

The Faces of Urban Forestry



Bill Whitte
Retiree



Trees Boost Recreation and Tourism

Hawksbill Creek runs through the center of Luray, a town of just more than 5000 residents in northern Virginia. This gateway to Luray was overrun with cattle, invasive tree species and degraded stream banks and had become an eyesore, until community leaders worked with state agencies to plant new trees and develop a vision for what has been dubbed “Luray’s New Front Porch.”

Bill Whitte, a retired extension agent and Luray resident since 1987, has seen how the trees along the creek are transforming his community, attracting tourism and bringing people outdoors. A once-avid runner, Bill and his wife are now walking daily on the greenway trail.

“People used to come to Luray to visit the caverns and now the trees, trails and wildlife give them a reason to stay,” Bill says.

The Virginia Department of Forestry and other state agencies were crucial to seeing the vision for the area realized.

Visitors who come to Luray to see Hawksbill Creek often end up staying and shopping, boosting the morale and economy of Luray.

“People take advantage of the greenway trail, the wildlife, the fishing and the shopping,” Bill adds. “The Hawksbill Greenway is now an integral part of this.”

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A joint project of U.S. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry, the National Association of State Foresters, and the Arbor Day Foundation. For more information visit arborday.org/faces