

September 6, 2006

Dear Editor,

The people of Wyckoff will soon debate the need to adopt a tree ordinance in town. As a biology teacher who spent a decade in environmental consulting and wrote my first master's thesis on global warming science and policy analysis tools, I am stunned by how we undervalue trees both locally and globally. Some real facts to consider:

According to *USDA Forest Service Pamphlet #R1-92-100*, over 50 years, a typical tree:

- recycles and decontaminates \$37,500 worth of water,
- controls \$31,250 worth of soil erosion,
- generates \$31,250 worth of oxygen,
- provides \$62,000 worth of air pollution control
- absorbs 2,000 pounds of carbon dioxide, the primary greenhouse gas causing global warming.

According to the Georgia Forestry Commission (www.gfc.state.ga.us/CommunityForests/TreeBenefits.cfm), other reasons to regulate tree cutting are:

- increasing property values and property tax revenue by up to 15 percent
- reducing heating and cooling costs by up to 30 percent
- reducing storm water runoff (and associated flooding) by 15% with a 21% existing tree canopy.
- absorbing and storing an average of 45 pounds of carbon dioxide each year, resulting in a national savings of \$22 billion in emissions control costs and reducing the risk/rate of global climate change (warming)

The larger the tree, the more beneficial it is environmentally, aesthetically and economically. Replacing a mature oak with a life expectancy of 200-600+ years with a 2-3 inch diameter tree has significant negative impacts.

- The smaller the total leaf surface area, the less air pollutant and CO₂ absorption, heating and less cooling savings and privacy provision.
- The smaller the root system, the less water pollutant removal, erosion control and soil water absorption.

We should be increasing the tree biomass in Wyckoff, not decreasing it. Every tree that is cut is taking money, privacy, flood protection and healthier air from all of us. This is no romantic notion, but rather a well researched economic and scientific fact.

John Nolan
Wyckoff