

SFI URBAN AND COMMUNITY FOREST SUSTAINABILITY STANDARD

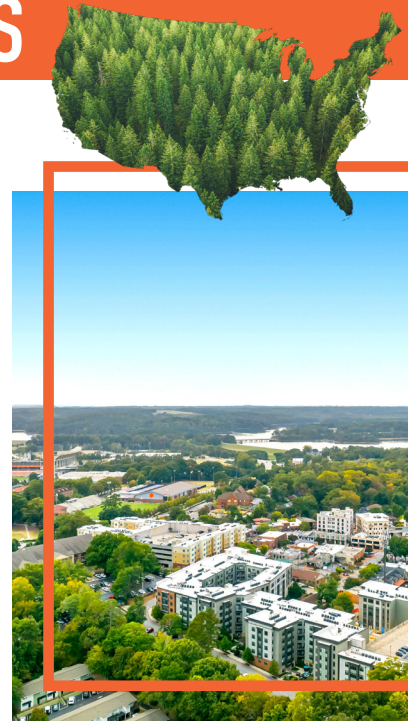
UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGE CAMPUSES

CAMPUS TREES THAT DELIVER HEALTH, RESILIENCE, AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

American colleges and universities play a vital role in shaping the future of sustainable urban and community forest management. Certification to the SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard demonstrates responsible stewardship of campus trees and green spaces, creating lasting benefits for the institution, its students, and surrounding communities. By leading on sustainability, campuses enhance student experience, strengthen community partnerships, and showcase environmental leadership.

CELEBRATING AN EARLY ADOPTER

In 2025, Clemson University in South Carolina became the first organization in the world to earn certification to the SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard. By embedding sustainable forest management into campus planning, academics, and student well-being, Clemson demonstrates how higher education can lead the way in building resilient, healthy communities. For Clemson, urban forestry is more than an environmental initiative—it is a commitment to student success, public health, and quality of life on campus and beyond.



KEY BENEFITS OF SFI CERTIFICATION

MAKES A STRONG CASE FOR FUNDING

Certification demonstrates accountability and transparency, helping institutions compete for federal and state grants, philanthropic support, and corporate partnerships.

ENHANCES STUDENT EXPERIENCE & WELL-BEING

Green, certified campuses provide safe, restorative places to relax, study, and gather. Research shows access to trees reduces stress, improves mental health, and builds stronger student communities.

DRIVES CAMPUS-WIDE COLLABORATION

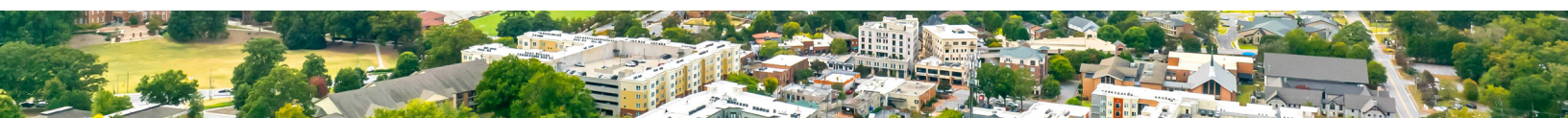
Certification unites facilities staff, faculty, researchers, and students around shared goals. From campus planning to curriculum design, it fosters partnerships across departments and strengthens alignment.

STRENGTHENS COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Certification encourages cross-departmental collaboration between land managers, interested parties, researchers and educators.

BUILDS TRUST AND CREDIBILITY

Certification equips universities to answer questions with confidence. Independent audits measure campus performance against a transparent, consistent standard—validating best practices, identifying opportunities for improvement, and strengthening credibility with alumni, funders, and community partners.



CERTIFICATION PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABLE URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTS

The SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard provides adaptable certification pathways, enabling organizations to pursue their desired goals and outcomes at their own pace.

SFI offers two unique certification options:

FULL CERTIFICATION

Certify to all 16 objectives to claim your urban or community forest as certified to the full SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard.



COMMUNITY
WELL-BEING AND
HUMAN HEALTH



URBAN
FOREST
IMPROVEMENT



THEMATIC CERTIFICATION

Focus on the areas that matter most to your community. Thematic certification lets your institution focus resources on priority objectives, showcase existing strengths, and build momentum toward full certification over time.



CLIMATE AND
DISASTER
RESILIENCE



ENVIRONMENTAL AND
CONSERVATION
LEADERSHIP

COMMUNITY WELL-BEING AND HUMAN HEALTH

PROMOTES public health by embedding equitable access to green space and opportunities for recreation, mental health, and social connection into campus planning and management.

URBAN FOREST IMPROVEMENT

DRIVES continual forest improvement by setting long-term objectives, reinforcing best practices, and tracking measurable results.

CLIMATE AND DISASTER RESILIENCE

POSITIONS your institution to confront climate risks by tracking ecosystem services, reducing carbon footprints, and prioritizing innovation.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP

VALIDATES your institution's role as an environmental leader, demonstrating stewardship of biodiversity, water, soil, and habitat while elevating research.

DRIVE INNOVATION IN SUSTAINABLE URBAN FOREST MANAGEMENT

Lead the way in education while securing funding and creating hands-on learning opportunities for students.

Turn vision into action—building a living campus legacy for generations of students and communities.

Explore how at:

forests.org/sfi-urban-forestry-standard/



Learn how certification can support your community's goals. Connect with Ned Brockmeyer at ned.brockmeyer@forests.org to get started.

