

Marketing and Communications: Tools for Repositioning Urban and Community Forestry



Paul D. Ries

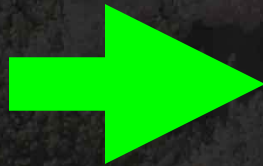
Oregon Department of Forestry



What Do People Think About Urban Forestry?

Where we are


- Trees are a discretionary budget item that is nice to have
- Trees make our city pretty



Where we need to be

- Trees make a central contribution to what makes our city livable - a necessity
- Trees help solve community problems and are a vehicle to address community goals

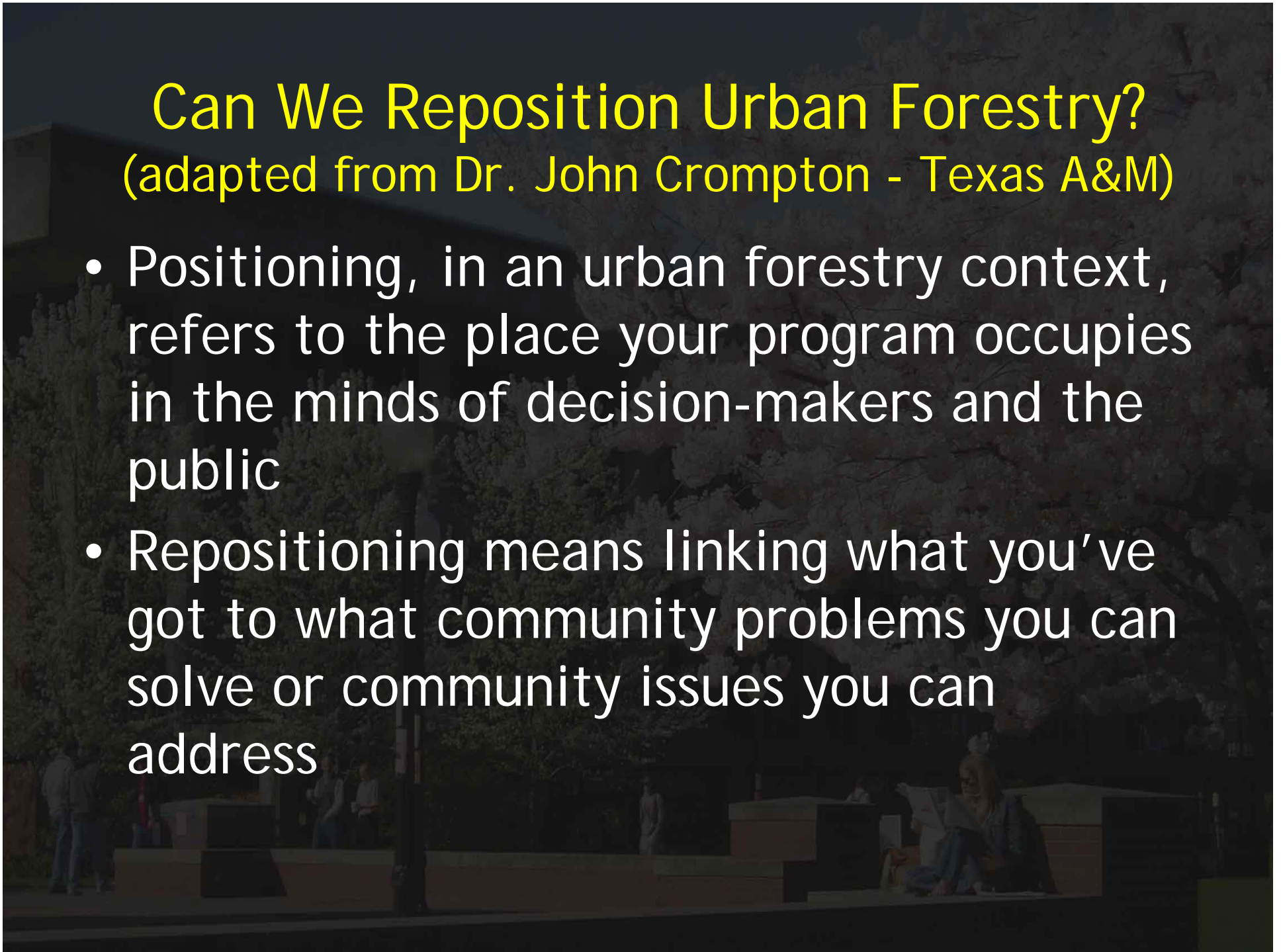
Positions of Existing City Services

- 
- Police/Public Safety
 - Fire Protection
 - Water/Sewer
 - Economic Development
 - Transportation/Traffic Safety
 - Planning/Growth Management
 - Education/Youth
 - Public Health
 - Parks/Trees
 - Libraries
 - Arts

Can We Reposition Urban Forestry?

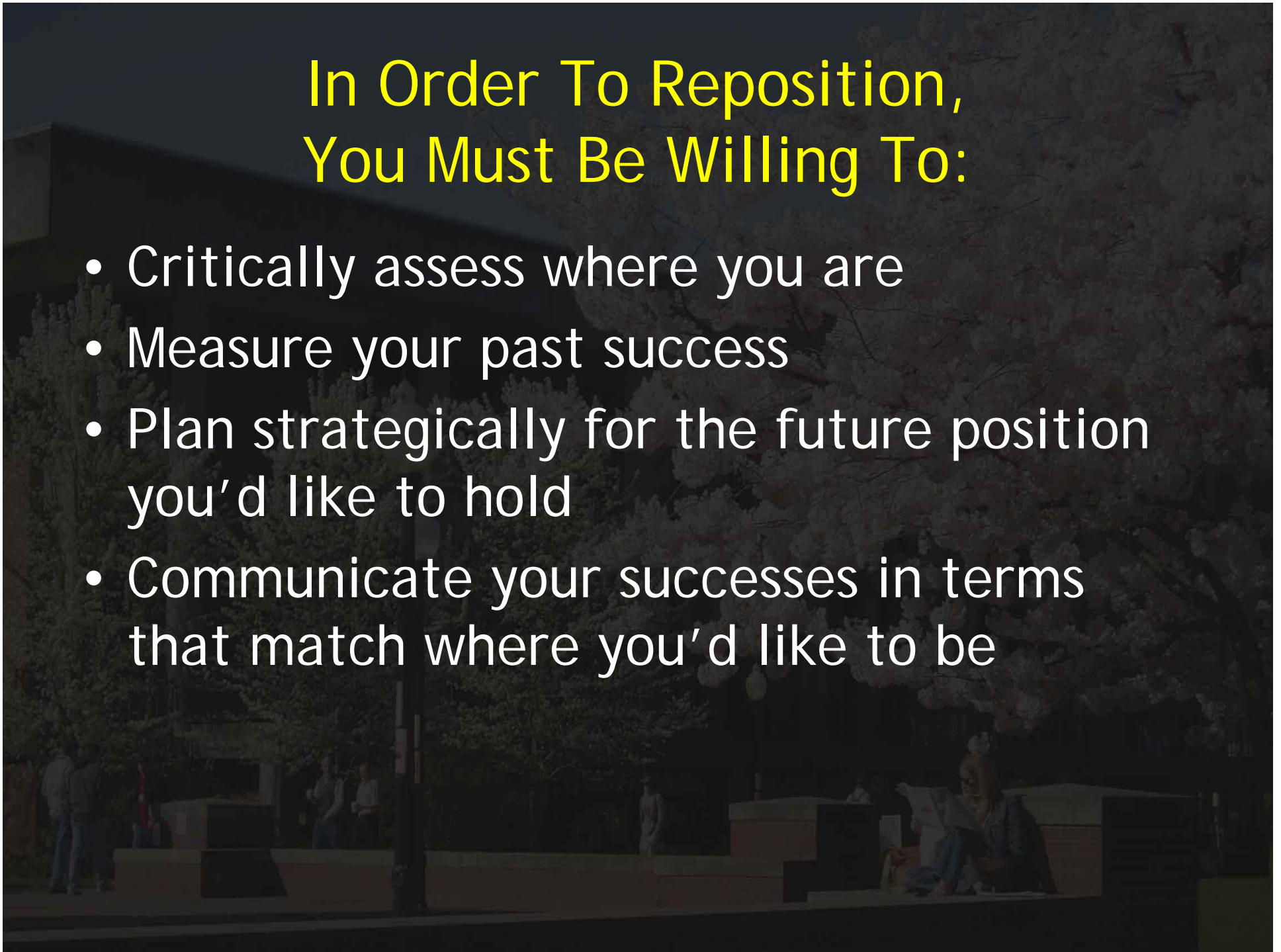
(adapted from Dr. John Crompton - Texas A&M)

- Positioning, in an urban forestry context, refers to the place your program occupies in the minds of decision-makers and the public
- Repositioning means linking what you've got to what community problems you can solve or community issues you can address



In Order To Reposition, You Must Be Willing To:

- Critically assess where you are
- Measure your past success
- Plan strategically for the future position you'd like to hold
- Communicate your successes in terms that match where you'd like to be

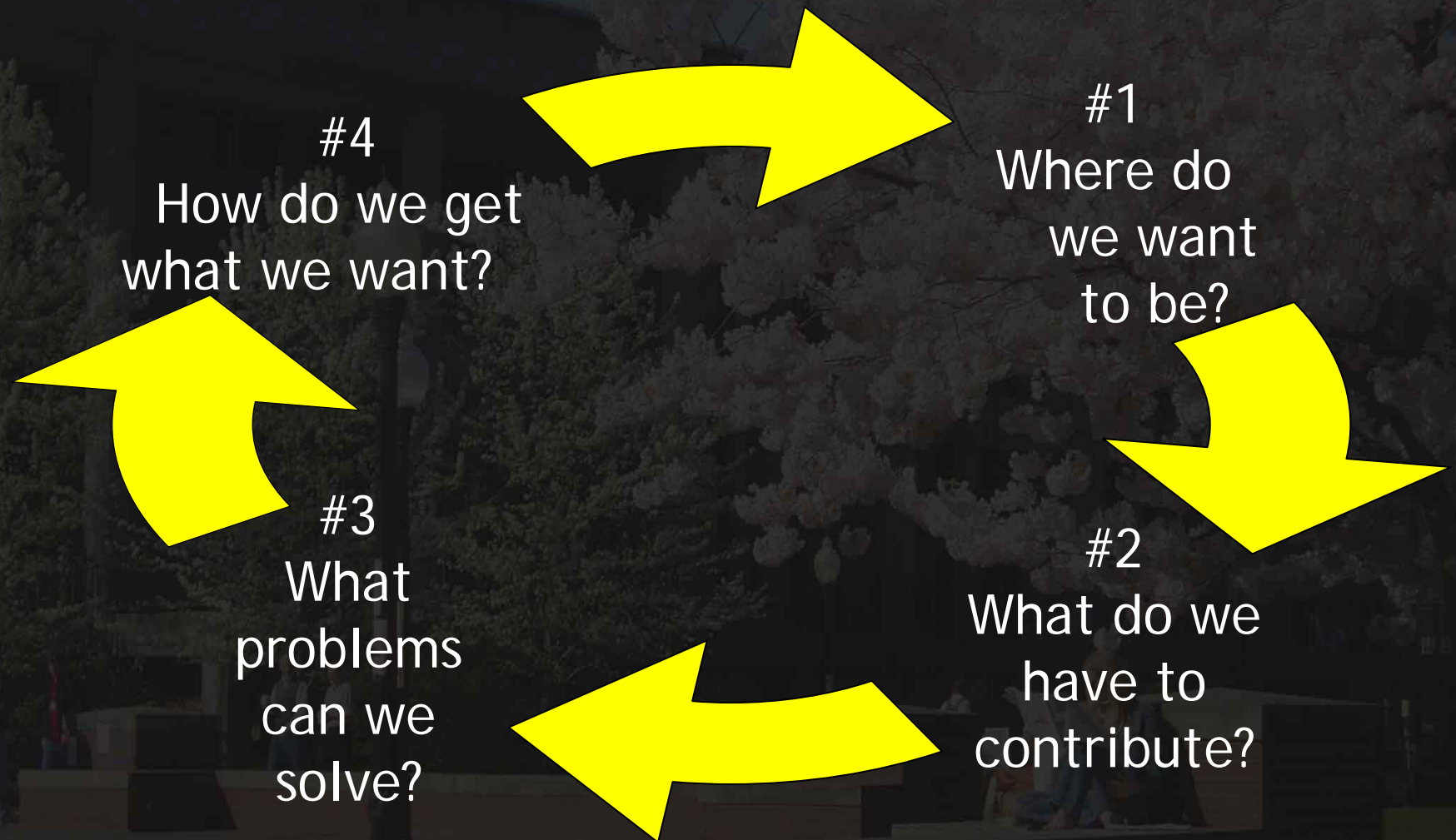


Aligning With Community Issues and Problems You Can Help Solve

- Resonate with the political issues and priorities
- Be allied with other community benefits
- Think outside the bark



The Repositioning Planning Process



The Repositioning Planning Process

- Where do we want to be?
 - An essential city service
 - A necessity, not a nicety
 - A solution to community problems
 - A key to what makes our city livable



The Repositioning Planning Process

- What do we have to contribute?
 - A clean air factory
 - A stormwater control mechanism
 - An economic engine



The Repositioning Planning Process

- What problems can we solve?
 - Crime
 - Economic decline
 - Environmental degradation



The Repositioning Planning Process

- How do we get what we want?
 - Realign our planning components
 - Make connections to issues and people
 - Think strategically
 - Communicate effectively



Communicating The Need For Trees

- Most people take trees for granted, or don't know much about urban forestry
- The trees in our cities are important, and they must be cared for...communications and public relations are how we get that message across



Communicating the Need For Trees

- People today want proof
 - we need to provide factual evidence of the benefits and costs
- Demonstrate financial as well as quality of life consequences
- We need to connect with them if we're going to communicate with them

A photograph of a large, mature tree with dense green foliage in a suburban setting. The tree is positioned in front of a white house with a red roof. A person is walking on a path near the tree. The text 'For every dollar invested in urban forestry, \$2.70 is returned' is overlaid on the right side of the image in yellow.

For every dollar
invested in
urban
forestry,
\$2.70 is
returned

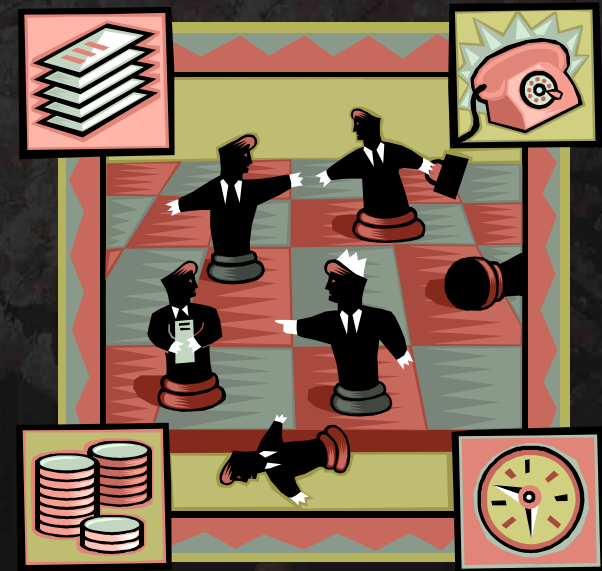
Why We Communicate:

- To transfer information
- To transfer knowledge
- To convince the listener
- To educate the listener
- To gain acceptance
- To gain support
- To change minds
- To make decisions
- To create, maintain, and transform relationships



Strategic Communications

- We can learn from the art of communication to advance urban forestry
- If we are going to communicate to change minds, to convince the listener, or to gain support, then that communication must be **STRATEGIC**



A Marketing Strategy for Urban & Community Forestry in the West

Developed by:
The Western
Forestry Leadership
Coalition's
*Western Urban and
Community Forestry
Committee*





**WESTERN
FORESTRY
LEADERSHIP
COALITION**

www.WFLCweb.org

Western Forestry Leadership Coalition

23 Western State & Pacific Island Foresters (Council
of Western State Foresters - 1967)

+ 7 USDA-FS western Regional Foresters

+ 3 USDA-FS western Research Station Directors

+ 1 Forest Products Lab Director =

34 WFLC Members

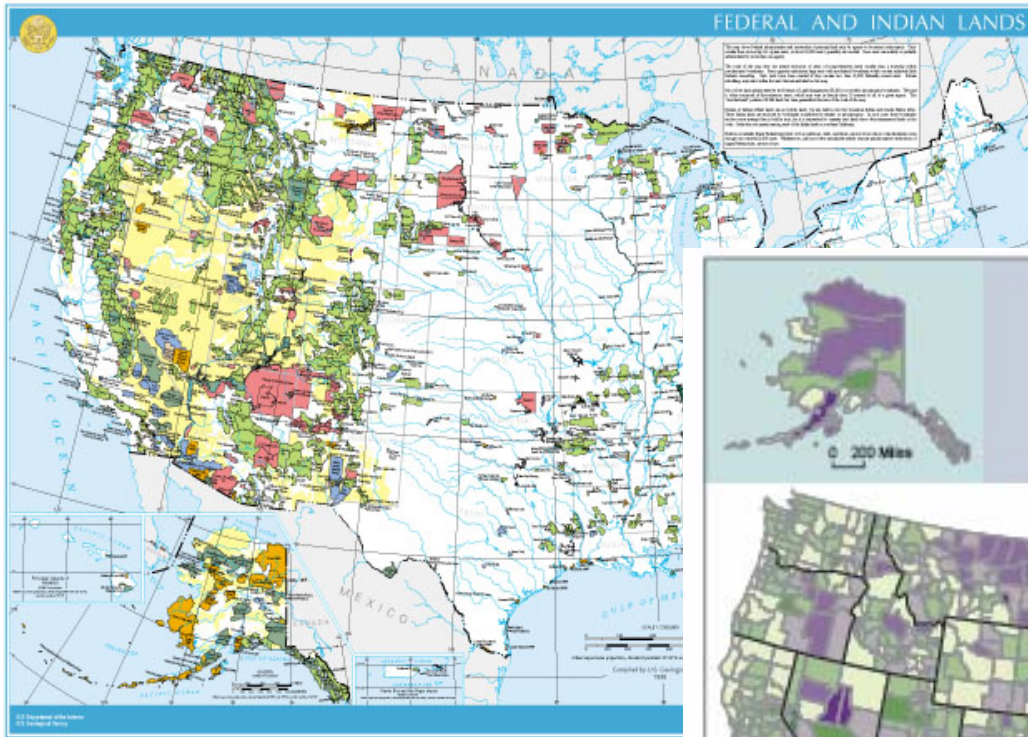
We needed One Western Voice to be Heard

We wanted to:

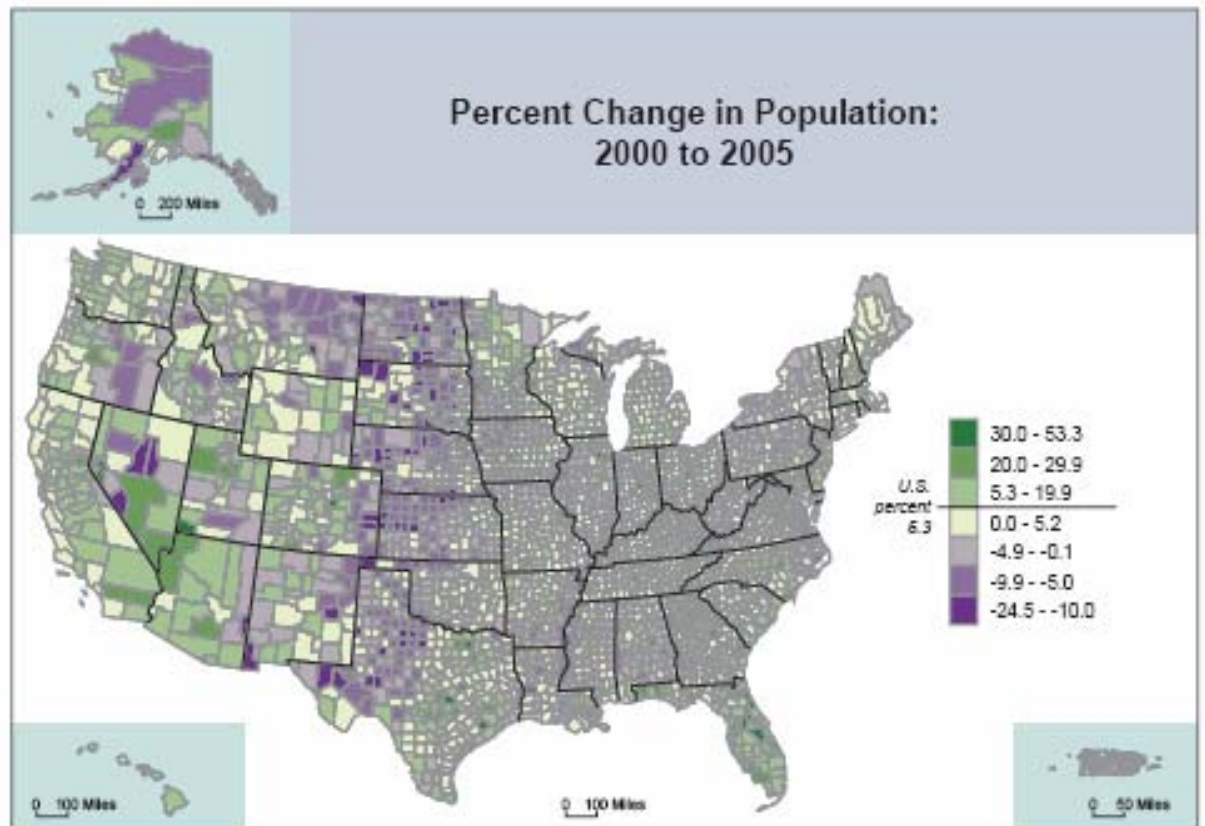
- 🏠 Launch **western** initiatives
- 🏠 Communicate the unique **western** challenges and issues
- 🏠 Maximize **western** federal and state financial investments
- 🏠 Tackle emerging **western** issues by providing research, recommending policies, and coordinating efforts across land ownerships

Big Issues in the West

- Endangered Species
- Urban/Wildland Interface



- Population growth
- Development
- Invasive Species



Source: U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates Program

Western Urban and Community Forestry Committee

- The mission of the WUCFC is to promote healthy and sustainable urban and community forest ecosystems in the west.
- We provide advice and recommendations, thereby helping to focus a western approach and a unified voice to urban and community forestry.
- We serve the Council of Western State Foresters as a component of the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition (WFLC). As such, the WUCFC works collaboratively as a state-federal partnership to promote the mission of the WFLC.

A Marketing Strategy for Urban & Community Forestry in the West

- Developed to communicate and promote the benefits of Urban and Community Forestry in the 17 western states and Pacific Islands.
- Desire to position Urban and Community Forestry in the West so that it more clearly resonates with federal, state, and local decision makers who control resources and can influence support for U&CF efforts.

Goals of the Strategy

1. Increase the awareness of and support for urban forestry among policy-makers in the West
2. Foster a greater understanding of the importance of urban forests in meeting the economic, environmental, and social needs of communities
3. Engage a diverse set of partners and motivate them to support sustainable urban forestry programs

Key Messages of the Strategy

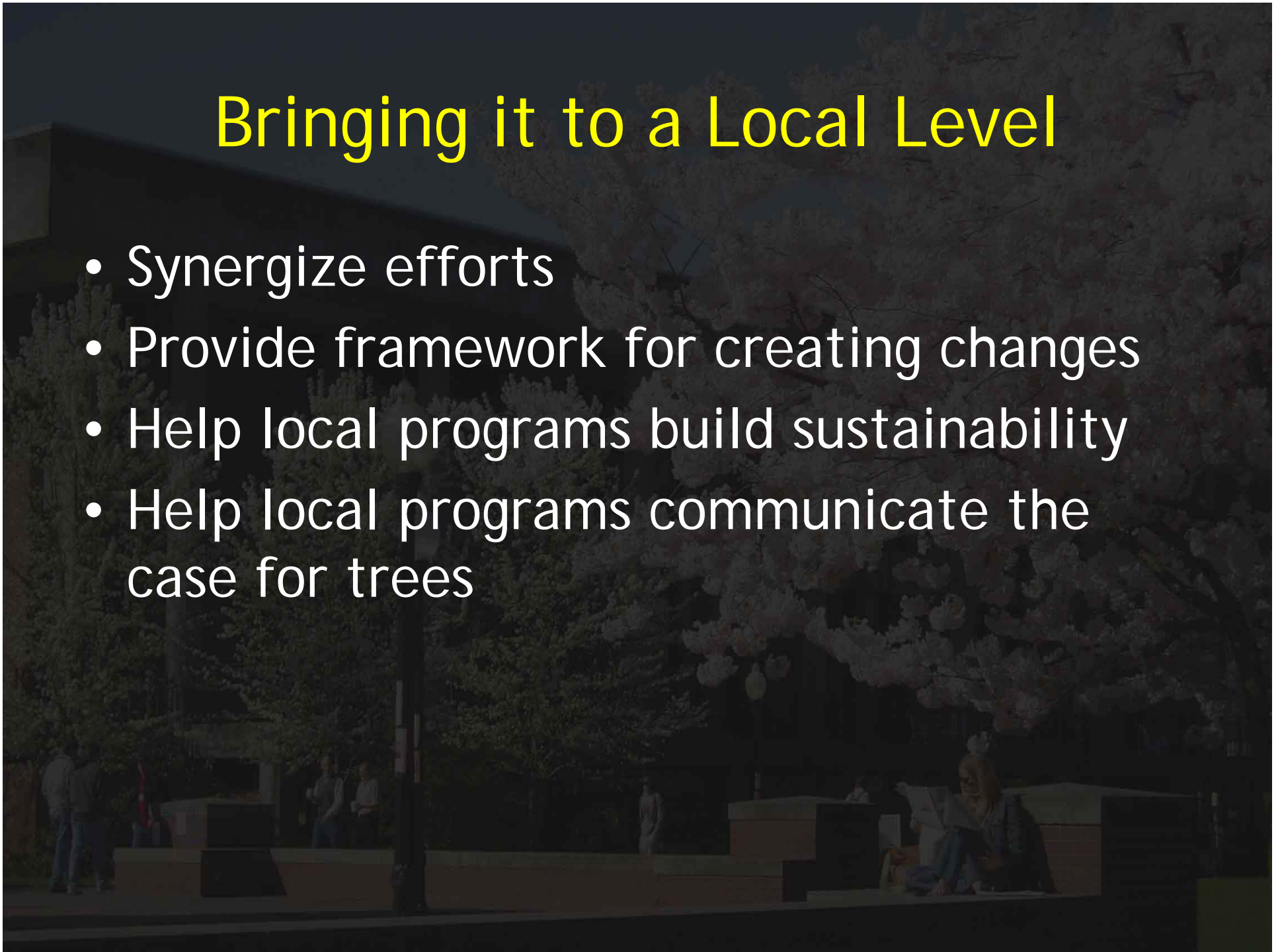
1. Urban forests provide essential benefits we cannot live without (benefits)
2. A healthy urban forest doesn't happen by chance - it is the result of proper planning, management, and community investment (investments)
3. Healthy urban forests can help solve many community problems (solutions)
4. Urban forest and rural forests are connected; good management of one helps the other (connections)

How the Strategy Will Be Used

- Align state and west-wide efforts to provide for common messages and themes within state priorities
- Guide the Committee's work for the next 5 years
- Help states initiate or improve their won communication and marketing efforts

Bringing it to a Local Level

- Synergize efforts
- Provide framework for creating changes
- Help local programs build sustainability
- Help local programs communicate the case for trees



Strategies For Communicating Trees

1. Define your **desired outcome**
2. Identify your **target audience**
3. Select/Refine your **key message**
4. Select your **tools and methods**
5. Recruit **collaborators**



Strategy 1: Define The Desired Outcome Of Your Communication

- Start with the end in mind
- Scenarios and futures
- Identify the limitations or problems in advance
- Anticipate the unexpected



Strategy 2: Identify Your Target Audience

- Whose problem can you solve through trees?
- What individuals or groups can be influenced for your cause?
- Which of these individuals or groups will give you the greatest return on your investment of time?

Strategy 3: Select/Refine Your Key Message

- What main point are you trying to get across?
- How much detail is needed?
- Four aspects of a Key Message
 - Who says it
 - What they say
 - How they say it
 - What image it conveys



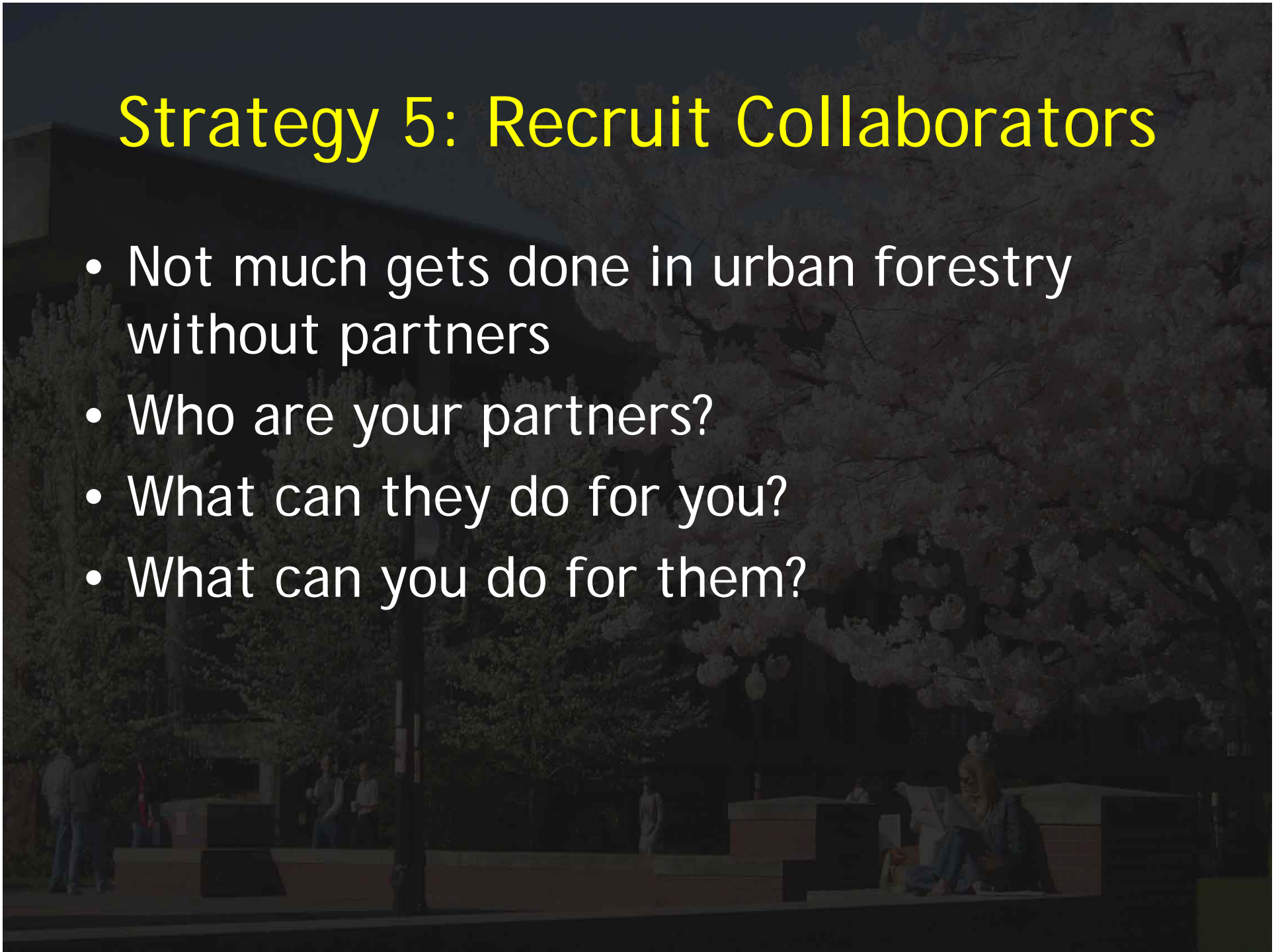
Strategy 4: Select The Right Tools & Methods

- Know what you are trying to achieve via media or public outreach
- Target the communication in the proper format
- Ask what the recipient needs and provide details



Strategy 5: Recruit Collaborators

- Not much gets done in urban forestry without partners
- Who are your partners?
- What can they do for you?
- What can you do for them?



Communicating Trees

- Urban forestry involves people - we must communicate, not to them, but with them
- Think of urban forestry as the process of managing the relationship between people and trees



What Results From A Failure To Communicate...



Don't let this be you...or your urban forestry program...

