



**Ten-year Action Plan** 2006-2016

**National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council**



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# Executive Summary



The National Urban and Community Forest Advisory Council (NUCFAC) is the author and chief steward of a national action plan for urban and community forestry, which was first created in response to the 1990 Farm Bill and continually updated in subsequent years. Through NUCFAC's efforts, the Action Plan remains a key source of policy-making guidance to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and USDA Forest Service personnel.

NUCFAC's Action Plan identifies the following goals for 2006–2016. Action items with specific measures and achievement dates accompany the goals and are detailed within the following pages of this report.

- **Assessment of the Extent, Health and Function of Urban Forests**

Goal: Continually update data on the overall extent, health and function of the urban forest.

- **Management Programs**

Goal: Increase active management of urban and community forests at state and local levels by 2016.

- **Outreach**

Goal: Support and encourage active involvement of all people in urban and community forestry at the local, state, regional, and national levels — including underserved populations.

- **Program Funding**

Goal: Achieve sustainable funding, investments, and efficiencies from traditional and non-traditional sources for all U&CF activities.

- **Research**

Goal: Support research that is applicable to local needs.

- **Program Enhancement**

Goal: Improve performance and effectiveness of USDA programs that address urban forestry.

## Legislative Mandate

The 1990 U.S. Farm Bill created The National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on matters relating to the protection, planting, and care of trees and forests in our nation's cities and communities. As outlined in the 1990 Farm Bill, specific purposes of the Council are to:

### 1 **Develop a national urban and community forestry action plan and every ten years thereafter. The plan is to include:**

- An assessment of the current status of urban forest resources.
- A review of urban and community forestry programs and activities, including education and technical assistance.
- Recommendations for improving the status of the Nation's urban and community forest resources, including education and technical assistance.
  - A review of urban and community forestry research,
  - Recommendations for new and expanded research efforts; and
  - A summary of research priorities and an estimate of the funds needed to implement such research, on an annual basis, for the next ten years.
- Proposed criteria for evaluating proposed projects under the urban and community forestry challenge cost share program.
- An estimate of the resources needed to implement the National Urban and Community Forestry Action Plan for the succeeding ten fiscal years.

### 2 **Evaluate how the plan has been put into effect.**

### 3 **Develop criteria and recommendations for an urban and community forestry challenge cost-share program.**

# The Importance of Urban and Community Forestry

Urban forestry is defined as the art, science and technology of managing trees, forests and natural systems in and around cities, suburbs and towns for the health and well-being of all people. Did you know that the 2004 U.S. Census projection estimated that more than 83 percent of America's residents live in urban areas? Simply put, urban forests have a tremendous ecological and social value that must be actively and expertly cared for and managed for the long term.



Through ongoing efforts including those outlined in this ten-year plan, urban and community forestry (U&CF) is positioned to help address some of the greatest threats to our nation's landscape, including:

- Wildfire risk
- Invasive species
- Open space fragmentation
- Watershed degradation

Every person in the country has the right to enjoy and benefit from our urban forests. But each person also has an important part to play in understanding, appreciating, and caring for these natural resources and help sustain healthy communities.

## Goals and Action Items

To successfully manage our urban treescapes and allow them to properly perform their vital role in the environment and our communities, has identified six strategies. Each has specific goals, action items and intended results identified for the course of this ten-year plan.

### 1 Assessment of the Extent, Health and Function of Urban Forests

**Goal** Continually update data on the overall extent, health and function of the urban forest.

#### Actions

- Complete urban forest inventory and analysis (UFIA) and urban forest health monitoring (UFHM) assessment nationwide by 2011 (2007–2011).  
**Result** By 2011, this action will be 30 percent complete.
- Develop and promulgate data collection and land cover analysis standards for local (city, town, and other localities) inventories and assessments.  
**Result** 1,000 communities will adopt the standards.
- By 2012 establish tree cover targets from results above, based on baseline and UFI data.

## 2 Management Programs

**Goal** Increase active management of urban and community forests at state and local levels by 2016.

### Actions

- Increase the amount of land area covered by urban and community forestry management plans by 30 percent.  
**Result** Establish base line number by 2007.
- Increase the number of communities with urban forestry professional staffing by 15 percent.  
**Result** Establish base line number by 2007.
- Increase the number of communities with an active urban and community forestry advocacy or advisory organization by 60 percent.  
**Result** Establish base line number by 2007.
- Increase the number of communities with legally constituted tree ordinances and/or policies by 50 percent.  
**Result** Establish base line number by 2007.  
**Result** Work with the USDA Forest Service to distinguish whether a community is developing an urban and community forestry program (determined by achieving 1 to 3 of the following — management plan, professional staffing, tree ordinance and advocacy group).  
**Result** Work with the USDA Forest Service to increase the number of communities that have achieved all of the following measures — management plan, professional staffing, tree ordinance and advocacy group.
- Create Catastrophic Event Mitigation Strategies Best Management Practices.  
**Result** By 2008 gather information.  
**Result** By 2010 create mitigation strategies.
- Increase U&CF Program awareness with other government agencies and local officials through direct solicitation and invitation to participate in planting projects, education and training sessions, and other public awareness events.  
**Result** Participation in 20 percent of the urban and community forestry programs by 2016.



## 3 Outreach

**Goal** Support and encourage active involvement of all people in urban and community forestry at the local, state, regional, and national levels — including underserved populations.

### Actions

- Develop strategy by 2008 to include nonprofits and volunteers.

**Result** Collect baseline data as per the goal statement.

**Result** Increase and strengthen partnerships with and among U&CF nonprofit groups through participation in outreach, education, advocacy and other program activities.

**Result** Increase participation of nonprofit and volunteer groups for and through U&CF project activities.

**Result** Establish a nonprofit and volunteer organization tracking system to account for participating partners and donated hours (specific measures).

- Encourage workforce development through stakeholder partners.

**Result** Collect baseline data as per the goal statement.

**Result** Scholarships, seminars, conferences and mentoring opportunities to college bound and currently enrolled students.

**Result** Professional mentoring — develop career ladder opportunities in public and private sector service.

**Result** Continuing education and retraining opportunities to current work force.

**Result** Training of under-employed or at-risk groups for entry level jobs in arboriculture and urban forestry.

- Increase participation by, and equitable service delivered to, people of color, handicapped, underserved, and others as defined by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

**Result** Collect baseline data as per the goal statement.

**Result** Track direct involvement of minorities in federally funded projects. Minority involvement should be proportionate to the population to promote stakeholder buy-in and sense of ownership.



## 4 Program Funding

**Goal** Achieve sustainable funding, investments, and efficiencies from traditional and non-traditional sources for all of U&CF.

### Actions

- Stimulate, leverage, and increase private and public partnerships to attract investment in U&CF education research, outreach, and management.

**Result** Raise \$15 million by 2012 from private and public partnerships.

- Secure \$24 million in annual federal funding to implement recommendations in “A Revised National Research and Technology Transfer Agenda for Urban & Community Forestry” by 2016.

- Encourage Congress to establish a National Endowment Program with funds to support U&CF program performance measures.

**Result** \$50 million per year by 2008.

- Provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions about public financing models for funding urban forestry by 2008.

- Increase U&CF funding to \$62 million per year by 2012 to support:

- \$36 million for state agencies to deliver technical and financial assistance to communities in support of the four U&CF performance measures.
- \$10 million for U&CF to support better integration and delivery and technology transfer to respond to catastrophic events, invasive pests, fire risk in the urban-wildland-urban interface, and other occurrences that significantly threaten urban forests and can spread to forestlands.
- \$16 million for metro area focus projects in diverse geographic settings that emphasize multi-agency and non-governmental organizations (NGO) partnerships focused on achieving tree canopy goals through public, private and citizen action on behalf of the urban forest

- Invest \$2 million to conduct urban forest inventory and analysis as part of the Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA).





## 5 Research

**Goal** Support research that is applicable to local needs.

### Actions

- Increase USDA Forest Service research and development (R&D) investment in urban forest research to \$24 million by 2015.
- Support participatory and collaborative research between and among partners and stakeholders.

**Result** Minimum of one cross-disciplinary research project focused on arboriculture/urban forestry per year

**Result** By 2010 establish at least one research demonstration model in each region managed by interdisciplinary teams.

**Result** Develop a National Clearinghouse of Research Results in the area of U&CF by 2008.

- Update “A Revised National Research and Technology Transfer Agenda for Urban and Community Forestry” by 2012. Broaden participation and distribution.

## 6 Program Enhancement

**Goal** Improve performance and effectiveness of USDA programs that address urban forestry.

### Actions

- Work with the USDA Forest Service U&CF program in measuring and tracking performance tied to outcomes by FY 2007.
- Beginning in 2006, include a key U&CF program in each USDA Forest Service annual performance report.
- Include key urban and community forestry issues in the USDA Strategic Plan for FY 2008–2013.
- Integrate urban forestry as an element within other programs and units of the USDA Forest Service by 2010. Examples:
  - Increase commitment to educational programs that serve diverse urban populations for recreation in national forests. [National Forest System–NFS]
  - Increase funding for U&CF research projects and increase collaboration with other research initiatives to expand urban applications. [Research and Development–R&D]
  - [State and Private Forestry–S&PF] Investigate the potential for new program authorities and tools to address emerging urban forest issues. For instance, there may be a federal role in assisting with acquisition and creation of parks and forest preserves within cities.





## Challenges of Implementing this Action Plan

While this plan is comprehensive and will take tremendous effort, the members of NUCFAC believe it presents a strong and achievable roadmap for 2006–2016. However, the plan faces several obstacles that we will need to address for successful implementation:

**Appropriations.** NUCFAC recommends that the Federal Government should seriously consider a permanent endowment program to aid in accomplishing this action plan within the next five years.

**Prioritization of needs.** Program, research and technology transfer needs are great and diverse.

**Documenting accomplishments.** No concise, consistent, and relevant system has been developed so far, thus causing some to question what has actually been accomplished through the work of U&CF and NUCFAC.

**Inclusion.** Many sectors of American society have not been included in urban and community forestry efforts, limiting effectiveness of current and future programs.

**Dependency on single-source resources.** We must overcome the difficulties of many entities needing to share the same resource.

**Applying research to issues/problems.** We must find ways to successfully transfer research knowledge to field applications where they can have a real and measurable affect.

## Council Members

### Joe Wilson, Chair

Representing cities with a population of more than 50,000

### Brenda M. Allen

One of Two Positions Representing Academic Institutions with an Expertise in Urban and Community Forestry Activities

### Ann Bates

Representing Forest Products, Nursery, or Related Industries

### Catalino Blanche

Representing the USDA Extension Service

### Juan Carlos Cervantes

Representing Professional Renewable Natural Resource or Arboriculture Society

### Melanie Kirk

One of Two Positions Representing Academic Institutions with an Expertise in Urban and Community Forestry Activities

### Neil Letson

Representing State Government

### Suzanne Probart

Representing Urban Forestry, Landscape, and Design Consultants

### Steven Sinclair

Representing State Forestry Agencies or Equivalent State Agencies

### James Hubbard

Representing the USDA Forest Service

### Alice Ewen Walker

Representing National Non-Profit Forestry and Conservation Citizen Organization

### Bobbi Wallace

Representing County Government

## USDA Forest Service Contacts

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# Appendix

## U.S. Farm Bill Content Relating to Urban and Community Forestry

### 2005 Process for the Creation of an Updated NUCFAC Plan

- NUCFAC Annual Reviews — Council annually reviews the national action plan and the previous year's accomplishments toward fulfilling the plan. Where accomplishment gaps exist, the Council develops strategies to encourage their accomplishment.
- Review and incorporation of NUCFAC Commissioned Work
  - [A National Research Plan 2005-2015 for Urban Forestry Draft](#), Prepared by: The Aslan Group, June 2005 draft utilized
  - [Assessment of the USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program](#), Prepared by: HortScience, Inc. and The Aslan Group, 2004
  - [A Revised National Research and Technology Transfer Agenda for Urban and Community Forestry](#), Prepared by: Edith Makra and Gary Watson (for the Tree Research and Education Endowment Fund), 2003
  - [Assessing the Progress of Urban and Community Forestry Research and Technology Transfer](#), Prepared by: CRA Inc. / ECI, 2002
- Document review
  - [Status Brief: Performance Based Methodology for Allocating U&CF Funds](#), Prepared by: USDA Forest Service, U&CF Program, 2005
  - [USDA Forest Service, UCF Partial Work Item Summary: '04-'06](#), Prepared by USDA Forest Service, UCF, 2004-2005
  - [USDA Forest Service Program/Activity Business Plan Elements DRAFT](#), Prepared by: USDA Forest Service, May 2004, updated April 2005
  - [A Report to the Committee of Appropriations U.S. House of Representatives on the U.S. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program](#), Prepared by: Surveys and Investigations Staff, 2004

- Document review (continued)
  - USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Blueprint for the Future, Prepared by: USDA, Forest Service, 2004
  - Status Brief: A National Communities Database for UCF (and uses for states/regions/partners & the WO), Prepared by: USDA Forest Service, U&CF Program, 2004
  - Urban Tree Risk Management: A community guide to Program Design and Implementation, Prepared by: USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Area, 2004
  - Congressional Briefing 2004: Our Urban Community Forest at Risk, Prepared by: NUCFAC, 2004
  - USDA Urban and Community Forestry Accomplishment Report FY 2003, Prepared by: USDA, Forest Service, September 2004
  - Urban and Community Forestry Accomplishment Report FY 2002, Prepared by: USDA Forest Service, 2003
  - Smart Growth for Clean Water: Helping Communities Address the Water Quality Impacts of Sprawl, Prepared by: National Association of Local Government Environmental Professionals, Trust for Public Land, ERG, 2003
  - FY 2001 Accomplishment Report for Urban and Community Forestry, Prepared by: USDA Forest Service, 2002
  - Community Forest Systems — Living and Working Among Trees: Action Items For Developing Sustainable Communities and Forests, Prepared by: United States Department of Agriculture, NUCFAC, February 1998
  - The Forest Where We Live: A National Strategic Plan, Prepared by: United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, August 1993, October 1995
  - A National Research Agenda for Urban Forestry in the 1990s, Prepared by: The International Society of Arboriculture, 1991
  - Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978, Prepared by: Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, 1978
- 2005 Stakeholder Input — The Council surveyed national, regional and local stakeholders in the summer of 2005. The results were summarized and presented during a partner meeting hosted by the Council at the outset of development of the action plan. Stakeholder input was actively solicited at the partner meeting and throughout the drafting of this action plan.
  - Groups from whom input was solicited — 265 urban and community forestry stakeholders from the local, regional and national levels were identified from organization memberships, forestry related jobs, and a number of others who Council members solicited because of their associations, were contacted by electronic mail and asked to respond to an online survey. 225 people responded for a response rate of 85 percent.
- USDA Forest Service stakeholder input — Executive Summary Report to Council, 2005

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USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry • [www.fs.fed.us/ucf](http://www.fs.fed.us/ucf)  
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