



Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council *2021 Biennial Report*

Presented to State Forester Berklund, Secretary Cole
and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council

2021 Biennial Report: Executive Summary



Shahla M. Werner, WUFC Chair /
WDATCP Plant Protection Section

The 2021 Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council (WI UFC) Biennial Report summarizes our actions over the last two years, WDNR Urban Forestry grants, staff and programs, key recommendations to WDNR, and future opportunities and challenges. We are proud of our accomplishments as a Council and are hopeful that our role of advising the WDNR on the best ways to protect, expand and improve Wisconsin's urban and community forest resources is making a difference.

The WI UFC's top recommendations to WDNR, as described in detail on page 14, include 1) maintaining and expanding the current \$1,049,200 in GPR funding for Urban Forestry; 2) adding an additional \$345,000 in state Forestry SEG funding each year for Urban Forestry grant awards for emerging risks, including introduced, invasive insects and diseases; 3) creating a new, \$300,000 per year tree planting grant to meet Wisconsin's goal of planting 75 million trees by 2030; allowing stormwater credits for tree planting and maintenance; and 4) adding an FTE to administer the recommended new tree planting grant to meet the Trillion Trees goal; and creating full-time, permanent positions for all urban forestry staff rather than limited term employees in order to ensure continuity and long-term program success.

We would like to thank state forester Berklund and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Division of Forestry Leadership for your engagement with our Council. Having state forester Heather Berklund, Applied Forestry Bureau Director Carmen Hardin and Forestry Services Deputy Mike Warnke attend our meetings has been invaluable and demonstrates the vital role urban and community forestry plays in the direction of the Division of Forestry. Your active engagement is strongly appreciated by our Council Members.

Our Executive Committee looks forward to meeting with you soon to address any questions or provide clarifications on matters concerning this report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shahla M. Werner". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a white rectangular box.

Shahla Werner, Chair
Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council

Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council: *Mission, Members, and Committees*



Members are appointed for 3 year terms once nominations are approved by the WDNR Secretary and are supported by WDNR staff. There are no term limits.

The 27 members of the [Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council](#) (WI UFC) advise the Wisconsin State Forester and Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) on the best ways to preserve, protect, expand and improve Wisconsin's urban and community forest resources, as authorized by Wisconsin Statute s. 15.04 (1)(C). Specifically, we develop, implement, monitor and revise sections related to urban forestry in Wisconsin's 10 year forest action plan; we advise and assist the Wisconsin State Forester WDNR on activities to further the understanding, appreciation, practice, and benefits of urban forestry in Wisconsin; and we strive to assist all parties involved in urban forestry matters to coordinate activities to avoid duplication, inefficiency and conflict, with the ultimate goal of the betterment of the urban forests in Wisconsin.

Our bylaws, which require us to have at least 21 voting members, are intended to ensure a broad spectrum of urban forestry stakeholder representation and require our membership to include representatives from the nursery / green industry, higher education, commercial arborists, utility foresters, a local elected official, public works staff, municipal arborists from communities of various sizes; at-large members that may include environmental nonprofits, wood-using industries, and natural resource advocates; and the Wisconsin Arborist Association (WAA), the League of Wisconsin Municipalities, the Urban Wood Network Wisconsin, and Wisconsin Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, Wisconsin Parks and Recreation Association, WisDOT and WDATCP.

Each Member of the WI UFC is required to serve on a standing committee (the Executive, Nominations and Orientation, or Awards); or one of our 6 Issue Groups, which include Advocacy, Public Health and Trees, Species Diversity, Stormwater, Urban Wood Utilization or Workforce Development, which will be described in detail later in this report. The Executive Committee is comprised of the Chair, Vice Chair and Past Chair, and mainly works with WDNR to plan meetings and events, complete reports, and address overarching issues. The Nominations and Orientation Committee, which is led by Vice Chair Matt Koepnick and comprised of Lee Fredericks, Dwayne Sperber, and Matt Staudenmaier (with Sara Minkoff and Jeff Roe providing staff support), works to nominate new members to the UFC, mentor new members, and ensure that we acknowledge the service of outgoing members. The Awards Committee (with staff support from Sara Minkoff) recognizes various categories of outstanding urban forestry champions statewide. They host an awards ceremony at the Annual WDNR / WAA Urban Forestry Conference each February.

2021 Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council Membership

Katie Aspenson
Representing city planners
Planning Manager, City of Onalaska

Ben Reince
Representing the Wisconsin Arborist Association
Executive Vice President, Wachtel Tree Science

Kirsten M. M. Beyer
Representing higher education
Medical College of Wisconsin

Sarah Repp
Representing the WI Parks and Recreation Association
Park, Recreation and Cemetery Director, City of Antigo

Wendy Braun
Member-at-large representing statewide nat. resources
advocates; North American Stormwater and Erosion Control
Assoc.; Wisconsin DOT Stormwater Engineer

August Ridder
Representing utility arborists
Program Manager, Vegetation Management, Xcel Energy

Linda Cadotte
Representing municipal arborists/foresters from medium sized
communities
Director of Parks, Recreation & Forestry, City of Superior

Christa Schaefer
Representing the WI Department of Transportation
State Transportation Landscape Architect

Marla Eddy
Representing municipal arborists/foresters from communities
over 200,000, City Forester, City of Madison

Jordan Skiff
Representing public works
City Administrator—Utilities Manager, City of Plymouth

Jeff Edgar
Representing the nursery/green industry
Silver Creek Nursery

Dwayne Sperber
Member-at-large representing Urban Wood Network, WI
Wudeward Urban Forest Products, LLC

Mark Freberg
Member-at-large representing interested Wisconsin citizens
Green Bay City Forester (retired)

Matthew Staudenmaier
Representing municipal arborists/foresters from
communities under 100,000
Forestry Department Supervisor, City of Eau Claire

Lee Fredericks
Member-at-large representing commercial arborists and
elected officials; Territory Mgr, Rainbow TreeCare Scientific
Advancements; Trustee, Village of Slinger

Jonathan Stickels
Representing the nursery/green industry
Mariani Plants

Tricia Gorby
Representing higher education
Director, Natural Resources Institute,
UW Division of Extension

Gail Sumi
Representing the League of Wisconsin Municipalities
Member Engagement and Communications Director

Keith Hardie
Member-at-large representing interested Wisconsin citizens
Department of Public Works (retired)

Alex Timmer
Representing higher education
UW – Milwaukee School of Architecture & Urban Planning

August Hoppe, Past Chair
Representing commercial arborists
Hoppe Tree Service

Sarah Toomsen
Representing the WI Chapter of American Society of Landscape
Architects
Manager of Planning & Development, Milwaukee Co. Parks

Matthew Koepnick, Vice Chair
Representing municipal arborists/foresters from medium sized
communities and the Society of Municipal Arborists
City Forester, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department,
City of Racine

Jeffery Treu
Member-at-large representing statewide natural resources
advocates
WE Energies Regional Forester (retired)

Shirley Brabender Mattox
Member-at-large representing statewide natural resources
advocates

Shahla Werner, Chair
Representing the WI Department of Agriculture, Trade and
Consumer Protection, Plant Protection Section Manager

Rex Zemke Representing interested Wisconsin citizens; District Groundskeeper, Wausau School District

Ex-Officio, Non-Voting Members of the Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council

Jill Johnson

USDA Forest Service
Midwest Urban Forestry Coordinator

Jeff Roe

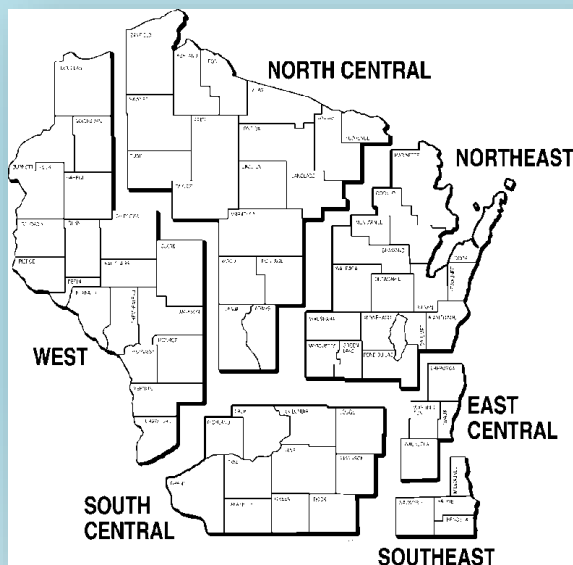
Urban Forestry Team Leader
WDNR Forestry Division

Sara Minkoff

Urban Forestry Council Liaison
WDNR Forestry Division

The Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council is thankful for the dedicated WDNR and USFS staff who have provided immeasurable support to members over the years. They provide the tools we need to accomplish our mission, from meeting scheduling, agenda development, meeting notes, meeting hosting, arranging urban forestry tours, supporting WI UFC meeting and travel costs, sending UFC members to the Community Tree Management Institute, promoting attendance at national Urban Forestry meetings, providing historical perspective, and more. In recent years they have arranged for facilitation of WI UFC members to organize our input on the forest action plan, assisted with awards, and provided essential technological support to allow us to continue holding virtual meetings throughout the pandemic.

WDNR Urban Forestry Council Liaison Sara Minkoff provides the majority of staff support. On the federal level, USFS Midwest Urban Forestry Coordinator Jill Johnson has helped connect the WI UFC to other states and facilitated regional council meetings, in addition to providing members with timely national budget and policy updates on urban and community forestry issues. In addition, the WI Urban Forestry Council works closely with other WDNR Urban Forestry Team members, including Partnership and Policy Specialist Laura Buntrock, Urban Forestry Finance Specialist Nicolle Spafford, Communications Specialist Patricia Lindquist, Forest Products Specialist Scott Lyon, Urban Forest Assessment Outreach Specialist Dan Buckler, Forest Products Team Leader Collin Buntrock, Grants Specialist Chase O'Brien, and others.

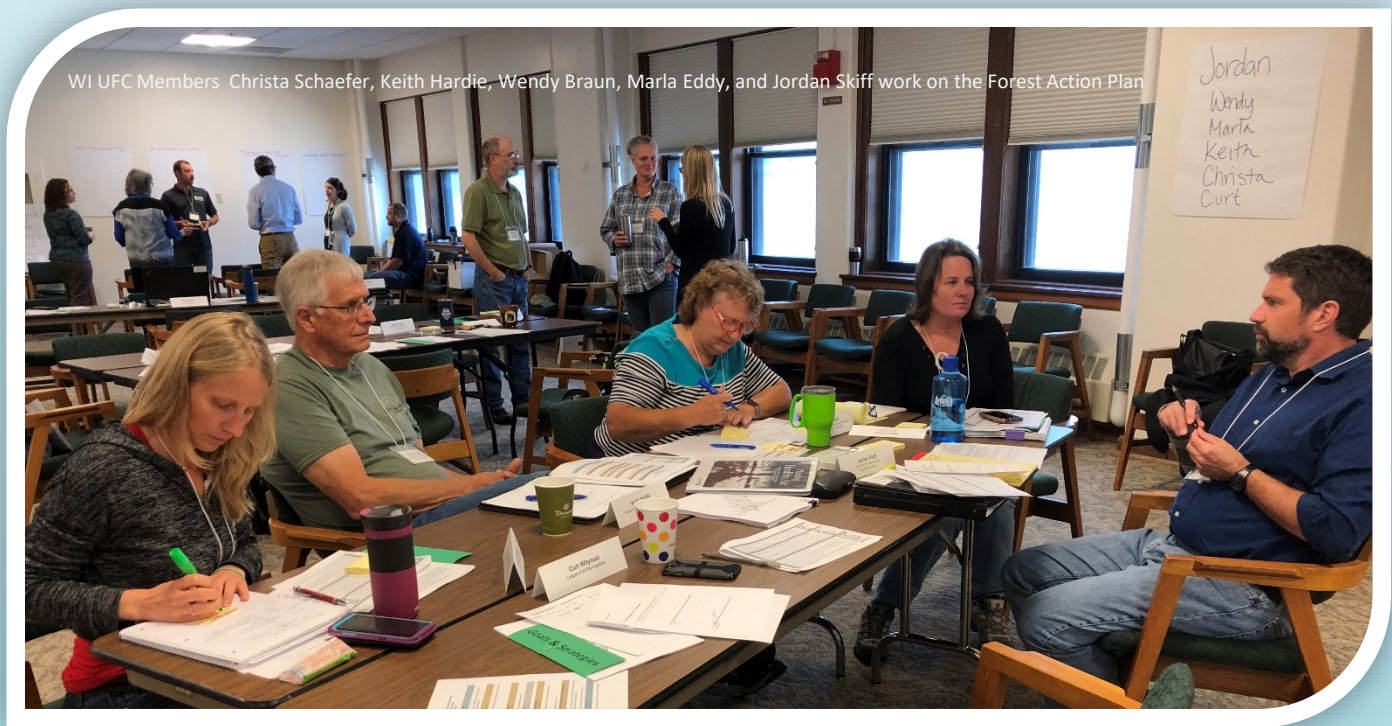


Regional WDNR Urban Forestry Coordinators (whose territories are depicted on the map to the left) also support the UFC. **Special thanks to Don Kissinger (North Central) and Brad Johnson (West) who recently both retired, as well as Tracy Salisbury (Northeast), Olivia Witthun (East Central), Kim Sebastian (Southeast), and Brian Wahl (South Central) for all they have done and continue to do to foster urban forestry and facilitate the WI UFC.**

Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council: *Updates & Accomplishments*

Significant, exciting developments have transpired since the last biennial report. In fall 2020, WI UFC members were pleased to see **WDNR Secretary Preston D. Cole's historic appointment of Heather Berklund as the department's state forester**, the first woman to serve in this position. Since that time, we have appreciated how engaged and visible state forester Berklund has been in attending our meetings, and her strong support for urban and community forests and all the benefits they provide, from carbon sequestration to providing critical greenspace for underserved communities. Her predecessor, Fred Souba was similarly engaged, so we are hopeful that this is a continuing trend of prioritizing urban forestry issues in Wisconsin.

WI UFC contributed to the finalization and release of Wisconsin's [10 year Statewide Forest Action Plan](#) in January 2021, ensuring that urban forestry issues are prominently included throughout the document. Individual members and issue groups are now working to implement recommendations related to urban forestry, some of which we helped craft in that plan.



WI UFC Members Christa Schaefer, Keith Hardie, Wendy Braun, Marla Eddy, and Jordan Skiff work on the Forest Action Plan

WDNR staff supported the WI UFC throughout the pandemic to adapt seamlessly to the new normal, through offering virtual meeting participation. Our six Issue Groups have continued to advocate and promote benefits that urban forests provide in mitigating stormwater impacts, improving public health, increasing resiliency to pests and diseases through diverse plantings, expanding the highest use of urban wood, and providing family-supporting jobs. UFC members have also continued to present Awards to impressive individuals and groups advancing Urban Forestry across the state, and our Nominations and Orientation Committee has continued to identify outstanding leaders to replenish our ranks. While we look forward to networking and connecting in-person for meetings and tours as soon as we can, we are thankful for the measures that kept us safe.

Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council: *Updates (continued)*

The state budget as finalized by the state legislature included some good news for urban forestry, including reauthorizing the integral Knowles-Nelson Stewardship program for 10 years, albeit at \$33 million per year rather than the \$70 million. It also resulted in a loss of one full time position from the Division of Forestry, which was mitigated to the loss of a half of a position through the use of a technical transfer. *The WI UFC strongly supports maintaining funding for Urban Forestry, Stewardship, and staffing, and we hope to see expansions in staff rather than cuts in future budgets.*

The Champion Tree program has been recognizing and celebrating the state's largest trees since the WDNR began documenting them in 1941. The goal of this program is to encourage the appreciation of Wisconsin's forests and trees in communities on private and public land throughout Wisconsin. *The WI UFC is pleased to see that the program has been reactivated after a period of temporary dormancy while management of the program was reviewed.*

The WI UFC maintained a close connection with the **Wisconsin Council on Forestry** over the past biennium, mirroring budget goals connected with urban forestry and reporting on studies and events of interest to both groups. The WI UFC also continued to support the Wisconsin Urban Forest Inventory Assessment throughout the state, and we provided input on urban forestry research prioritization to Andy Stoltman. The WI UFC also maintained our presence at the **WDNR / WAA Urban Forestry Annual Conference** in 2020 through in person trivia and awards and we did the same virtually in 2021.

In September 2021, we worked with USFS Midwest Urban & Community Forestry Coordinator Jill Johnson to host a **Regional Urban Forestry Council meeting** that included all 7 states in our region. This virtual, half-day event kicked off with updates from Jill, who reminded us that our own former WI UFC Chair David Sivyer is now in a key position as the Eastern Region Urban & Community Forestry Leader and informed us that Beatra Wilson is the national Urban & Community Forestry Leader. Jill also touched on federal core, competitive and focused grants available for urban forestry, a bilingual tree owner's manual that is available from the USFS, National Urban & Community Forestry Advisory Committee (NUCFAC), and more. The regional meeting also included presentations emphasizing individual state accomplishments and challenges from neighboring Urban Forestry counterparts (including Chairs and agency coordinators) in IA, IL, IN, MI, MO, MN, and WI. Our day concluded with a breakout session in which staff discussed the perennial challenge of keeping volunteers with limited time engaged, productive, and focused; while chairs got together to discuss joint initiatives and potential ways to synergize our efforts across state lines to amplify our support for urban and community forestry at the regional and federal level. All-in-all it was a productive event that helped build camaraderie, established a network for Chairs to access for advice and support, identified regional trends, and highlighted opportunities for collective action. WI UFC members are excited to continue working with other states over the next biennium to address common challenges and advance common goals.

Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council: *Advocacy Issue Group*

The purpose of the WI UFC's Advocacy Issue Group is to 1) help guide the Council's promotion of and support for urban trees and 2) monitor the state budget and other policies impacting urban forests and provide recommendations.

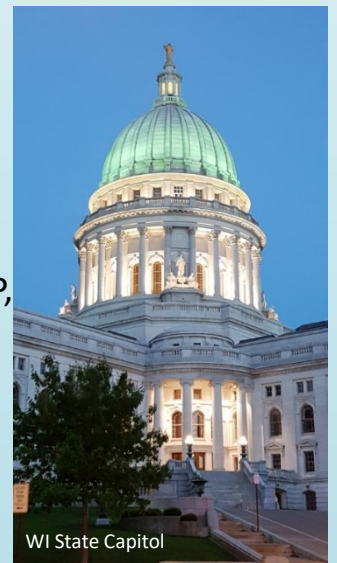
Leader: Gail Sumi

Members: Keith Hardie, Sarah Repp, Christa Schaefer, Matt Staudenmaier, Shahla Werner, Jeff Roe (WDNR staff support)



Gail Sumi

Over the past two years, the **Advocacy Issue Group** published a series of five articles covering urban forestry issues (tree diversity, urban wood utilization, public health, invasive species, in the League of Wisconsin Municipalities magazine, known as *The Municipality*, which reaches nearly 10,000 elected officials and staff over 600 Wisconsin cities and villages <https://lwm-info.org/828/The-Municipality-Magazine>. Articles included one on plant pests and diseases facing urban forests, entitled "*Licensed Nurseries Reduce Urban Forest Pest Risks*" by Shahla Werner, Plant Protection Section Manager, WDATCP, in the November 2020 issue; two articles on links between urban forests and public health entitled "*Trees Support Mental Health During COVID-19*" by Patricia Lindquist, WDNR Urban Forestry Communications and Education/Outreach Specialist, in the December 2020 issue and "*Great Communities Grow from Wisconsin's Trees*" by Kirsten Beyer, PhD, MPH, MS, Associate Professor of Epidemiology at the Medical College of Wisconsin and former UFC member Patty Dreier in the February 2021 issue; an article entitled "*Wisconsin Urban Wood: Trees First. Wood Next*" by Dwayne Sperber, Founding Member, Wisconsin Urban Wood, Urban Wood Network and an online article entitled "*Diverse Forests Are Healthy Forests: Tree Diversity Made Easy*" by Mark Freberg, Green Bay City Forester (retired), Jeff Treu, WE Energies Regional Forester (retired), and members of the Species Diversity Issue Group in the April 2021 issue.



The Advocacy Issue Group also drafted a letter to the WDNR supporting increased Urban Forestry grant funding, reauthorization of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, and a permanent full-time position to administer tree planting grants, needed to reach WI's new trillion trees goal, in the state budget. The Advocacy Issue Group's future plans include tackling advocacy-related parts of the Wisconsin Forest Action plan to help the WDNR reach key goals. *The WI UFC strongly encourages WDNR to continue its focus on implementing aspects of the FAP related to urban forestry over the next 10 years.*

Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council: *Urban Wood Utilization Issue Group*



Dwayne Sperber

The purpose of WI UFC's Urban Wood Utilization Group is to support WDNR Urban Forestry staff in community forest management by aligning with the goals of the urban wood industry to promote full-circle urban forest management, ensuring that when trees must be removed, many of the benefits they provided while living carry on to capture their full worth from seed to sawdust, expanding public benefits of trees from shade to finished wood products.

Leader: Dwayne Sperber

Members: Kristin Beyer, Keith Hardie, August Hoppe, Alex Timmer, Scott Lyon (WDNR staff support)



Lumber from Urban Wood

The Urban Wood Utilization Issue Group has been very active over the current biennium. They helped update our bylaws to include representatives from Urban Wood Network, WI and an architect/wood-using industry member. They made a joint presentation on urban wood utilization with WDNR to design students at UWM School of Architecture and Urban Planning (SARUP); and sent letters to colleges supporting the inclusion of urban wood utilization in architecture curricula.

Members of this group were engaged to ensure that urban wood utilization was included in the 2020 Statewide Forest Action Plan and aligned with statewide and national urban wood industry goals. The urban wood industry naturally increases awareness of the benefits of urban and community forests and supports continued and new opportunities for partnerships and collaboration with WDNR Urban Forestry.



Urban Wood Utilization Design Professionals

The Urban Wood Network, WI was included in the 2021 WAA annual conference with the presentation, "The Urban Wood Network: Expanding from Coast to Coast." Jennifer Alger, from the Urban Wood Network Western Chapter in CA, provided a national perspective and August Hoppe provided a positive outlook on the work happening in Wisconsin. We were honored to have Jordan Skiff present on his roles with the WI UFC and the Council on Forestry. Urban Wood Network, WI has recently started working with the Waukesha County Green Team on a WDNR Urban Forestry Grant. This project provides funding for Urban Wood Network, WI and Waukesha County Green Team to conduct outreach and to provide technical assistance to municipalities in Waukesha County to develop sustainability plans that incorporate urban wood use. *The WI UFC strongly recommends that the WDNR do everything possible to help expand urban wood utilization through assisting with overcoming current challenges.*

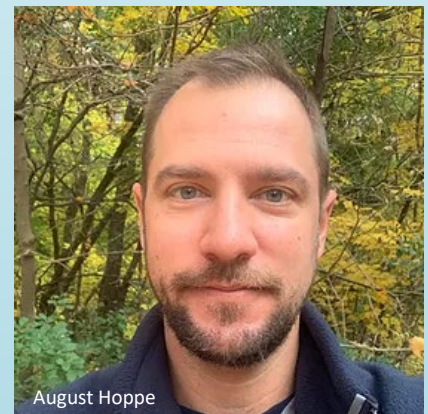
Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council: *Workforce Development Issue Group*



The purpose of the Workforce Development Issue Group is to connect the Wisconsin urban forestry community and other organizations that work with Work Force Development to build strong relationships and assist in various initiatives to help bring more people into the industry.

Leader: August Hoppe

Members: Katie Aspenson, Jeff Edgar, Matt Staudenmaier, Brian Wahl (WDNR staff support)



The Workforce Development Issue Group has been working to address the fact that while private employers are enrolling apprentices and graduating skilled journeyworker arborists, municipalities have been slower to adopt program. Measures they have taken to overcome barriers to municipal participation include hosting a [webinar](#) with Randy Krouse and Matt Staudenmaier (municipal arborists from Milwaukee and Eau Claire); and creating a survey to increase awareness about the benefits of **municipal arborist apprenticeship**.

Realizing the need to increase awareness of urban forestry career opportunities among youth, to spark interest in the field and increase preparedness, they helped tree care companies make inroads into high schools; worked with WI DWD Youth Apprenticeship program to introduce youth to arborist careers and promote the Youth Apprenticeship. DWD hosted a booth at the Fall 2021 WAA Fall Conference; and a panel discussion is planned for the 2022 WAA/WDNR Annual Conference. *The WI UFC strongly recommends that the WDNR continue to support these urban forestry workforce development efforts.*

Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council: *Stormwater Issue Group*

The purpose of the Stormwater Issue Group is to raise awareness to how increasing urban forest canopy (keeping leaves out of storm drains) can positively affect stormwater runoff in quality through filtering and quantity through absorption uptake, as urban stormwater runoff contributes significantly to water quality and quantity in urbanized areas and impacts habitat, public health, and the aesthetics of urban waterways.

Leader: Wendy Braun

Members: Linda Cadotte, Lee Fredericks, Matt Koepnick, Christa Schaefer, Jordan Skiff, Laura Buntrock (WDNR staff support)



Aerial view of Wisconsin Community with Urban Forest Cover

Recent activities of the Stormwater Issue Group include following and promoting research showing water quality benefits of fall leaf removal, preparing a letter of support from WDNR to EPA for ongoing research and promotion of benefits of urban trees in addressing stormwater impacts.

Members are now identifying outlets such as NASECA and the League of Wisconsin Municipalities to promote Urban Forestry practices that help mitigate stormwater runoff that are backed up by research (i.e., Silva Cells, increased frequency of leaf pickups, pervious surfaces and green infrastructure).

The Stormwater Issue Group is working with WDNR staff to devise a process to make urban trees eligible for stormwater credit, a concept that the WI UFC strongly supports.

Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council: *Public Health and Trees Issue Group*

The purpose of the Public Health and Trees Issue Group is to broaden the understanding of the health benefits of trees to multi-sectoral audiences. Members seek to identify evidence supporting the benefits of trees and sharing that evidence with public health practitioners, health care organizations, foresters, urban planners, architects, municipalities and communities more broadly.

Leader: Kirsten Beyer

Members: Mark Freberg, Tricia Gorby, Shirley Brabender Mattox, Dwayne Sperber, Jeff Treu, Olivia Witthun (WDNR staff support)

The Public Health and Trees Issue Group worked with WDNR to convene the *Good Health Grows on Trees* conference with Dr. Kathleen Wolf in 2019 to raise awareness about the immense health benefits of trees and urban forests. Attendees included medical workers, mental health professionals, and natural resources specialists. This successful event highlighted research on benefits of urban forests and nearby nature for improving public health, from reducing depression to improving immunity to reducing childhood asthma and other chronic conditions. *The group is now considering future similar events and the WI UFC strongly recommends that the WDNR continue to support those efforts.*

The group is also working with the Arbor Day Foundation and the WDNR to build interest around the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree Campus Healthcare program.

Dr. Beyer, fellow WI UFC members August Hoppe, Dwayne Sperber and others co-published an [article](#) in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* linking greenspace investments to resiliency in the time of COVID.



Kirsten Beyer



Alex Elias (former WDNR, current WDATCP staffer) with families at Schenk Elementary School in Madison for Earth Day / Arbor Day event

Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council: *Tree Species Diversity Issue Group*

The purpose of the Tree Species Diversity Issue Group is to promote the importance and practice of tree diversity in urban forests. Diverse forests are healthy forests and help enrich the lives of people using trees for the many benefits they provide.

Leader: Mark Freberg

Members: Kristin Beyer, Jeff Edgar, Marla Eddy, Matt Koepnick, Jeff Treu, Patricia Lindquist (WDNR staff support)

The Tree Species Diversity Issue Group has been working to develop easy-to-understand messages about the importance of urban forest diversity that mirrors messaging in the article published in “The Municipality” magazine. They now hope to amplify and spread this message to the Wisconsin Nursery and Landscape Association and similar groups.

Members also advised and worked with the Northeast Wisconsin Water Sewerage District on a 50-tree planting project, using 8 less common species, and excluding maple, linden and honeylocust.

The Diversity Issue Group worked with WDNR Forestry staff members Don Kissinger (retired) and Robert Godfrey to devise and deploy a “Diverse Urban Tree Species Survey” for nurseries and municipal arborists to better understand supply and demand. The group now plans to summarize survey responses. They will then work with the WDNR to find communities interested in buying lesser-used tree species and track their success in purchasing, planting, and growing a more diverse, prosperous and resilient urban forest canopy. Because diversity is so pivotal to making communities resilient in the face of increasing threats from introduced, invasive insects and diseases, the WI UFC strongly recommends that the WDNR continue to support efforts to increase tree species diversity in Wisconsin’s communities.



Mark Freberg



Wisconsin Nursery Stock

Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council: *Advisory Recommendations*

The Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council's recommendations are intended to ensure that the department will be able to meet the needs and challenges we see ahead, from mitigating climate change to addressing longstanding equity and environmental justice issues. Our top priority recommendations for the upcoming biennium are further detailed below:

1. Maintaining and Expanding Funding in the Forestry Account – Continued support for our state's forests and forestry industry by fully funding the Forestry Account with GPR ensures that Wisconsin's forestry programs will have the staff and resources needed to thrive for generations to come. ***The WI UFC urges WDNR to maintain and strive to expand the current \$1,049,200 in funding and ensure that urban forestry is given equal priority to other items funded by GPR, given the outstanding needs urban forestry investments can meet and impending threats posed by climate change and invasive species.***

2. Urban Forestry Grant Program – Over the years this program has been hugely successful in supporting cities, villages, towns, counties, tribes and nonprofit organizations in developing innovative projects that support sustainable urban and community forestry. WDNR administers \$524,600 in annual grants each year. Catastrophic storm grants, which are only available if the Governor declares an emergency, are awarded out of this same appropriation, up to \$104,920 per year. ***With more frequent, severe storms related to climate change causing severe urban forest damage, along with ongoing and emerging invasive species threats, funds must be expanded to meet growing needs. The Council recommends an additional \$345,000 in state Forestry SEG funding be appropriated each year for Urban Forestry grant awards for emerging risks, including introduced, invasive insects and diseases like Asian longhorned beetle. The Council further recommends a new, \$300,000 per year tree planting grant that can be used to plant more trees to replace canopy that has been lost to emerald ash borer and other pests and to meet Wisconsin's goal of planting 75 million trees by 2030 as part of the [U.S. Chapter of the Global Trillion Trees Initiative](#), as announced by Governor Evers on Earth Day 2021.***

3. Storm Water Credits for Trees – Urban trees reduce stormwater runoff by capturing and storing rainfall in the canopy and releasing water into the atmosphere through evapotranspiration. Trees also slow down and temporarily store runoff, which further promotes infiltration and decreases flooding and erosion downstream. Communities that spend significant funds to meet water quality limits as part of a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System permit may realize savings if credits were offered for a responsible leaf management program and for increasing urban forest canopy in their community. ***The WI UFC reiterates our recommendation from the 2019 biennial report in urging WDNR to cooperate among divisions to allow for stormwater credits for tree planting and maintenance, in recognition of established and ongoing research.***

4. Funding and Staff: *The WI UFC recognizes that maintaining Urban Forestry staff is critical to effectively meeting goals, running grants and other programs. For example, one FTE will be needed to administer the new tree planting grant to meet the Trillion Trees goal; and we also urge WDNR to create full-time, permanent positions for all urban forestry staff rather than limited term employees in order to ensure continuity and long-term program success.*

Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council: *Urban Forestry Awards*

The Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council presents annual awards to outstanding individuals, organizations, communities and tribes that further urban forestry in Wisconsin. The awards are announced each year at the annual Wisconsin Urban Forestry Conference and presented to winners in their community. Led by Linda Cadotte, the Awards Committee also includes Wendy Braun, Shirley Brabender Mattox, Jordan Skiff, and Dwayne Sperber. Sara Minkoff provides staff support. The Awards Committee has recently received UFC approval to create a new award to recognize contributions of younger leaders and their mentors, known as the NextGen Award, and merged Leadership & Distinguished Service Awards for future years.

Lifetime Achievement Award

- 2021, John Neumann, Beaver Dam Urban Forester for over 27 years
- 2020, Chuck Nass, Whitewater Urban Forester / CTMI attendee & instructor

Distinguished Service Award

- 2021, Cindy Kohles, Gays Mills Forester, Urban Forester Grants, Tree City USA member
- 2020, David Sivyer, former Milwaukee UF, Developed EAB treatment program; Current USFS position

Leadership Award

- 2021, Dennis Fermenich, City Forester for the City of Greenfield, Tree City / Bee City USA
- 2020, Don Merkes, Mayor of Menasha, former UFC member

Innovations in Urban Forestry Award

- 2021, DeForest: Urban Lumber in Park Buildings
- 2020, Employer Sponsors of the Wisconsin Arborist Apprenticeship Advisory Committee

Project Partnerships Award

- 2021, Restoration of Our Trees Sheboygan (ROOTS), Rotary Club and Lakeshore Natural Resources Partnership address EAB impacts
- 2020, Phoenix from the Ashes, nonprofits and City of Madison, repurpose ash killed by emerald ash borer in art



Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council: *Urban Forestry Grants*

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources offers urban forestry grants to cities, villages, towns, counties, tribes and 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations in or conducting projects in Wisconsin. These grants fall into three categories: **regular grants, startup grants and catastrophic storm grants. These grants support crucial programs in every corner of our state.**

The WDNR's Catastrophic Storm Grants, which are pursuant to the Governor's Declaration of a State of Emergency in Response to Extreme Severe Weather, help defray unplanned, unbudgeted costs of removing, saving, and replacing trees damaged by the catastrophic storms.

A particularly severe thunderstorm occurred during the evening of July 19, 2019. This storm moved across much of central Wisconsin, the Fox Valley and the Lake Michigan shore, snapping and uprooting hundreds of thousands of trees, damaging homes, and causing power line damage. The worst damage was associated with a 60 mile long, 10-mile-wide burst of straight-line winds that impacted areas from Pelican Lake in Oneida County, southeast through Langlade and Oconto counties. The grants below detail the assistance WDNR provided to communities to mitigate storm impacts.

After the storm, the WDNR drafted a memo to the Joint Finance Committee that was successful in garnering over \$489,000 in emergency funding to allow communities to respond to storms like this one, as well as threats including fires, pests and diseases. 2020 Catastrophic storm grants are described below.

Four grants were awarded in North Central Wisconsin including \$50,000 to the City of Antigo; \$9,700 to the City of Pittsville; \$24,975 to the Village of Port Edwards and \$50,000 to the City of Wisconsin Rapids.

Eight grants were awarded to communities and tribes impacted in Northeast Wisconsin, including \$50,000 to the Oneida Nation; \$50,000 to the City of Appleton; \$9,300 for the Town of Greenville; \$25,000 to the Village of Kimberly; \$50,000 to the City of Little Chute; \$50,000 to the City of New London; \$25,000 to the City of Two Rivers; and \$50,000 to the City of Waupaca.

Three grants were awarded in Western Wisconsin, including \$50,000 to the City of Barron; \$50,000 to the City of Chetek; and \$50,000 to the Village of Turtle Lake.

Urban Forestry Financial Specialist	Nicolle Spafford 518 West Somo Avenue Tomahawk, WI 54487	(715) 453-2188 x1274 nicolle.spafford@wisconsin.gov
Urban Forestry Grant Specialist	Chase O'Brien PO Box 7921 Madison, WI 53707-7921	(608) 640-6143 chase.obrien@wisconsin.gov

Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council: *Urban Forestry Grants 2020*

The Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council strongly supports the WDNR's Regular and Startup Urban Forestry grants, which sustain a diverse array of activities, including tree planting, invasive species response, tree inventories and more. We congratulate **Brad Johnson**, who retired from WDNR in September 2020, and **Don Kissinger**, who retired from WDNR in May 2021. These strong urban forestry champions will be missed! 2020 and 2021 grants are described on the following 2 pages.

Select Urban Forestry Grants 2020

East Central – Olivia Witthun, Urban Forestry Coordinator, Plymouth, WI

Cedarburg Green	\$11,034.70	2020: Focus on Trees - Plant trees as if life depended on it!
Grafton, Village of	\$25,000.00	Re-create and Update Tree Inventory
Kewaskum, Village of*	\$5,000.00	Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan/Tree Planting
Lakeshore Natural Resource Partnership, Inc.	\$12,500.00	Phase II: Updating Inventories and Plans for Municipalities in Sheboygan County
Palmyra, Town of*	\$5,000.00	Tree removal: Second Half of Island Road and Mehering Road
Plymouth, City of*	\$5,000.00	Better Tree Management Through New Management Practice Implementation
Watertown, City of	\$25,000.00	Private and Municipal Tree Replacement

North Central – Don Kissinger, Urban Forestry Coordinator, Wausau, WI

Athens, Village of*	\$2,625.58	Village of Athens Urban Forestry Project Year 2
Hayward, City of*	\$5,000.00	Tree Removal and Pruning
Hurley, City of*	\$3,437.50	Riccelli Tree Removal
Kronenwetter, Village of	\$3,500.00	2020 Kronenwetter Urban Forestry Program
Nekoosa, City of*	\$5,000.00	Startup of Community Tree Program

Northeast – Tracy Salisbury, Urban Forestry Coordinator, Green Bay, WI

Bellevue, Village of	\$23,310.00	EAB/Ash Tree Removal & Treatment, Arboretum Continuation, Education & Training
Endeavor*	\$4,324.10	Removing Dead Ash & other dead trees and Increasing Tree Canopy
Oakfield, Village of*	\$5,000.00	Removal of infested ash trees and tree replacement on Village property
Shawano, City of	\$15,886.67	Updated Tree Inventory & Updated Forest Management Plan

South Central – Brian Wahl, Urban Forestry Coordinator, Fitchburg, WI

Beloit, Town of*	\$5,000.00	Town of Beloit Urban Forest/ Urban Forestry Management Plan
Cottage Grove, Village of	\$9,897.50	Tree Inventory & Urban Forestry/EAB Plan
Dane, County of	\$25,000.00	Forestry Career Pathways Initiative and Forestry Revitalization Management
Fennimore, City of	\$19,386.00	Workshop; Tree Planting, Pruning & Removal; Plan Update; Signage; and Staff Education
Lancaster, City of*	\$5,000.00	Lancaster Tree Inventory Completion and GIS Mapping
Monona, City of	\$14,427.82	EAB Infestation: Remove, Reuse, Replace
Pardeeville, Village of*	\$5,000.00	Phase II: Address EAB throughout community and tree inventory plan
Sauk City, Village of	\$23,778.50	Sauk City EAB Action Activities
Urban Tree Alliance	\$25,000.00	Phase II: Housing Partnerships
Verona, City of	\$5,400.00	Verona Tree Inventory Update
Wauunakee, Village of	\$25,000.00	GIS Tree Inventory Update, Forest Diversification, Public & Staff Education
Windsor, Village of	\$17,028.40	Tree Inventory & GIS layer, Urban Forestry Plan, Emerald Ash Borer Plan
Wisconsin Dells, City of*	\$4,045.90	Urban Forestry Management Plan Development

Southeast – Kim Sebastian, Urban Forestry Coordinator, Milwaukee, WI

Greenfield, City of	\$25,000.00	A Collaborative Approach to Urban Forest Restoration
Muskego, City of	\$6,451.33	EAB Tree Replacements, Volunteer Tree Planting Event, and Staff Training
Sustainable Resources Institute, Inc.	\$11,635.00	Promoting Urban Forestry and Wood Utilization in Waukesha County

West – Brad Johnson, Urban Forestry Coordinator, Eau Claire, WI

Barron, City of*	\$5,000.00	Implementation of Operations Plan
Frederic, Village of*	\$5,000.00	Tree Inventory Compliance
Gays Mills, Village of	\$21,011.00	Private Lands Outreach & Public/Private Canopy Enhancement
Shell Lake, City of*	\$5,000.00	Tree Removal, Stump, Grinding, Pruning, and Planting

* Startup Grant

Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council: Urban Forestry Grants 2021

Select Urban Forestry Grants 2021

East Central – Olivia Witthun, Urban Forestry Coordinator, Plymouth, WI

Cedarburg, City of^	\$17,486.50	Ash Removal & Replanting
Grafton, Village of^	\$17,486.50	Tree Planting (Replacing trees affected by EAB)
Kewaskum, Village of*	\$5,000.00	Tree Removal/Tree Planting
Port Washington, City of	\$25,000.00	Inventory/Ash tree management
Watertown, City of	\$25,000.00	Private and Municipal Tree Replacement
West Bend, City of	\$25,000.00	City of West Bend Urban Forestry Program Recovery 2021

North Central & West Northern – Don Kissinger, Urban Forestry Coordinator, Wausau, WI

Almond, Village of*	\$4,129.30	Safety Prune, Removal of dead or dying trees, Removal of trees in waterway.
Ashland, City of	\$23,048.50	City of Ashland Urban Forestry Program Restart
Athens, Village of*	\$5,000.00	Village of Athens Urban Forestry, Year 3
Elderon, Village of*	\$3,960.85	Shade Trees along the Boulevard of Hwy 153 (formerly Main St.) in Village of Elderon
Hayward, City of*	\$5,000.00	Tree Removal & Pruning
Merrill, City of	\$2,489.13	Request funding to perform additional tree plantings & review/update current Ordinances
River Falls, City of	\$25,000.00	Emerald Ash Borer Management - Proactive Implementation
Shell Lake, City of*	\$4,504.37	Growing Shell Lakes Tree Program

Northeast – Tracy Salisbury, Urban Forestry Coordinator, Green Bay, WI

Bellevue, Village of	\$24,944.38	EAB Ash Tree Removal & Replacement, Youth Outreach, Staff Training
Brandon, Village of*	\$5,000.00	Tree removal
Chilton, City of*	\$5,000.00	Emerald Ash Borer - Park Remediation
Coloma, Village of*	\$2,640.50	Trees for Downtown/Cemetery
Fond du Lac, City of	\$23,338.50	Ash Management and Training
Kewaunee, City of	\$25,000.00	Urban Forestry Inventory and Management Plan Creation
Kiel, City of*	\$5,000.00	Renew Kiel - Tree Management Program: Year 1
Ledgeview, Town of*	\$5,000.00	Town of Ledgeview Tree Inventory and GIS Mapping
Menasha, City of^	\$17,486.50	Growing Diversity in Menasha's Urban Forest
New Holstein, City of*	\$5,000.00	Removal and Replacement of ash trees in Kiwanis Park

South Central & West Southern– Brian Wahl, Urban Forestry Coordinator, Fitchburg, WI

1000 Friends of Wisconsin	\$5,880.00	Leafing Out – Reaching out to Wisconsin Homeowners about their Community Tre...
Beloit, Town of	\$6,451.00	Town of Beloit Ash tree removal/replacement, tree maintenance & gravel bed Plan
Columbus, City of	\$25,000.00	EAB/Ash Tree Removal, Tree Planting, and Education & Training
Edgerton, City of*	\$5,000.00	Milling Ash Logs for Solar Kiln and Street/Cemetery Reforestation
Gays Mills, Village of	\$6,429.00	Reforestation Public Lands & Private Tree Enhancement
Hillsboro, City of	\$8,517.50	Inventory, Operations Plan & EAB Management Project
La Crosse, City of	\$25,000.00	EAB Tree Replacement & Tree Inventory
Lancaster, City of*	\$5,000.00	Ash tree removal and replanting
Madison, City of	\$20,000.00	Ash Tree Mitigation
Mineral Point, City of*	\$5,000.00	Mineral Point Tree Management Plan
Monroe, City of	\$25,000.00	Public Tree Inventory, Management Plan Development, Ash Removal & Tree Planting
Monroe Co. Land Conservation Dept. *	\$2,980.00	Monroe County Tree Planting Project
Pardeeville, Village of*	\$5,000.00	Village of Pardeeville Phase III Tree removal, planting and tree inventory
Poynette, Village of	\$7,500.00	Remove high risk trees, ash tree removals and perform routine pruning
Sparta, City of	\$25,000.00	After EAB Tree Inventory & Plan
Stoughton, City of	\$2,072.30	City of Stoughton Canopy Restoration Project
Sun Prairie, City of^	\$17,486.50	Ash tree removal and replacement
Urban Tree Alliance	\$25,000.00	Regional Housing Partnerships

Southeast – Kim Sebastian, Urban Forestry Coordinator, Milwaukee, WI

Bayside, Village of	\$25,000.00	Mitigating the Spread of EAB and Tree Planting
Bradley Family Foundation, Inc.	\$24,485.00	Lynden Sculpture Garden Tree Inventory and Urban Forest Management Plan
Delafield, City of^	\$17,486.50	Canopy Preservation and Restoration Project for 2021
Forest Home Historic Preservation Association	\$25,000.00	Forest Home Cemetery Tree Management and Education Project
Franklin, City of	\$10,000.00	Street Tree Replacement and Staff Training
Genoa City, City of*	\$5,000.00	Village Street Tree Pruning
Glendale, City of	\$11,923.00	The City of Glendale Tree Inventory and Management Plan
Greenfield, City of	\$23,835.25	Completing hard tasks
Mukwonago, Village of	\$4,906.10	EAB Mitigation and Tree Planting
Rochester, Village of*	\$2,725.98	South State Street Tree Renewal Program.
Shorewood, Village of^	\$17,486.50	Ash Tree Replacement
Wind Point, Village of*	\$2,500.00	Village of Wind Point Forestry Management Program

* Startup Grant, ^2nd round

Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council: *Challenges and Opportunities*

Below we highlight some key challenges and opportunities that the WI UFC plans to tackle in the upcoming biennium. We are confident that we can make strides in these areas, thanks to the efforts of our energetic volunteers and dedicated WDNR support staff.

Challenge: The unprecedented **COVID-19 pandemic** has hindered educational field trips and in-person networking opportunities.

Opportunity: At the same time, the pandemic has forced us to expand virtual meeting options for all our attendees throughout the state, significantly improving member attendance. This has reduced travel and meeting time and allowed us to continue our work regardless of the weather in Wisconsin. It has further allowed us to consider virtual meetings in order to reduce carbon emissions to help meet climate change goals. While we all look forward to a day when we can safely meet in person, this situation has offered the opportunity to balance that need with other crucial goals and prove that we are resilient in the face of challenges, thanks, in part for the ability to spend more time in nature.

Challenge: Science tells us that we urgently need to address **climate change** over the next decade if we are to have any hope of leaving a livable planet for future generations of humans, plants, and animals.

Opportunity: We expand urban forest plantings as a tool to sequester carbon and reduce stormwater runoff to mitigate the most severe impacts of climate change. We can also plant trees that are genetically adapted to Wisconsin's climate and expand plantings of native urban tree species to provide critical habitat for native birds & pollinators impacted by changing temperatures, stronger storms, droughts, flooding and unpredictability.

Challenge: **Invasive species** have increasingly threatened urban forests, caused safety hazards, and cost billions of dollars for local, state, and federal governments. As we deal with emerald ash borer's ongoing damage we need to prepare for new invasive species, including hemlock woolly adelgid, beech leaf disease, Asian longhorned beetle, spotted lanternfly, and others.

Opportunity: Members of the Tree Species Diversity Issue Group can make the case for planting a larger array of species in urban areas and we can all do our part to expand outreach to ensure that Wisconsin's urban forests will be more resilient and more prepared to take action in the face of the next invasive species, when it arrives.

Challenge: The WI UFC is always working to **keep volunteer members engaged and focused** on our mission to advise WDNR to advance tangible achievable goals vs. working on priority areas individually; while also respecting peoples' limited time that is divided among groups like ours, family, and career responsibilities.

Opportunity: Other states in our region are facing similar challenges. As we continue meeting with one another across state lines, there will likely be opportunities to pool resources and learn from innovations that have worked in neighboring areas.

Challenge: **Expanding UFC ethnic diversity:** low ethnic and socioeconomic diversity can hinder the ability to get an inside perspective and make inroads on vital issues including increasing urban forest canopy in minority communities.

Opportunity: We need to acknowledge the barriers to participation that underrepresented groups face and make an extra effort to recruit diverse individuals from all walks of life to the WI UFC. If we succeed, our efforts to expand urban tree canopy in areas that lack greenspace now will be effective, as we will be speaking with, rather than to impacted communities to find solutions that work for all. If we fail, we risk having those same communities seeing trees as a risk and a burden.

Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council: *Thank You for Your Continued Support*



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Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council

<https://WDNR.wisconsin.gov/topic/urbanforests/members>