

Climate Change Adaptation Community of Practice Forests, Urban Trees, and Climate Change – October 26, 2016

Concluding thoughts, summaries, takeaways

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1. Importance of water – “You control your water, you control your environment!”
2. Principle of adapting trees to a shifting climate – “Don’t try to take a punch straight to the face. Step out of the way!”
3. We can look to southern zones and species to get a flavor of what kinds of tree species may flourish here in a hundred years – “Take a vacation to Hilton Head”
4. Trees and their interactions with a changing climate are not entirely linear or predictable. As climate shifts, a pest that’s not here today might be here tomorrow or vice versa. Arborists have to be nimble and flexible and cultivate resilience through diversity.
5. Forest/tree management is already a long-term process since the trees we plant today will not be fully mature for another 30 or 50 years. Foresters and arborist are therefore in the unique position of having the ability and the opportunity to plan for the impacts of climate change. Tree managers can assist nature’s efforts to adapt to changes in temperature and precipitation by becoming more knowledgeable about tree species that may not yet be common to a given area.
6. Climate change is just one challenge – and not always the most pressing – in urban tree management – “Sometimes trees die because people cut the down.” Hostility toward urban trees, a lack of understanding of their value, misplaced fears of liability, budgets that don’t emphasize replacing/increasing urban tree canopy and street trees, and both micro- and macro-scale deforestation are all issues that local governments, advocates, public works personnel, tree professionals and citizens must continually work to address.
7. Tree/forest protection and health are key goals of DVRPC’s long-range plan, *Connections*. Please engage DVRPC as we work to update *Connections* in the coming year.
8. DVRPC has numerous initiatives to engage with governments, scientists, and non-profits to understand and adapt to the impacts of climate change across multiple sectors: including infrastructure, the natural environment and community health. DVRPC has or is currently working on climate change adaptation projects, plans and initiatives with NJDOT, PennDOT, SEPTA, NJDEP, PADEP, FEMA, the University of Pennsylvania, the Sustainable Jersey Climate Change Adaptation Task Force, the City of Chester, New Jersey municipalities, and many others. DVRPC desires to share what we’ve learned and broaden the discussion by hosting several more Climate Change Resiliency Community of Practice workshops in the coming year and beyond. The next workshop will be held on February 7th at DVRPC and will focus on the intersection between climate change and public health.