The January–February 2016 issue of the *Journal of Environmental Quality* (JEQ) includes a special section titled “The Urban Forest and Ecosystem Services.” Guest editor Steven Livesley, University of Melbourne, Richmond, Victoria, Australia, provides some details about the special section below:

**CSA News:** What prompted you to pull together this special section of papers?

**Livesley:** In the summer of 2014, I visited Europe to attend two excellent international conferences focused upon the role of trees in urban landscapes: the 16th European Forum for Urban Forestry (Lausanne, Switzerland) and the 1st International Conference on Urban Tree Diversity (Alnarp, Malmo, Sweden). There were many excellent studies that I felt would benefit from exposure to a wider environmental science audience through a consolidated special section. The *Journal of Environmental Quality* provides such an outlet and audience.

**CSA News:** Urban forestry has been around for decades, so what makes the subject timely and important now?

**Livesley:** Yes, “urban forestry” as a term has been recognized for several decades now, but urban tree management as a practice, for aesthetic reasons and ecosystem service functions, has been around since settlement in towns and cities began. We have an innate association with trees. Even in the most dense and modern cities, we still strive to grow trees, to maintain a connection with nature as well as gain from shade, biodiversity, and cooling. With the rise of the term urban forestry, there has been a growing rise in the recognition of the many ecosystem service benefits that trees can provide, from particulate air pollution interception, stormwater runoff reduction, and water quality improvement, to cooling through shade and transpiration. However, the scientific understanding and evidence base through which city managers can justify the expense of urban tree management or even argue for greater urban tree planting has not kept pace. It is vital that the scientific evidence we have as to the magnitude of these benefits, and the understanding of how these ecosystem service benefits operate, be consolidated and made available to help keep the trees in our towns and cities. This evidence base is needed now so that urban forests can be recognized as a central tool in urban climate change adaptation and overall future urban “liveability.” The publication of this special section is also timely and is about the host the 2nd International Conference on Urban Tree Diversity in Melbourne, Australia.

**CSA News:** Would you describe briefly what this special collection of papers encompasses?

**Livesley:** The special section contains urban ecosystem studies from all over the world, from Japan, Australia, North America, South America, Argentina, and Germany. The focus of these studies is generally into three categories: An assessment of the impact and role that trees perform in urban landscapes with regards to water, pollution, or heat (cooling).

**CSA News:** What was the most surprisingly or interesting thing you learned from working on this collection?

**Livesley:** What was not surprising was the quality of the studies submitted to the special section. What was interesting was how a clear nexus between improved urban forest function and improved urban water management exists, and this was reinforced by many of the studies. This special section provides an evidence base for many.

Photo courtesy of Dan Wendt, Public Affairs, MWRD, Chicago, IL.