



## International Urban Forest Data Standards Committee



**Objective:** The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), the U.S. Forest Service, and the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO) are looking to convene a team of scientists and practitioners to develop international standards for urban forest data collection, measurement and recording. The objective of this communication is to secure commitments from potential committee members of active participation in the standards development process.

**Justification:** With the advent of i-Tree ([www.itreetools.org](http://www.itreetools.org)) and other computerized urban forestry software, it has become evident that international standards related to urban forest data collection will facilitate ease in data analyses, allow communities across the globe to share data and analysis tools, and help promote urban forest management internationally. Issues of inconsistent methods, measurements, variable classifications, and database structures are limiting the abilities of many communities to engage in proper urban forest management and limiting the international urban forest community from learning through comparative analyses of urban forests. International standards will facilitate the development of new urban forest tools and reduce the cost of data collection and analyses.

**Overview:** The goal of this committee is to develop international standards following procedures that will be prescribed by the ISA. Once the committee is formed, standards protocols will be distributed and an action plan is to be formed by the committee on the standards development. Upon completion of the standards, the ISA and other groups will sanction these standards as the means to collect and record urban forest data.

The development of the particular details of the standards is the purpose of this standards committee. Though many of the details will be worked out by the committee, the following are the types of issues that could be dealt with by this committee: 1) What are the standard variables to be collected for an urban forest assessment (e.g., species, dbh, condition); 2) How will these variables be measured and classified (e.g., standardized species code list, height to measure dbh, and how to consistently rate tree condition); 3) Development of a standardized field input data base structure with consistent variables and codes to facilitate data sharing and tool development; and 4) Development of a global species and geographic location database to aid in international urban forest analyses. Use of these standards would of course be optional, but could greatly assist in enhancing urban forest measurement and management across the world.

**Meetings:** The first face-to-face meeting of this committee will be at the 85<sup>th</sup> Annual ISA Conference in Providence, RI, USA, on July 24-29, 2009. Prior to this meeting in Providence, communication will be conducted via e-mail and teleconferences to help facilitate the development of these standards and set the agenda for the July meeting.

**Contacts:** For more information, contact: David J. Nowak at [dnowak@fs.fed.us](mailto:dnowak@fs.fed.us) (Project Leader U.S. Forest Service and Deputy Coordinator of IUFRO 6.14.00 Urban Forestry) or Jim Skiera at [jskiera@isa-arbor.com](mailto:jskiera@isa-arbor.com) (Executive Director, ISA)

