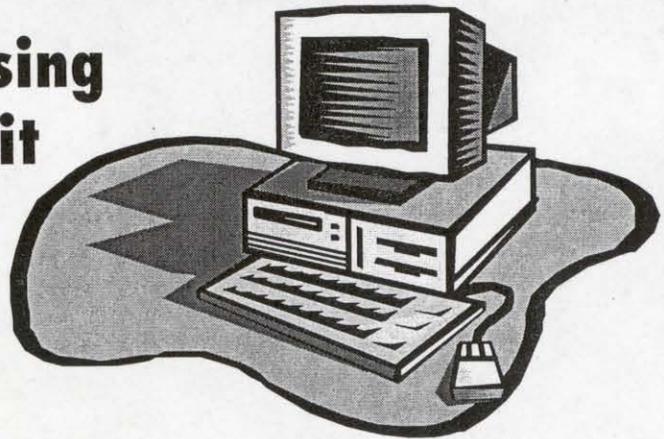


Tree Inventories

Collecting and Using Information to Fit Your Needs

by
 Don Kissinger
 DNR North Central District
 and
 Cindy Casey
 DNR Western District



This is the second in a two part series on community tree inventories. Part one introduced the concept of inventories and described different types. This article discusses how to collect, use and maintain inventory data.

The goal of any community tree inventory is to provide information essential for management in a timely fashion, at reasonable cost. Determining which information is essential for management depends on how the inventory will be used; therefore, the first step in any inventory is to identify its objectives. If objectives can be satisfied with estimates, it is unnecessary to survey every tree in detail. It is a waste of time and money to collect data you don't need. On the other hand, if your inventory objectives include establishing an accurate basis for ongoing work planning and record keeping, you will need to collect detailed information tree-by-tree.

Once you've determined your objectives, develop a field data sheet or customize an existing one to reflect your information needs. Most information can be recorded with codes to save space and speed the data gathering process (see figure 1). If using a computerized inventory system, design the data sheet to record

information in the same order that it will be entered into the computer. This will ease data entry and minimize errors. All field data sheets should include a place to record the date and the name of the data collector.

The following types of data are those most commonly collected in a community tree inventory:

1. **Location** - In a complete inventory, individual tree location is recorded by street name and address. Codes can be used to indicate vacant planting spaces, trees closest to intersections, corner trees, trees on median strips or adjacent to empty lots, or additional trees at a given address. Park trees can be recorded by distance and direction from a reference point, or by tag identification number or grid coordinates. In a windshield or sample inventory, location can be indicated in a general sense by street name, block, ward or management area.
2. **Land Use** - Typically categorized as residential, commercial or industrial, land use information helps prioritize tree planting, maintenance and removal needs. For example, tree maintenance and removal in residential areas would be given higher priority than in industrial areas because of public safety concerns.

Upcoming Events

November 12-15, 1996 - *Wisconsin Park and Recreation Association 31st Annual Conference & Trade Show* - Grand Geneva Resort & Spa, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. Contact WPRA, 414-423-1210.

January 26-28, 1997 - *Wisconsin DNR Urban Forestry Conference, Wisconsin Arborist Association Annual Conference & Trade Show and the Wisconsin Nursery Association Winter Workshop*, Hilton Hotel & Convention Center, Oshkosh, WI. Contact: Dave Scharfenberger, 414-251-6900.

