Urban Forests Save Us Money

When thinking of trees and economics, many people will think of timber harvest, lumber, plywood, and other forest products. But the highest economic values of trees in cities are from living, thriving trees! Valuation studies for urban forest benefits are the most recent field of research. If we think about all the benefits described above, the return-on-investment potential becomes obvious. Research confirms cost savings for trees as green infrastructure, including reduced investments in air and water quality 'gray' infrastructure. Recent monetizations of health benefits show cost savings across the human life cycle from children to elders. Finally, numerous studies show increased property values associated with having nearby trees and parks, and these values can be converted to local government revenues to support tree programs.

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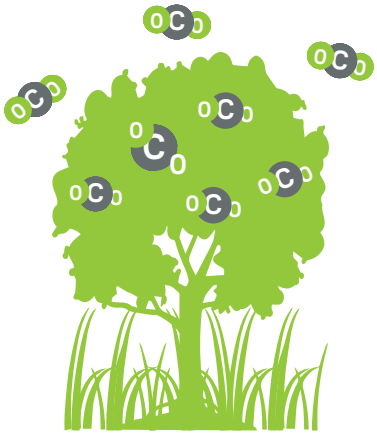
$6.8 Million

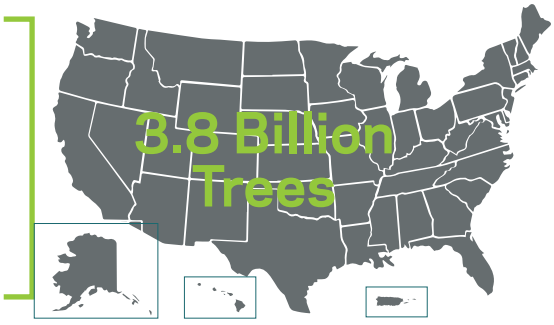
Using the iTree software, the city of Minneapolis calculated that not only had they saved approximately $6.8 million in energy expenditure by planting trees, but they had also increased property values by $7.1 million (City Of Minneapolis, Minnesota Municipal Tree Resource Analysis).



22.8 Million Tons/Year

Based on the field data of 10 USA cities and a national urban tree cover data, it is estimated that urban trees in the contiguous USA currently store 708 million tons of carbon (tC) ($14,300 million value) with a gross carbon sequestration rate of 22.8 million tC/year ($460/million per year) (Nowak et al. ,2002).

$2.4 Trillion



Nationally, urban forests in the United States are estimated to contain about 3.8 billion trees, with an estimated structural asset value of $2.4 trillion (Nowak et al., 2002).*

*Note: Structural asset value is based, in part, on extrapolations of estimated replacement costs of trees of the same size, condition, species, and location.

Investment Return: $1.37 - $3.09

A study on the value of street and park trees in five U.S. cities found that for every dollar invested in urban tree management resulted in benefits valued between $1.37 to $3.09 annually (McPherson, et al., 2005).