

**Rene Voss**

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U.S. Forest Service R&D Newsletter - March 2017

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#### FEATURE NEWS

### Big Benefits from Buffers

The National Agroforestry Center (NAC) produced numerous [riparian forest buffer planning tools](#). A buffer is a managed area of forest and vegetation adjacent to a stream, lake, or wetland, primarily to provide conservation benefits. The NAC tools help landowners optimally design riparian buffers to increase water quality, stabilize stream banks, protect from storm damage, and increase and diversify farmland income.



#### FOREST HEALTH

### Forecasting California Tree Mortality for 2017

For the second consecutive year, researchers have [produced a map of California showing the location and severity of likely tree mortality](#) from the state's prolonged drought and bark beetle epidemic. The 2017 forecast suggests that bark beetle-caused mortality should subside in many parts of California.



Jim Gathany, CDC, Wikimedia Commons

## PUBLIC HEALTH

### Urban Forests and West Nile

[A recent study investigated risk factors for West Nile virus](#) in Atlanta, Georgia.

The researchers examined forest, environmental, and socioeconomic conditions and found that West Nile-carrying mosquitoes are less common in large forested areas. The presence of urban pine trees in particular was closely related to lower risk from West Nile virus.



Rob Progar

## PUBLIC HEALTH

### Using Bugs to Control Noxious Weeds

Leafy spurge, listed as a noxious weed in 35 states, is toxic to cattle and has been estimated to cost \$144 million a year in just Montana, North and South Dakota, and Wyoming alone.

[Researchers experimented with a natural enemy of the weed](#), the flea beetle, and found that when 50 beetles per flowering plant were released they acted as an effective control agent.



NASA

## WATER

### How Much Water is in Snow?

Forest Service researchers [are collaborating with NASA on SnowEx](#), a project that investigates how much water is stored in Earth's terrestrial snow-covered regions. This knowledge can improve snow-water equivalent predictions, which has important implications for terrestrial water supplies.



## URBAN FORESTRY

### Trees Reduce Building Energy Use

If not for urban trees, energy used for heating and cooling homes in the United States would be more than 7 percent higher. [New research found](#) that urban/community forests save approximately \$7.8 billion annually in reduced energy costs.



## HISTORY: AGROFORESTRY

### Roots of the National Agroforestry Program

During the Great Depression, President Roosevelt initiated a program—led by the Forest Service—to create “shelterbelts” of trees to mitigate the effects of the Dust Bowl and reduce soil erosion in the Great Plains. This project laid the groundwork for the creation of R&D’s National Agroforestry Center (NAC) in 1992. Read more about this fascinating part of R&D history (on [pages 13-17 of The Rendezvous](#) newsletter) and how NAC has improved the lives of landowners through forest management in the Great Plains.

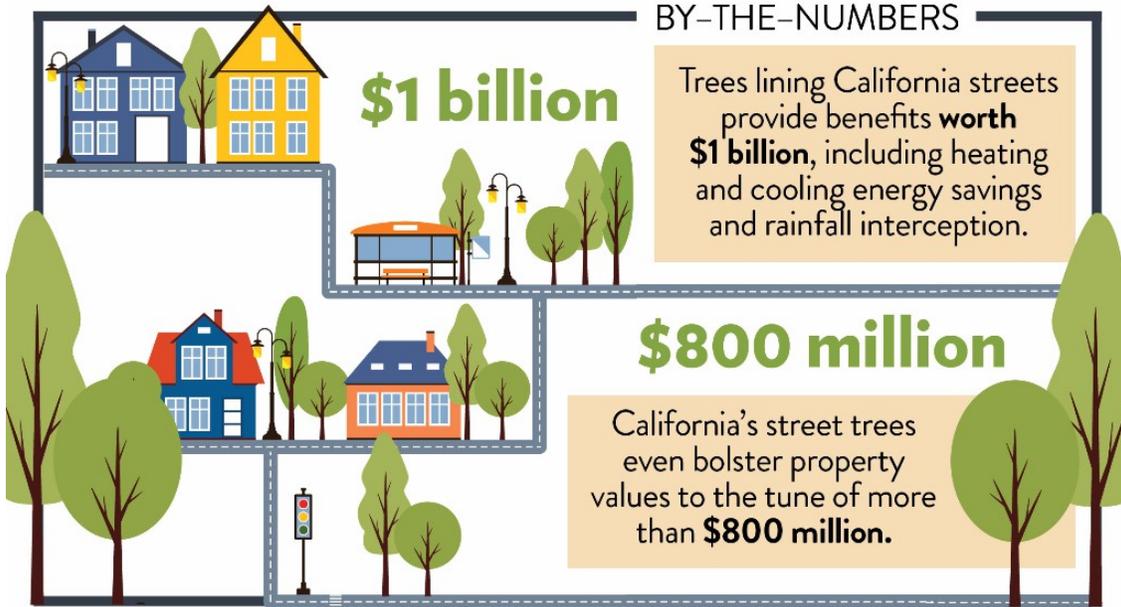
To keep up to date on agroforestry science, subscribe to the [National Agroforestry Center newsletter](#).

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