The Future of Forestry in the Farm Bill

Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) and U.S. Nature4Climate (USN4C)
June 7, 2023
We need shading canopy to combat rising heat.

Burlington, VT days above 100 Heat Index
• Zero (Historic 1971-2000)
• 8 (Mid-century 2036-2065)
• 25 (Late century 2070-2099)
We need robust canopy to reduce flood intensity.
Jacksonville
THE POWER OF TREES

2771
MILLION
GALLONS
STORM RUNOFF AVOIDED

22
MILLION
POUNDS
AIR POLLUTION ABSORBED

1.3
MILLION
TONS CO₂e
CARBON POLLUTION REMOVED

Estimates for Duval County
Source: U.S. Forest Service - Tree County Tool
RUNOFF AVOIDED BY TREES
Million gallons per year

Annual county-level estimates based on 2010 census data.
Source: U.S. Forest Service i-Tree County Tool
Trees in communities have a global climate impact.

15% of all forest carbon sequestered in the United States is from trees in settlements (urban and community).
Trees improve public health and equity.

- “Healthy Trees, Healthy Lives” – tree canopy strengthens the body, nourishes the mind, boosts healing, and improves financial health
- Increased canopy can reduce citywide temperatures and decrease illness and death.
- As tree canopy increases, mental health disparities for poor communities decrease.
- How does your tree canopy and access to parks compare? Visit American Forests' TreeEquityScore.org and TPL's ParkServe.tpl.org.
Trees increase park usage

National Study of Playgrounds (2023) – NIH (NHLBI # R01HL114432)
Critical community tree cover is declining.

• 127 million acres of canopy in urban areas (5.5 billion trees)
• $18.3 billion value air pollution capture and prevention, water pollution, reduced energy use, carbon capture
• BUT...we are losing 175,000 acres (36 million trees) a year
• AND...historically redlined “class D” communities have ½ the canopy today of “class A” communities
Moving forward – Policy Recommendations

• Urban and Community Forestry Program –
  • Continue historic investment and tools to reach those with greatest need
    • maintain funding levels and waiver of match requirements

• Community Forest Program –
  • Remove barriers to entry/participation for Tribes and historically underserved communities
    • reduce match requirements
    • revise forest cover requirement
    • increase flexibility in public access requirements

• (Proposed) Forest Conservation Easement Program –
  • Use the Farm Bill to protect private working forests that benefit rural and urban communities:
    • 72 percent of annual carbon sequestration from all U.S. forests
    • filter 30 percent of the nation’s drinking water
    • provide habitat for 60 percent of at-risk species
    • support 2.5 million jobs
Thanks to EESI and USN4C

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