



- BACKGROUND -

Urban and community forestry

Promoting and practicing sustainable forestry

Trees in cities – investments that pay off for Oregonians

**Urban forests:
A resource
worth nurturing**

When people think of Oregon’s landscape, they often picture magnificent forests. Indeed, Oregon has some of the most productive, scenic, and biologically diverse forests in the United States, and most of these lands are rural.

However, while Oregon is geographically primarily a rural state, recent population estimates show that 68 percent of all Oregonians live in cities, and 79 percent live in urban areas. These residents live in a particular kind of forest: **an urban forest**. Remnants of the pre-development forest, and the planted landscape in and around our cities, comprise this urban forest – a forest that produces many economic, environmental, and social benefits.

Research by the U.S. Forest Service indicates that every dollar that cities invest in trees returns \$2.70 in benefits. These benefits include increased economic activity, improved environmental quality via cleaner air and water, ecosystem services such as stormwater control and wildlife habitat, increased property values, and an overall sense of community livability.

**Urban
population
trends**

Oregon's Population and Rural/Urban Distribution, 1900-2000

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Population</u>	<u>Percent Urban</u>	<u>Percent Rural</u>
2000	3.4 million	79%	21%
1960	1.8 million	62%	38%
1940	1.1 million	49%	51%
1900	413,536	32%	68%

**About the
Urban and
Community
Forestry
Program**

In 1992, the Oregon Legislature passed HB 2913, directing the Department to provide technical assistance to Oregon’s cities and community organizations, and to help them plant, manage, and care for their urban forests.

Primarily using federal funds provided through the U.S. Forest Service, ODF has enabled Oregonians to reap the economic, environmental, and social benefits that trees in cities provide. For 15 years, ODF’s small staff of three urban foresters has provided an average of more than 600 assists per year, and distributed over \$2 million worth of cost-share grants to nearly 500 city and community projects that have leveraged nearly \$4 million in local expenditures.

Enhancing quality of life in Oregon's communities

ODF's Urban and Community Forestry staff provides assistance to cities and community groups to help improve the quality of life in many Oregon communities. For example, ODF has helped:

- The city of **La Grande** to determine the value of its urban forest (\$9 million).
- The city of **Eagle Point** to develop a hazard tree risk management plan.
- The cities of **Mt. Angel, Lakeview, and Echo** to inventory public trees.
- The city of **Dallas** to hire an arborist to assess dangerous right-of-way trees.
- The city of **Sandy** to determine the most appropriate tree species to plant.
- The city of **Corvallis** to hire its first city forester.
- **OSU Extension** to train its Master Gardeners about proper tree pruning.
- The city of **Forest Grove** to better use the input of a citizen tree advisory committee.
- The city of **Sherwood** to educate citizens about trees and water quality.
- **OSU** to teach its first-ever urban forestry course.
- The city of **Bend** to regain a Tree City USA award after a multi-year absence.



Studies show that shoppers are willing to pay 12% more for goods purchased in business districts with trees, versus those without.

By proactively managing their tree issues, cities can save money and keep the public safe. For many smaller cities that don't have forestry expertise on staff, ODF provides a valuable service to address issues that might otherwise go unresolved.

ODF can help cities address water quality issues, Measure 37 impacts, public safety issues related to hazard trees and risk, and many other topics.

For more
information

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