



Leaves OF Change



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Introduction

Latinos and Natural Resources in the South

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE across the United States is occurring at a rapid pace. The U.S. Census Bureau projects that by 2042 ethnic and racial minorities will comprise a majority of the nation's population. A major component of this change is a dramatic increase in the number of Latinos (also often referred to as "Hispanics"). The Latino population will nearly triple by 2050, to 133 million from 47 million, and will account for 30 percent of Americans, compared with just 15 percent today.

The southern U.S. (states other than Florida) has experienced unprecedented immigration and migration of Latinos in the last twenty years. For example, the Latino population increased in Georgia by 324%, in North Carolina by 440%, and in Tennessee by 284% during the ten year period from 1990 to 2000. This increase in the South has been primarily in smaller cities, towns, and rural areas in the Appalachian and "Black Belt" (a broad region in the South characterized by a high percentage of African-Americans) areas, unlike other parts of the country that have mainly seen growth in large cities.

What does this change mean for natural resource professionals in the South and across the country? Several studies have pointed to differences between various ethnic and cultural groups with respect to how they use and value natural resources, an important consideration when developing natural resource programs. For example, many studies have documented that there are differences between the participation and preferences of African-American, Latino, and Anglo users of urban parks and forests. This issue of *Leaves of Change* focuses on work that members of our centers and our partners are conducting to address the critical need for research and information related to the interaction between Latinos and natural resources in the South.

Research

Latinos and Urban Green Space

INCREASES IN the Latino population in the U.S. South have sparked the development of monitoring programs in health, education, and the broader social sciences aimed at understanding the needs of this rapidly growing population. Few studies, however, have looked at the connection that Latinos have with urban green space. Immigrant and minority use of outdoor, natural places in the South is an important consideration for urban foresters and municipal managers to consider because of the many human benefits associated with green space access, such as physical, social, and psychological well-being.

To address this issue, a multidisciplinary research team comprised of a natural resources sociologist (Cassandra Johnson, USFS); geographers (Stephen Holloway and Nic Goodson, University of Georgia), and arborists (Dudley Hartel and Eric Kuehler, USFS) examined Latino involvement with urban green space in Gainesville, Georgia, a small city in the northeastern portion of the state. Gainesville had a four-fold increase

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Research: Latinos in Urban Green Space

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in the Latino population between 1990 and 2000, attributed largely to the labor demand in the area's poultry industry and the preference of local producers for Latino labor. The study focused on two Gainesville communities—Old Town with a majority Latino population (69%) and the Lake Area with a majority Anglo population (76%). Researchers compared residents' perceptions, interactions, and exposures to urban green space in the two neighborhoods. Also, an arboricultural assessment of tree health and quality in the two neighborhoods was conducted, along with a longitudinal analysis of canopy cover for the two areas at various points in time.

Results showed that residents of the Lake Area had more *passive* exposure to green space. This means that Lake Area residents were more exposed to green space since they had a greater amount of canopy coverage than Old Town residents. There was no difference found between the neighborhoods in the *active* engagement of residents in activities such as tree planting and the amount of time spent near trees. However, Old Town respondents were found to be less involved in making neighborhood tree planting decisions and hence had less interaction with district and municipal tree planting authorities. Local governments' lack of collaboration in green space enhancement projects may work to the detriment of immigrant neighborhoods, as arborists have found that tree planting and maintenance are most successful in neighborhoods where residents are actively involved with city planners for the establishment of neighborhood green spaces.

Overall tree health and quality of trees was good in both neighborhoods. In the Old Town section, an increase (6%) was found in the tree canopy between 1999 and 2006, suggesting that Latino's were involved in improving green

spaces in their neighborhoods. Rather than formal channels involving city planners and arborists, Latino neighborhoods were being revived through informal channels and through community efforts to make improvements.

For both neighborhoods, homeownership was the largest contributing factor for residents' interaction with local green spaces; homeowners were found to be more likely than renters to plant trees and spend time near trees. Because renters tend to be more transient than homeowners, they are more likely to depend on public parks for nearby nature experiences. Old Town residents were more likely than Lake area residents to be renters (84.5% and 68% respectively), and as such may have been less likely to have influence over how space around their homes were organized and managed. This

kind of information suggests that rental-home developers may want to consider green space as a useful addition to the amenities for developments.

Several environmental justice studies have suggested that low-income minority and immigrant neighborhoods tend to be located farther from green spaces than Anglo communities. Our data indicates this is not the case for Old Town Latino immigrants, as the household, arboricultural, and canopy data showed abundant vegetation in Old Town (although less than the Lake Area) and suggested informal networks may be involved in green space restoration in Old Town. Researchers concluded that, in some cases, Latinos who migrate to the South "inherit" established, urban green spaces in neighborhoods vacated by Anglos. More information is needed about Latino and renter populations in the southern United States to understand better how these populations make use of municipal green spaces and more dispersed outdoor areas on state and federal lands.

Photo credit: Felix Carretto



There are many human benefits associated with green space access.

Information Needs in Spanish for the South

InterfaceSouth recently conducted an informal assessment of needs for materials and programs in Spanish with resource professionals in state forestry agencies in seven states across the South (Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas). All of the resource professionals noted that the Spanish-speaking audience is increasing in their states. Most of the agencies noted that the majority of the Spanish-speaking audience are not landowners. This fact is important to consider when prioritizing which materials/publications should be translated. Urban natural resource issues are of top priority, such

as information about firewise, fire prevention, and burning laws. The majority of agencies expressed concerns that the inability to speak and write Spanish is an obstacle that their organization has encountered. Most states agencies do not have the capabilities for translation in-house. Agencies have used a variety of partners for translation services including, the Red Cross, Spanish radio stations, and various universities. Almost all the state agencies have translated at least a portion of their materials into Spanish, although the extent of these translations varies by state.

Partnership Highlight

Francisco Escobedo

FRANCISCO ESCOBEDO, Ph.D., is an assistant professor and state extension specialist at the University of Florida's School of Forest Resources and Conservation. His work focuses on urban forest management and the ecosystem services of urban and urbanizing areas. Prior to coming to the University of Florida, he worked for thirteen years for the USDA Forest Service (USFS) in several National Forests, and for the USFS Northern Research Station. He works closely with the Centers for Urban and Interface Forestry on a range of research and technology transfer projects.

Dr. Escobedo grew up in a small farming town immediately outside of a major U.S.-Mexico border urban area. Being raised in this bicultural, urban-desert-agriculture interface helped spark his interest in wildland-urban interface (WUI) issues and cultural differences in natural resource interaction between Latino and Anglo communities. He has explored these issues in many ways, including in his dissertation work in Santiago, Chile, in which he evaluated the effects of urban vegetation on air quality and the effectiveness of a policy that called for the use of urban vegetation to improve Santiago's air quality. He has just completed an extension project that assessed the need for extension agents to have access to Spanish language materials in the state of Florida.

Dr. Escobedo is currently working on a project that assesses urban forests in three areas of Florida—Gainesville, Pensacola, and Miami-Dade County—and studying the services they provide to communities. He is also working on a project that estimates hurricane effects on urban forest landscapes along the Gulf Coast of the U.S.

To learn more about Dr. Escobedo and his work visit: www.sfrc.ufl.edu/urbanforestry/

Training and Outreach Activities

Upcoming Changing Roles Train-the-Trainer Workshop in Lake Conroe, Texas

INTERFACESOUTH IS partnering with the Texas Forest Service to conduct a Changing Roles Train-the-Trainer workshop. The Changing Roles Professional Development Program provides state and federal natural resource agencies and other organizations with a set of flexible resources to conduct their own training programs, which are aimed toward building skills and tools to successfully tackle WUI issues. This workshop will enable participants to: (1) understand why the wildland-urban interface is an important consideration in natural resource management today; (2) use Changing Roles materials to plan and conduct a successful Changing Roles training workshop for natural resource professionals; (3) contribute to training a staff better equipped to work effectively in the WUI; and (4) understand how the formation of interagency training teams can help in the implementation of professional development programs.

The workshop will be held just north of Houston, Texas, in Lake Conroe on April 23–24, 2009, with an optional day for a field trip and attendance at the Texas Forest Expo on April 25. Registration is \$150 per person and lodging is \$110 per night. You can register online at tfsweb.tamu.edu/conferences/ChangingRoles. For more information, contact Nicole Wulff at: nmwulff@fs.fed.us, (352) 378-2451.

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)

Patricia Amoroto worked with InterfaceSouth from June through August 2008 as a technology transfer intern through the HACU-National Internship Program, a national nonprofit organization



representing Hispanic-Serving Institutions. These institutions are non-profit, accredited colleges and universities where Hispanics constitute a minimum of 25 percent of the total enrollment at either the undergraduate or graduate level. Some of the main objectives of the HACU internship program are to (1) provide professional work experience for Hispanic students; (2) expose students to and encourage their pursuit of careers in research, development, technology and administrative opportunities in the federal government and private sector; and (3) supplement academic study with practical applications for students in their field of study.

Currently, Patricia is a junior at the University of California-Davis, majoring in Community and Regional Development. She grew up in the Philippines on an island called Panay. Her intern responsibilities included supporting development and maintenance of the InterfaceSouth Web site content, assistance with the development of project publications and electronic updates, and helping with communications with the public.

Recommended Resource

InterfaceSouth en Español

The Spanish version of the InterfaceSouth Web site was recently completed, with all of the major sections of the Web site translated. We are currently in the process of having many of the fact sheets and other resources translated into Spanish as well, including the Fire in the Interface fact sheet series. Visit InterfaceSouth en Español at:

www.interfacesouth.org/espanol.

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Upcoming Events

Date	Description	Location	Contact
April 23, 2009	Building with Trees	Conroe, TX	For more information: tfsweb.tamu.edu/uploadedFiles/FRD/Urban_Forestry/BWT_23April2009.pdf . To register: tfsregister.tamu.edu
April 23-24, 2009, optional day April 25	Changing Roles Train-the-Trainer Workshop	Lake Conroe, TX	tfsweb.tamu.edu/conferences/ChangingRoles or Nicole Wulff, nmwulff@fs.fed.us , (352) 378-2145
April 25, 2009	Texas Expo	Conroe, TX	tfsweb.tamu.edu/conferences/texasforestexpo/
April 28-30, 2009	International Biomass Conference & Expo	Portland, OR	www.biomassconference.com/ema/DisplayPage.aspx?

In the Next Issue

In our next issue we will focus on the Changing Roles: Wildland-Urban Interface Professional Development Program.

