

NEPA Urban and Community Forestry Program

USDA Forest Service
Northeastern Area
State and Private Forestry

Bringing forestry to the people through collaborative stewardship



Description: The Northeast Pennsylvania (NEPA) Urban and Community Forestry Program enhances the livability of communities by improving the health of trees and forests and increasing open space. Program emphasis has been the use of nontraditional partners to complete on-the-ground improvements. Since 1995, the program has involved more than 2,450 partners in 165 projects. Tree planting and management projects complement economic recovery, tourism, recreation, education, and community revitalization efforts. NEPA fosters community awareness and participation throughout a 13-county region that encompasses three watersheds and supports more than half a million residents. The PA Urban and Community Forestry Council coordinate the program in cooperation with PA DCNR, Bureau of Forestry, and Penn State Cooperative Extension.

Key Issues:

- Changing community infrastructure due to a decline in mining and the rise of tourism.
- A need for outreach and education to raise awareness of natural resource values.
- Declining water, forest cover, and open space due to past and changing land uses.
- A need to encourage communities to care for trees and better understand the benefits they provide.

Accomplishments:

- Communities planted 695 trees and removed 82 dangerous trees throughout the region.
- Arboricultural training reached 400 green industry professionals and municipal employees resulting in ISA certification for 14 arborists, improved project planting standards, adherence to Nurseryman's Standards for plant selection, and increased awareness of the impacts of invasive species on the region's ecological health.
- Increased the capacity of organizations to apply for capital improvement, restoration, and tourism funding.
- Shade tree commission members from Factoryville, Milford, and Williamsport shared program experiences at the PA Urban and Community Forestry annual conference, contributing to the development of community-based programs statewide.
- The Morris Arboretum's FY 2000 Final Report Lessons Learned section provides insight that will be used in the development planning of a pilot urban forestry initiative in southeastern Pennsylvania.

Budget History:

Northeast Pennsylvania Urban and Community Forestry Program				
(\$ Thousands)				
	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004
Totals	\$250	\$250	\$400	\$592

Future Direction:

The NEPA program will continue to assist communities in developing comprehensive and sustainable urban and community forestry programs by providing high-quality technical assistance that promotes partnership building, on-the-ground improvements, and enhanced quality of life in northeastern Pennsylvania.

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February 11, 2004 - Revised