



Urban Reforestation Site Assessment (URSA)

1. General Site Information

Location:

Property owner:

Current land use:

2. Climate

USDA plant hardiness zone:

Sunlight exposure:

- Full sun (6 hours or more of direct sun per day)
- Part sun or filtered light (< 6 hours per day)
- Shade (< 3 hours of direct sun per day)

Microclimate features (check if present):

- High wind exposure
- Re-reflected heat load
- Other:

3. Topography

Steep slopes

Are any slopes > 15% present in the proposed planting area? Y/N

If Yes, estimate slope:

Low-lying areas

Are any low-lying areas present in the proposed planting area? Y/N

Notes:

4. Vegetation

Regional forest association (or dominant species from reference site):

Current vegetative cover (check all that apply and note percent of planting area):

- Mowed turf: _____%
- Other herbaceous: _____%
- None: _____%
- Trees or shrubs: _____%

Note species to be preserved:

Are invasive plants or noxious weeds present?

Y/N

If Yes, note species and percent coverage at site.

Adjacent vegetative cover:

Is forest present? Y/N

If Yes, note dominant species:

Are invasive plants or noxious weeds present?

Y/N

If Yes, note species and percent coverage at site.

5. Soils

Texture:

- Clay
- Loam
- Sand

Drainage:

- Poor (< 1" per hour)
- Moderate (1" - 6" per hour)
- Excessive (> 6" per hour)

Compaction:

- None
- Moderate
- Severe

pH:

- Acid (5.0 – 6.8)
- Neutral (6.8 – 7.2)
- Alkaline (7.2 – 8.0)

Other soil features (check if present and describe):

- Active or severe soil erosion
- Potential soil contamination
- Debris and rubble in soil
- Recent construction or other soil disturbance
- Other:

Soil Chemistry (Optional)

List results of soil tests if applicable (e.g., levels of phosphorus, salt, or organic matter in the soil). Describe any visual indicators of soil quality.

6. Hydrology

Site hydrology:

- Upland
- Riparian

Note: For riparian planting sites where planting is proposed on both stream banks, fill out this section for each bank separately

Stormwater runoff to planting site (check all that apply):

- Bypasses site in pipe
- Upslope drainage area outfalls to site
Note diameter of pipe outfall:
- Open channel directs flow across or around the site
- Shallow concentrated flow (e.g., evidence includes rills, gullies, sediment deposits)
- Sheetflow
- Unknown

Contributing flow length:

Slope: _____%

Length: _____ft

Dominant cover type:

- Impervious
- Pervious

Floodplain connection (riparian areas only):

Are levees present? Y/N

Bank height: _____ft

Depth to water table (optional): _____ft

Stream order: _____

Contributing Flow Length Sketch:

7. Potential Planting Conflicts

Space limitations (check if present, and note height of overhead wires, signs and lighting):

- Overhead wires: _____ft
- Pavement
- Structures
- Signs: _____ft
- Lighting: _____ft
- Underground utilities

Note type:

- Other:

Other limiting factors (check if present and describe below):

- Trash dumping/debris
Note type of trash, volume (estimated pickup truck loads), and source if known:

- Deer, beaver or other animal impacts
- Mowing conflict (e.g., site is mowed regularly)
- Wetland present
- Insect infestation or disease
- Heavy pedestrian traffic
- Other:

Notes:

Local Ordinance Setbacks

Check local ordinances or utility requirements and note any required setbacks from these features.

8. Planting and Maintenance Logistics

Site access (check if present):

- Delivery access for planting materials
- Temporary storage areas for soils, mulch, etc.
- Heavy equipment access
- Volunteer parking
- Nearby facilities for volunteers

Party responsible for maintenance (if known):

Water source (check all that apply):

- Rainfall only
- Storm water runoff
- Hose hook-up nearby
Note distance from hook-up to planting area (ft):
- Irrigation system in place
- Overbank flow from river or stream
- Fire hydrant nearby
- Other:

9. Site Sketch

Sketch the site below and include the following features at a minimum:

- Property boundary, landmark features (e.g., roads, streams) and adjacent land use/cover
- Boundary and approximate dimensions of proposed planting area
- Variations in sun exposure, microclimate, and topography within planting area
- Current vegetative cover, location of trees to be preserved, and invasive species
- Location and results of soil samples (if variable)
- Flow paths to planting area and contributing flow length
- Above or below ground space limitations (e.g., utilities, structures)
- Other limiting factors (e.g., trash dumping, pedestrian paths)
- Water source and access points
- Scale and north arrow

Developed by the Center for Watershed Protection, 8390 Main Street, 2nd Floor, Ellicott City, MD 21043

