

## Austin EcoNetwork 3.18.16

**[Outdoors] Thirty-four million dollars.** That's how much Austin's **urban forest is worth**, according to a ground-breaking new study from the US Forest Service.

The study is the first to take a comprehensive look at a US *urban* forest, highlighting the growing movement to integrate nature more closely into the city.

Here are some of the report's highlights:

- An estimated 33.8 million trees in Austin provide the city with a 30.8 percent canopy cover
- Every year, Austin's trees remove 1,253 tons of pollutants from the air, which is worth about **\$2.8 million in avoided human health costs.**
- Austin's urban trees help capture stormwater and reduce runoff, which in turn helps to reduce the amount of pollutants entering our waterways
- By providing shade for buildings, Austin's trees account for \$4.9 million worth of **avoided carbon emissions** from power plants each year. This saves Austin residents \$18.9 million a year in energy costs.
- Our trees help to **mitigate climate change** by storing 1.9 million tons of carbon, a service valued at \$242 million. On top of that, each year they sequester an additional 92,000 tons of carbon, which is worth \$11.6 million.

But just because Austin's urban forest is robust *now*, doesn't mean that it will continue to be that way in the future, warns the report. Human population growth, if not effectively managed, could damage the city's vast tree cover, along with the many services that it provides.