

# PARTNERS IN COMMUNITY FORESTRY

2024 CONFERENCE





# Washington, DC

## Youth Tree Ambassadors: *Why, Where, and How*



PRESENTED BY:

**Melinda Peters**

Director of Education  
Casey Trees  
[mpeters@caseytrees.org](mailto:mpeters@caseytrees.org)



PRESENTED BY:

**Ray Barrera**

DC Area Program Manager  
The Student Conservation  
Association  
[rbarrera@thesca.org](mailto:rbarrera@thesca.org)

# AGENDA

**About our Orgs**  
**Casey Trees**  
**SCA**

**Why—**  
**Program Goals**

**Where—**  
**Serving**  
**Southeast DC**

**How—**  
**Program Model**

**Challenges**  
**and Learnings**

**Looking towards**  
**2025**

Mission

Tree  
Conservation  
DC Free Trees  
Program  
Youth  
Workforce  
Development  
Partnerships

DC Wards 7 & 8  
to increase the  
tree canopy

High School  
Crew  
Weekend  
service days  
Training and  
projects  
Environmental  
Justice

Recruitment  
Community  
partnership  
Program model

Partnership  
building  
Updated goals  
Target  
outcomes

Melinda Peters  
Casey Trees

# ***Restore, Enhance and, Protect DC's tree canopy***



- Tree planting – Home, school, community space
- Youth and community education – Schools and community spaces
- Advocate – Testify to council and work with neighborhood advisory groups
- Conserve land – Preserve land under conservation easements
- Farm – Sustainable tree production facility



Raisa Barrera  
The Student Conservation Association

# *Empowering the next generation of conservation leaders*



- Youth and young adult conservation field crews
- Impacting work in National Parks, community natural spaces, and local waterways
- Members gain experience in diverse areas – Environmental education, urban forestry, trail maintenance, invasive plant removal, and more
- Professional development – Technical and soft skills, exposure to green collar conservation careers
- High school programs throughout the year

# Why

## *Preserve/Restore Urban Canopy and Activate Youth Voice*

- Tree Conservation
- DC Free Trees Program
- Youth Workforce Development
- Strengthening Partnerships

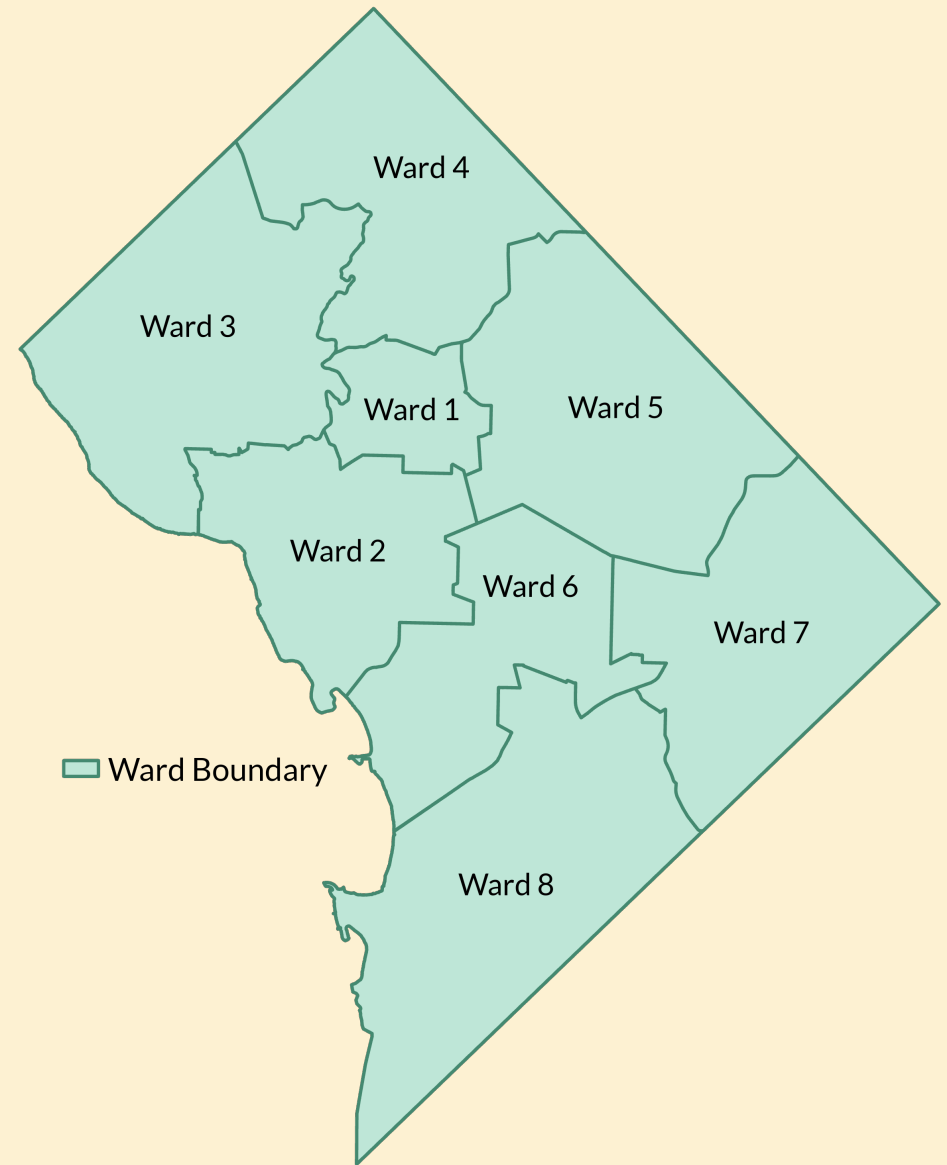




# Where and Why

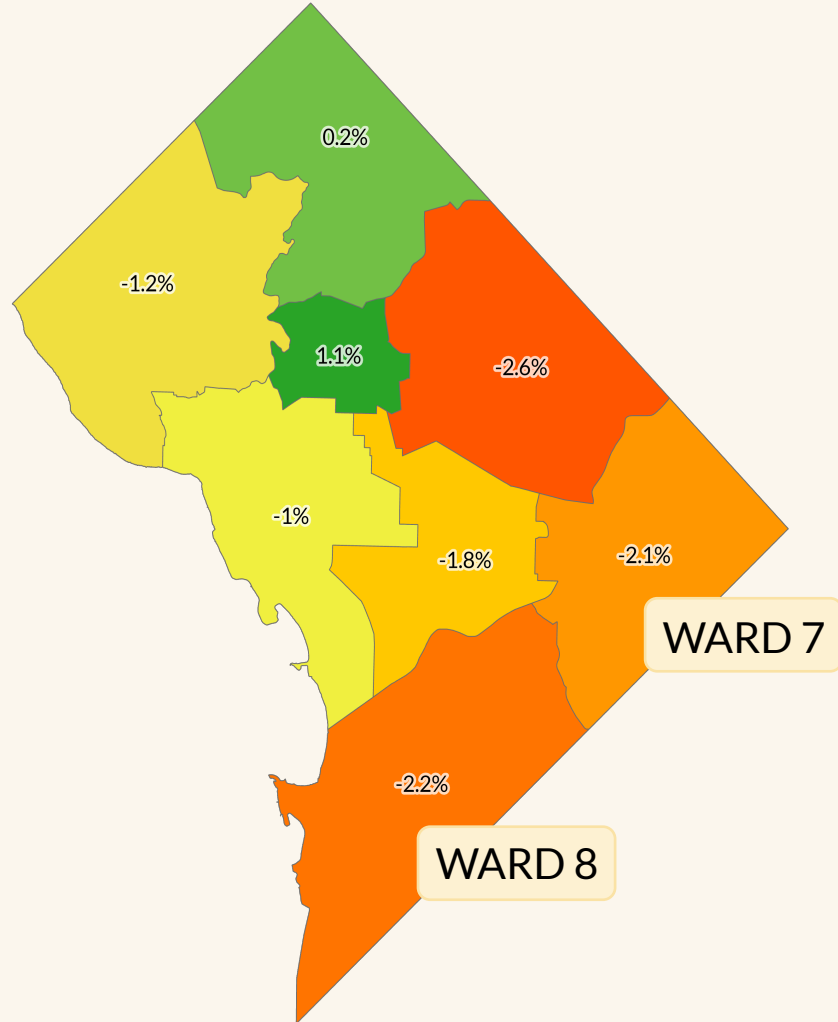
## Washington, DC – Wards 7 & 8

- *Air pollution*
- *Flooding*
- *Urban heat island*

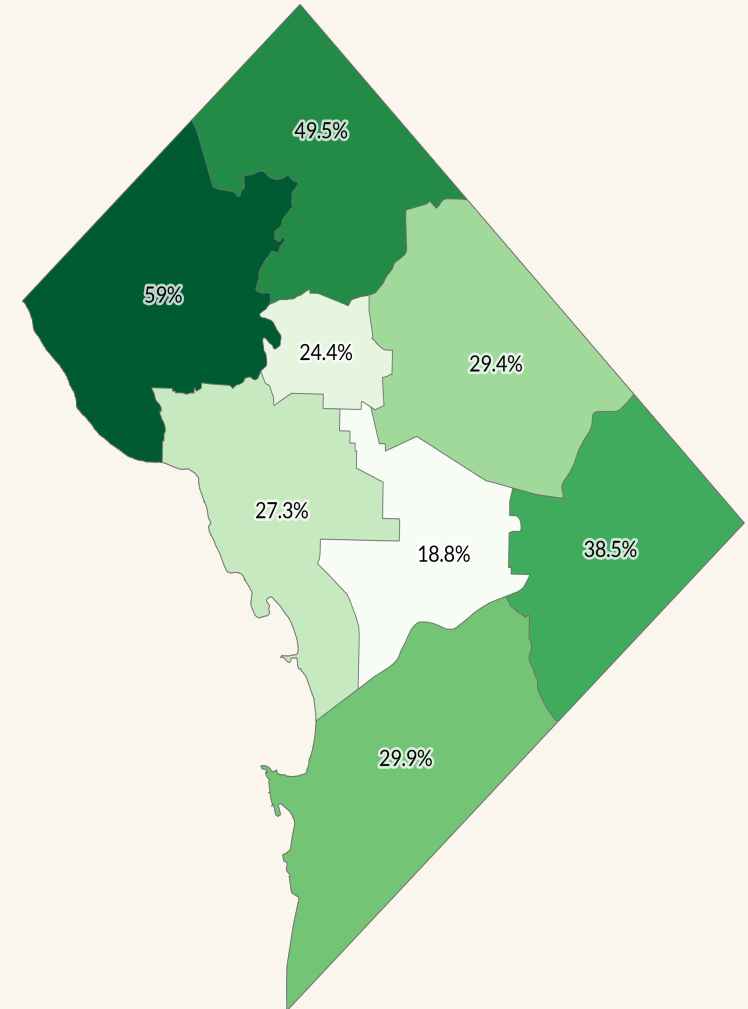


# CANOPY COVER

CANOPY CHANGE by WARD, 2015-2020

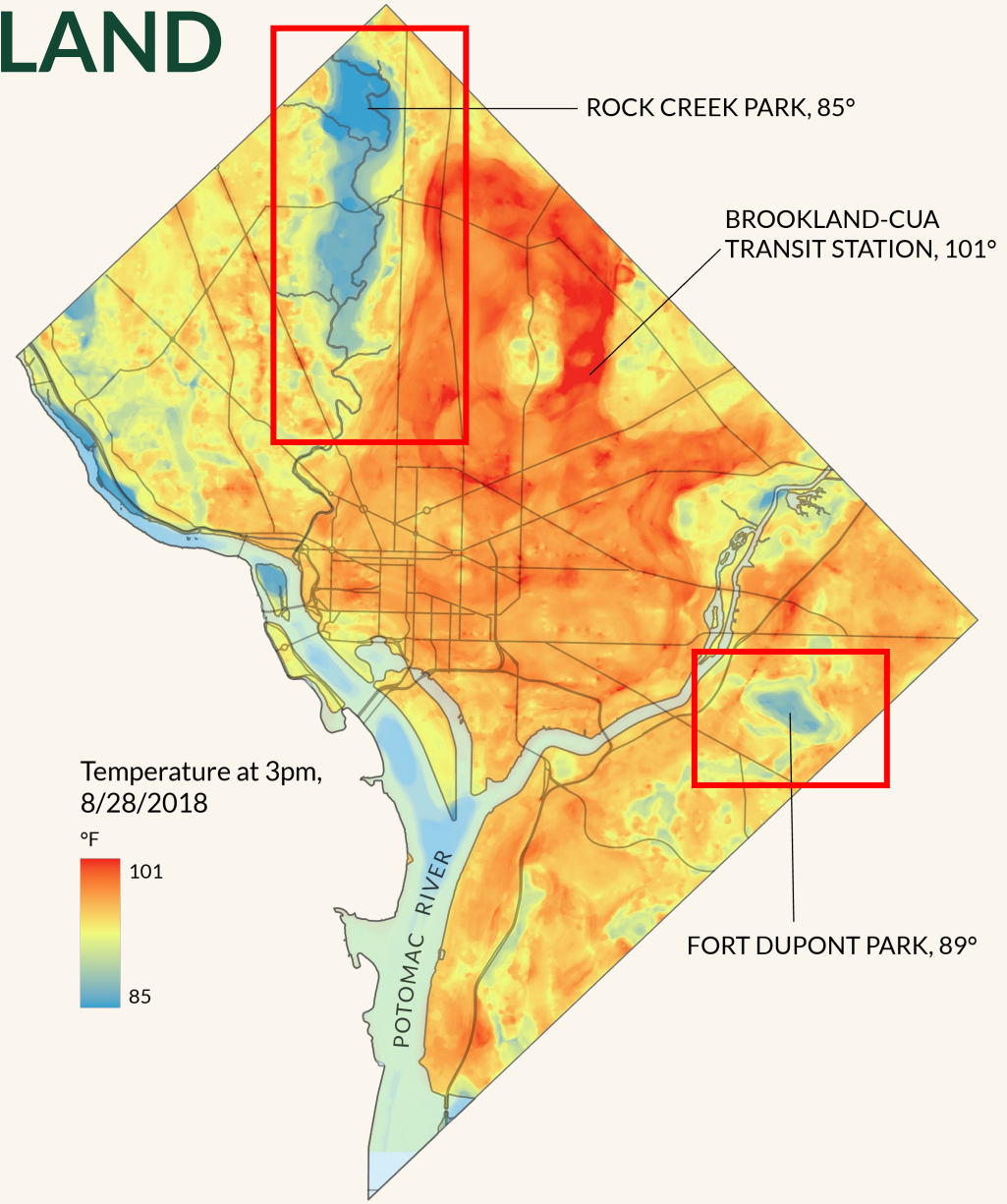
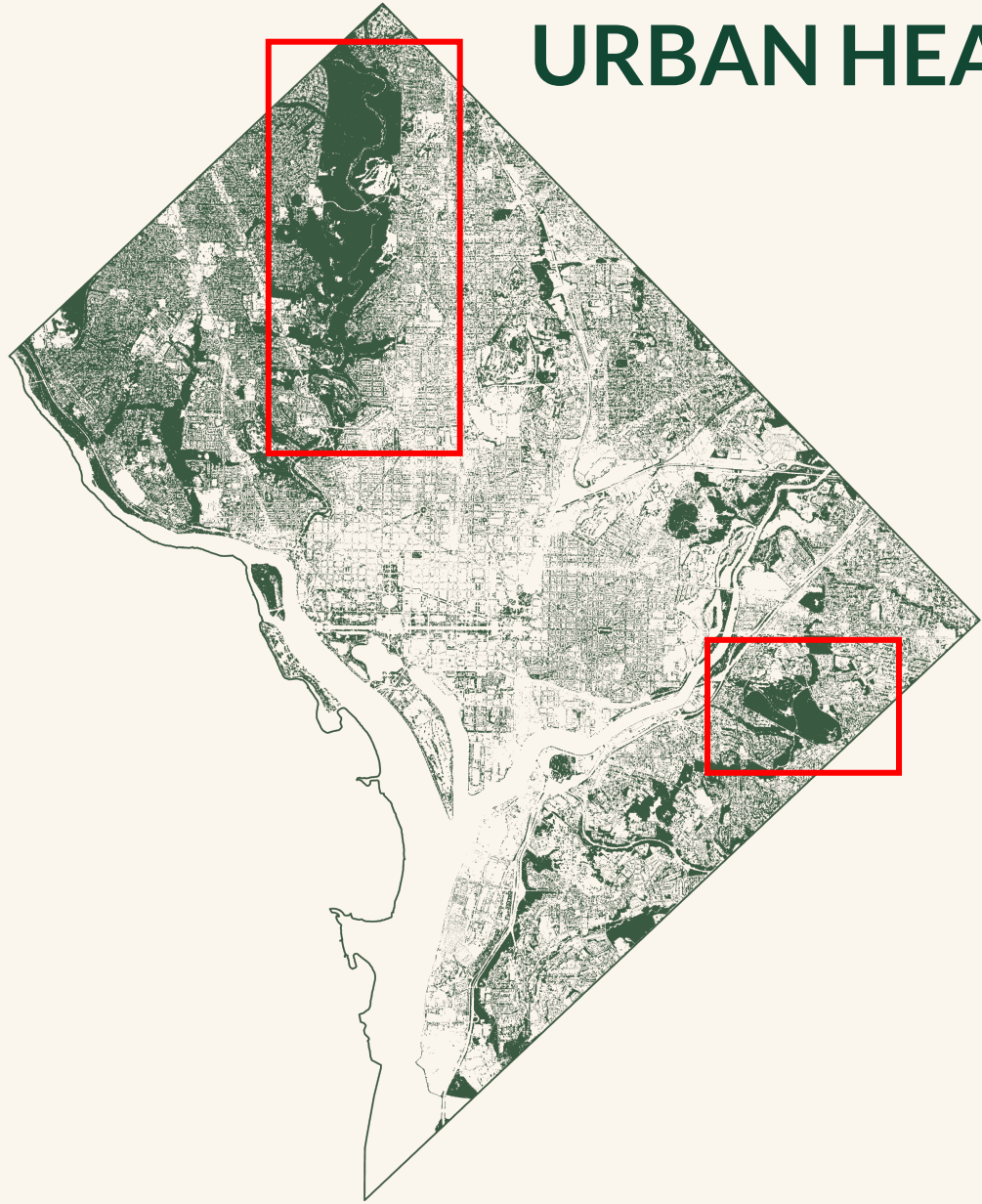


CANOPY COVERAGE by WARD, 2020





# URBAN HEAT ISLAND



# How

## *Youth workforce development*

- High School Crew (Youth Ambassadors)
- Weekend service days
- Training and projects
- Environmental Justice







# Training

- Community outreach skills
- Local environmental justice
- Tree ID
- Tree planting
- Teambuilding/collaboration



# Youth Ambassadors



Tabling/  
Canvassing



Tree Planting



Environmental  
Justice





# Outcomes

**200+** Service Hours from  
October 2023 – June 2024

**12** Training Hours in  
hands-on and community  
engagement skills

**12** Service-learning events

**6** High School Youth  
engaged

**400** Flyers Distributed



# Personal growth and reflection



**Rose** – *"Talking to people about trees"*

**Bud** – *"Coming together with the Youth Ambassador group next time to share more ideas about outreach and to see how [the various plans] might fit together"*

**Thorn** - *"The event was moved inside because of weather"*



# Challenges and Learnings

- Rebuilding recruitment relationships and partnerships in target communities
- Member attendance
- More dedicated staff support
- More hands-on learning
- More community engagement opportunities







## What's next?

- Revitalized recruitment strategy aligned with schoolyear
- Broader geographic range aligned with IRA areas
- Increased training opportunities for youth
- Service learning with new and existing community partners





**Thank you.**



**[friends@caseytrees.org](mailto:friends@caseytrees.org)**  
**[scadc@thesca.org](mailto:scadc@thesca.org)**