

# Integrated Urban Forest Assessment

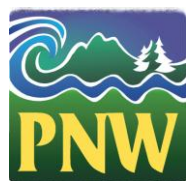
Forest Ecosystem Values

Residential Private Property Outreach Report



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## Background

The Green Cities Research Alliance (GCRA) is a program of the USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station, was initiated in 2009. This report represents one element of a multi-phase GCRA research project referred to as the Integrated Urban Forest Assessment (IUFA), funded by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. Major collaborators are the University of Washington, King County, and the Cascade Land Conservancy. IUFA supports green job creation while working to understand regional forest conditions, volunteer forest stewardship activities, and potential public health benefits of contact with nature.

During the summer of 2010, the IUFA research team initiated the Forest Ecosystem Values project across the city of Seattle using the i-Tree Eco<sup>1</sup> assessment tool. Two project goals were to provide baseline data about urban forest ecosystem services, and to improve the tool for use in the Pacific Northwest.

Existing i-Tree publications and materials<sup>2</sup> include very little if any guidance on how to implement private property outreach. Letter mailing campaigns by i-Tree Eco users are often referenced in i-Tree background materials (examples include Milwaukee, WI and Washington, DC). However, it is implied in the protocols that a field crew can visit a property, request permission, and expect to measure the trees the same day, which we found to be impractical for quality data collection. With single-family residential property making up 56% of Seattle's land base, it was particularly important to develop a successful strategy to gain access to parcels where randomly distributed research plots were located.

The following report documents the process and materials used to access residential property and presents outcomes and recommendations to assist future i-Tree users. For additional information, contact Lisa Ciecko, Forest Assessment Coordinator at Cascade Land Conservancy, 206-905-6924 or [lisac@cascadeland.org](mailto:lisac@cascadeland.org).

## Process

### Data Collection Goals

Forest Ecosystem Values field data collection was organized into circular tenth-acre plots randomly distributed throughout the city and stratified by the management units listed in Seattle's Urban Forest Management Plan<sup>3</sup>. Plots regularly included more than one property parcel. Table 1 includes the targeted plot numbers by management unit. In order to account for the extensive land cover and expected canopy variability in the single-family residential unit, 86 plots were targeted for data collection.

**Table 1. Plot Numbers by Urban Forest Management Unit**

Urban Forest Management Plan Units	Land cover (%)	Tree cover (%)	Targeted plots	Completed plots (2010)
Downtown	1	9	20	19
Natural Parks	7	64	20	20
Major Institutions	2	15	20	20
Developed Parks	4	19	20	20
Commercial	8	8	20	19
Manufacturing and Industrial	11	8	25	19
Multi-family Residential	11	13	25	0
Single-family residential	56	18	86	68
Totals:	100	--	236	185

<sup>1</sup> i-Tree Eco - <http://www.itreetools.org/eco/index.php>

<sup>2</sup> i-Tree Manual - <http://www.itreetools.org/resources/manuals/i-Tree%20Eco%20Users%20Manual.pdf>

Casey Trees Management Guide - [http://www.caseytrees.org/geographic/tree-inventory/citywide/UFORE-2009\\_webversion.pdf](http://www.caseytrees.org/geographic/tree-inventory/citywide/UFORE-2009_webversion.pdf)

Nowak et al (2008) - <http://auf.isa-arbor.com/request.asp?JournalID=1&ArticleID=3075&Type=2>

<sup>3</sup> City of Seattle Urban Forest Management Plan - [http://www.seattle.gov/environment/documents/Final\\_UFMP.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/environment/documents/Final_UFMP.pdf)

## Permission for Property Access

Most of the management units include extensive private property, Developed Parks and Natural Parks being the only two units with pre-approval. During the planning phase, it was decided that private residential property required a more systematic permission request process, while plots that fell on commercial, institutional, and industrial properties could be accessed using minimal internet research followed by phone calls or in-person access requests.

Cascade Land Conservancy's legal counsel helped determine that the forest assessment crew would need to request permission from each property that was partially or entirely included in a residential study plot. Approval could be provided in writing (by return postcard), phone, email, or through an online response system. The person providing approval did not have to be the property owner, but instead could be a tenant or family member 18 years of age or older.

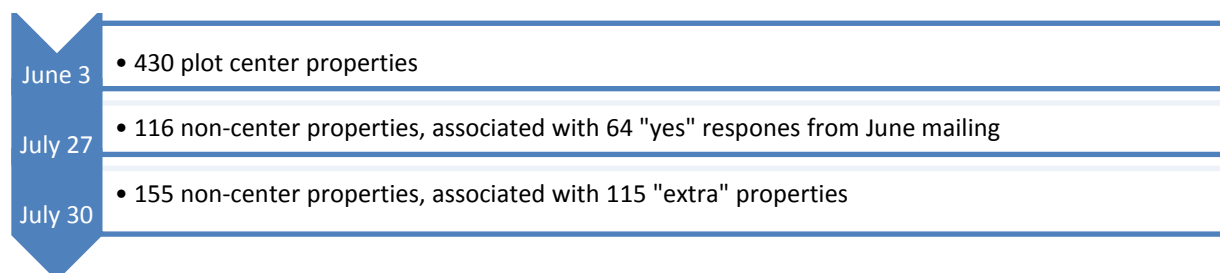
## Database of Property Owners

Data for residential outreach was organized in an Excel spreadsheet, an ArcGIS geodatabase, and a Google Earth KML file. Once research plots were randomly distributed using the i-Tree Eco Random Plots Workbook<sup>4</sup>, parcel data was retrieved from the King County Property Tax data layer in ArcGIS to create a spreadsheet with a physical address and a tax name, as well as a tax mailing address for each parcel associated with a research plot. Subsequent mailing information, communication notes, and responses were recorded alongside the original information for each parcel in the database.

## Mailing Campaign

In order to account for an expected 20% response rate, 430 plots were targeted to meet the necessary 86 single-family residential plots. These targeted plots included multiple associated properties. To limit mailing expenses and increase effectiveness, properties at the plot center point were targeted first. Once we received approval from the plot center addresses, a second mailing was sent to associated non-center properties. A final mailing was necessary to increase total plot numbers. The first 115 plots from the 430 targeted plots were selected for additional outreach and the 155 non-center properties were including in the mailing.

**Figure 1. Mailing Timeline and Plot Numbers**



A letter ([Appendix A](#)) with a self addressed and stamped return postcard ([Appendix B](#)) was mailed to each of the properties listed above. For the first mailing, a follow up postcard ([Appendix C](#)) was mailed a week later to encourage additional responses. The letter and postcard included a link to an online response tool<sup>5</sup> where residents could provide approval and leave comments or contact information ([Appendix D](#)). The letter also included a sentence in Spanish at the bottom of the page that directed Spanish-speakers to the full-length letter and response tool online ([Appendix E](#)).

<sup>4</sup> I-Tree Eco Random Plots Workbook - <http://www.itreetools.org/resources/manuals.php>

<sup>5</sup> Survey Monkey - [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)

## Property Visits

Environmental Coalition of South Seattle (ECOSS) was contracted by our project partner, City of Seattle, to visit a selection of targeted properties to ask for property access permission and to answer any questions related to the forest assessment. ECOSS outreach crews are multilingual with each crew of two people speaking up to six languages. Training for the crews was held in late July to develop the canvassing campaign and share important information on the project goals. The training outline is included as [Appendix H](#).

City of Seattle and CLC staff worked closely to prepare materials for each crew to use during property visits. Each crew member was outfitted with a project t-shirt, a name badge with both CLC and ECOSS logos, and an accordion folder of handouts. Items included a one-pager of frequently asked questions ([Appendix K](#)), handouts explaining ecosystem services provided by trees, a multilingual tree care handout from the City of Seattle's reLeaf program, and response postcards for recording signatures. To navigate to each plot, crews were given an informational sheet and an aerial map of the plot ([Appendix J](#)). The map included numbered parcels that corresponded with notes on previous communications and approval needs. For specifics on the visit process and message see [Appendix I](#).

ECOSS crews were tasked with getting a response from 278 properties. To do this an estimated 489 total visits took place during a two month period. Follow up visits occurred if residents were not home during the initial visit and did not provide a response using the return postcard, the online system, or by phone. All properties where no response was received were visited twice, while some properties were targeted for additional outreach (up to four visits) when a significant number of the associated properties had already provided approval.

## Publicity

A press release ([Appendix G](#)) was submitted to community newspapers in Seattle in late July to correspond with ECOSS outreach activities. It presented information specific to the Seattle Forest Ecosystem Values research and did not mention the larger IUFA efforts in an attempt to simplify the message. In early August, unrelated to the press release, the Seattle PI ran an article about the Forest Ecosystem Values research. The article was posted on the CLC's website and included in social media outreach (Facebook and Twitter). Additional information about the project was posted on the City of Seattle's reLeaf website, [www.seattle.gov/trees/](http://www.seattle.gov/trees/).

## Reminder Contact

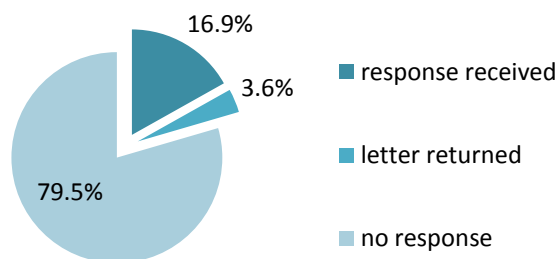
A pre-visit postcard ([Appendix F](#)) was mailed the week before a plot was to be measured as a reminder to property owners/tenants that they provided approval and to offer another opportunity for them to communicate any potential access issues (dogs, locked gates, etc).

# Results

## Mailing Response

The initial mailing in June provided a response (approval or denial) from 70 of the 430 plot center properties contacted (Figure 2). There were 15 letters returned by the U.S. Postal Service, which listed reasons like vacant houses, incorrect addresses, etc. Factoring in the returned letters gives us an initial mailing response rate of 16.9%. Because of tracking methods, it is not possible at this time to determine response rates for the second mailing effort.

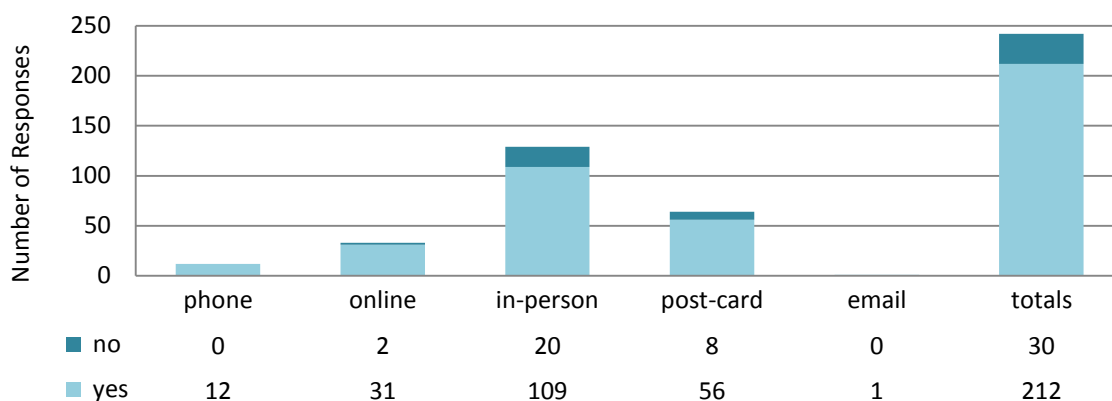
Fig. 2: Initial Mailing Response Rate



## Response Totals

To better understand the effectiveness of each method, responses were tallied for both the first and second mailings, as well as in-person visits (Figure 3). In-person visits were most successful with 129 total responses, 109 of which yielded permission to access the property. While postcards tallied 64 and phone calls added another 12 responses. Although no responses were recorded for the Spanish language online response tool, the English language version captured 33 responses.

**Fig. 3: Outreach Response Totals**

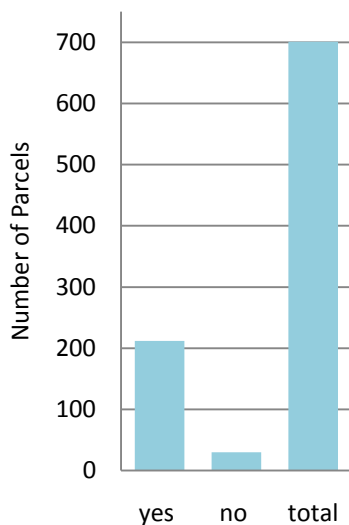


## Property Totals

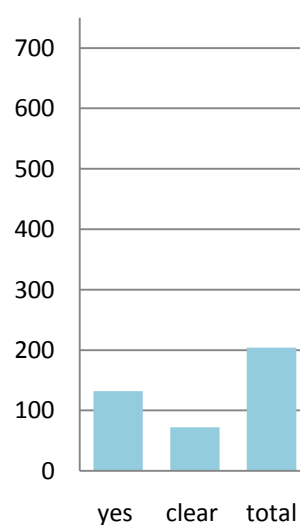
The number of properties associated with each plot complicated outreach efforts. Of the 430 residential plots, 701 individual properties were targeted (based on methods explained on page 3). The average number of properties per plot was 2.1 with the highest number of associated properties being 7. We received approval from 212 of 701 properties (Figure 4).

Figure 5 shows the number of properties visited to measure the 68 research plots from the 2010 field season. It should be noted that 72 of these parcels were considered “clear”, meaning they had no measurable trees within the plot boundary and so did not require access. Clear parcels were determined using Google Earth and Google Streets. All plots were completed where necessary approval was provided.

**Fig. 4: Contacted Properties**



**Fig. 5: Completed Properties**



## Cost and Time Requirements

The following tables describe the cost and time required to generate the residential property access permission. Outreach expenses (Table 2) include the costs of mailing materials, as well as the people hired exclusively to assist

with the outreach campaign, but does not capture the CLC and City of Seattle staff time. Instead, the time required to coordinate outreach efforts is included in Table 3, along with the ECOSS outreach crew's time.

**Table 2. Outreach Expenses**

Expense Description	Cost
Postage expenses [stamps for each letter, pre-paid return postcard, reminder postcard, and pre-visit postcards]	\$609
Other mailing expenses [postcard paper, postcards trimmed, labels, etc.]	\$89
Spanish translation	\$100
ECOSS Outreach Crew contract	\$14,123
Total	\$14,921

**Table 3. Outreach Time Estimates**

Time Description	Amount (hrs)
Initial outreach planning [meetings, communication, etc.]	10
Mailing implementation [spreadsheet creation, drafting written materials, mail merge, labeling, etc.]	20
Response management [data entry, phone calls, pre-visit postcards]	75
Site atlas development [map research for "clear" plots, map and plot sheet creation for sites visited in person]	50
ECOSS Outreach Crew time [property visits, transportation, and crew coordination]	365
Other [outreach training, etc.]	15
Total	535

## Discussion

### Identity

During initial planning, it was decided by project partners that Cascade Land Conservancy would be the primary name and logo on the outreach materials. This was due in part to the fact that the CLC Forest Assessment Coordinator was the primary point of contact and all outreach materials were generated and managed by CLC. During the initial planning phase, there was some speculation as to whether residents would have a negative reaction to city, county and federal government involvement based on previous urban forestry outreach efforts. Recent proposed revisions to the City of Seattle Tree Regulations, although unrelated to the i-Tree Eco assessment, were expected to add a sense of concern from private property owners, leaving project coordinators to frame the project outreach using the CLC brand.

Feedback from the ECOSS outreach crews ([Appendix L](#)) provides a different assessment of resident concerns. John Lloyd from ECOSS writes, "Many indecisive and apathetic residents were obviously unclear as to whether the staff represented the City of Seattle or Cascade Land Conservancy. The impression the staff was left with was that had they been representatives of the City of Seattle, the residents would have felt more compelled to participate". Future outreach efforts should take this into consideration, understanding that the government identity provides a sense of authority often necessary to access residential property.

The letter wording may have also contributed to the low response rate. Although several people familiar with survey language edited the letter, others expressed that the positive tree benefits language in the first paragraph may have influenced people who do not share the same sentiment. Future letters should consider mentioning the problems along with benefits of urban trees. In the same vein, there were several respondents who noted that there were no trees in their yard, sometimes as a reason for not providing approval. For this reason, the letter should mention needing access even if there are no trees present and should include language about all vegetation.

### **Outreach and Data Collection Timing**

Much of the complexity of the outreach effort could have been reduced had it occurred before the beginning of the field season. Planning happened during late May and initial mailings were distributed in June, while in-person outreach efforts didn't begin until August. This detracted from the Forest Assessment Coordinator's field time and limited the timing and methods for follow up. Ideally, outreach planning would be initiated in February, with property research occurring in early spring, and property visits following soon after. It would be optimal to reduce the amount of time that passed before we returned to measure each plot. Using the reminder postcards and other options for follow up communication, it would be reasonable to complete outreach during the spring months before the field crews are in full swing.

### **Potential Bias**

Although plots were randomly selected using ArcGIS and the i-Tree Random Plots Workbook, it is expected that some bias was introduced during the property access permission process. To reduce regional differences, the city was divided into four quadrants and an equal number of plots were targeted for each quadrant. Even with this in place, in-person outreach targeted parcels only after the plot center parcel provided approval, potentially creating localized bias.

Language barriers likely influenced response rates even though outreach efforts included an online response tool in Spanish and multi-lingual outreach crews. Seattle is a diverse city; a United Way Community Assessment<sup>6</sup> lists 83 languages spoken by students in the Seattle School District. According to the City of Seattle, the top languages other than English are Spanish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin, Somali, Tagalog, and Korean. The second tier languages (spoken by at least 2,000 Seattle residents) are Cambodian, Amharic, Oromo, Tigrinya, Laotian, Thai, and Russian. Interestingly, only two languages were encountered and documented during the ECOSSE in-person visits, Spanish and Vietnamese. This may have been due in part to the localized bias mentioned above.

The field crew observed other potential biases when they visited plots to complete tree measurements. People were often home during traditional business hours, suggesting that people who did not work during the day may have been more available to respond to letters or in-person visits. Also, many people who provided approval expressed pride in their yard and were excited to have the field crew measure their trees. This may have affected approval, as well as measured trees.

All said, much of these concerns were likely mitigated by the large sample size and the random plot distribution. Future research efforts should work to recognize areas of potential bias, including those listed above, and structure sampling and outreach methods to reduce bias.

### **Cost and Time Requirements**

The costs and time required to complete the public outreach campaign was substantial, but remains a necessary part of i-Tree Eco projects that include a significant number of residential properties as was the case in Seattle, WA. Our results suggest that taking the time to visit properties in person will significantly increase approval rates.

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<sup>6</sup> United Way Community Assessment - <http://www2.uwkc.org/kcca/data/Languages/default.asp>

Paying for the outreach crew likely reduced the need to train and hire additional field crews, ultimately cutting costs. Previous projects noted gaining access by knocking on doors the same day they were out to measure trees, but we expected that this would be too challenging for the single field crew employed to complete the plots. Considerations included the complexity of obtaining day-of permission from multiple parcels associated with each plot and whether the field crews work schedule (weekdays 7 am – 4 pm) would best match resident availability. In the end, it was a question of the amount of time it would take away from the field crew’s already limited data collection time.

Future outreach efforts should look to involve volunteers interested in engaging residents in urban forestry or assisting in office activities. The Seattle i-Tree project was significantly helped by a single office volunteer who contributed to data entry, plot research, map making, and responding to residents.

## Conclusion

Residential private property outreach is a consuming and challenging part of an i-Tree Eco Assessment. This summary and analysis was prepared as a way to share new processes and successes in Seattle, as well as a way to identify areas for improvement. The following suggests important considerations for future i-Tree Eco users:

- There is a need to formulate outreach materials that convey neutral messages; our tendency towards explaining the benefits of urban trees may have detracted from access efforts and introduced bias.
- Future outreach efforts with multiple partners should consider the impact of the project branding, understanding that the government identity provides a sense of authority often necessary to access residential property.
- Future research efforts should work to recognize areas of potential bias in property owner permission response, including language barriers, resident availability, and individual’s interest and appreciation for trees. Sampling structure and outreach methods should be organized to reduce bias.
- For projects with a significant number of plots on private residential property, outreach requires extensive planning and implementation time, making it necessary to start early and to plan for staff time.
- In person site visits were an important method for receiving property access approval. To reduce costs, volunteers should be used when appropriate.



## Appendix A: Residential Letter

July 27, 2010

Dear ,

Trees are an important element of the quality of life in Seattle. Our urban forest cleans our air, filters our water, creates walkable neighborhoods, and promotes a healthy learning environment for our children.

To better understand the benefits Seattle's urban forest provides, we are conducting an **urban forest assessment**. Several hundred plots will be sampled this summer to learn about the current condition and extent of Seattle's urban forest. Your property has been randomly selected to be a part of this project.

A small part of the study plot falls on your property, we are writing to request **permission to study the trees in your yard**. If you provide approval, we will remind you the week before we plan to be in your neighborhood. Once there, we will record species, size, and crown coverage information for each tree that falls within the plot. The measurements will not harm the trees in any way and we will make every effort to leave no trace of our work. We will be visiting during weekday work hours. You do not need to be present or prepare for our visit in any way.

Please respond using the enclosed **prepaid postcard** or **respond online** at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/treesurvey](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/treesurvey) by **August 6, 2010**. Feel free to contact the Forest Assessment Coordinator, Lisa Ciecko, at 206-905-8209 or [lisac@cascadeland.org](mailto:lisac@cascadeland.org) with any questions or concerns you may have.

Your trees count! Please take the time to respond and help us learn about Seattle's urban forest.

Thanks for your time,

Lisa Ciecko  
Forest Assessment Coordinator  
Cascade Land Conservancy

Si el Inglés no es su idioma nativo y usted quiere leer esta carta en Español,  
porfavor visite [www.surveymonkey.com/s/arboles](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/arboles)



## Urban Forest Assessment

Make your trees count! Please complete the information below and drop this postage-paid card in the mail. Or visit: [www.surveymonkey.com/treesurvey](http://www.surveymonkey.com/treesurvey).

- ☐ Yes, I authorize Cascade Land Conservancy to access my property during the summer of 2010 for the purpose of collecting inventory data from trees on my property.
- ☐ No, I do not want my trees included in this important study.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_



## MAKE YOUR TREES COUNT!

We contacted you last week regarding our **urban forest assessment** project, but we haven't heard back from you yet. Because part or all of a research plot falls on your property, we would like permission to study the trees in your yard.

If you have **questions** about when we'll come and what we'll measure, please feel free to contact me at 206-905-8209 or [lisac@cascadeland.org](mailto:lisac@cascadeland.org).

**Please take the time to respond** by dropping the postcard you received last week in the mail or go online: [www.surveymonkey.com/treesurvey](http://www.surveymonkey.com/treesurvey).

Thank you for your time and help!

Lisa Ciecko, Forest Assessment Coordinator  
Cascade Land Conservancy

## Appendix D: Online Response Tool – English

Urban Forest Assessment Project		<a href="#">Exit this survey</a>																								
<p>The Cascade Land Conservancy in partnership with the US Forest Service, King County and the University of Washington is conducting an urban forest assessment to better understand the benefits Seattle's urban forest provides. Several hundred plots will be sampled this summer to gather information on the current condition and extent of Seattle's urban forest. Your property has been randomly selected to be a part of this project.</p> <p>Because part or all of a plot falls on your property, we are requesting permission to access your yard. If you provide approval, we will remind you the week before we plan to visit your property. Once there, we will record species, size, and crown coverage information for each tree that falls within the plot. The measurements will not harm the trees in any way and we will make every effort to leave no trace of our work. We will be visiting during weekday work hours. You do not need to be present or prepare for our visit in any way.</p> <p>Please contact the Forest Assessment Coordinator, Lisa Ciecko, at 206-905-8209 or <a href="mailto:lisac@cascadeland.org">lisac@cascadeland.org</a> with any questions or concerns you may have.</p> <p><b>* Your trees count! Please complete the information below:</b></p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes! I authorize Cascade Land Conservancy to access my property during the summer of 2010 for the purpose of collecting data from trees on or adjoining my property.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No, I do not want my trees included in this important study.</p> <table border="0"><tr><td><b>* First name</b></td><td><b>* Last name</b></td></tr><tr><td><input type="text"/></td><td><input type="text"/></td></tr><tr><td colspan="2"><b>* Street address</b></td></tr><tr><td colspan="2"><input type="text"/></td></tr><tr><td colspan="2">Street Address line 2</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2"><input type="text"/></td></tr><tr><td colspan="2"><b>* Zip code</b></td></tr><tr><td colspan="2"><input type="text"/></td></tr><tr><td colspan="2">Phone number</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2"><input type="text"/></td></tr><tr><td colspan="2">Comments or Questions?</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2"><input type="text"/></td></tr></table>			<b>* First name</b>	<b>* Last name</b>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<b>* Street address</b>		<input type="text"/>		Street Address line 2		<input type="text"/>		<b>* Zip code</b>		<input type="text"/>		Phone number		<input type="text"/>		Comments or Questions?		<input type="text"/>	
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## Appendix E: Online Response Tool – Spanish

**Apreciación de los Bosques Urbanos**[Exit this survey](#)

CASCADE LAND CONSERVANCY  
Conservando tierras maravillosas  
Creando comunidades fantasticos

4 de Junio, 2010

Querido Vecino,

Árboles son un elemento importante de nuestra calidad de vida en Seattle. Nuestro bosque urbano limpia nuestro aire, filtra nuestra agua, crea vecindarios bonitos, y promueve un medio ambiente saludable para nosotros y nuestros hijos.

Para entender mejor los beneficios de los bosques urbanos de Seattle, estamos conduciendo una evaluación del bosque urbano. Cientos de propiedades serán estudiados este verano para conocer la condición actual y el alcance del bosque urbano de Seattle. Su propiedad ha sido elegido al azar a ser parte de este proyecto.

Porque una parte o toda la propiedad seleccionada está en su propiedad, estamos escribiendo a pedir su permiso estudiar a los árboles en su jardín. Si usted nos da permiso, nos comunicamos con Ud. la semana antes de que estamos en su vecinidad. Ya que visitamos a su jardín, recordamos los especies, los diámetros (tamaños), e información sobre el alcance de las coronas de cada árbol en su propiedad. Las medidas no causarán ningún daño a los árboles, y haremos todo lo posible para no dejar evidencia de nuestro trabajo. Visitarémos durante horas de trabajo entre semana. No es necesario que sean presentes o que preparen para nuestra visita.

Favor de responder usando la carta preparada que está incluido or responde por internet en [www.surveymonkey.com/s/arboles](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/arboles) antes del 15 de Junio, 2010.

Si tiene ganas de comunicarse con nosotros por favor mande un correo electronico a Lisa Ciecko, [lisac@cascadeland.org](mailto:lisac@cascadeland.org) con preguntas o preocupaciones.

Sus árboles son importantes! Por favor toma el tiempo de responder y ayudar a preservar a los bosques urbanos de Seattle.

Gracias por su tiempo,

Lisa Ciecko  
Coordinadora de Appreciación de Bosques Urbanos  
Cascade Land Conservancy

**\* Complete la información abajo.**

☐ Si, yo doy mi permiso a Cascade Land Conservancy para hacer un apreciacion de mi propiedad durante el verano de 2010 para sumar información de arboles en mi propiedad.

☐ No, no quiero que mi arboles esten incluido en este estudio.

**\* Nombre**

**\* Apellido**

**\* Dirección de casa**

**Dirección de calle**

**\* Codo de vecinidad**

**Número de teléfono?**



## WE'RE COMING TO COUNT YOUR TREES!

We contacted you recently to ask your permission to measure the trees on your property as part of our citywide **urban forest assessment** project. We are writing to let you know that we will be visiting this next week!

You do not need to prepare or be home for our visit, but please let us know if there are any **potential access issues** – locked gates, dogs, or construction.

If you have **questions** please feel free to contact me at 206-905-8209 or [lisac@cascadeland.org](mailto:lisac@cascadeland.org).

Thank you for your time and help!

Lisa Ciecko, Forest Assessment Coordinator  
Cascade Land Conservancy



## CASCADE LAND CONSERVANCY

CONSERVING GREAT LANDS  
CREATING GREAT COMMUNITIES

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 9, 2010

#### **Your Trees Count! Urban Forest Assessment Coming to a Backyard Near You**

Seattle – In neighborhoods around Seattle this summer, trees are being counted and measured in an effort to better understand the health, age and extent of the city's trees. The research is being coordinated by the Cascade Land Conservancy (CLC) in partnership with the US Forest Service, King County, City of Seattle, and University of Washington and will provide important information about the current conditions and environmental benefits provided by our urban trees. By measuring trees in over 200 randomly distributed plots, researchers will be able to quantify how Seattle's trees contribute to reducing pollution, storing carbon, reducing storm water and saving energy. This information is critical to understanding the current and future management needs of our urban forest in order to develop sound management policies.

Because the plots can fall anywhere in the city, CLC is currently contacting residents for permission to access yards. The assessment crews will collect information on the number of trees in each plot, their species and size, as well as information on the type of ground cover (grass, pavement, etc.). The measurements do not harm the trees in any way and the crew makes every effort to leave no trace of their work. If you were contacted by CLC, please consider responding to help move this project forward. With single family residential property making up 56% of Seattle's land base, it is important that residential property be included in this research. Residents with questions can contact Lisa Ciecko, Forest Assessment Coordinator for the Cascade Land Conservancy, at [lisac@cascadeland.org](mailto:lisac@cascadeland.org) or 206-905-6924.

**About the Cascade Land Conservancy:** The Cascade Land Conservancy is the largest land conservation, stewardship and community building organization operating in Washington State with headquarters in Seattle and principal offices in King, Kittitas, Mason, Pierce and Snohomish Counties. Founded in 1989, the Conservancy has protected 163,000 acres of working forests, farmlands and natural areas as well as estuary lands on the Olympic Peninsula and along the Washington Coast. It provides stewardship services, caring for more than 12,000 acres of land. Since 2005 it has been the host organization of The Cascade Agenda, which links conserving great lands with creating great communities. For more information, please visit [www.cascadeland.org](http://www.cascadeland.org).

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Integrated Urban Forest Assessment  
ECOSS Private Property Outreach Training

Seattle i-Tree Eco  
July 30, 2010

Outline

Discuss roles

Discuss meeting/training goals

- o Learn about i-Tree Eco project goals and what happens at each plot
- o Discuss messaging and work to create the story that best communicates what we're doing
- o Introduce the plot workbook and plot sheet system
- o Work out plot visit strategy
- o Solidify the plan for moving forward, including timeline and expectations

i-Tree Eco introduction

- o Integrated Urban Forest Assessment project background
- o What will we gain from this research project?
- o How is data collected and what does a typical plot look like?
- o Example plot outside

Property Access introduction

- o Strategy to date
- o What information we need to receive/record
- o The plot workbook and plot sheets
- o Walk through example plot

Telling our story – brainstorming activity

- o What do we want to communicate to landowners?
- o What part of this work will be interesting to people?
- o What questions should we expect to receive?
- o What resources do we need on hand to help describe our work?

Moving forward

- o Timeline
- o Expectations
- o Who needs to follow up on what?
- o Last questions



### VISIT PROCESS

#### Pre-Visit:

- Lisa will create/print aerial photos and property maps.
- John will create plot sheets that include addresses and names associated with the plot and information on any previous communication.
- Each team with help from John will prepare directions and a strategy for accessing each plot and revisiting as necessary.

#### When someone is home:

- **Introduce yourself**, mention you are working with Cascade Land Conservancy.
- **Explain purpose** of your visit and basic project information, using the talking points below, as well as the tree benefits sheets and the Frequently Asked Questions sheet as needed.
- **If they are willing to provide property access approval**, have them **complete the card** (check box, name, signature). The person providing approval must be over 18 years of age, but does not have to be the property owner. Please encourage them to tell other people living at the house about the forest assessment work.
- **If they are unwilling to provide approval** while you are there, leave a response postcard, as well as the frequently asked question sheet and let them know they can respond by phone, online, or by postcard. The online site is listed on the postcard. Ask if there is a good time to stop by and follow up.
- Provide City of Seattle tree planting informational sheets (if interest is expressed)
- **Record visit information** in "communication notes" box on plot sheet. Include information on which properties you need to follow up on, who you talked to, general reactions, phone numbers if provided. Be sure to write the plot number on the card and then staple the card to the plot sheet when you return to the office.
- **Record access information** in "access note" box on plot sheet. Include information on locked gates, dogs or other animals to consider, easiest way to get to plot, any other considerations.
- **Record basic site information** on plot sheet. Include information on whether it is necessary for crews to visit the address in order to complete the plot. Specifically, check whether there are trees over an inch in diameter in the area of the plot.

#### When there is no answer:

- **Leave materials**, including letter and frequently asked questions sheet in noticeable location (tucked under mat, in screen door, but not in the mailbox).
- **Record visit, access, and site information** on the plot sheet as described above.

### TALKING POINTS

- Cascade Land Conservancy is assessing randomly selected plots across Seattle to collect data related to trees such as age, species, and size.
- Data collected will be used to quantify the environmental benefits provided by Seattle's trees.
- All or part of your yard falls into a randomly selected plot.
- Therefore, we would like your permission to access your property and take some tree measurements.
- Your trees and property will not be harmed in any way; no trace of our presence will be left. If you are not home at the time, you may not realize we have been here.
- Survey crews are working through the summer; you will receive a postcard from us the week prior to our arrival letting you know we are on our way. You do not need to be home when we come.
- Questions can be directed to Lisa Ciecok at the Cascade Land Conservancy; 206-292-5907 or [lisac@cascadeland.org](mailto:lisac@cascadeland.org)

## Appendix J: Example Plot Sheet and Map



### Integrated Urban Forest Assessment Forest Ecosystem Values Plot Sheet

plot number: \_\_\_\_\_  
region: \_\_\_\_\_  
address: \_\_\_\_\_

property access:	#	tax payer name	physical address	Date visited	communication notes <small>(include follow up needs, who you talked to, general reactions, phone numbers if provided, remember to staple approval card to this sheet)</small>	oral or written response <small>(yes, no, follow up)</small>
	1					
	2					
	3					
	4					
	5					
	6					

**access notes:** (include information on locked gates, dogs or other animals to consider, easiest way to get to plot, any other considerations)

\_\_\_\_\_

**site notes:** (include information here when you suspect that there are NO measurable trees (must be above 1 inch in diameter) in a plot)

\_\_\_\_\_



SSF



## Integrated Urban Forest Assessment Forest Ecosystem Values



The Green Cities Research Alliance, with project coordination by Cascade Land Conservancy, is conducting an urban forest assessment throughout Seattle during the summer of 2010. This research will tell us about the overall condition of Seattle's trees and will help us quantify the benefits provided by our urban forest.

### Frequently Asked Questions:

#### What benefits do Seattle's trees provide?

Trees are an important part of the urban ecosystem and provide significant benefits for the city residents. These include environmental benefits such as storm water management, carbon storage, and pollution reduction; economic benefits such as increased property values and consumer spending; public health benefits such as decreased asthma rates and much more.

#### What data are you collecting and how will it be used?

The assessment crews will collect information on the number of trees in each plot, their species and size. Data on the type of ground cover (grass, pavement, etc) will also be collected. Your trees and property will not be harmed in any way. Data from all plots surveyed will be combined and used to estimate citywide urban forest conditions and benefits.

#### Why do you need access to my property?

The project is organized into randomly selected plots 1/10 of an acre in size. All or part of a plot randomly falls on your property, so in order to complete the research, we are asking permission to enter your yard.

#### What do I need to do be ready for your visit?

You do not need to prepare for the crew visit, but please let us know if we should expect access issues (locked gates, dogs, etc.) We will mail you a reminder postcard the week prior to our visit.



For further information or questions, please contact:

Lisa Ciecko, Forest Assessment Coordinator, Cascade Land Conservancy: phone 206-292-5907, [lisac@cascadeland.org](mailto:lisac@cascadeland.org)



PARTNERING FOR  
SUSTAINABLE CITIES  
THROUGH SCIENCE,  
POLICY, AND  
CITIZEN ACTION





## Appendix L: ECOSS Private Property Campaign Debrief

Compiled by John Lloyd, Environmental Coalition of South Seattle

### Resident Languages

During the course of the project, the staff assigned encountered two languages other than English. One home spoke Vietnamese, another spoke Spanish. The low number of Non-English speaking interactions can most likely be attributed to the broad geographical reach of the project. The number of homes in the area where we would be most likely to encounter other language needs (SE) was lower than those in the other quarters of the city.

### Informational Materials

Based on their experience with other projects, the staff felt that a clear and simple brochure, developed to fully explain the project and requesting the resident's cooperation would be useful. The team felt that the materials did leave behind were "easily ignored". The most requested change from the staff was a single "door hanger" with a detachable (perforated) postage paid approval card. This would have enabled a resident that was not home to review the request and send their response at their leisure, and a resident that made their decision on the spot could send the card back with the staff.

### Resident Feedback

Not many recurring questions were posed by the residents visited. The most often asked questions were "Why is this important" and "To whom is this important". It was easy for the staff to answer the first question, though there was some confusion on the part of the residents regarding the second. Many indecisive and apathetic residents were obviously unclear as to whether the staff represented the City of Seattle or Cascade Land Conservancy. The impression the staff was left with was that had they been representatives of the City of Seattle, the residents would have felt more compelled to participate. The most common reason for denial was the impression that this would have been an inconvenience. If the staff had already received approvals from neighbors, they would use these as a means to influence the resident's decision. Without this tool, no amount of persuasion seemed to dissuade the notion.

### Scheduling

In a four hour shift, twelve to sixteen addresses could be reached, and up to thirty during an eight hour shift. During the week, the most productive hours were from 4:00pm – 7:00pm in most areas. Saturday and Sunday shifts yielded the greatest audience, and in many cases the most receptive.

### ECOSS Feedback

One great challenge that the team felt was the need to gather multiple approvals in order to complete a plot. During a month's time, a team could return to single plot (with more than one house) four or five times, each time interacting with residents that had not answered the door during previous attempts. If at any point, and particularly during the last attempt a resident actually refused, it meant that the previous time had been wasted as the entire plot could not be completed. Had the randomly generated point on the map be restricted to single parcels, the budget could have been far more efficiently utilized, and a more robust goal could have been met.