



Forestry Advisory Board Agenda

2529 High Country Court - Conference Room

September 3, 2026

8:30 AM

Call to Order

Approval of Minutes

Approve Minutes from the following Meetings: July, August, August
Special Meeting

Public Comments

New Business

Review of Significant Tree Status

Volunteer Program; Tanya and Dan

IRA Irrigation Grant

Water Conservation and Tree Health

2026 Licensed Contractor Day of Service

Urban Wood Network Update

Rules and Regs

Standards for Natural Areas

Standards for Clearing and Grubbing

Other Items to Discuss

Forestry Updates

Developing Tree Maintenance Rotation

Adjournment

Next Meeting Date

October 1, 2026 at 8:30am



Grand Junction Forestry Advisory Board Minutes -Draft

July 9, 2026

Roll Call

Board Members Present:

Joseph Chandler
Bill Cooper
Mollie Freilicher online
Dan Komlo
Kamie Long
Anna Stout online
Tanya Travis

Board Members Absent:

Earl Perry

Guests Present:

City Staff Present:

Rob Davis, Parks Supervisor, Forestry and Open Space
Cameron Walters, Communications Specialist
Anna Wirth, Admin Specialist
Sara Kinkade, Water Conservation Specialist

Meeting called to order by Bill Cooper at 8:38am.

Approval of Minutes

Kamie Long made a motion to accept the June 4 minutes. The motion was seconded by Joe Chandler and carried unanimously.

Public Comments

No Public Comments.

New Business

Sara Kinkade; GJ Water Conservation Specialist

Sara Kinkade, the City's new Water Conservation Specialist, introduced herself to the Board. Board members also introduced themselves.

Sara discussed challenges with the City's turf conversion program, noting that many completed projects have raised concerns about maintaining the health of existing trees as irrigated turf is removed. Most projects are located in the downtown area making it difficult to balance water conservation goals with preserving mature trees. Ongoing discussions with City staff have focused on identifying ways to maintain tree health while continuing to promote turf conversions.

Sara noted she is exploring a variety of water conservation strategies beyond landscaping, including consulting with staff at the water treatment plants, and is seeking as many ideas as possible to reduce water use.

Sara Kinkade asked about the potential damage sod cutting can cause to tree roots during turf conversion projects and whether there are alternative removal methods. Members noted that removing turf with sod cutters can damage tree roots, and alternatives such as cutting turf low, covering it, and using mulch were discussed.

Board members emphasized the importance of providing irrigation across the full tree root zone rather than only near the trunk, as mature tree roots often extend well beyond the canopy. Proper mulch, avoiding weed fabric near trees, and using appropriate irrigation methods were identified as key factors in maintaining tree health.

The discussion also highlighted that water conservation does not always require removing all turf. Alternatives such as native grasses, drought-tolerant groundcovers, and improved watering practices can reduce water use while preserving trees and creating more diverse landscapes.

The Board discussed the value of evaluating water savings from turf conversion projects by comparing changes in landscape type and water use. Staff noted that some previous conversions have not resulted in significant water reductions but have improved landscape health and maintenance needs. The discussion highlighted the importance of understanding the overall impact of conservation efforts and continuing to evaluate best practices for sustainable landscapes.

The Board discussed concerns about property owners discontinuing irrigation after turf conversions and the potential impact on mature trees. Staff noted that City code requires adjacent property owners to maintain watering of trees within the public right-of-way and suggested using conservation programs and available funding to help residents maintain tree health.

Anna expressed interest in developing recommendations for Council that strengthen protections for City trees, including potential updates to ordinances and enforcement practices. Board members emphasized the need for a balance between water conservation and preserving the community's urban tree canopy through education, outreach, and consistent enforcement. They also noted the importance of coordinating outreach so residents understand both their responsibility to maintain trees and available resources to help with irrigation improvements.

Tri-fold Follow-up

The Board revisited the proposal to distribute the forestry board's tri-fold informational brochure through a third-party marketing group that provides welcome packages to new homeowners.

Previously, the Board had discussed moving forward if at least 70% of the addresses reached were within city limits. Rob Davis reported that GIS review showed the percentage was significantly lower than expected, a little over 50%.

Overall, approximately 5,000 households had received welcome packages since 2023, with about 2,663 located within city limits. The marketing group's nonprofit rate would be approximately \$150 per month, compared with their typical rate of \$450–\$500 per month.

The Board discussed whether city funds should be used for outreach that also reaches residents outside city limits. Members noted concerns about potential confusion for non-city residents and possible impacts on staff time, but also recognized the value of broad tree education and the efficiency of using an existing outreach program.

Members agreed that the program could serve as one component of a larger public outreach strategy and discussed the importance of evaluating its effectiveness before making a long-term commitment.

Motion

Tanya Travis made a motion to conduct a three-month trial of the welcome package program and monitor results, including public response and any impacts on staff time. If August is unavailable, the trial will begin in September. Dan Komlo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Yes – 6 No - 0

Rob and Cameron will develop a brief script for the representatives delivering the welcome packages.

2026 Licensed Contractor Day of Service

Rob reported that discussions had taken place with Tom Ziola regarding another Licensed Contractor Day of Service in 2026. The current plan is to hold the event at Sherwood Park to continue improvement efforts in that area, although a date has not yet been selected.

Board members expressed support for following the same format as the previous year's event, noting that it had been successful and generated positive feedback. Staff indicated they were tentatively considering September.

IRA Irrigation Grant

Rob Davis and Tanya Travis will coordinate outreach to potential participants, including reviewing the list of interested property owners from the previous year and conducting additional neighborhood outreach as needed. Kamie Long offered to assist with outreach if needed.

Kamie Long reported that the next round of grant applications will open at the end of the month. While federal agency restructuring is ongoing, there have been no indications that the grant funding will be withdrawn. The program is now being referred to as the Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) grant rather than the IRA grant.

Market on Main Starts Tonight

Board members reviewed preparations for the first event. Molly, Tanya, and Jermaine were assigned to staff the booth, with setup scheduled for 4:45 p.m. at the storage facility before the event begins at 5:30 p.m. Staff discussed booth logistics, including equipment, the misting fan, water station access, and volunteer support. Members emphasized the importance of adequate setup assistance and agreed to evaluate the first event to identify any needed improvements for future markets.

Four Canyons Parkway

Rob Davis provided an update on the Four Corners Parkway/25 Road project, noting concerns with tree protection, project coordination, and the loss of several trees. He is working with the City's

Transportation Engineering and Parks and Recreation departments to improve tree protection practices and ensure forestry staff are involved earlier in future projects.

Rob Davis discussed opportunities to restore canopy by planting additional trees in nearby city right-of-way and emphasized the need for better maintenance of young trees. He also highlighted the potential value of a dedicated young tree maintenance crew and trained volunteers to support pruning and long-term tree care.

Other Items to Discuss

Rob Davis invited Kamie Long to participate in the Grand Junction Fire Department's strategic planning process, pending scheduling availability.

Rob Davis reported that CMU revised plans for its Lincoln Park Barn project to preserve more existing trees and reroute utilities to reduce tree impacts. Due to seasonal concerns, staff recommended replacing trees removed for construction with mitigation plantings rather than relocating mature trees during summer. Rob Davis commended CMU for its collaborative approach to tree preservation.

The meeting adjourned by acclamation at 10:12am.

Next Meeting – August 6 at 8:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Wirth



Grand Junction Forestry Advisory Board
Minutes -Draft
August 6, 2026

Roll Call

Board Members Present:

Bill Cooper
Dan Komlo
Kamie Long

Board Members Absent:

Joseph Chandler
Mollie Freilicher
Earl Perry
Anna Stout
Tanya Travis

Guests Present:

City Staff Present:

Rob Davis, Parks Supervisor, Forestry and Open Space
Cameron Walters, Communications Specialist
Anna Wirth, Admin Specialist
Sara Kinkade, Water Conservation Specialist
Jamie Beard, Assistant City Attorney

Meeting called to order by Bill Cooper at 8:40am.

Approval of Minutes

Since a quorum was not present, approval of the July 9 meeting minutes was postponed until the September meeting.

Public Comments

No Public Comments.

New Business

Volunteer Program; Tanya and Dan

Dan informed the Board that he had been speaking with Tanya about developing a volunteer program to support public outreach and forestry-related efforts. Potential volunteer activities could include assisting with Arbor Fest, seedling organization and delivery, IRA grant efforts, data collection and inventory updates, tree-watering issues, school presentations, neighborhood canvassing, flyer distribution, public education, and pruning.

Dan outlined several steps to establish a volunteer program:

- The Board would need to define the program's mission and goals.
- Volunteer roles and tasks would need to be identified.
- Position descriptions would need to be developed outlining responsibilities, required skills, and time commitments.
- Volunteers would then need to be recruited and provided with appropriate training.

Dan asked the Board for feedback on whether they felt a volunteer program would be useful and whether there would be enough variety in tasks to keep volunteers interested and engaged.

The Board discussed how volunteer forestry programs in Fort Collins and Denver are structured and shared contacts who may be able to provide additional information and guidance.

The Board also discussed the feasibility of developing a local program. Members noted that tasks such as inventory inspection updates, flyer distribution, and public education would be well suited for volunteers. Pruning was identified as a more challenging activity due to the level of training and oversight that would be required.

The Board discussed whether the benefits of adding volunteers would outweigh the additional time and effort required to recruit, train, and manage the volunteer program.

Forestry Updates

Bylaw Update

Jamie Beard discussed the proposed bylaws updates with the Board.

Jamie then informed the Board that the hearing regarding proposed changes to the significant tree section of the City Code is scheduled for September 2. The proposed change would remove the "preservation of significant trees" section from the City Code, which has been noted as a potential factor increasing costs for affordable housing projects.

The Board discussed the effectiveness of the current code, noting concerns that trees are being removed before development applications are submitted. Members discussed the importance of identifying and considering significant trees early in the development process and emphasized the need for Forestry and Planning to work together. A general meeting or pre-application meeting may provide an appropriate opportunity to identify trees that should be considered for preservation at the beginning of a project.

A board member asked whether a letter from the Board to City Council would be beneficial in communicating that, while the current significant tree provisions may not be working effectively, the intent behind them is important and the language should be updated rather than removed entirely.

Jamie Beard suggested that the Board consider developing an updated version of the significant tree provisions and presenting it to City Council.

Water Conservation and Tree Health

Rob informed the Board that he compiled a list of trees that are currently struggling and plans to send flyers to affected homeowners reminding them of their responsibility to water ROW trees. The Board discussed a more formal approach involving official warning letters and potential fines if watering issues are not addressed. A two-step approach was suggested, beginning with an educational reminder and followed by a formal warning if there is no improvement.

The Board also discussed the importance of educating homeowners about the importance of watering trees during the drought and the long-term benefits trees provide. The Board also highlighted the importance of educating homeowners about the need to continue watering trees during the winter months.

The meeting adjourned by acclamation at 10:10am.

Next Meeting – September 3 at 8:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Wirth



Grand Junction Forestry Advisory Board
Minutes - Draft
August 25, 2026

Roll Call

Board Members Present:

Joseph Chandler
Bill Cooper
Mollie Freilicher
Dan Komlo
Kamie Long
Earl Perry
Anna Stout

Board Members Absent:

Tanya Travis

Guests Present:

City Staff Present:

Rob Davis, Parks Supervisor, Forestry and Open Space
Anna Wirth, Admin Specialist

Meeting called to order by Rob Davis at 2:37pm.

New Business

Discussion and development of Forestry Board recommendations regarding the potential elimination of the Significant Trees section of the Grand Junction Development Code

Rob Davis explained that he used AI to assist in drafting a letter to City Council with recommendations regarding the potential elimination of the Significant Trees section of the Grand Junction Development Code. The prompts incorporated comments from Board members as well as relevant information from City strategic documents, including the 2021 Comprehensive Plan, Parks and Recreation Open Space Master Plan, and Forestry Management Plan.

Board members then started discussing recommendations for city council and talked about guiding documents adopted by the City and their emphasis on the importance of trees and the need to protect the community's tree canopy. Strong public support for protecting trees within the community was also noted.

A board member asked whether data exists demonstrating the financial impact of significant trees on affordable housing and development. Anna Stout stated that she was not aware of data showing that significant trees have had a measurable impact on construction costs or affordable housing. She noted that the proposed elimination of the ordinance appears to be primarily focused on deregulation.

Anna Stout suggested that the Board consider proposing a middle-ground approach rather than simply opposing elimination of the Significant Tree Ordinance. She also suggested requesting that the matter be postponed and scheduled for discussion at a City Council Workshop before being considered on a regular Council agenda. A workshop would provide an opportunity for stakeholders and subject-matter experts, including the Forestry Board, to provide input and answer questions from Council members. Anna Stout noted that this approach would also be consistent with the City's strategic priority of transparency.

The numerous benefits provided by trees, including soil-moisture retention, improved physical and mental well-being, reduction of urban temperatures, and other environmental and community benefits were discussed and why these benefits support maintaining protections for significant trees. The Board expressed the belief that the Significant Tree Ordinance can be improved to better accommodate affordable housing and development while continuing to protect significant trees. The Board's recommendation is to ask City Council to retain the Significant Tree Ordinance while its effectiveness is evaluated, additional data is collected, and potential alternatives or improvements are considered.

Drafting of a letter with Forestry Board recommendations to be included in the City Council Packet for the 9/2/2026 meeting

The Board discussed finalizing the letter outlining its recommendations to City Council for inclusion in the packet for the September 2, 2026, City Council meeting.

Anna Stout suggested that the letter be submitted by email to each City Council member, with copies to the City Manager, City Attorney, City Clerk, and Rob Davis. She also suggested that paper copies be delivered.

As the City Council liaison, Anna Stout offered to assist the Board in ensuring that the letter is submitted for inclusion in the Council packet.

Motion

Kamie made a motion to accept the letter to City Council as written, with the ability to make minor changes for clarity and grammar. Dan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- Yes: 5
- No: 0
- Abstention: 1 - Anna Stout

Joe Chandler left the meeting early and did not participate in the vote.

The meeting adjourned by acclamation at 3:52pm.

Next Meeting – September 3 at 8:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Wirth