

Urban Forest Health Monitoring

USDA Forest Service
Northeastern Area
State and Private Forestry



Assessing Change in the Nation's Urban Forests

Description

Trees in cities contribute significantly to human health and environmental quality, yet little has been done to quantify the urban forest resource and its contribution to society and the economy. To better understand urban forest resources, Urban Forest Health Monitoring pilot studies began in the Northeastern Area in 1999, expanding to include Colorado and Tennessee in 2005.

Key Issues

- Urban forests are a significant part of the country's forest resource. Metropolitan areas and the urban counties that surround them cover almost one-quarter of the lower 48 states and support 74.4 billion trees, shading more than 33 percent of these urban counties.
- The USDA Forest Service does not have a full-scale inventory and monitoring system in place to evaluate the Nation's urban forest.
- Very little is known about the status of urban forest resources: whether conditions are changing or whether there are factors that could threaten urban forest structure and health.
- Urban forest information is crucial to developing comprehensive urban and community forestry policies and identifying areas of need.

Accomplishments

- Urban forest resource assessments have been completed in Wisconsin and New Jersey. A report for Wisconsin is in being reviewed.
- Urban street tree assessments have been completed for Maryland, Massachusetts, and Wisconsin. Reports for Maryland and Massachusetts are complete.
- An Urban Forest Health Monitoring Task Team was assembled in 2005 at the request of the National Association of State Foresters. This team determined that a national, continuous monitoring system is feasible and ready to implement when funding permits. In addition, a Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) Urban Implementation Team, established in 2005, developed an urban supplement to the FIA field manual.

Budget History

Urban Forest Health Monitoring (\$ thousands)				
	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007
FHM	\$90	\$100	\$85	\$85
UCF	0	\$90	\$90	\$110
Research	0	0	0	0
Totals	\$90	\$190	\$175	\$195

Future Direction

- Crews will continue to visit urban plots in Colorado and Tennessee during the field season.
- Full implementation of urban forest health monitoring will occur when funds are available.

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