



Promoting and practicing sustainable forestry

2009-2011 BACKGROUNDER



Urban and Community Forestry

An Overview

Trees in cities and other developed areas are investments that pay off for Oregonians. The Urban and Community Forestry Program helps local governments realize the economic, environmental and social benefits of the forests in some of Oregon's most densely populated places.

Urban forests: A resource worth nurturing

While Oregon is geographically primarily a rural state, recent estimates show that 68 percent of all Oregonians live in cities, and 79 percent live in urban areas. These residents live in a particular kind of forest: **an urban forest**. Remnants of the pre-development forest, and the planted landscape in and around our cities, comprise this urban forest – a forest that produces many benefits.

Research by the U.S. Forest Service indicates that every dollar that cities invest in trees returns \$2.70 in benefits. These benefits include increased economic activity, improved environmental quality via cleaner air and water, ecosystem services such as stormwater control and wildlife habitat, increased property values, and an overall sense of community livability. The capacity of trees and forests to store carbon also helps to mitigate climate change.

Oregon's population grows increasingly urban

Oregon's Population and Rural/Urban Distribution, 1900-2000

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Population</u>	<u>Percent Urban</u>	<u>Percent Rural</u>
2000	3.4 million	79%	21%
1960	1.8 million	62%	38%
1940	1.1 million	49%	51%
1900	413,536	32%	68%

Providing expertise to local governments and groups

In 1992, the Oregon Legislature directed the Department to provide technical assistance to Oregon's cities and community organizations, and to help them plant, manage, and care for their urban forests.

For more than 15 years, ODF's small staff of three urban foresters has provided an average of more than 600 assists per year, and during that period has distributed over \$2 million worth of cost-share grants to nearly 500 city and community projects that have leveraged nearly \$4 million in local expenditures. The grants, and the Urban and Community Forestry program itself, are paid for entirely with federal funds, although the future availability of these funds is uncertain.

The department also helps cities address water quality issues, development impacts, public safety issues related to hazard trees and risk, and many other topics. For many smaller cities that don't have forestry expertise on staff, ODF provides a valuable service to address issues that might otherwise go unresolved.

By proactively managing their tree issues, cities can save money and keep the public safe.

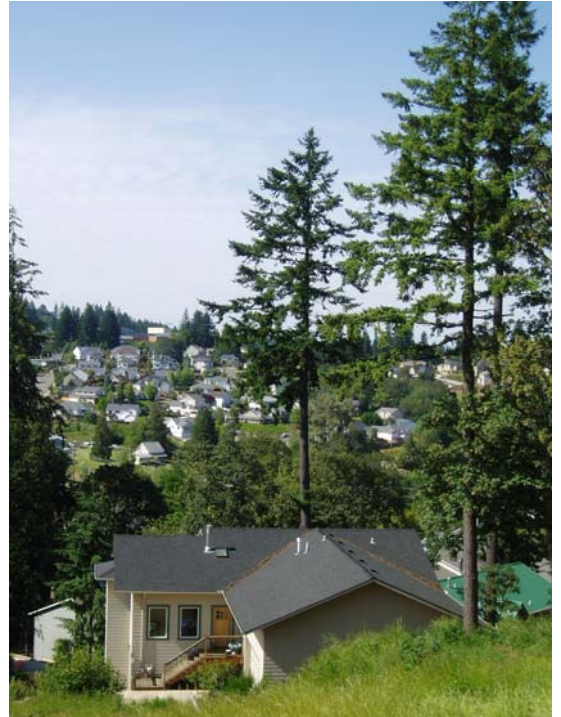


Enhancing quality of life in Oregon's communities

ODF's Urban and Community Forestry staff provides assistance to cities and community groups to across the state.

Recently, for example, the department has helped:

- The cities of **Happy Valley** and **Eugene** with pruning workshops.
- The cities of **Dallas, Gresham** and **Lincoln City** achieve Tree City USA status.
- The city of **Oakridge** to begin to form a new Tree and Trails committee.
- The city of **Seaside** create its own arboretum.
- The cities of **Corvallis** and **Sutherlin** write community forest management plans.
- Cities throughout Oregon deal with invasive species issues.
- The city of **Gresham** examine its tree program, and builds toward hiring its first city forester.
- City employees throughout Oregon, by providing the "Community Tree Management Institute," an intensive urban forestry training.
- Cities along Oregon's north coast address catastrophic storm recovery.



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For more information

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