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Guide Provides Insight Into Urban Forestry Benefits

DAVIS, Calif.—The U.S. Forest Service's Center for Urban Forest Research has released a guide demonstrating how trees benefit cities in temperate parts of the West such as Southern California, Central Idaho and the Oregon Coast.

"The Temperate Interior West Community Tree Guide: Benefits, Costs and Strategic Planting" is the latest in a series of nine publications showing how trees improve air quality, conserve energy, filter storm water and reduce carbon dioxide in the nation's cities.

The regional guides detail costs and benefits of planting trees in specific climate zones across the country. They can be downloaded for free at: http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/programs/cufr/tree_guides

Tree advocates, arborists and public officials have used the guides since 1999 to increase public awareness and support for tree programs by quantifying the average annual net benefits of trees.

Center for Urban Forest Research scientists found energy conservation to be the most significant benefit provided by urban trees in the temperate interior West. A mature hardwood tree in this region can bring annual savings of $40 in electricity and $15 in heating costs, while reducing power plant emissions through energy conservation.

Scientists also found the same tree absorbs about 6 pounds of air pollutants and intercepts 2,100 gallons of storm water each year. It also sequesters several tons of carbon dioxide, and provides about $1,100 in aesthetic, social and economic benefits in its life.

The average annual benefit of trees in the temperate interior West differs with size and location. After taking maintenance costs into account, scientists found net benefits to be:

- $25 to $32 for a small hardwood tree
- $32 to $33 for an evergreen tree
- $39 to $55 for a medium hardwood tree
- $58 to $74 for a large hardwood tree

The latest guide also includes sections on applying cost/benefit data to a specific city, maximizing energy savings from shading, selecting hearty trees, avoiding conflicts with infrastructure and reducing storm water runoff.

Call U.S. Forest Service Publishing Services for printed copies of the guide at 970/498-1392 or send an e-mail to rschneider@fs.fed.us

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