

Community Forest Initiative

Tree Resource Management Assistance for Cities and Towns



South Dakota Department of Agriculture Division of Resource Conservation & Forestry

Our mission is to conserve, protect, improve and develop the natural resources of South Dakota. The division accomplishes this by providing advice and assistance to other agencies, communities and private land-owners. This assistance is provided through state and federal programs.

What is the Community Forest Initiative (CFI)?

By entering into an agreement with the Division, participating communities will gain the services of one of our urban foresters, all of whom are also International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborists. These services are provided at no cost to the community. Division staff will work with city staff to determine management goals and to develop the tools and information necessary to accomplish those goals.

Why CFI?

There are over 300 Communities in South Dakota with an estimated 4.7 million urban trees, yet only 6% of communities employ professional staff to manage their publicly owned trees. Through CFI, communities will develop a healthier, more diverse, and resilient community forest that can be enjoyed now and into the future.

Benefits of Trees in South Dakota

The term “community forest” refers to the collection of trees, shrubs, and related vegetation growing in cities and towns. These areas include city parks, streetscapes, and trees on public, private, and commercial land. Approximately 71% of South Dakotans live in urban, suburban, or community areas and benefit from our state’s community forests.

This “green infrastructure” provides many valuable benefits important to human and ecological health including:

- Reducing cooling costs by up to 50% for well shaded homes and heating costs by up to 40% with effective windbreaks ;
- Sequestering 27,200 tons of carbon/year (at a value of \$13.6 million); and
- Removing 1,310 tons of total pollutants/year (at a value of \$9.7 million):
 - ◇ Pollutants include carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, sulfur dioxide, and particulate matter.

South Dakota’s community forests also improve water quality; reduce noise pollution; improve human comfort, health, and psychological well-being; increase property values; and improve a community’s “sense of place.”



What do Communities Receive?

- One year of service, with the option to renew annually for up to an additional 2 years.
- At least 5 visits annually by a division community forester.
- City employee education on pruning, planting, and tree health care topics.
- Tree insect and disease identification and recommendations for appropriate treatment of plant health issues.
- Assistance in completing a public tree inventory.
- Assistance in creating, revising, and implementing a long term community forest management plan.
- Review and recommendations on enhancement of tree ordinances.
- Support and training for city tree advisory board.
- Level one (basic) risk assessment of all public trees (subject to liability limitations)

Terms of the Agreement

- The city pays for any tools, city employee travel, copies, legal fees, etc. that the city deems necessary for enhancement of their Community Forestry program.
- The city will track expenses related to its Community Forestry program and report these to the Division to serve as match for the services provided.
- The Division pays for any expenses incurred by its own employees.



For more information or assistance, contact: Resource Conservation & Forestry, at

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