

The Faces of Urban Forestry



Fran Clasby
Hospital Physiologist



Trees Soak Up Flood Waters

The 3,000 residents on a small peninsula in South Carolina face a problem. Their mile-square neighborhood was built over what was once marsh land – and it has settled during the years. The low-lying nature of the land creates a soggy situation after heavy rains, even backing up in the storm sewers.

When Fran Clasby became chair of the neighborhood association's environmental committee, he had the idea of letting trees help with the problem. Now the association holds oyster roasts and raises about \$5,000 each year to purchase trees. The trees are 4-inch caliper live oaks and are being planted in the public rights-of-way at a rate of about 50 a year. The association works in partnership with the City of Charleston, each paying half the cost of each tree. Live oaks can be expected to live as much as 300 years.

The trees help absorb some of the water during rain storms," says Fran. In addition, they capture rain in the canopy and slow the runoff. With this project, Charleston joins many communities that are counting on their public trees to protect private property during storms.

“The trees in my neighborhood keep us from flooding during heavy rains. Other neighborhoods aren't so lucky.”

– Fran Clasby



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A joint project of U.S. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry, the National Association of State Foresters, and the Arbor Day Foundation. For more information visit arborday.org/faces