

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE - THE GLENCOE PARK DISTRICT

The Glencoe Park District's mission is to "enrich lives and create memorable experiences by providing exceptional services, parks, programs and facilities". They were organized in 1912 and have been doing this for more than 100 years.

Over the past 100 years there have been many changes to the Park District and the trees have continued to grow. In 2014, the community population was approximately 8,800 people at 24 different park sites, providing a broad range of habitats and services. Included in these parks are naturalized areas with mature native oak ecosystems unique to the region.

Tom McDonald has been working for the Glencoe Park District in forestry for more than 18 years. Tom cares for the trees and horticultural beds throughout the Park District. There have been many forestry professionals before Tom who have cared for and maintained the mature wooded atmosphere that is Glencoe but Tom has been looking ahead to the future of Glencoe. He has been actively studied the age and diversity classes of the urban forest and has worked to expand both. Many of the oaks and native tree species are mature and in decline. Tom has planted native oak acorns, and seeds from other tree species, in the Glencoe Park District nursery for more than 15 years and estimates 300 - 400 trees have been planted around the community through this effort. He has tried to expand the species diversity by incorporating a broader mix of species while expanding the age diversity through his continued planting. Tom has explained what he is trying to do to the residents of Glencoe so they can improve the forest on their properties and has provided many of them with trees.

The Glencoe Park District, along with eleven other organizations, participated in the Climate Vulnerability and Adaptation workshops offered in 2014/15 at The Morton Arboretum in partnership with the Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science (NIACS). The objective of these workshops was to get feedback to the U.S. Forest Service and NIACS on realistic strategies for communities, park districts and forest preserves to assess their vulnerability to climate impacts and to adapt their operations, plant selection and practices to reduce adverse impacts to the urban forest due to climate. Experiences and information provided by the Glencoe Park District and other communities, park districts and forest preserves across the region will be used to guide organizations across the country in addressing their own climate impacts.

Every organization that manages, cares for and plants trees should be looking at what they have now (trees and resources) and what they will need for their future. The Glencoe Park District and Tom McDonald have been doing this and their thoughtful evaluation of their urban forest and continued efforts to adapt and plan for the future will provide a healthy urban forest for generations to come.