

HOW CONSERVATION DISTRICTS CAN BECOME INVOLVED IN URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ACTIVITIES

The lead federal agency is the USDA Forest Service through their Cooperative Forestry's Urban and Community Forestry Program (www.fs.fed.us/ucf/). The US Forest Service and State Forestry Agencies, in partnership with national and local organizations, provide a comprehensive approach to the stewardship of urban trees and forest resources. This approach helps ensure the vitality of communities by engaging people where they live, work, and play. The Program provides financial and technical assistance to plan, protect, establish, and manage trees, forests, and related resources. *Districts can become familiar with Forest Service programs, and support NACD efforts to obtain adequate federal resources for FS State and Private Forestry.*

Also at the federal level is the National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council (www.treelink.org/nucfac/). The 1990 Farm Bill authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to charter this advisory body, representing a broad range of public and private urban forestry interests. Their role is to advise the Secretary on urban forestry program issues, resource allocation priorities, and challenge cost-share program recommendations. *Districts can become familiar with NUCFAC, and help bring challenge grants to their communities for local projects.*

Closer to home and more accessible to conservation districts are the state agency and advisory committee. The State Forester's office provides leadership for forest resource management, including urban and community forestry. Most have an Urban Forestry Coordinator (www.fs.fed.us/ucf/contact_state.html) who can provide information on current activities around the state as well as federal and state resources. The state agency is advised by the State Urban Forestry Council, composed of agency and organization representatives. *Districts, through their State Association, can establish relationships with the State Forester and Urban Forestry Coordinator, seek a seat on the advisory committee, and support efforts to obtain adequate state resources for urban forestry.*

At the county and city level, there are a variety of entities involved. Some counties and cities have an established program through planning or resource departments while others work through the many active volunteer organizations. Member groups of the Alliance for Community Trees (<http://actrees.org/site/aboutus/index.php>) sponsor awareness programs, tree planting and care, and more. *Districts can learn about local efforts through their State Foresters, county commissions, and city councils. They can visit with these groups to learn about the needs and how they can best assist.*