



Urban and Community Forestry Strategic Plan Community Presentation

Urban and Community Forestry Strategic Plan

In Fall 2024, Davey Resource Group, Inc. (DRG) was contracted by Lake County to develop an Urban and Community Forestry Strategic Plan.



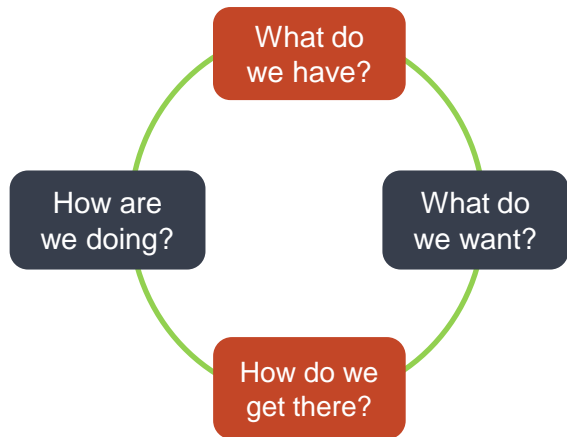
Urban and Community Forestry Strategic Plan

Why Plan?

To develop and implement a strategy that aligns with regional forestry efforts, community and equity-driven priorities, and Lake County's forestry goals.

The Planning Process

The Adaptative Management Planning Process:



Planning Timeline

Fall 2024

Project Launch
Plan Review
Outreach Plan

Winter 2025

Stakeholder Engagement
Program Research

Spring 2025

Public Survey
Data Collection
Program Assessment

Summer 2025

Strategic Objectives
Community Feedback

Fall 2025

Urban and
Community
Forestry Strategic
Plan

Steering Committee

- Dani Abboud, Brushwood Center
- Tiffany Becker, Lake County
- Melanie Bromberek, College of Lake County
- James Fitzgerald, Lake County
- Mary Fortmann, Openlands
- Melissa Grycan, Illinois Department of Natural Resources
- Steven Panos, Youth Conservation Corps
- Katie Piotrowska, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
- Laura Reilly, Chicago Wilderness Alliance
- Rebekah Snyder, Lake County Forest Preserve District
- Zachary Wirtz, The Morton Arboretum's Chicago Region Trees Initiative (CRTI)

Six meetings to...

1. Assure community engagement is thorough and targeted
2. Create buy-in to the plan as it proceeds
3. Provide advice to DRG and the PMT about plan development and trajectory
4. Review, refine, and provide input to plan goals and objectives

Photo credit: Chicago Region Trees Initiative, Lake County Urban Forestry Summary

Focus Groups

Focus Groups 53 individuals/orgs targeted

- Educators and Community Organizations
 - Environmental Organizations
 - Economic and Community Development
 - Public Works and Utilities
 - Tree Care
 - County and City Staff
- City of Waukegan
 - Community Members
 - Gateway Tech College
 - Lake County Operations, Buildings, & Grounds
 - Lake County Public Works
 - Landscape Illinois
 - Lydia Scott
 - Metropolitan Mayors Caucus
 - Metropolitan Planning Council
 - Meyer Tree Service
 - Morton Arboretum, CRTI
 - Openlands
- Resource Environmental Solutions
 - Student Conservation Association
 - Superior Enterprises
 - The Ancient Oaks Foundation
 - Lake County Forest Preserve
 - US Forest Service
 - Village of Barrington
 - Village of Hawthorn Woods
 - Village of Highland Park
 - Village of Lindenhurst
 - Village of Port Barrington
 - Youth Conservation Corps

Lake County's Urban Forest

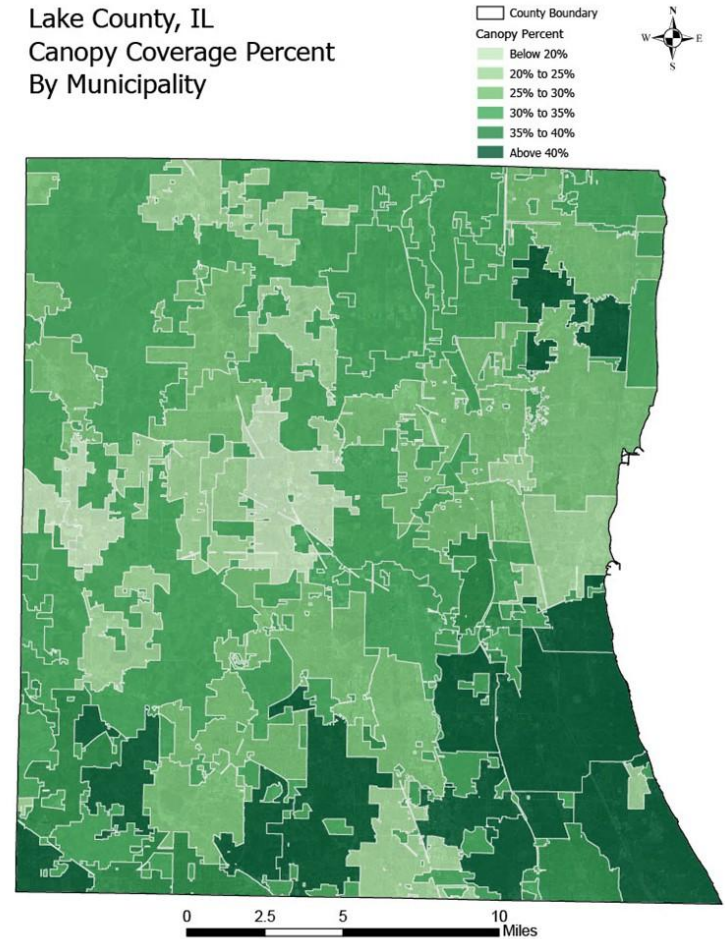
What is an Urban Forest?

All the trees within an urbanized area, including streets, yards, and parks, that provide environmental services and benefits to human and wildlife communities.

Tree Canopy Cover in Lake County, 2017

33% (+3% since 2010, 30%)

Lake County, IL
Canopy Coverage Percent
By Municipality



Lake County's Urban Forest

What do we know about Lake County's Trees?

- The highest percentage of canopy is found in **vacant, residential, and natural area properties** (*CRTI Lake County Urban Forest Summary*).
- Predominantly Maple, Oak, and Buckthorn
- Buckthorn makes up an estimated 53% of all trees in Lake County. Buckthorn is an invasive woody plant.
- 80% of trees are less than 5" DBH.

Most abundant trees in Lake County

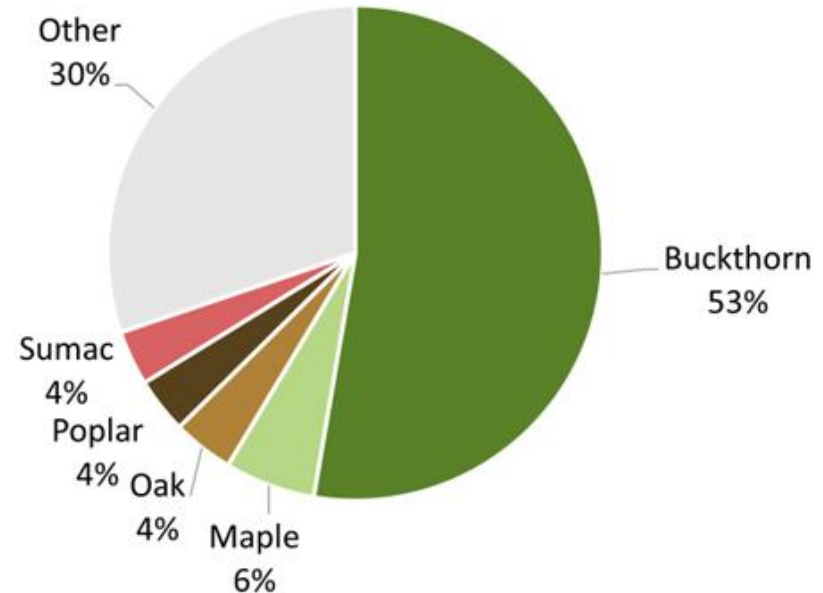
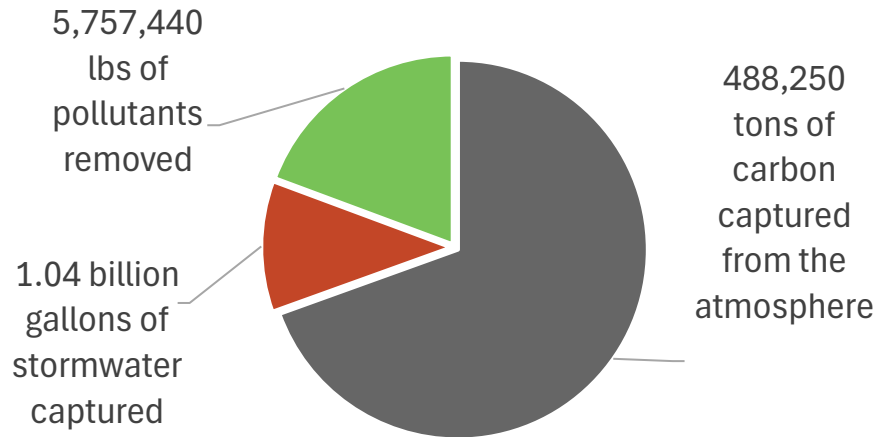


Photo credit: Chicago Region Trees Initiative, Lake County Urban Forestry Summary

Benefits of Trees

Total Annual Ecosystem Value of the Urban Forest

= **\$76,712,468**



Lake County's Urban Forest Challenges

- Tree canopy is not evenly distributed. Communities range from 9% to 62%.
- Buckthorn makes up an estimated 53% of all trees in Lake County. Buckthorn is an invasive woody plant.
- Green industries are in need of a skilled workforce but workforce development opportunities are limited.

Most abundant trees in Lake County

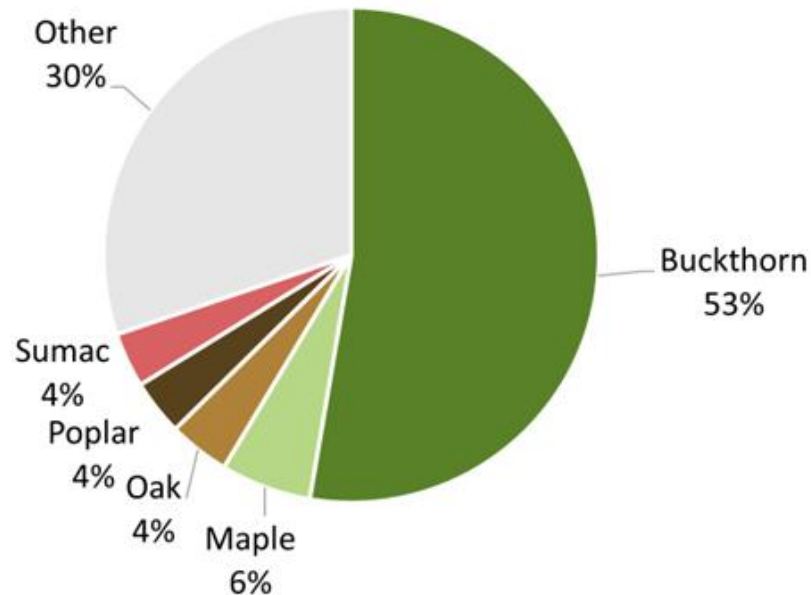


Photo credit: Chicago Region Trees Initiative, Lake County Urban Forestry Summary

Lake County's Urban Forest

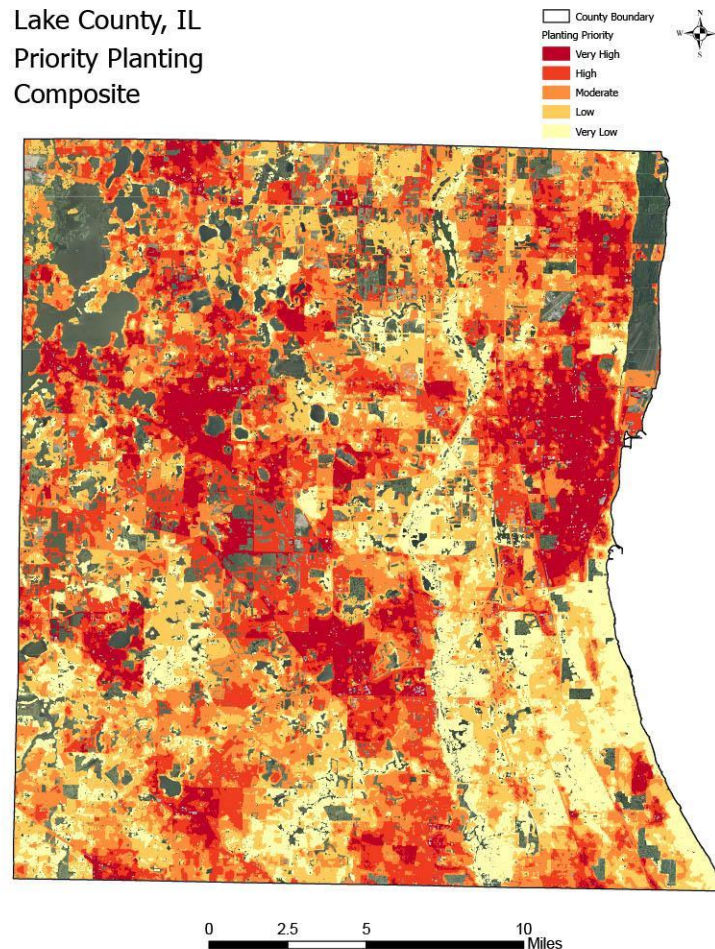
What are the opportunities for growth?

- 85,829 acres of land (28% of Lake County's total land area) could support additional tree plantings
- Lake County has the following community priorities to drive tree planting: **reduce stormwater runoff, address urban heat disparities, distribute trees equitably, and improve health outcomes.**

Lake County's Tree Planting Program

Will distribute \$2.5 million to Lake County's municipal partners who seek to plant trees to mitigate stormwater impacts

Lake County, IL
Priority Planting
Composite





Community Survey – Spring 2025

19

Questions

7

Weeks

464

Unique survey
respondents

94%

Of survey respondents
live in Lake County

43

Zip codes represented

98%

Of respondents believe
that Lake County should
have more trees

91%

Of respondents feel
that trees are worth
the financial cost of
maintenance



Vision and Goals

UCFSP Vision

Support a thriving, connected tree canopy that brings lasting value and resilience to all in Lake County.

UCFSP Goals

1. Plant and care for trees to grow a healthier and accessible urban forest
2. Collaborate to protect the urban forest
3. Support and inspire communities to value trees

Lake County Strategic Plan Vision

A national leader driven to achieve excellence, innovation, and sustainability so all are valued and can thrive.

The 5 Strategic Priorities

Collaborate

Plant

Regenerate

Train

Educate





1. Collaborate

Example strategies include:

- Lead and coordinate countywide collaboration on urban forestry.
- Provide technical and policy support to partners.



2. Plant



Example strategies include:

- Realize Countywide canopy goals and planting priorities.
- Incentivize tree planting and protection on private property.



3. Regenerate

Example strategies include:

- Coordinate Lake County's response plan for non-native invasive plants.
- Support homeowners with incentives for non-native invasive species management.



4. Train

Example strategies include:

- Establish inclusive workforce pipelines in Urban Forestry to support Lake County's municipal partners.
- Support workforce development and elevate professional standards in private sector tree care.



5. Educate

Example strategies include:

- Grow public awareness of trees and tree benefits.
- Build advocacy and local leadership for Urban Forestry.



Questions?



THANK YOU!