



# The Council Quarterly

Quarterly Newsletter of the Florida Urban Forestry Council

2010 Issue Four

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## WHAT IS THE SUSTAINABLE SITES INITIATIVE?

Submitted by Thomas Levin, ASLA, AICP, CEP

### THE SUSTAINABLE SITES INITIATIVE™

The Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES) is a program to measure sustainability of site development and management. In certain ways it is similar to the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System, but differs in that it focuses exclusively on site and landscape issues. Unlike LEED, this initiative applies to sites both with and without buildings.

Projects that qualify for the program include parks, preserves, transportation corridors, and other open uses of land as well as commercial, institutional and residential development.

It all began as two separate projects by the Sustainable Design and Development Professional Practice Network of the American Society of Landscape Architects



and the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. They joined together with the United States Botanical Garden in 2006 to establish the Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES). The impetus for SITES was the lack of comprehensive guidelines or benchmarks for sustainable landscapes. Existing standards for "green buildings" do not address certain site development issues,

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



*As a Consulting Arborist and Forester, my frame of reference to urban forestry issues is molded by a range of professional experiences in both urban and traditional forestry. However, as forest fragmentation continues and human populations expand, I have noticed that most of my “traditional forestry” projects have a component that is at least influenced – if not significantly impacted – by urban issues. The line between traditional forestry and urban forestry has blurred. On one current project, I am providing traditional forestry services related to a thinning harvest and reforestation, while also evaluating potentially hazardous trees along the property line posing risk to adjacent homes. In addition, I am dealing with wildfire protection and invasive exotic vegetation – issues clearly relevant to both forestry realms.*

*I feel that “Sustainable Forestry” is a core principle that bridges both forestry disciplines and is worthy of our attention and reflection. Insight about designing sustainable urban forests is presented in an article in this issue of the newsletter by Landscape Architect Tom Levin. Tom writes about the Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES), which will provide guidelines and measurable benchmarks for site development issues such as landscapes. Many of you had the pleasure of hearing Edward Browder present on this topic at our FUFC 2010 Regional Workshop. Tom Levin continues this discussion on SITES in his article including references to the Florida Aquarium landscape, which Tom helped to design as one of the first SITES projects in the country. SITES is very much an evolving initiative, but one in which landscape architects, urban foresters, and arborists will likely become more involved in the future.*

*There are many important and interesting aspects to sustainable urban forestry. I hope you give the topic much thought and perhaps we will have a future newsletter devoted to this subject. It is my hope that we can be diligent and wise in our professional service so that we can make positive contributions that will leave our urban and urbanizing forests in a better condition for our kids and grandkids. The Council stands ready to assist in this task, but each of us individually can play an important role in realizing this goal.*

*Finally, the year will soon wind to a close and I wanted to note a few highlights of 2010. A thorough review will be presented in the next issue of The Council Quarterly newsletter when we will feature our Annual Report.*

*The year 2010 included a blend of some traditional big FUFC sponsored programs including Tim Womick’s Trail of Trees, the Friends of Our Urban Forest awards, and the FUFC Regional Workshop & Annual Meeting – held this year in Winter Park. FUFC also supported other urban forestry conferences and FUFC members gave presentations at different venues such as the Florida Native Plant Society annual conference.*

*This represents the fourth newsletter of 2010 – a hearty thanks to the Newsletter Committee and all those who contributed articles. The newsletter went to full color with the second issue and is now printed on recycled paper. Of course, many of you have selected to receive the newsletter electronically, which saves us the cost of paper and printing allowing us to redirect some of our budget dollars to other programs.*

*Early this year we conducted our first electronic Membership Survey. Results were printed in the 2010 Issue Two of The Council Quarterly. Please note in this issue plus future issues a special section titled “We Hear You” devoted to follow-up on specific survey questions.*

*Finally, I am very thankful to the devoted work that Sandy Temple, FUFC Executive Director, and the many executive committee members and other FUFC members have made. This has enabled us to forge more constructive partnerships, improve core member services, and begin the development of some exciting future programs. As we implement our new Strategic Plan, our goal is to be a relevant and influential organization that you will continue to support.*

*I hope you will take time to fully enjoy the final 2010 issue of The Council Quarterly. Wishing all of you a blessed holidays and winter season!*

Gratefully yours,

*John Holzapfel*  
FUFC President

[JohnH@nrpsforesters.com](mailto:JohnH@nrpsforesters.com)

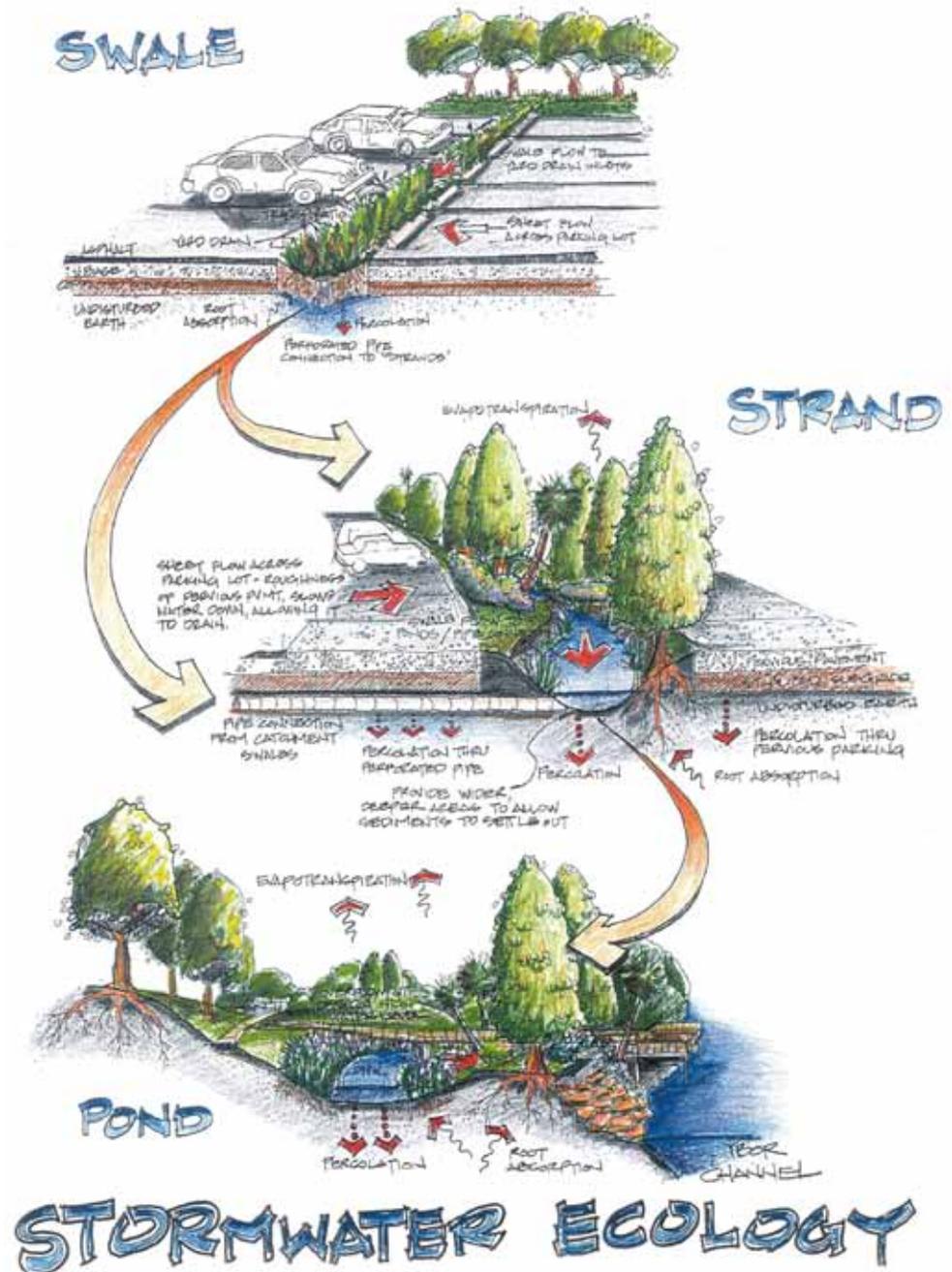


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and in particular do not include landscapes not associated with buildings.

The concept of “ecosystem services” is rooted in the philosophy that healthy ecosystems provide functions of value that are difficult to quantify and therefore difficult to protect. Many of these services are “free” until the ecosystem is no longer able to provide them. Clean air and water, biodiversity, fisheries and forest goods, all come to mind. Thoughtful management and design of landscapes can maintain or improve their value and contribution to the human and natural environment. The SITES approach to land stewardship can provide guidance for planners, landscape architects, foresters, engineers, developers/builders, biologists, horticulturalists and maintenance crews. The lessons apply equally to all who design, construct, operate and maintain landscapes.

A selection of Case Studies from across the country has been assembled on the SITES website (<http://www.sustainablesites.org/cases/>). The case studies were compiled in 2008 to showcase the type of projects that SITES intends to foster. One of those case studies is a Florida project, the Florida Aquarium, completed in 1995. This project was developed on an urban site using bioswales, detention pools and landscape



*“Florida, with its warm climate, diverse habitats, fragile aquifers and numerous waterways, is a prime candidate to demonstrate sustainable site practices by participating in this program.”*

areas together in a concept of “stormwater ecology.” Florida, with its warm climate, diverse habitats, fragile aquifers and numerous waterways, is a prime candidate to demonstrate sustainable site practices by participating in this program.

In 2009, SITES published “The Sustainable Sites Initiatives: Guidelines and Performance Benchmarks 2009,” an overview of criteria for sustainable land design, construction and maintenance practices. There are currently over 150 pilot projects registered in the SITES two-year pilot program to span from June 2010 to

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June 2012. The results of this effort will be utilized to develop a technical reference guide to be released in 2013. The goal is to create a national rating system to rank and certify projects under the program.

There has been a great amount of information assembled to assist the site designer or land manager in creating more sustaining landscapes. The Sustainable Sites Initiative is developing a viable

methodology to measure benchmarks for successful implementation. SITES will soon be able to go beyond case studies and pilot projects to be translated into sustainable site techniques that can be applied and measured for mainstream project sites.



## ANNUAL TREE INSPECTIONS FOR HOMEOWNER ASSOCIATIONS

*Submitted by Brian Hopper, ISA Certified Arborist – Greenstar Concepts, LLC*

Most homeowners' associations perform tree pruning on an annual basis. Typically a sales person for the company bidding the work will look at the property to get a general assessment of difficulty level of the job (time required) and will take a quick count of the trees. Then, if awarded the job, the trimmers for the company will prune the trees based on general instructions. Most often, tree canopies are raised for clearance and thinned out to reduce wind load and increase light penetration.

An important missing component that is very often omitted is a thorough look at each tree to determine if there are any branch defects or hazardous conditions that might lead to tree failure. It is of utmost importance to include trees in inspection programs because their failure can often cause major damage or injury. A proper inspection involves a certified arborist completely walking around each tree and looking into the upper canopy for broken branches, branches with poor attachment and wounds or decay anywhere on the tree.

Suggesting that trees should be inspected on a regular basis is not just a personal opinion of one arborist. A report published by the International City/County Management Association in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service also recommends that each tree in high use areas be inspected on an annual basis. High use areas include playgrounds, picnic spaces, clubhouse grounds and any outdoor area that people visit frequently. Of course, inspections should also be conducted immediately after a hurricane or severe storm event.

In addition to a tree inspection for hazardous conditions, a community can also request an inventory of their trees and a recommendation for pruning specifications. This will ensure that bids for pruning will be consistent and the community receives an "apples to apples" comparison of work proposals. An inspection during the pruning operation can also be included to ensure that proper pruning is conducted. There are many very good tree trimmers and many very bad tree trimmers out there.

Unfortunately, it is difficult for the average consumer to tell whether they received good work. Certain improper pruning methods may provide a dramatic effect but may not always be in the best interest of the customer or the tree.

Only qualified individuals should conduct formal tree inspections or inventories. Their qualifications should include being an International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist (<http://www.isa-arbor.com>) or a college degree/formal training in Forestry. The cost of tree risk inspections, inventories, or pruning specifications is usually a small fraction of the cost for annual pruning. It will be well worth the investment, in the form of peace of mind and possible damage or injury avoided.

*For further information, please contact Brian Hopper at [www.greenstarconcepts.net](http://www.greenstarconcepts.net) or 561-654-6797.*

# WINNERS FOR THE GROVE'S TREE PLANTING STORY CONTEST



Thanks to all who shared stories and photos on The Grove. Communities across the Southeast--and the world--are doing great things to increase their tree canopies. Many of you are getting kids involved to teach them the importance of creating a green legacy. Keep up the good work!

Winning authors of The Grove Tree Planting Story Contest are:

**Cheryl Kortemeier**, the first place winner from Decatur, GA, who helped the community of Oakhurst plant 100 trees in celebration of its 100th anniversary. Cheryl selected Trees Atlanta to receive a \$350 donation from The Grove.

**Richard Bamlet**, the second place winner from Vero Beach, FL, who worked with a group in Scotland to plant 1,390 trees in 37 minutes. Richard selected the Florida Urban Forestry Council to receive a \$200 donation from The Grove.

**Janice Rahill**, the third place winner from Orlando, FL, who corralled a group of sixth grade boys to plant trees for Green Up Orlando. Janice also selected the Florida Urban Forestry Council to receive a \$100 donation from The Grove.

## The winning stories are as follows:

### DECATUR, GEORGIA

*Submitted by Cheryl Kortemeier,  
Decatur, Georgia*

On Saturday, October 30, from 9 a.m. to Noon, Trees Atlanta proudly hosted a tree planting project in the Oakhurst Community of Decatur, GA. Trees Atlanta is helping the Oakhurst plant 100 trees in celebration of its 100th Anniversary. The project is sponsored by the Decatur Craft Beer Festival and The UPS Foundation, and so far, 62 of the 100 trees have been planted.



On the morning of the tree installation, Trees Atlanta was pleased to announce to

the crowd of 50+ volunteers that the trees planted through this project are also in loving memory of late community hero, Sally Wylde. Sally passed away earlier this year after a several year battle with breast cancer. Sally was a dynamic community leader who loved trees and loved people. Sally helped found the Oakhurst Community Garden Project in the early 1990s, along with longtime Oakhurst resident, Ms. Louise Jackson. Ms. Jackson was present on the day of the planting along with Sally's husband, Britt Dean, and City Commissioner, Patti Garrett. After a touching welcome and tribute to Sally, smiling (teary-eyed!) volunteers got to work and were enthusiastic about making Oakhurst a healthier and more beautiful community through planting trees. We did it "Sally-style," planting the trees together and then sharing a meal at the local pizza joint, MoJo's, after the project.

We miss you, Sally. You inspired hundreds of people of all ages to become better stewards of the environment. You encouraged people to get their hands dirty as a means for learning, growing and healing. The dirt healed our hearts as we planted those trees, but we still think about you every day and reflect on the lessons you shared with us. May the 100 trees honoring Oakhurst's 100th Anniversary grow tall, strong and for many years in honor of the legacy of OUR community hero, Sally Wylde.



## RAINY SCOTLAND

*Submitted by Richard Bamlet,  
Florida Division of Forestry*

Last December I organized a tree planting event in Scotland which was part of a world record attempt to plant the most trees in simultaneous events in one hour.

We expected about forty people to turn up to the local park. By the time the 11 a.m. starter horn sounded, over 160 people were ready to join in the record attempt. Community leaders, non-profit environmental groups, local Boy Scouts, teenagers, mums

with toddlers and senior citizens all came along to do their bit. A local choir sang festive carols to cheer everybody along. Boy Scouts served cups of hot soup which doubled as hand warmers, as well as belly warmers, on that foggy, rainy December morning. We planted 1,390 trees in 37 minutes. Not too shabby.

Unfortunately the existing record of 653,143 trees planted in one hour in the Philippines in 2006 was not broken. I don't think anybody really cared about that. The trees still counted towards the United Nations Environment Programme "Plant for

the Planet: Billion Tree Campaign" attempt to plant seven billion trees in 2009. This was achieved with nearly seven-and-a-half billion trees being planted across the world. That's one tree for everyone on the planet plus a few spare.

Aldo Leopold said "Acts of creation are ordinarily reserved for gods and poets. To plant a tree, one need only own a shovel." As the little boy in the picture shows, it doesn't even matter if that shovel is bigger than you.



## AUDUBON PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ORLANDO FLORIDA

*Submitted by Janice Rahill,  
City of Orlando*

Trees are really just children in a different skin. They begin life as a seed that takes root, and with enough love and care, become the future of a neighborhood. A group of sixth grade boys with budding testosterone proved that recently. Add a couple of

adults to guide them and you build a future tree canopy in a neighborhood in a day. More importantly, you grow our future, not only to shade a downtown neighborhood surrounded by declining Laurel Oaks, but by instilling pride in youth to care about tomorrow in many other ways.

It started like any other volunteer planting day. A motivated homeowner rallying neighbors who care about their beloved

Oaks, add a Green Up Orlando tree delivery and a bunch of boys whose mother thought a great way to earn school community service hours was to join our event. What happened in the process is what counts. A group of boys whose initial Saturday goal was to sign in, stay an hour, then leave, instead planted fifteen, 250 pound, 10' tall oaks in less than 3 hours. The most amazing part is they had FUN--and asked when they could do it again!

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So although we accomplished the goal of replanting a historic neighborhood's oaks, we also grew pride in doing something

worthwhile. Together a team of boys made a transformation into young men by planting the future of our City Beautiful in a day.



## FLORIDA WINS STATE VS. STATE COMPETITION

Florida is the winner of The Grove's State vs. State Competition, our three-month drive for states to add members to their group pages. From September 1 to November 30, Florida added more than 200 members to its group page.

The Florida Urban Forestry Council will receive a \$1,000 donation for its recruiting efforts. The donation will go to urban forestry programs throughout the state. A special thank you goes to Sandy Temple and Charlie Marcus for their efforts to get individuals in their state involved in The Grove. Arkansas also recruited several new members this fall. During the contest, it added more than 150 Arkansans to its group page. As the runner-up, The Grove will make a \$750 donation to the Arkansas Urban Forestry Council. AUFC plans to use this donation to help with the Arkansas ReLeaf project to assist communities in recovering from tree loss caused by storm damage. Along with helping to releaf the community, the project educates the public on proper tree selection, placement and planting.

Thank you to all of our states for creating buzz about The Grove this fall. In total, the community grew from 454 members on September 1 to 1,338 members as of November 30.



## ARTICLES WANTED

The Florida Urban Forestry Council would like to share information on what is going on throughout the state in our newsletters. We would like to receive articles on any aspect of our field. Article ideas may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- New trends in the industry
- News about tree advocacy groups
- Volunteer projects
- Favorite or new websites
- Ideas on working with the public
- City tree programs
- Solutions to common problems in your typical workday
- Children's poems, drawings, favorite quotes

Please update us on urban forestry news in your corner of the state so that we can learn from each other. Our newsletter is not only a great way to share information, but also a way to show off our accomplishments and successes. Articles can be sent to Sherie Burch, FUFUC newsletter editor, at [sburch@ocalafl.org](mailto:sburch@ocalafl.org).

Thanks for contributing!



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# CITY OF ALTAMONTE SPRINGS URBAN BEAUTIFICATION "FORESTRY PROGRAM" UPDATE IN RELATION TO STREET TREE ANALYSIS

*Submitted by Mike Insley, Urban Beautification Coordinator –  
City of Altamonte Springs*

The Urban Beautification Division has had a Tree Inventory since 2000. The inventory was updated in 2006 after the hurricanes in 2004. Species diversification has been a great concern and in the 2000 inventory Laurel Oaks comprised 28% of our street trees, but in 2006 they comprised only 22.6%. Other examples of increasing species diversification is in the planting projects such as City Hall, West Altamonte and Central Parkway where hundreds of trees were planted with approximately only 1% of the trees being Laurel Oaks. Finally, we are working with the Growth Management Department and have made recommendations of tree species that could increase the "Acceptable Tree Species for Altamonte Springs" (table 8.3 of the Land Development regulations). By increasing this tree list we will continue to increase diversity of our street trees.

Our current inventory does not have tree planting spaces listed yet. Once we have our current tree inventory updated the scope of services will include the location of all tree planting spaces. The F.A.S.T (Future Altamonte Springs Trees) program which was started in 2005 has allowed us to increase species diversity, identify planting spaces and increase street tree canopy which is currently at 36.8%. The FAST program has limitations and is only available to residents who agree to water the newly planted right-of-way trees.

Eighty percent of street trees in Altamonte Springs have a diameter of 18 inches or less because they are young trees. Beautification projects such as Maitland Avenue medians, Central Parkway and others all occurred in the last 20 years. Also, tree replacement and the FAST tree programs all started in the last 5 years. If these programs continue, the street tree DBH (Diameter at Breast Height) distribution will become more consistent with all sizes being represented which will increase the age diversity of the street tree population.

In our 2000 tree inventory 84% of the street trees were rated in fair to good condition, the tree condition in the 2006 inventory jumped to 93.6% of the street trees being rated in fair to good condition. This increase is the result of removal of hazard street trees, planting replacement trees and a good maintenance program. Our maintenance program is set up so the City is divided into four (4) sections and each year we perform maintenance on every road in that section. After four years the entire City tree population has been maintained.

Energy savings, carbon dioxide reductions, improvement in air quality, stormwater runoff reductions, along with aesthetic, property value, social, and economic benefits are all the positive attributes we receive from our street trees. The value of these attributes is approximately \$1.16 per tree and it costs the City approximately \$1.00 per tree to maintain.

Future objectives for the Urban Beautification Forestry Program will include a new tree inventory which will include identifying planting spaces. This inventory will need to be done in 2012. Another objective will be the expansion of the tree planting program on rights of way throughout the City. This tree planting expansion should include undeveloped parcels along roads or medians such as Newburyport, Gateway Drive, Spring Oaks, and Laurel Street. It will be imperative to maintain the current tree program and expand it in some areas.



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# SOME CITY TREES MAY DISCOURAGE 'SHADY' BEHAVIOR

## Study explores relationship between urban trees and crime.

Reprinted with permission from Geoffrey Donovan, Research Forester – Portland Forestry Sciences Lab

**ScienceDaily (Nov. 2, 2010)** Along with energy conservation and storm-water reduction, scientists may soon be adding crime-fighting to the list of benefits that urban trees provide. Researchers with the U.S. Forest Service's Pacific Northwest (PNW) and Southern Research Stations have published a new study that suggests that certain types of city trees may help lower property and violent crime rates.

Their study -- which is posted online in advance of its appearance in a forthcoming printed issue of the journal *Environment and Behavior* -- is the first to examine the

effects of trees and other factors on crime occurrence in Portland, Oregon.

"We wanted to find out whether trees, which provide a range of other benefits, could improve quality of life in Portland by reducing crime, and it was exciting to see that they did," said Geoffrey Donovan, research forester with the PNW Research Station who led the study. "Although a burglar alarm may deter criminals, it won't provide shade on a hot summer day,

and it certainly isn't as nice to look at as a tree."

Donovan and his colleague Jeffrey Prestemon, with the Southern Research Station, obtained crime data from the Portland Police Bureau from 2005 to 2007 and grouped the incidents into seven categories. They examined only crimes for which a physical address was given and paired this information with additional

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*"Their sample of 2,813 single-family homes experienced 394 property and 37 violent crimes."*

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data obtained from aerial photographs, onsite visits, and the Multnomah County Tax Assessor's Office. Their sample of 2,813 single-family homes experienced 394 property and 37 violent crimes.

The researchers then conducted statistical analyses to explore the relationships among crime and more than two dozen variables they compiled, including the number and size of trees on a lot and the size of trees on surrounding areas. Of the tree variables analyzed, canopy size of both street and yard trees and the number of trees growing on a lot had the most effect on crime occurrence -- large trees were associated with a reduction in crime, while numerous small trees were associated with an increase.

"We believe that large street trees can reduce crime by signaling to a potential criminal that a neighborhood is better cared for and, therefore, a criminal is more likely to be caught," Donovan said. "Large yard trees also were associated with lower crime rates, most likely because they are less view-obstructing than smaller trees."

In contrast, their analysis suggested that small yard trees might actually increase crime by blocking views and providing cover for criminals -- an effect that homeowners can mitigate by keeping trees pruned and carefully choosing the location of new trees.

Donovan and Prestemon plan to continue this line of research and may conduct similar studies in other cities.



*Large trees can make a neighborhood seem well-cared for. Shown here is a neighborhood in Portland, Ore., where a study was conducted that explored the effects of trees and other factors on crime occurrence in the city. (Credit: Geoffrey Donovan, U.S. Forest Service, PNW Research Station)*

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# WE HEAR YOU

The FUFUC Executive Committee appreciates your responses to the member survey. We will be addressing some of the specific comments which were made. For this quarterly issue, the Executive Committee has decided to assess the responses regarding the quality and effectiveness of *The Council Quarterly* Newsletter. In this issue we will discuss the question of "Please rate the FUFUC *Council Quarterly* Newsletter."

From the results of the survey, it appears the majority (56.2%) of the members found the newsletter "very informative and useful." An additional 32.6% of the members found the newsletter to be "somewhat informative and useful." This is good to know that the members are finding the information in the newsletter useful as it a culmination of the working and doings of the FUFUC, its members, and those involved professionally in the tree and urban forest industry throughout the state of Florida.

The newsletter is intended to be a vehicle by which those involved and interested in the urban forest can participate and learn about various activities that are taking place throughout the state of Florida in the industry. Some of the activities have already taken place, such as municipal or street tree plantings. Some of the activities are up and coming, such as the development of the American Grove (visit [www.americangrove.org](http://www.americangrove.org) and click on the Florida Grove). And some of the activities are evolving, such as the i-Tree software used for street tree inventories and evaluations. The newsletter is also used as a tool to keep members and readers in the loop of upcoming events and workshops.

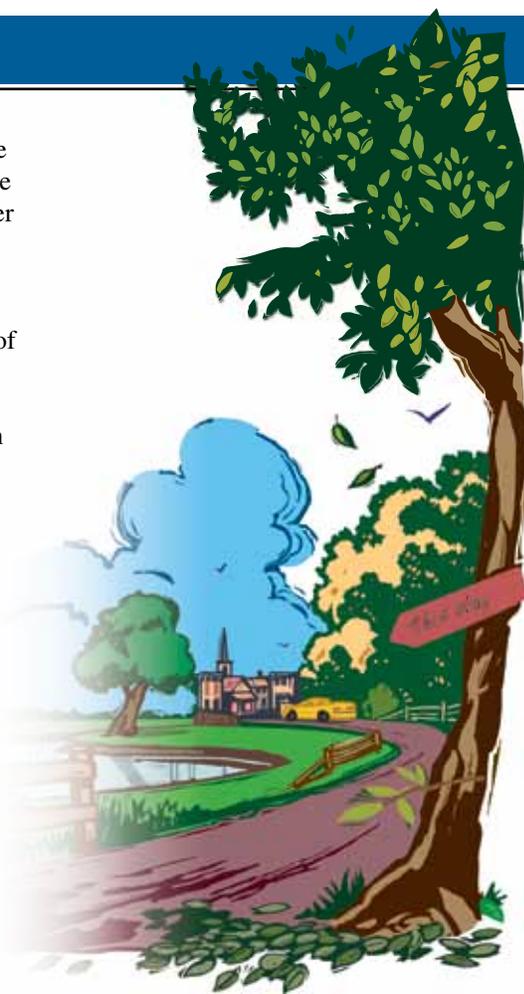
Just keep in mind that membership in the FUFUC and the information provided in the newsletter is not intended just for industry professionals. The newsletter is intended to continually provide information for anyone who is interested in protecting and caring for the urban forest, including individual home owners and tree advocates in general.

Several FUFUC members that participated in the membership survey provided suggestions as to how to improve the quarterly newsletter. Some of the suggestions included the following:

- Broaden the spectrum of who contributes articles

- FUFUC strongly encourages anyone to provide an article on any aspect of the field of urban forestry. Articles can be sent to Sherie Burch, FUFUC newsletter editor, at [sburch@ocalafl.org](mailto:sburch@ocalafl.org).
- Include new research and technologies that are being utilized in Florida arboriculture, especially from the University of Florida.
  - The state of Florida is performing valuable research in the field of urban forestry. The Executive Committee is working diligently with University of Florida (and other colleges and universities) to provide the results of this research to our members in a reader-friendly format.
- Include more photographs of the urban forest in the newsletter.
  - Photographs are definitely aesthetically pleasing and welcomed to the newsletter. If you have a photograph that you feel would be beneficial, please provide it to Sherie (E-mail address included above).
- Provide a feature article each issue showing some significant and innovative tree project from around the state of Florida.
  - FUFUC strives to provide examples of projects from around the state that express the success and challenges of developing and completing urban forestry projects. If you have a similar experience you would like to share please provide this to Sherie's attention.

Again, FUFUC recognizes the value of *The Quarterly Council* newsletter to its members and is continually striving to improve its function and value to its readers.



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