FORESTS

CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION

- Forests absorb 1/3 of the carbon dioxide released from burning oil, gas and coal.

- Forest restoration, such as planting seedlings in gaps or along edges, can increase a forests ability to combat climate change.

- Emissions from deforestation are over 18% of global carbon emissions (greater than the transportation sector).

- Good green design and management of forests delivers biodiversity benefits, health benefits and improves air and water quality.

ECONOMIC

- Trees and green spaces in residential areas increase property values.

- The forest industry employs approximately 14% of Canadians living in the boreal region.

- Important medications (such as Aspirin and breast-cancer drugs) are originally derived from trees or other plants.

SOCIAL

- Communities with trees and green spaces experience less violence and crime.

- Children with access to natural play areas have improved emotional well-being (less bullying, more social interaction and imaginative play).

- Views of trees and greenery from low income housing reduce domestic violence rates.

URBAN TREES

Urban trees play a key role in maintaining air and water quality in cities by absorbing pollutants.

They provide shade, deflect wind and reduce the energy requirements to heat and cool buildings (one tree can have the same cooling effect as 10 air conditioners).

Urban trees provide shade and protection from wind and their shelter reduces heat loss in winter.

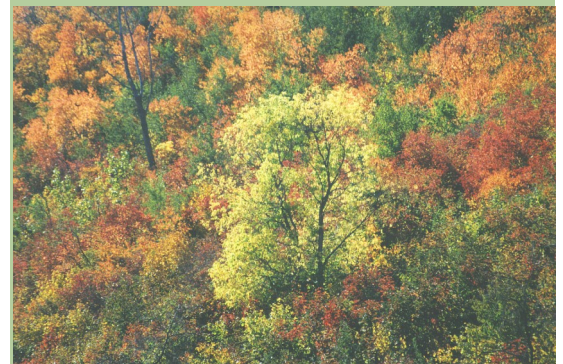Trees slow down surface water run-off and reduce the cost of storm water management in urban settings.

Photo: Betty Fisher

Edmonton & Area Land Trust

FORESTS

PHYSCIAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

- One large tree can provide a days worth of oxygen for up to four people. Increasing trees in an area can reduce rates of asthma.

- Easy access to areas that support outdoor activities (walking, biking, running) helps to counter increasing rates of obesity, diabetes and other health risks.

- Trees and natural areas in urban areas reduce stress and improve public health.

- Hospital patients who can see trees out of their windows recover faster and with less pain-killing medicine than patients who can only see brick walls.

AIR, WATER AND WILDLIFE

- Forests filter air by absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen. Trees filter out pollutants such as sulphur dioxide, ozone, nitrogen oxides and particulates. Forests have been called the "lungs of the earth".

- They absorb rain water which helps slow down surface water run-off. As more rain water is absorbed into the ground, ground water is replenished and harmful nutrients are removed, resulting in better water quality.

- Reduce sedimentation, regulate flooding and drought in watercourses.

- Provide valuable wildlife habitat and help to preserve biodiversity.

- Even a single tree in a fragmented landscape can be beneficial to wildlife as a stepping stone for their movement.

PROTECT FORESTS AND TREES

Plant trees and shrubs in your yard. Consider including native fruit trees and shrubs such as Saskatoon and Chokecherry to provide a food source for local wildlife (and you!).

Get involved with organizations that plant trees in natural areas.

Where feasible, water your trees during periods of drought.

Become familiar with the signs of exotic pests that can affect trees and report any occurrences of these to your municipality.

Contact your elected officials and let them know that forests are important to you.

Celebrate Canadas National Tree Day (www.treecanada.ca).