

## **Strengthening Our Leadership in the Care of Urban Forest Resources: A Strategy to Serve People and Ensure the Stewardship of Natural Resources Where People Live, Work, and Play.**

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**Introduction:** The USDA Forest Service and state forestry agencies, in partnership with national and local grassroots organizations, assist communities to manage trees and forests where people live, work, and play. The vitality of our communities is strongly dependent on the quality of their natural environments. Urban area expansion and inner city decline are national problems that impact the health of urban forests, watersheds, and people. The continued deterioration of the natural environment in and around our cities and communities speaks to the need for the agency to take a comprehensive approach in caring for urban forest resources.

**Goal:** Strengthen our leadership and unify our efforts to ensure the long term health and sustainability of America's urban natural resources.

### **Desired Outcomes:**

- The complexity of the urban forest ecosystem is recognized and addressed.
- Capacity for urban forest resource planning, conservation, and management is improved.
- Technical assistance and technology is accessible to practitioners.
- Local governments and citizens make informed natural resource decisions and investments.
- Investments in urban and community forestry are supported by a wide-range of constituents, including Congress.
- Programs emphasize the sustainability of natural resources and communities.
- The benefits of urban forest resources are maximized
- Numerous and diverse sectors of the population are engaged and served.
- Integration and cooperation exists within the Forest Service and with other Federal agencies.

### **Strategy Components:**

#### **1. Increase Agency Capacity**

- Elevate the stature of urban forestry within the agency.
- Expand authorities to facilitate the exchange of resources across the agency.

#### **2. Expand Partnerships and Services**

- Broaden urban National Forests interactions with urban constituencies.
- Improve services to under-served and nontraditional groups.
- Enhance partnerships with key organizations and community leaders.

#### **3. Expand Resources and Funding**

- Increase resources for states and regions to deliver technical and financial assistance.
- Advance opportunities for grassroots organizations and volunteers in urban forestry.
- Focus the use of funds to maximize desired outcomes.

#### **4. Advance Research and Technology Transfer**

- Strengthen and expand research, technology transfer, and resource analyses and monitoring.

**Linkages to the Forest Service Natural Resource Agenda and S&PF Action Strategy:**

<b>Forest Service Natural Resource Agenda</b>	<b>S&amp;PF Action Strategy</b>
Sustainable forest ecosystem management	Sustainable natural resources and communities
Watershed health and restoration	Watershed issues and conditions
Recreation	Urban Forest Resources

**Federal Funding Requirements:** The strategy calls for increased Federal funding by about 80 percent over the current level.

	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	<b>Total</b>
Current funding*	\$ 31,300	\$ 31,300	\$ 31,300	\$ 31,300	\$ 31,300	<b>\$ 156,500</b>
Investment Needs	22,500	26,000	27,500	27,500	24,000	<b>127,500</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 53,800</b>	<b>\$ 57,300</b>	<b>\$ 58,800</b>	<b>\$ 58,800</b>	<b>\$ 55,300</b>	<b>\$ 284,000</b>

\*Dollars are in thousands and based on FY 2000 funding level

**Implementation:** Most components of the strategy can begin within one year. Full, effective implementation will take about three years. Implementation will include monitoring and performance evaluation.

<b>Strategy Component</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<b>1. Increase Agency Capacity</b>	<b>\$1 - 3 Million Investment Above Current Level</b>
Elevate the stature of urban forestry within the agency.	Highlight the program through the creation of a separate staff group with a national coordinator assigned to the Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry.
Expand authorities.	Review existing authorities and expand as necessary to facilitate the exchange of resources within and outside the Forest Service.
<b>2. Expand Partnerships And Services</b>	<b>\$3 - 5 Million Investment Above Current Level</b>
Broaden urban National Forest interactions with urban constituencies	Develop a strategic plan that links National Forests to urban constituencies. Working with states: emphasize conservation education, GIS, watershed restoration, and urban/wildland interface issues for improved local decision-making.
Improve services to under-served and nontraditional groups	Work with state forestry agencies and national forests to develop strategies for expanding technical support and services to tribal communities and under-served areas of larger cities.
Enhance partnerships with key organizations and community leaders.	Increase outreach to key organizations, members of Congress, and community leaders to build a strong support base for the Forest Service and other agencies responsible for land stewardship.
<b>3. Expand Resources</b>	<b>\$13 - 15 Million Investment Above Current Level</b>
Increase resources for states and regions to deliver technical and financial assistance.	Increase financial resources and the capacity for technical assistance and program delivery within the regions and in state forestry agencies.
Advance opportunities for grassroots organizations and volunteers in urban forestry.	Increase financial resources to strengthen existing, and foster the emergence of new, grassroots organizations engaged in state and local urban forestry work.
Focus the use of funds to maximize desired outcomes.	Establish criteria for improved funding allocations and develop an approach to target high priority needs and opportunities.
<b>4. Advance Research and Technology Transfer</b>	<b>\$4 - 6 Million Investment Above Current Levels</b>
Strengthen and expand research, technology transfer, and resource analyses and monitoring.	Strengthen research and build a strong technology transfer component into the urban forestry research centers in Athens, Chicago, Davis, and Syracuse as well as with universities to emphasize technology transfer and regional technical assistance to states and partners.