedar (<i>Thuja plicata</i>)	~115	Between 868 and 832 9th Street
20	Douglas-fir grove (<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>)	~130	642 Iron Mountain Blvd (behind house, accessible via driveway)
21	Douglas-fir (<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>)	~150	Country Club and C Avenue

Century Tree Locations



JANUARY 2010	
PUBLIC R.O.W.	PRIVATE PROPERTY
Yes	
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 Silk Art Installation



THE MAN WHO LOVED TREES

“The story of Glenmorrie is that of a man who loved trees,” explains Goodall. Parker Farnsworth Morrey, the first president of Portland General Electric, visited his farm by river boat, the land between the Bullock claim (Marylhurst College) and Sucker Creek. He built an estate with orchards of fruit and nut trees, and left much of the land wild, and made other parts into a park-like setting accessible with foothills and roadways. He hired English landscape garden John Gower to oversee crews of Chinese laborers to do the plantings, but among this pleasure-garden, “the best of the native trees were saved and thinning was done to encourage larger trees.” The native trees that were preserved included “Douglas-fir, White Fir, Western Red Cedar, Western Dogwood, Oregon Maple, Hemlock, Port Orford Cedar, and Red Alder.” He also planted “the Giant Sequoia..., the Magnolia, the Tamarack, the English Holly, the Hawthorn, the Cryptomeria and the Empress tree... another favorite was the Camperdownii Elm.” His choice in trees was so wise that many of the same species were chosen for Hoyt Arboretum twenty years later. The people who live there now “planned their homes in relation to the trees of Glenmorrie and have a constant reminder of the man who loved trees.”



HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CENTURY TREES

LINK TO EARLY SETTLERS

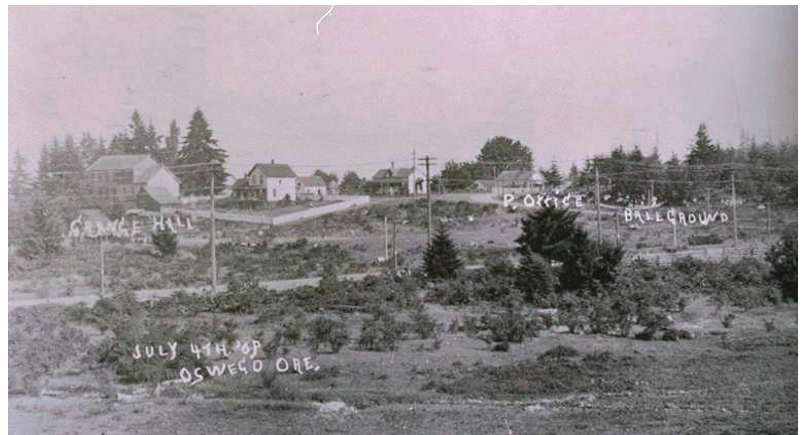
Trees were also essential in Lake Oswego’s early settler history, used for buildings and for fuel. The ancient forest began to thin when the sawmill was constructed on Sucker Creek in the 1850s, and many more trees became charcoal in the iron furnace that was the engine of the City’s early growth. The settlers protected some of the trees, such as those recognized as the three oldest century trees - the Peg Tree, Old Town Douglas-firs, and Glenmorrie.

The Peg Tree was saved and there is evidence that early residents enjoyed a grove of great Fir trees in Old Town, as described below in the words of Mrs. G. Howard Pettinger, an Old Town resident in the late 1800’s:

The streets were roadways winding along among fir trees older than any person living now... there was great waste in the woods in the cutting of trees to feed the charcoal kilns and there was wood for fuel all over the place. All you had to do was to gather it and bring it in. Later, this source gave out and a price was demanded for wood by the cord. At first you didn’t have to have permission to cut down any tree you wanted to cut. If you made a statement that some beautiful old tree was blocking a roadway, the road supervisor gave permission and down came the tree.

For example, there was a great line of big heavy fir trees all along the river on Furnace Street. This tree shaded band was a public playground for young and old in both summer and winter. The men from the two big boarding houses on Furnace Street liked to sit here and rest after their work on a summer evening and watch the river boats that plied up and down between Portland and Oregon City. One morning we saw the road supervisor come along and pretty soon all our beautiful trees were cut down.

Though most the ancient trees were cut during early settlement, many were also planted by the early settlers in Old Town, such as the Deodar Cedars and the Sugar Maples marked as century trees in Old Town, and the sequoias in Glenmorrie planted by Parker Farnsworth Morrey.



Durham and Leonard Old Town 1910. The firs on the back left include the Peg Tree and some of the group of firs described by Pettinger.