

The Portland Observer Sustainability



Urban Trees add to Our Health

Urban forests providing billions in economic value

From Portland's famous Forest Park to New York City's Central Park, America's urban forests store an estimated 708 million tons of carbon, an environmental service with an estimated value of \$50 billion, according to a recent U.S. Forest Service study.

Annual net carbon uptake by these trees is estimated at 21 million tons and \$1.5 billion in economic benefit.

In a study published recently in the journal *Environmental Pollution*, Dave Nowak, a research forester with the U.S. Forest Service, and his colleagues used urban tree field data from 28 cities and six states and national tree cover data to estimate total carbon storage in the nation's urban areas. The study resonates with tree stewards here in Portland.

"As cities and suburbs grow and grow, trees and urban forests are becoming increasingly important to the health and well-being of our environment" said Jenn Cairo, City

of Portland Urban Forester. "Trees provide carbon storage, filter stormwater, help cool the air, and provide wildlife habitat. This study is a reminder of the many values of

trees and we hope it spurs even more people to care for them."

Cairo noted that the Portland Parks & Recreation Urban Forestry division actively works with neigh-

borhood volunteers to manage the urban forest through the Neighborhood Street Tree Inventory Project.

The community volunteers are taught to collect street tree data and

utilize it in ways including identifying space for more tree plantings and creating neighborhood tree plans to promote good tree management.

To volunteer with the Street Tree Inventory Project, contact trees@portlandoregon.gov.

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