NEW REPORT:


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Prepared for: North Carolina Forest Service, Urban and Community Forestry Program
Urban areas in the United States - in the South and nationwide - have expanded rapidly over the last few decades. This expansion has led to an estimated 4 billion trees in urban areas across the U.S. If the broader definition of "metropolitan areas" is used, the estimate increases to 70 billion trees growing in population centers throughout the country. As urban land is projected to continue increasing in the continental U.S. (nearly tripling in size by 2050), the discipline of urban forestry will continue growing in importance.

Of concern to urban foresters and urban residents alike is the fate of trees that are removed from private yards, small wooded lots, and municipally owned areas. Whether tree removal is due to damage from disease or storms, construction and development, or other factors, the volume of wood removed is substantial. Estimates of this volume range from 16 to 38 million green tons per year nationwide; even the lower end of this range is larger than total annual harvests from U.S. National Forests. Historically, urban trees have been disposed of rather than being utilized as lumber or value-added products. Recently, however, this approach has been undergoing a shift, with increasing awareness of the magnitude of wood being wasted and the potential for better use of this raw material.

The transition from a disposal mindset to one of utilization for urban wood ultimately affects a wide range of stakeholders - from arborists, foresters, loggers, haulers, sawyers, millers, and wood product developers to local governments, builders, landowners, and consumers. For all professionals in the lumber and wood products supply chain, there can be challenges, such as high costs related to handling and disposal of removed trees; there can also be market opportunities for turning a disposal problem into an array of valuable products. For entire communities, urban wood utilization has implications for broader environmental issues such as resource sustainability, carbon sequestration, and air quality.

Read the full report...

New Project to Recognize Responsible Urban Forestry and Urban Wood Utilization

Certification to support better use and less waste

Minneapolis, MN - A new initiative to support increased urban wood utilization and community benefits has been launched. The project will develop a unified urban wood
certification strategy with the goal of aligning existing programs that recognize responsible management practices in the urban forest. Existing urban forestry programs range from accreditation and licensing to training and certification programs.

"We're not starting with a blank slate," says project manager, Kathryn Fernholz, Executive Director of Dovetail Partners. "There are many high-quality existing programs that support the practice of urban and utility forestry - from Tree City USA and Tree Line USA to Arborist certifications - and we're looking at how these programs support shared goals and can respond to the growing interest in urban wood and responsible sourcing."

The intent of the project is to develop a certification process to be incorporated into existing professional and accreditation standards, adopted by municipalities, and embraced by tree-related operations within urban forests including arboriculture businesses and wood processors.

Partners on the project include the Arbor Day Foundation, Society of Municipal Arborists, Tree Care Industry Association, Utility Arborists Association, Right-of-Way Stewardship Council, Dovetail Partners, North Carolina Forest Service, and the USDA Forest Service. Support for the project is provided by the North Carolina Forest Service, Urban and Community Forestry Program and the USDA Forest Service.

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