Urban Forestry 2020: A Critical Look at the Profession

Q. What is Urban Forestry 2020?
A. A 3-year research and networking project that aims to define the urban forestry profession, understand its relationship with allied professions, and make strategic recommendations to make urban forestry an attractive career choice.

Q. Who is involved in Urban Forestry 2020?
A. The project is run by a consortium of four universities (Virginia Tech, University of Maryland, West Virginia University, and Virginia State) and includes a national steering committee representing the diverse urban forest stakeholder community. UF2020 is supported in part by the National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council (USDA Forest Service).

Q. What will the results of the project be?
A. A research-based assessment of how urban forestry is perceived as a profession by young people, employers, and allied professionals that will allow for analysis of the influence of demographics and professional support systems on these perceptions. Ultimately, the project will produce research-based recommendations for strategic planning.

Project Timeline

Discovery Phase
- Student perceptions of urban forestry and demographic cues
- Regional agenda for profession
- Role of educational and professional credentials
- Image of Urban Forestry among other professions

Planning Phase
- Integrate UF into new communication networks
- Recruitment products & strategies
- Plan to address public image of Urban Forestry
- Proposed role of accreditation & curricular placement

Implementation & Evaluation
- Technology transfer: results, products, recommendations

Sustainable recruitment systems in place

More students studying Urban Forestry

National impact: strategic planning for Urban Forestry profession

WHERE is Urban Forestry Practiced?

Wildland-Urban Interface
Peri-Urban
Suburban
Cities & Towns
Urban Centers

Street Trees
Roadside Vegetation
Utility ROWs
Residential
Commercial/Industrial
Vacant
Government & Institutional Buildings
Forest Fragments
Riparian Areas
Parks & Greenways
National/State Parks

Interior


disciplinary focus


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disciplinary focus


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Urban Forestry Assessment
Forest Health, Urban Health/Environmental Health, Urban Planning

Land Use Planning & Policy
Zoning & Ordinances, Development, Environmental Planning & Policy

Arboriculture
Pruning, Planting, Root Management, Arboricultural Practices

Program Administration
Education, Planning Program, Issues & Research, Instructor Development, Workshops

Risk Management
Natural Hazards, Public Safety/Security

Public Relations
Public Programs, Media Relations, Government Relations, Conservation

Disaster Prevention & Recovery
Wildfire & Natural Hazards Planning, Geospatial Mapping

Networking in Urban Forestry
- Many urban foresters feel that they have multiple valuable local or regional networks that help them problem solve
- Urban foresters belong to a lot of different organizations and networks, but there is NO universal list
- Some urban foresters perceive there are few places to interact with peers about their professional role
- Many urban foresters belong to non-urban forestry organizations

What’s YOUR take?
- What is the role of urban foresters in urban natural resource management?
- Are allied professions just as effective at managing the urban forest as urban foresters?
- Should urban foresters be more involved in the planning and creation of GI?
- What can we do to increase recognition of urban foresters as valuable team members in GI?

Urban Foresters are MORE LIKELY than other professionals to be engaged in managing:
- Forest health, inventory, & assessment
- Recruitment products & strategies
- Risk Management related to the urban forest
- Forest health, inventory, & assessment
- Land Use Planning
- Commercial/Industrial

Urban foresters in terms of green infrastructure (GI) and land use planning (LUP):
- Professions equally or more likely to be involved in GI include: Landscape Architects, Urban Planners, Environmental Consultants and Stormwater Engineers.

Roles where urban foresters are LESS LIKELY to be engaged than allied professions:
- Land Use Planning
- Residential
- Government & Institutional Buildings

Steering Committee Members

Susan D. Day, Virginia Tech, West Virginia University, Virginia State University


What is the ROLE of the Urban Forester in Relation to Allied Professions?

Urban Foresters are MORE LIKELY than other professionals to be engaged in:
- Green Infrastructure Planning and Implementation
- Risk Management related to the urban forest
- Arboricultural practices and planting programs
- Planning & financing of the urban forest

Key roles of urban foresters where allied professionals are EQUALLY LIKELY to be engaged:
- Land Use Planning
- Commercial/Industrial

Q. Do urban forestry networks need to be…
- More formal or STRUCTURED?
- More NATIONAL in emphasis?

Goals of Urban Forestry Assessment
- More students studying Urban Forestry
- National impact: strategic planning for Urban Forestry profession

Urban Forestry is at a critical point in its development. Our urban forests are receiving more attention than ever thanks to accelerating interest in the benefits of urban forests and environmental management tools such as green infrastructure. In addition to the efforts of UF2020, professional organizations such as the International Society of Arboriculture and the Society of American Foresters are engaged in market research to understand the nature and needs of the profession. Professions advance and develop when a wide array of professional support systems are in place. Our goal in UF2020 is to understand the current status of the profession and where we should head from here. By working with discussion groups and our steering committee, we are starting to bring the urban forestry profession into sharper focus.