

# Welcome

## to the Urban Forest Edition of the *Natural Inquirer*!

**W**hat are urban forests? Urban forests are the trees and other plants that grow where people live, go to school, work, and play. Even if you live in a rural community, the trees in your yard, around buildings, and in parks are called urban forests. Calling them urban forests helps you to see that they are different from the kind of forests that grow in large undeveloped areas. Urban forests include trees in community parks and other public land, along streets, in neighborhoods, around businesses and industry, and just about everywhere in a community. You will find urban forests almost anywhere that you find people living, going to school, working, and playing.

Urban forests provide many benefits to people and to their communities. Trees and other plants help to slow soil erosion, reduce noise, provide homes for wildlife, and provide recreational opportunities. Can you imagine a park without trees? There are other benefits as well. Benefits of urban forests include—

- ❧ Reducing the amount of rainwater going down storm drains.
- ❧ Improving air quality.
- ❧ Increasing the value of property.
- ❧ Making communities more attractive.
- ❧ Keeping the temperature cooler in the warm summer months.

You will read about some of these benefits in this edition of the *Natural Inquirer*. Even though you may be surrounded by urban forests, you might never have thought about all of the benefits that they provide to you and your community.



### Did you know that—

- ❧ Urban forests can help protect you from ultraviolet radiation?
- ❧ Different groups of people like to picnic in different ways?
- ❧ Urban forests can reduce the amount of fuel used by vehicles?
- ❧ The average tree growing in a yard could be worth almost \$1,000?
- ❧ Urban forests can help reduce the amount of pollution being washed into streams and rivers?
- ❧ Urban trees and the machines used to take care of them are a part of the carbon cycle?
- ❧ Most of the benefits from urban trees come from their branches and leaves?

You will learn all about urban forests in this edition of the *Natural Inquirer*. You will also learn about the scientists who study urban forests. When someone says the word “forest,” people usually think about the large forests located outside of cities and towns. Now, when you hear the word “forest,” you will also think about the urban forest that makes your community more attractive, healthier, cooler, and a lot more fun!