

# Town of Twisp

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## Tree City U.S.A. Tree Planting and Air Quality Initiative

Salary: \$13. per hour, 24 hours/week for 10 weeks (*paid by Office of Sustainability*)

Supervisors: Dwight Filer, Tree Board/ Andrew Denham, Public Works

Period of employment: June 21 – August 27, 2021

### Overview:

The Town of Twisp has been designated by the National Arbor Day Foundation as a “Tree City USA” for the last 18 years. This designation means we have made a commitment to actively manage our town’s urban tree resource. The Mission Statement of the Town of Twisp Tree Board describes very well a philosophy the Town would like to develop further as a response to the **Climate Crisis** we face as a nation and world:

***“To pass on to succeeding generations in our town a legacy of love for trees and tree stewardship, and to leave an abundance of healthy trees to inspire others to carry on our work”***

There have been multiple studies showing the economic and health benefits of planting and nurturing trees in an urban setting. Dr. Kathleen Wolf at the University of Washington College of the Environment (School of Environmental and Forest Sciences) has shown through her research the clear economic benefits of establishing shade trees in business districts and shopping areas. People are drawn to shaded areas, linger longer, and spend more money in a well planned and tree lined urban setting. There are many other tangible benefits that come with the planting of trees. And now we have another important reason to plant trees- Climate Change.

In the last year over 50 Methow Valley based organizations and community leaders have been developing a **Climate Action Plan** for communities up and down our mountain valley home. Representatives from the municipal, agriculture, health and emergency services, infrastructure, natural systems, and economic sectors of our valley have participated in this effort. A draft of

this plan is expected to be released in December of 2020, with planning for implementation to be established during the winter months. This program is being called “*Resilient Methow*”.

## **Responsibilities:**

The recipient of this “**Climate Leadership Practicum**” will work in conjunction with Town of Twisp Personnel and the Town of Twisp Tree Board to support the implementation of the **Community Climate Action Plan**. The specifics of the job description will be established closer to the start date. In general terms, the project work will involve brainstorming fresh ideas to implement the planting of many more trees within Twisp city limits, and the encouragement of planting trees outside of city limits. It has been established for a very long time that **Trees** absorb CO2 and store carbon, which is one of the greenhouse compounds driving the catastrophic warming of our planet. The student’s work will address the positive impacts of planting trees to combat Climate Change, and may include some or all of the following:

- A survey of the townspeople to gage the interest in an “Adopt a Tree program”.
- Obtaining commitments from citizens willing to adopt a tree.
- Research new funding sources for obtaining and planting trees.
- Researching the feasibility of starting a small tree nursery on Town property to serve as a low cost way of obtaining trees for planting in Town.
- Research the possibility of the Town giving water allowances for citizens willing to adopt and water a tree in the city’s rights of way along roads and alleys.
- Research and educate the public on the value of carbon offsets related to tree plantings.
- Research the pioneering work done in other communities to implement innovative ways to get more trees in the ground and then follow through with caring for those trees (and then helping implement the same innovations in the Town of Twisp).
- Participate in the research and planning of air quality initiatives in the Town of Twisp

The recipient of this fellowship will be expected to do some physical labor actually working with trees –planting, mulching, watering. Basic tools such as shovels, pruning saws and shears will be used. Driving a vehicle may be an occasional need. While the intern **will not** be a Town of Twisp employee, they will engage in these activities in partnership with the Town of Twisp personnel and Tree Board members, and Western Washington University.

The intern will be helped and guided with this ambitious agenda by Town Personnel and the Tree Board. They will be working with other partners engaged in similar efforts to implement the “**Resilient Methow**” *Climate Action Plan*. The whole focus will be a robust

response to the existential threat that Climate Change poses to all forms of life on this fragile planet. This will be an excellent opportunity to get direct experience with research, planning, and on the ground climate action work, and to learn the larger picture of how the Town of Twisp and the greater Methow Valley Community are responding to the Climate Crisis.

The student will be able to take the knowledge gained through this internship to another community and apply what they have learned.

### **Required Qualifications and Experience:**

- An ability to demonstrate initiative, work independently, and ask for help or guidance as needed
- Basic knowledge and interest in sustainability, climate justice, pro-active climate mitigation work, and community engagement
- An interest in developing teamwork and communication skills
- An understanding of the joys of sitting under the shade of a large tree on a hot summer afternoon

### **Educational/Professional Benefits:**

- Gain first-hand knowledge of the power and simplicity of one of the best tools in the human tool bag to mitigate the climate crisis we face: the planting of trees.
- The worldwide effort to mitigate climate change will require new ways of thinking and new ways of direct action. This practicum will be a way for the student to think broadly and expand their horizons while actively participating in a very tangible way to combat the Climate Crisis.
- This will be an opportunity to develop writing, research, and communication skills
- Collaboration with others working on Climate Action and the experience of networking will offer valuable experience in coordination with others.
- This will be an opportunity to live in a rural mountain valley that has experienced catastrophic wildfires in recent years, and participate in a community wide effort to implement our Climate Action Plan, and see first-hand what a community can do when united for a common purpose.