

Montana

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION

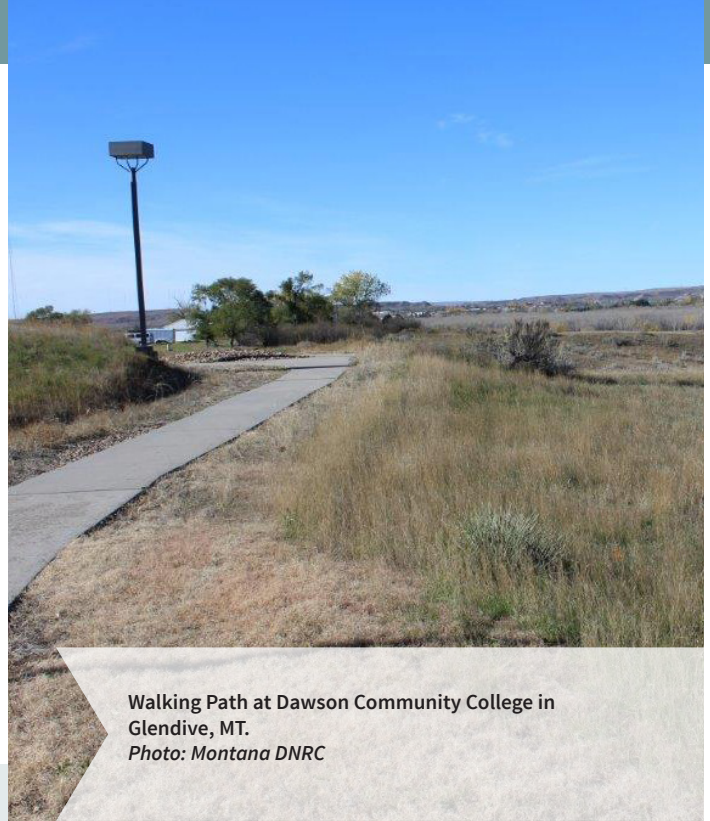
With increasing climate variability, projects that promote diversity and adaptability are vital to advancing the practice of urban forestry in Montana. Rural communities must consider ways to be self-sufficient, and higher populated areas must find opportunities to move forward and to plan for sustainable urban forest management.

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) Urban Forestry Program encourages communities to find sustainable methods in managing their urban forest resource. The DNRC has supported projects such as solar-powered drip irrigation, edible forest gardens, urban tree farms, and trees for fruit and berry production.

While Montana's climate spans across five zones, finding a wide variety of species from local nurseries can be a challenge. When a community supports itself through local sourcing, such as growing trees locally, or utilizing public spaces for fruit trees or marketable wood, it benefits everyone. It reduces costs and fuel consumption by minimizing transportation, trees are better acclimated, and generates local produce or wood-viable products.

While the concept of developing urban and community-based shelterbelts of trees is not new, Montana is finding the practice to be a viable one. Public use areas such as baseball fields, disc-golf courses, and walking trails on the edge of town are using trees to attract more use and provide various benefits for the community.

The campus of Dawson Community College in Glendive in east Montana has very few trees and sought a DNRC grant to assist in designing a shelterbelt near a walking path to help protect from snow, wind, and dust, and provide visual appeal. This area of the state is mostly plains and grassland, with extreme weather conditions. The goals of the project are to beautify the campus, to educate college staff about landscaping with trees, and to



Walking Path at Dawson Community College in
Glendive, MT.
Photo: Montana DNRC

plant low-maintenance, climate-hardy trees. Tree selection includes a combination of drought tolerant species and hardy ornamentals. Through some networking, Dawson College partnered with the neighboring community of Sidney to acquire trees adapted to the climate. Water conservation and efficient irrigation is also a component for this endeavor.

Urban and Community Forestry managers, groups, and the green industry must look to biodiversity to create a resilient community forest. As conditions and climates change, the practice and science of urban forestry must evolve too. This means utilizing the latest technology, research, policy tools, and broad-based collaboration for creating sustainable, multifunctional green infrastructure.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Urban and Community Forestry Program
[http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/forestry/forestry-assistance/
urban-and-community-forestry](http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/forestry/forestry-assistance/urban-and-community-forestry)