

Economic research supports urban foresters' tree cover recommendations

Oct. 3, 2016 – Urban forestry experts have long suggested that tree canopy cover in residential and urban areas is essential to maintaining a healthy ecosystem in those communities, but a new study suggests that tree cover may also contribute to increased property values.

The study, published in the August issue of [Ecological Economics](#)^[1], is a collaborative project between the Virginia Tech [Program in Real Estate](#)^[2], the university's [Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation](#)^[3], and the U.S. Forest Service.

Changes in tree cover owing to climate change and urbanization impact both people and the environment. With many communities dealing with tree cover losses, scientists are working to help the public understand the value of trees to their local ecosystems. This study was born out of a desire to understand how tree cover affects residential property values in the hopes of finding an economic incentive for homeowners and communities to conserve trees.

[Kevin Boyle](#)^[4], director of Virginia Tech's Program in Real Estate and professor of agricultural and applied economics in the [College of Agriculture and Life Sciences](#)^[5], initially partnered with Thomas Holmes, a forest economist with the U.S. Forest Service, to study the economic effects of forest pests on urban trees. The Forest Service hoped to use the data to support agency decision making and to advise communities on the economic benefits of healthy urban forests.

As they gathered their data, Boyle and Holmes began to wonder if there is a systematic relationship between homeowners and community residents and the values they place on the tree cover around them. To find out, they enlisted the help of two Virginia Tech urban forestry experts. ([continue reading.....](#)^[6])

Links

- [1]. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2016.04.016>
- [2]. <http://www.realestate.vt.edu>
- [3]. <http://frec.vt.edu>
- [4]. <https://www.aaec.vt.edu/people/faculty/boyle-kevin.html>
- [5]. <http://cals.vt.edu/index.html>
- [6]. <https://vtnews.vt.edu/articles/2016/09/cnre-treecoverresearch.html>