



# SAF Specialized Accreditation for Urban Forestry Programs

## A CASE STUDY AT VIRGINIA TECH

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8<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference on Univ. Educ. in Natural Resources  
March 27, 2010



# Presentation overview

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- Relevance of urban forestry education
- SAF specialized accreditation of VA Tech urban forestry
- Value of accreditation to student recruitment and professional development
- Impact of accreditation on the urban forestry discipline
- Influence of accreditation on urban forestry practices





# Relevance of urban forestry education

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According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the resident population of the United States, projected to 03/26/10 at 21:41 UTC (EST+5) is

**308,944,242**

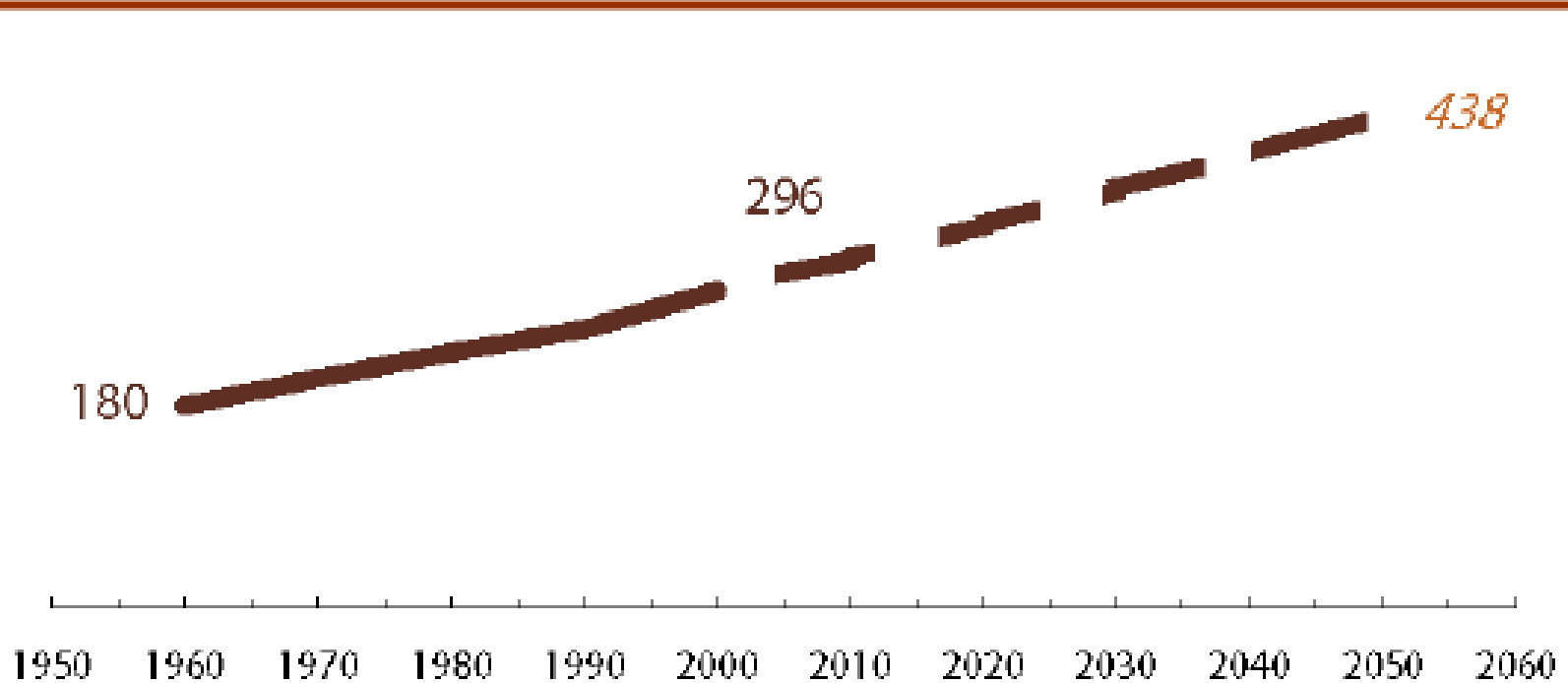
#### COMPONENT SETTINGS FOR MARCH 2010

One birth every.....	7 seconds
One death every.....	11 seconds
One international migrant (net) every.....	37 seconds
Net gain of one person every.....	13 seconds



# Relevance of urban forestry education

**Figure 1**  
U.S. Population, Actual and Projected: 1960-2050  
*(in millions)*

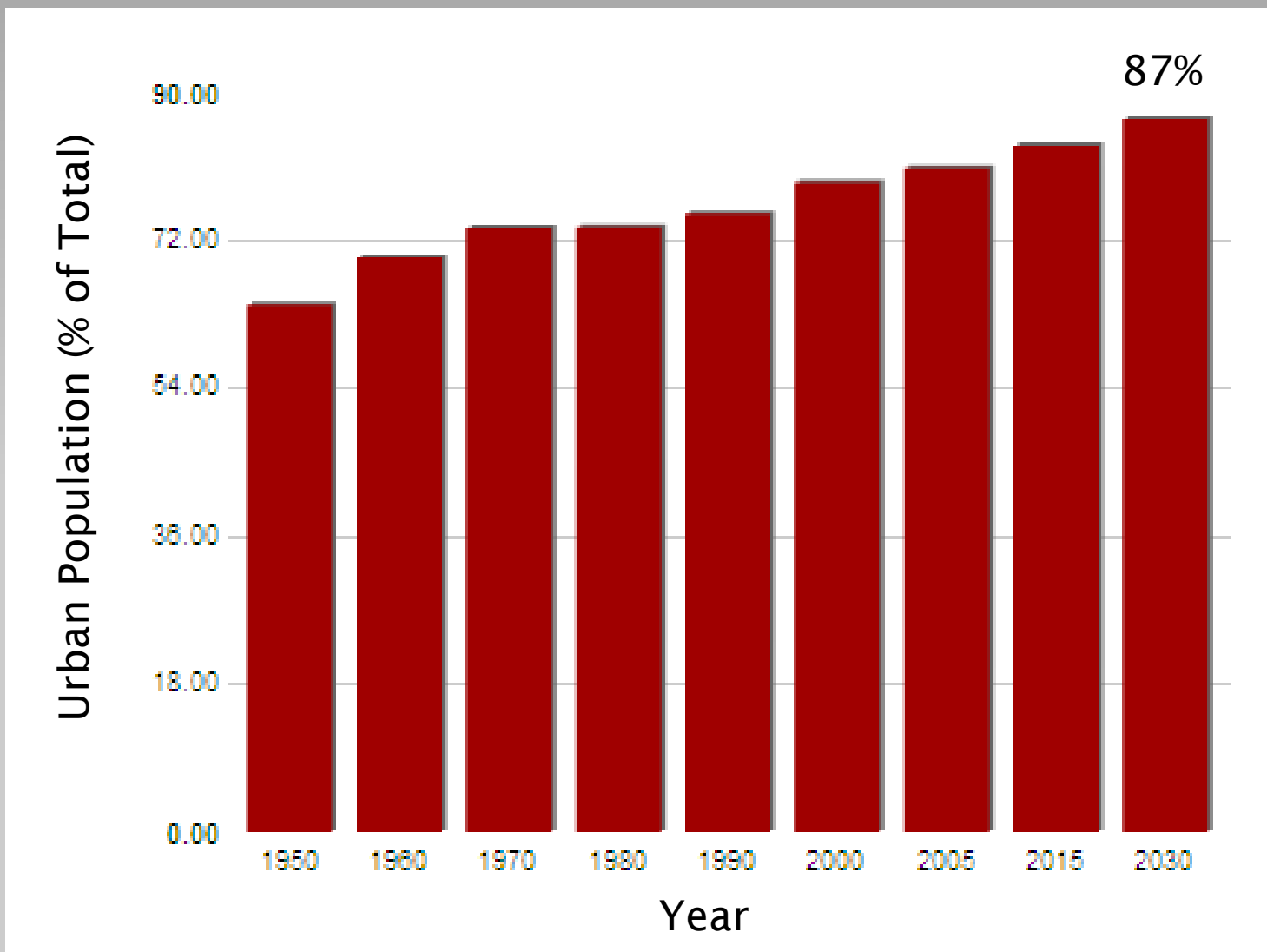


Note: Projections for 2005–2050 indicated by broken line.

Source: Pew Research Center, 2008



# Relevance of urban forestry education

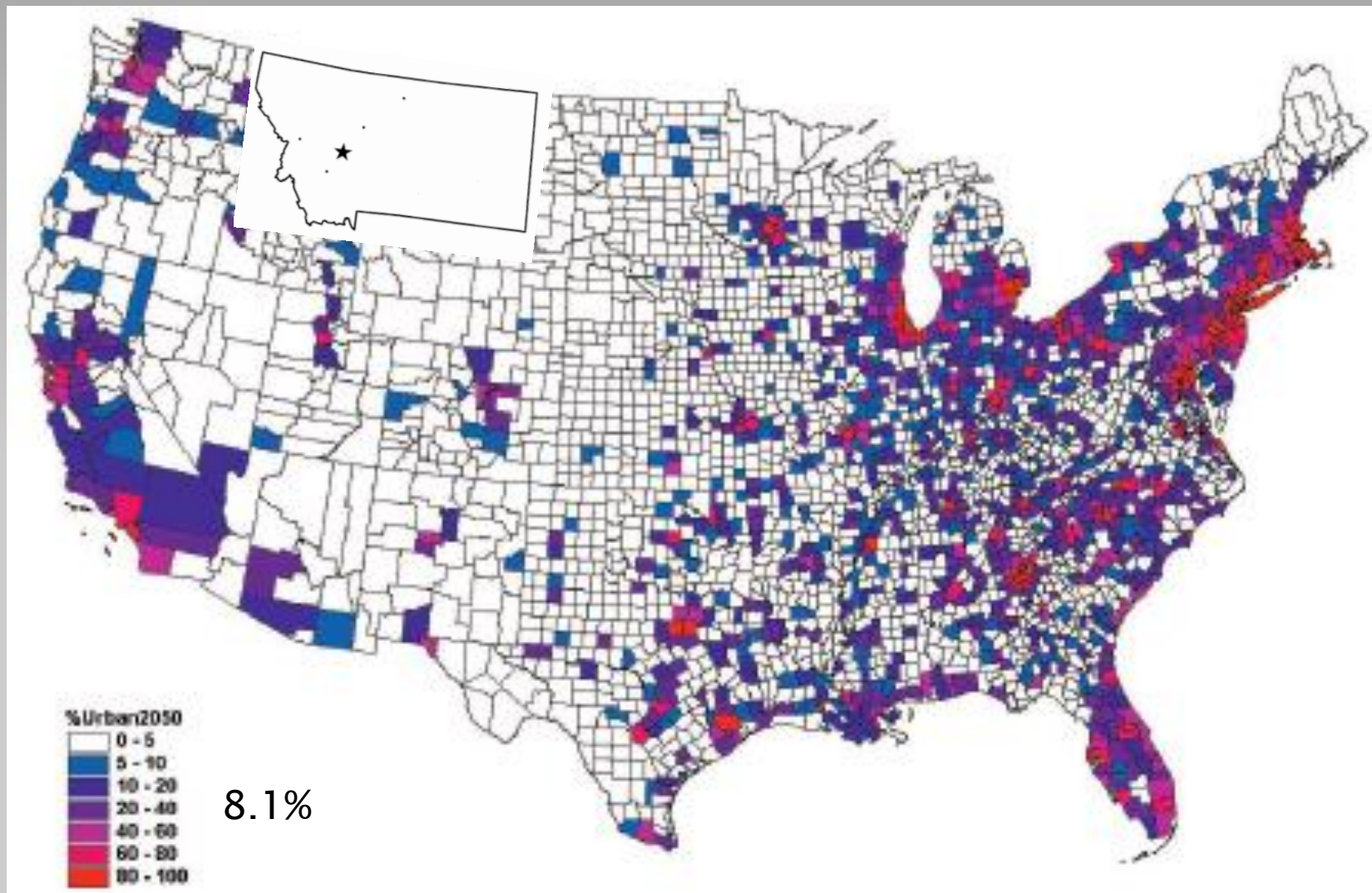


Source: Globalis - UNEP (2005)

<http://globalis.gvu.unu.edu>



# Relevance of urban forestry education



Source: Nowak, D.J. and J.T. Walton. 2005. *J. of Forestry* 103: 383-389.



# VTUF & SAF accreditation

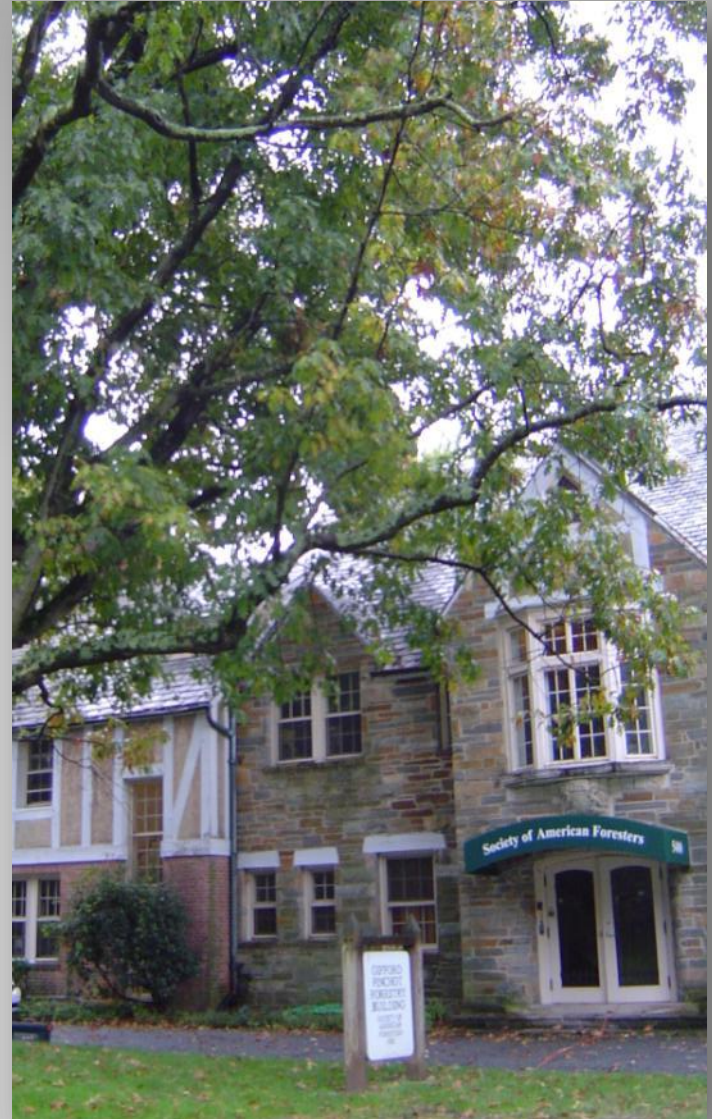
- **1976** – developed urban forestry special study course
- **1979** – urban forestry course established
- **1999** – Urban Forestry option added to Forestry Major
- **2002** – Department hires its first full-time urban forestry faculty member
- **2004** – Second urban forestry course added to the curriculum





# VTUF & SAF accreditation

- **2005** – Educational Policy Review Committee charged by SAF Council to develop standards
- **2006** – Committee presented accreditation recommendations to SAF Council
- **2007** – SAF Council approved standards and incorporated them into the SAF Accreditation Handbook





# VTUF & SAF accreditation

1. Recognized as SAF accreditation candidate
2. Organize operations and modify curriculum to meet standards (5 yrs max.)
3. Submit formal application letter
4. Commence accreditation review
  - Comprehensive, written self-assessment
  - On-site, external review

## ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK

Standards, Procedures, and Guidelines for  
Accrediting Educational Programs in Professional Forestry

NOTE: This Handbook will be in effect for all accreditation-related activities occurring ON OR AFTER JANUARY 1, 2010.





# Accreditation: where does it take us?

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- Undergraduates
- Graduate students
- Disciplinary development
- Professional practice





# Undergraduates - Accreditation?

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- Urban forestry accreditation recognizes unique challenges
- Who are urban forestry students?
- Where are they going?





# Graduate Students - Accreditation?

- Defines opportunities
- Tags programs
- Generational community
- Defining the discipline





# Accreditation and the UF discipline

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- The urban environment—what's so special about it?
- Research and practice
- Professional societies
- Where is urban forestry headed?





# Influence on professional practice

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- Are we all urban foresters?
- How will accreditation relate to job qualifications?
- How should it relate to job qualifications?
- Integration vs. specialization

