

# URBAN FORESTRY PROGRAMS BEGINS FIFTH YEAR

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The USFA Forest Services' Urban Forestry Assistance Program began its fifth year of operation on October 1, 1981. The program, authorized by Congress in 1972 and funded in 1978, is designed to promote forest and related vegetation management in and around the nation's 20,768 communities.

According to the 1980 National Census, nearly 80 percent of the nation's populace lives on 94 million acres in an urban/suburban environment. Associated with this environment is a wealth of forest and other natural resources that have a marked impact on the quality of urban life. Also associated with this environment is a host of activities that damages, weakens or kills the forest resource. Recognizing these facts, Congress appropriated funds and authorized the state foresters (through a federal state cooperative agreement) to disseminate natural resource management information to requesting towns and cities.

Since the program's inception in 1978, the states have served as the nucleus for a number of positive, beneficial accomplishments. One of the leaders in urban forestry is the Florida Division of Forestry. Administratively attached to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Division has the largest number of practicing Urban Foresters in the nation. Their stated objective is "... to provide urban communities the services of a professional forester in planning and in the establishment and management of trees and plant associations in order to enhance the beauty and livability of the urban environment..." Their job is difficult, as Florida's population annually increases by approximately 300,000 new residents.

The Georgia Forestry Commission's and the Missouri Department of Conservation's urban forestry programs are also quite large, and among the oldest in the nation. Both Agencies place heavy emphasis on mass communications. Their urban foresters routinely provide mass media information on urban forest management.

Simultaneously, they also inform their citizens of other forestry programs, including timber management and fire protection.

Michigan's and Texas' urban forestry programs are somewhat similar to Georgia's and Missouri's. Respectively administered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Texas Forest Service, the programs center on public relations and training. One of the most successful activities has been the Texas Urban Forestry Seminar for Builders and Developers. The seminar was initially developed for Houston by a local Urban Forestry Consultant and four public agencies, the Harris County Soil Conservation Service, the Texas Cooperative Extension Service, the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, and the Texas Forest Service. Their initial meeting was so successful that the program has been packaged and presented in Dallas and San Antonio. Return engagements are now being planned.

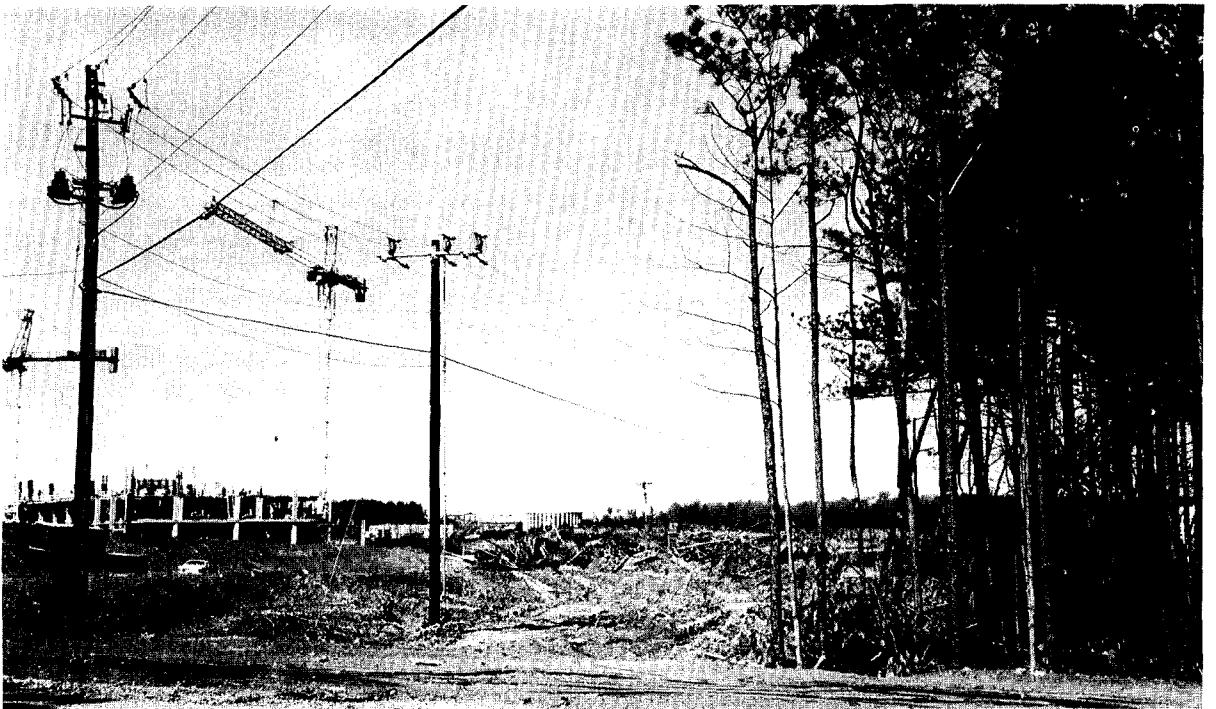
South Carolina's urban forestry program has been strong in utilization. Recognizing a need to control urban-residue-burning and conserve landfill space, the South Carolina Commission of Forestry stationed foresters in the major metropolitan areas to aid in more complete utilization of urban waste wood. This part of their program culminated in the joint sponsorship of the Urban Wood Utilization Conference in Charleston, March 26-28, 1979.

Maryland, Oregon, and Virginia have built urban forestry programs around forest resource considerations in urban land use planning. Recognizing that sizeable expanses of land are annually lost to urbanization prompted these states to get actively involved in urban natural resource management and utilization decisions.

Kansas', Nebraska's, North Carolina's, and Ohio's urban forestry programs center around providing technical assistance to units of local government. Their emphasis is on planning and management of vegetation on public property. Through their efforts, several communities in all of the states have been awarded "Tree City USA"



**There's a forest in the cities.**



**Urbanization annually claims approximately 3 million acres of forest, range and agricultural land.**



**Today forest = tomorrow's cities.**

awards by the National Arbor Day Foundation.

The Oklahoma Forestry Division has received great acclaim for their work with community service organizations. Aided by division personnel, both the Tulsa "Up With Trees Organization" and the Oklahoma City-City Beautiful Organization recently received awards for interstate highway plantings.

Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts and others have provided urban forestry funds directly to units of local government. Through their efforts, several cities are managing their public trees with the aid of street tree inventories. Other cities have chosen to upgrade the arboricultural skills of their staffs by providing professional training for all of their forestry employees.

California has revolutionized the urban forestry granting concept by providing a portion of the revenues generated from state forests to units of local government. In less than two years this pro-

gram, which is locally known as "Investing for Prosperity," has provided over a million dollars to seventy (70) California communities, and has prompted the planting of over 100,000 trees.

Each state is now involved in the Urban Forestry Assistance Program. As a result, more trees in urban areas are being planted, protected, maintained and utilized than ever before. There is more consideration given to the blending of the natural with the man-made urban environment. There are also more multi-disciplinary teams coordinating efforts to achieve the national desire of ". . . making our cities and communities a better place to live and work."

*Urban Foresters  
USDA Forest Service  
Atlanta, Georgia and  
Washington, D.C.*