Sustainable Urban Forests Coalition

The Sustainable Urban Forests Coalition (SUFC) is a group of national organizations advancing a unified urban forest agenda. SUFC members work together to integrate trees as a vital component of sustainable infrastructure for every community. SUFC members include urban planners, educators, landscape architects, public works and utility associations, foresters, scientists, diverse nonprofits, tree care industries and landscape and nursery associations.

FY 2012 FOREST SERVICE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

US Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program Budget				
2009 Enacted	2010 Enacted	2011 President's Budget	2012 President's Budget	2012 SUFC Recommendations
$29.5 million	$30.4 million	$32.4 million	$32.4 million	**$32.4 million**

- **$32.4 million for Urban and Community Forestry Program**
- **$18 million for Research on urban natural resources**

Support $32.4 million for Urban and Community Forestry Program

The Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) program has been a catalyst and important technical advisor to promoting healthy forests in our communities. Delivered in close partnership with State Forestry Agencies, the U&CF program assists cities, suburbs, and towns to maximize tree canopy and resulting environmental services. In FY10 U&CF delivered technical, financial, educational, and research assistance to 7,102 communities, *managing over 100 million acres of urban forests* covering all 50 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories and affiliated Pacific Island nations. Support for the U&CF program is essential for:

- **Enhancing urban parks and community green spaces.** By partnering with communities, U&CF fosters strategic tree planting and active management of urban forests and is a key component of the President's *America's Great Outdoors* initiative.

- **Delivering clean water.** U&CF helps promote clean waters by reducing soil erosion and polluted stormwater runoff and creating healthier watersheds. ***The coalition supports a strong role for U&CF in carrying out EPA's Urban Waters Initiative.***

- **Providing good paying jobs.** The U&CF program supports well paying and long-term jobs by leveraging state and local investments in green infrastructure. This support enables the public and private sectors to provide technical assistance, training, tree planting, maintenance, and survey activities.

- **Assisting Communities.** U&CF provides critical assistance to help communities manage risk, respond to storms and disturbance, and contain threats from invasive pests.

By absorbing large amounts of harmful pollutants, shading buildings and cooling the air, trees play an important role in air quality and energy efficiency. ***SUFC supports the $2 million funding request in the President's FY12 Budget for U&CF for energy programs***.

While SUFC is seeking to expand funds for urban forestry and green infrastructure, we understand the current economic conditions of the country and requests $32.4 million be allocated to the Urban and Community Forestry program.

There is significant return of federal dollars, making U&CF a smart investment for Congress. In FY10 the total national program spending was $30 million to provide technical and financial assistance to all states and territories nationwide. The program leveraged an additional $40 million in state and local support and provided 1,250 small grants to local communities.

The SUFC supports the recommendations of the National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council to increase the Forest Service's investment to $24 million for urban natural resources research by the year 2016. Consistent with this goal, in FY 2012, the coalition recommends $18 million for Research and Development in urban natural resources.

Key units:

- Northern Station at Syracuse, NY – urban forests, human health and environmental quality
- Northern Station at Evanston, IL – social science supporting natural resource management and policy
- Northern Station Urban Natural Resources Institute at Burlington, VT – providing tools and information to quantify the value of trees and open space for decision makers
- Pacific Southwestern Station Center for Urban Forest Resources at Davis, CA – urban forest structure, benefits and costs
- Pacific Southwestern Station at Riverside, CA – wildland interface and urban cultures
- Southern Station Centers for Urban and Interface Forestry at Gainesville, FL and Athens, GA– human and natural systems in urban and urbanizing landscapes

Key Benefits of Urban Forests

- **Energy:** Planting and preserving trees in communities is more cost effective than building new power plants. Properly placed, mature shade trees help save as much as 30% on electric cooling bills for homes. Tree windbreaks reduce residential heating costs 10-15%.
- **Water:** Urban trees reduce storm water runoff and help municipalities meet EPA Clean Water requirements. Washington DC's public trees alone provide stormwater management benefits of $3.7 million annually.
- **Air Quality:** Trees absorb carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide, nitrous oxides and other pollutants, and shade cars and parking lots reducing ozone emissions from vehicles. Houston's regional urban forest contains nearly 663 million trees that remove approximately 60,575 tons of air pollutants each year, valued at $300 million a year.
- **Green Jobs:** The green industries -- urban forestry, arboriculture, horticulture, landscape design and maintenance, and other professions that support the urban forest landscape -- have an estimated annual economic impact of $147.8 billion and are growth industries that can provide tens of thousands of new jobs.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Increasing tree cover by 10% in New York City would meet over 1/3 of the city's federal air quality compliance needs for ground level ozone.
- **Risk Management:** Professional urban forest management contains threats in the "urban interface"—such as invasive species, exotic pests, and fire—that pose a risk to forestlands.
- **Public Health:** Access to trees, green spaces, and parks promotes greater physical activity, reduces stress, improves mental health and reduces asthma risks.