Who Manages Urban Trees and Greenspaces for Local Governments?

In 2017, we asked professionals who manage urban trees and greenspaces for 1,577 U.S. localities to complete a survey about their careers.

Of the 524 respondents,

- 91% white, 78% male, median age: 52
- Only 15% had seriously considered a career in urban trees and greenspaces in high school or earlier
- 75% in a supervisory role (mid to upper management)
- 82% in profession for 10+ years and 47% for 21+ years (mid to late career)
- Top memberships: International Society of Arboriculture (59%), Local urban forestry group (38%), Society of Municipal Arborists (28%), National Recreation and Park Association (22%)
- 17% didn’t belong to any of the 25 professional organizations we asked about.

Workplace Perceptions
Percent that somewhat or strongly agreed that...

- 87% they were satisfied with their level of decision-making authority.
- 77% their coworkers understood their job. (Arborists felt a little less understood than urban foresters and Public administrators felt very well understood.)
- 83% their coworkers appreciated them.
- 74% their co-workers were making full use of their expertise.
- 88% their opinion was considered on urban trees or greenspace issues.

Job Satisfaction
Percent that somewhat or strongly agreed that...

- 94% they were satisfied with their career thus far.
- 76% they were well paid. (Arborists somewhat disagreed with this statement (28%) at a higher than expected frequency (p<.05).
- 84% there were opportunities for career advancement in the profession.
- 55% there were opportunities for career advancement with their current employer. (This suggests that career advancement would require a change of employer in many cases)
- 83% they knew where to find mentoring and resources to advance their career. (Arborists strongly disagreed with this statement (12%) at a higher than expected frequency (p<.05).

Annual Salary (US $)

Chi-square analysis revealed no anomalies in salary distribution across professional identities at α=.05 or α=.10.