

through the development of the County's Comprehensive Plan and possibly changed to allow for a future with differences between rural and urban environments.

By planning for appropriate landscape conservation, a better quality environment can be attained for the entire state. It is each community's challenge and responsibility during this decade. Those who lead our communities are

elected by citizens; their policies are guided by citizen advisory boards. Horticulturists will play an important role in determining Florida's success in providing for appropriate preservation of greenspace within their communities. In other words, the local politics of landscape conservation begins and ends with *you*.

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## FLORIDA'S URBAN FORESTRY COUNCIL

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During the past two years, the extensive publicity of theories concerning possible impacts of global warming and the greenhouse effect have heightened public awareness of the need for trees in and around our urban centers. The perpetuation and care of city trees, however, is nothing novel and new to the United States. As an example, one would note that tree wardens were to be found in New England communities over a hundred years ago.

Since the early 1970's "Urban Forestry" has described a renewed emphasis on trees in our towns and cities, an emphasis that goes beyond the care of individual trees to management of community trees as a dynamic interrelated continuum . . . an urban forest.

Urban forestry in Florida had its beginning in 1970 when the Florida Division of Forestry initiated its urban forestry program through cooperative agreements with a number of fastly urbanizing cities and counties. Florida's tremendous growth had prompted an environmentally-conscious state legislature that year to amend Florida's County Forestry Law to allow for cooperative urban forestry assistance to counties and municipalities. The objective of the Division of Forestry's 20-year effort in Florida urban areas has been "to provide the services of a professional forester, to assist in the establishment and management of trees and plant associations to enhance the beauty and livability of the urban environment".

After almost twenty years, many Florida cities have now employed their own urban forester or city arborist. Some of the larger cities have entire forestry departments responsible for tree planting and tree care and maintenance. In addition, a number of private urban forestry consultants and consulting arborists are now available to assist communities, large and small, with the development of comprehensive urban forestry programs. Many closely related professionals (landscape architects, nurserymen, private arborists, park supervisors, etc.) are becoming more active and more vocal in emphasizing the need for improved urban tree management programs. This, coupled with a tremendous interest by citizen and volunteer groups in participating in environmental enhancement, and national legislation prompted by an environmentally-minded President and Congress has set the stage for significant strides to be made toward greener, healthier Florida cities.

The newly-passed 1990 Farm Bill (Forestry Title) contains authorizing legislation for a renewed national commitment to urban and community forestry (U&CF) at a substantial funding level through 1995. Credit for this very significant step toward greener U.S. towns and cities should be given the U.S. Forest Service and the National Urban Forestry Council of the American Forestry Association who drafted portions of the initial legislation and the National Association of State Foresters who testified before Congress on the need for a new national U&CF policy.

Technically, the 1990 Farm Bill (Forestry Title) represents an amendment to Section 9 (Urban and Community Forestry Assistance) of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978. The bill does several very important things for urban and community forestry. It provides for:

1. Support funding for increased U&CF technical assistance to towns and cities through the State Foresters or equivalent state officials.
2. Establishment of a U&CF matching cost-share program for communities and 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations.
3. Creation of a National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council to develop and implement a national U&CF action plan.
4. A one-time grant of \$20 million to establish an *America the Beautiful Foundation* to solicit corporate funding and award matching grant monies for urban and rural tree planting.

An integral part of each state's implementation plan for accelerated U&CF Programs under the 1990 Farm Bill will be the active involvement and participation of a state urban forestry council. Creation of the Florida Urban Forestry Council was authorized by Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Doyle Conner in the spring of 1990. The organization might more appropriately be described as an association (council is more frequently used to describe a small group with a limited membership). The word "council" was, in fact, adopted to allow for a parallel at the state level to the American Forestry Association's National Urban Forestry Council (NU-FOREST COUNCIL) and the newly created National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council.

The Florida Urban Forestry Council is meant to be a forum and catalyst for urban forestry that will ideally involve the entire urban forestry community in Florida. Membership in the Council is open to any individual, citizen, group, organization, society, association, business or public agency with an interest in urban forestry.