

STATE OF THE URBAN FOREST

2025

The City of Fairfax's urban forestry program is stronger than ever.

This year marked a milestone for the city's urban forestry program with the completion of the city's first-ever Urban Forest Master Plan and permanent funding for the Stewardship Coordinator position. It was also a big year for invasive species management — the city launched the Forest Rescues program, contracted with Invasive Plant Control, Inc. to treat invasives in two high priority parks, and saw the founding of the Fairfax PRISM (Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management).

TREE CITY USA



Tree City USA (39 years)

To receive annual recognition, a community must meet four core standards:

Standard 1: Form A Tree Board Or Department

The city meets this standard with professional staff and its Environmental Sustainability Committee (ESC).

Standard 2: Establish A Tree Care Ordinance

Standard 3: Maintain A Community Forestry Program With An Annual Budget Of At Least \$2 Per Capita

In 2025, the city spent \$26.77 per capita on urban forestry activities.

Standard 4: Proclaim and Observe Arbor Day

In 2025, the city celebrated Arbor Day on April 22 with a proclamation by Mayor Catherine Read.

Growth Award (5 years)

To receive the Growth Award, a community must document activities in five categories that total at least 10 points annually.

Green Jobs	4 points
Tree Planting Projects	2 points
Plantings-to-Removals Ratio	3 points
Tree Protection	4 points
Enforcement Proceedings	3 points
Restoration Work	3 points
Departmental Communication	3 points
New Tree Board Member	2 points
Citizen Science	3 points
Community Forestry Report	3 points
Publicity Campaign	5 points
Tree Festival	4 points
Arbor Day Events	2 points
Youth Education	2 points

Total earned: 43 points

SPROUT made new strides this year with the launch of the Forest Rescues volunteer invasive management program, an expanded partnership to provide workforce development opportunities with the City Jobs Program, our first citywide acorn and nut collection effort, and new educational programming for students at city schools.



Over 115 Forest Rescues volunteers contributed to 549 hours of invasive plant removal in city parks. The program also saw 13 community members certified to work independently in parks through its training program.



Katherine Johnson Middle School and Providence Elementary School students celebrated the city's 39th annual Arbor Day with the planting of five native trees on their school campuses.



The City Jobs program worked with urban forestry staff to plant 244 new trees in parks as part of reforestation projects and helped maintain an additional 86 public trees with seasonal weeding and mulching activities.



Daniels Run Elementary School first graders and Providence Elementary School kindergarteners explored autumn leaves and acorns in fall visits by the Stewardship Coordinator.



Our seed collection effort with Potomac Conservancy's Tomorrow's Trees program resulted in 1,860 lbs of acorns, chestnuts, and walnuts being donated to the Virginia Department of Forestry.

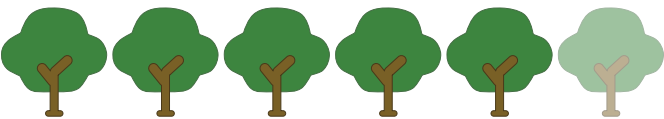


Three new oak seedlings were planted at Historic Blenheim in partnership with Historic Resources. The oaks are the progeny of a 283-year-old white oak on Brookwood Drive, the oldest known tree in the city.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Plantings-to-Removals Ratio

Five trees were planted for every one tree removed on public property

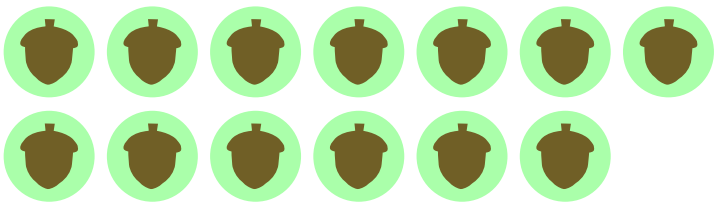


School Engagement

14 classroom visits, four service learning projects, and one career day presentation at city schools

Volunteer Hours

547 hours, equivalent to 13 weeks of staff time



82% 402

young tree survivor rate on city property

city-provided trees planted by residents

Number of Volunteers

116 volunteers dedicated their service across 16 public events and 56 Forest Rescuer workdays

Urban Forester Development Review

39

Tree Removal Permits Issued

14

Capital Improvement Projects Assisted

127

Development Review Field Inspections

67%

of plans were adjusted to strengthen tree preservation

Acres of Habitat Restoration

17 acres of parkland under invasive management



URBAN FORESTRY STAFF

Community Kudos

"I am writing to express my gratitude for the opportunity to participate in one of your volunteer programs along with my family. It was a truly rewarding experience, and we were delighted to be part of such a meaningful initiative."



Anna Safford
Urban Forest Manager

Hired in 2022 and an ISA TRAQ-Certified Arborist, Anna oversees the city's urban forest management program.



Sophia Chapin
Stewardship Coordinator

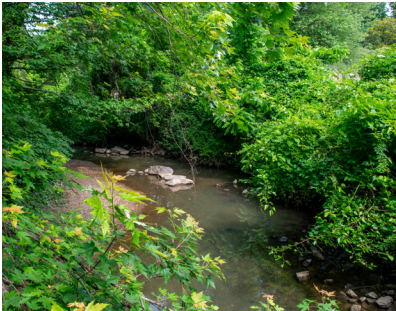
Hired in 2024, Sophia implements the city's urban forestry outreach programs through the SPROUT initiative.

POLICIES AND REGULATIONS



VA Department of Forestry Code & Ordinance Audit

The city received support from the VA Department of Forestry to conduct an audit of its tree-related codes and regulations. The Green Infrastructure Center completed its audit in May of this year and recommended several key improvements. Many of these recommendations were included in the Urban Forest Master Plan.



Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act Compliance Review

The Urban Forest Manager supported an external review of the city's compliance with the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act program that is being conducted by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. Under the Bay Act, local governments must incorporate and enforce measures to protect water quality into adopted ordinances and plans.



Non-Native Invasive Species Assessment and Management Plan

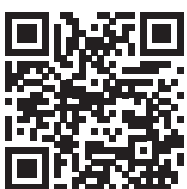
The city assessed 25 publicly maintained parks, non-managed woodlands, and trails for baseline ecosystem conditions and the presence of non-native invasive species. The resulting site-specific rankings guide ongoing invasive management activities.



Urban Forest Master Plan

The city completed its first-ever Urban Forest Master Plan. The plan includes a 20-year vision for the urban forest and recommendations for how the city should invest in policy, staff, operations, and community engagement to meet five key objectives: Protect, Regulate, Grow, Manage, and Engage.

LOOKING AHEAD



Scan Me

In 2026, urban forestry staff will begin implementation of the city's Urban Forest Master Plan, with a focus on field research and data collection, regulatory updates, strengthening staff professional development, increasing interdepartmental collaboration, and improving operational efficiencies. Our community forestry program will continue to deliver inspiring educational opportunities and impactful stewardship, to include a special celebration for our 40th Arbor Day this April.