



# URBAN CONNECTIONS PROGRAM

CONNECTING CITIZENS TO THE LAND  
*"A path to the future"*

**WHAT IS URBAN CONNECTIONS?** Urban Connections (UC) is an urban outreach approach of the Forest Service (FS), Eastern Region based on the energy, commitment, and proven programs of urban community activists. It aims to draw together all three branches of the FS (State & Private Forestry; Research; and the National Forest System) to work with urban leaders and other agencies to gain a foothold in the cities, in order to connect citizens to the land.

**History:** In late 2000, the three branches of the FS in the East committed to jointly reach out to urban audiences. The result has been a unique and newly formed "urban arm" of the Eastern Region, the UC program, which addresses the information needs and values of urban citizens. UC aims to increase the involvement of underrepresented urban groups in Forest Service activities, and bridge gaps between rural communities and city dwellers through partnerships with national forests, other federal agencies, and state and local organizations.

**WHAT IS THE FOREST SERVICE?** Established in 1905, the Forest Service (FS) is an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The FS manages public lands in national forests and grasslands for multiple uses and benefits for the sustained yield of renewable resources, such as water, forage, wildlife, wood, and recreation. Multiple use means managing resources under the best combination of uses to benefit the American people while ensuring the productivity of the land and protecting the quality of the environment. First Chief of the FS Gifford Pinchot summed up the mission of the FS — "to provide the greatest amount of good for the greatest amount of people in the long run." The FS motto, "Caring for the land and Serving People," captures the spirit of our mission. People enjoy a wide variety of activities on national forests, such as backpacking in remote wilderness areas, mastering an all-terrain vehicle over a challenging trail, enjoying the views along a scenic byway, or fishing in a great trout stream.

**WHY THE EASTERN REGION?** From Minnesota to Maine, and Missouri to West Virginia, the 20 state area of the Eastern Region contains nine of the top twenty metropolitan areas of the country, four times more than any other FS region. The map below shows key urban outreach cities in R9:



## USDA Forest Service—Eastern Region



### CURRENT OUTREACH AREAS & CITY COORDINATORS

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### SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS

In the years since the creation of the Urban Connections program, a number of key partnerships have been developed in our outreach cities, allowing us to engage the public and underserved communities in Forest Service activities.

Some of these partnerships include:

- Greenfield Village—Detroit
- Wildlife Forever—Minnesota
- Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful
- Fishin' Buddies—Chicago
- Greening of Detroit
- Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation
- Zoo New England
- Betty Brinn's Children Museum—Milwaukee
- Neighborhood House - Milwaukee

### OTHER RESOURCES—KIDS & EDUCATORS

Our Current UC internet site provides valuable information on the program and upcoming events to the public. Following is a link to the site: [www.fs.fed.us/r9/urban\\_connections/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/urban_connections/). We recently added a Kids Only section to the UC site with activities and links to other Forest Service sites for kids and educators; following are a few of those:

[www.fs.fed.us/kids](http://www.fs.fed.us/kids)  
[www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/ce/content/for\\_kids](http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/ce/content/for_kids)

### QUESTIONS?

If you would like to learn more about the Urban Connections program and/or the Forest Service, please contact one of the representatives listed above. We would be so excited to have you get involved by joining us in a UC activity in your city or by helping us share conservation messages with today's youth!