

## Andy Lipkis, Founder & President

Andy Lipkis began planting trees to rehabilitate smog and fire-damaged areas when he was 15 years old. He founded TreePeople and has served as its President since 1973.

TreePeople has been an international guiding light for the citizen forestry movement. Andy's innovations include inspiring the planting of one million trees in Los Angeles before the 1984 Summer Olympics, volunteer-based disaster relief efforts during flood and fire, and trainings that increase citizen leadership in urban tree planting and care. For the past 20 years, Andy has spearheaded an approach to using integrated watershed management to apply a forest's natural infrastructure services to cities. The result: a sustainable water supply, as well as flood and pollution prevention. Andy's advocacy has resulted in numerous demonstrations and progress in the adoption of this new paradigm, including the long-term retrofit of L.A.'s Sun Valley area (pop. 80,000).

Andy is a social entrepreneur and visionary who develops, implements and communicates solutions to pressing public health, economic and environmental issues by forging partnerships between diverse and sometimes conflicting parties. For over 40 years, Andy's leadership has helped make Los Angeles a model for community-based efforts that have gone to scale in the region and around the world including:

- Andy coined the term Citizen Forestry to refer to the thousands of residents TreePeople has trained and supported to organize their neighborhoods to plant and maintain trees in urban landscapes. This term has been adopted throughout the United States.
- Andy helped guide the creation and successful implementation of L.A.'s curbside recycling program.
- An author and public speaker, Andy wrote *The Simple Act of Planting a Tree: Healing Your Neighborhood, Your City and Your World* with his wife and colleague, Kate.
- A leader in environmental justice issues, Andy helped to create L.A.'s historic 1990 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. tree planting where 3,000 volunteers honored the birth and vision of Dr. King with the planting of 300 trees in a single day along a seven-mile stretch. Eventually 500 trees were planted, resulting in the largest living memorial to Dr. King, visible from space.
- A convener of multiple partners to solve urban problems, Andy founded and co-founded numerous initiatives in Los Angeles including the Los Angeles Conservation Corps and Green LA, a collaboration of 60 mainstream and environmental justice groups.
- In 2008, TreePeople cut the ribbon on one of the nation's most sustainable buildings—the LEED Platinum-Certified Center for Community Forestry's Conference Center. This facility includes a 216,000-gallon cistern to capture, clean and re-use rainwater. It is part of a state-of-the-art campus designed to nurture and accelerate local, state and national leadership in sustainability.
- In 2012, Andy led a research trip to bring back the lessons from Australia's record drought emergency to support L.A.'s ability to build a climate-resilient water supply.

- Andy has produced or been featured in numerous television programs, such as the Emmy-award-winning series, How Does Your Garden Grow, and the PBS series Edens Lost and Found and The [Visionaries as well](#) films including Leonardo di Caprio's The 11<sup>th</sup> Hour, Dirt! The Movie, Rock the Boat, Love Thy Nature, and Losing the West
- In 2014, Andy was named to the EPA's Green Infrastructure Collaborative, where he is representing L.A.'s Multi-Agency Collaborative, a group of three of the region's largest water agencies working together on innovative solutions to the historic drought.
- In 2014 Andy is leading a delegation of some of the top water policy leaders in California to Australia to learn lessons from how this country survived a 12-year drought. The purpose will be to bring solutions back to apply to Southern California.

Across the country and around the world, Andy has addressed groups involved in the linked issues of environment, urban forestry, sustainability, water and energy use. These include: the United Nations, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.K. National Urban Forestry Unit, the U.S. Forest Service, Greening Australia, American Society of Civil Engineers, and many others.

Andy's honors come from groups as diverse as the Baha'i Faith Daughters of the American Revolution and the South Coast Air Quality Management District. In 1991, President Bush named TreePeople a Point of Light. In 1998, Andy was honored as Founder of the Year at National Philanthropy Day. In 2009, Andy was named an Ashoka Fellow.