



# CITY OF HARRISONBURG PUBLIC WORKS

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## Va. Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry to visit for Urban Forestry Program tour

HARRISONBURG, Va. – Harrisonburg Public Works continues to get recognition for an innovative, environmentally positive program.

Virginia Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Bettina Ring will visit Harrisonburg on Friday to take a tour focused on successes of the City's Urban Forestry Program. The effort partners with the local community to promote utilization of downed wood, keeping it out of landfills, as well as in protecting the City's tree canopy.

Secretary Ring will visit several locations that feature urban wood projects and discuss Urban Forestry efforts in Harrisonburg.



*(Above) A bench made from downed wood as part of the Urban Forestry Program.*

“We are very excited for the opportunity to meet with Secretary Ring and discuss her interest in our Urban Forestry Program,” Harrisonburg Public Works Director Tom Hartman said. “We are always looking for ways that we can be better stewards of our environment, and we are grateful for the recognition from state leaders of our team’s work.”

The Urban Forestry Program is a multi-faceted effort for Harrisonburg Public Works, and one that has been honored for its ingenuity and impact.

The Purcell Park Bioreactor project – which utilizes recovered wood – recently earned a Gold Medal for the Governor’s Environmental Excellence Award. The bioreactor project removes nitrogen from our waterway, improving the water quality of Blacks Run and, further down the line, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Other utilization projects around town include benches located at the pollinator meadow on Noll Drive, at the Price Rotary Senior Center, the countertop in the Heritage Oaks Golf Course Pro Shop, and conference tables at Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance and at the Harrisonburg Fire Department.

Ash has also been used in creating the “Language of Love” sculpture behind the Harrisonburg Quilt Museum, tabletops for Magpie Dinner, and the front bar at Sage Bird Ciderworks. Public Works also has plans for a Hairpin Table Workshop in September where attendees can make their own end table using a “cookie” from an ash log and hairpin table legs.

The Urban Forestry Program also focuses on growing The Friendly City’s tree canopy by planting native trees in parks, right-of-ways, schools and on public lands. These efforts help improve conditions following the devastation of local ash trees due to the emerald ash borer beetle. Numerous trees were recently planted with the help of volunteers along the Northend Greenway.

“We are always looking for more ways to use the urban wood that must come down and improve the growing conditions of existing and newly planted native trees. Encouraging growth of a variety of native trees will help prevent the catastrophic impact the Emerald Ash Borer beetle had in our city,” Harrisonburg Public Works Green Space Manager Jeremy Harold said. “We are fortunate to have the support of so many, including the Virginia Department of Forestry, local mills, crafters, and artisans, who see the value of preserving our local wood resources for others to enjoy.”

The Public Works Department is also in the process of creating an Urban Forestry Management Plan to better coordinate efforts now and into the future. The plan will detail both near and long-term goals to care for local trees and grow the City’s tree canopy.

***The City of Harrisonburg*** is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 54,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is available online at [www.HarrisonburgVA.gov](http://www.HarrisonburgVA.gov).

You can also follow **Harrisonburg Public Works** on [Facebook](#).

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*(Above) A "cookie" from an ash tree that can be used for multiple projects. A workshop will take place in September where attendees can make their own end table using the recovered wood.*