



**TREE CITY USA®  
BULLETIN**

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# How Communities Recover From Disasters

No one likes to think about natural disasters, but they are a fact of life. When one strikes a community, trees are invariably involved and sometimes on the losing end of the event. This bulletin is dedicated to showcasing how some communities have responded to their loss of trees and how planning ahead can reduce such losses. Using the framework of the Tree City USA program, sound urban forestry management has proven essential to loss prevention and recovery.



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*Natural disasters take their toll on people in many ways. Restoration of damaged or destroyed trees not only provides environmental benefits, it helps lift the spirits of residents who have lost possessions and, in many cases, familiar surroundings.*

**N**atural disasters come in many forms and affect the lives of residents at many levels. In this bulletin we limit our considerations to the role of trees and urban forestry. This is not meant to diminish the impact from the loss of lives, homes, businesses or the other effects of a disaster, but rather to focus our efforts on what we know and do best. In times of disaster, there is a role for everyone.

The scientific consensus is that climate change is occurring and that in many cases it is making natural disasters worse. Any planning to mitigate disasters should also include planning to reduce human-caused acceleration or magnification of climate change. According to a survey by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, nearly three-quarters of U.S. cities see environmental shifts that can be

linked to climate change. More than 1,000 city leaders have signed the U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement to strive to meet or exceed Kyoto Protocol targets in their communities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A healthy canopy of trees play an important role in this effort. In fact, trees need to be considered part of every city's infrastructure and a focus of recovery efforts after any disaster. Sound urban forestry management through the framework of the Tree City USA program has been proven to be essential time and again.

For preventative measures or recovery efforts, planning for trees is essential. In the pages that follow are examples of how some communities are doing this.

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