

Northeast Pennsylvania Urban and Community Forestry Program

USDA Forest Service
Northeastern Area
State and Private Forestry



Enhancing the Livability of Northeastern Pennsylvania Communities

Description The Northeast Pennsylvania Urban and Community Forestry Program is a special initiative in the 10th Congressional District, a region that includes three watersheds and supports 1.1 million residents. It offers grants to enhance community livability and foster public awareness and participation by helping residents make on-site improvements to the health of their trees, forests, and public spaces.

Key Issues

- Changes to the economy and community structure due to declining mining activities and increasing tourism.
- A need for outreach and education to reverse a regional history of natural resource exploitation.
- Past and present land use changes are causing a decline in water quality and forest cover.
- A need to encourage environmental stewardship and management of community trees via community planning.

Budget History

NEPA Urban and Community Forestry Program (<i>\$ Thousands</i>)				
	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007
Totals	\$250	\$500	\$700	\$0

Accomplishments

- Funded 33 projects, including a Chesapeake Bay Urban Tree Assessment, and engaged 298 partners in completion of new and existing projects.
- Reached eight new communities, supported the creation of three new Shade Tree Commissions, and gave 16 Tree City USA Awards and 3 Tree City USA Growth Awards.
- Provided 166 days of technical assistance leading to the completion of 11 community tree assessments, final inspections for 23 projects, and advisory assistance to 69 projects.
- Initiated an Urban Forest Effects (UFORE) analysis of Scranton's trees and of the Toby Creek Watershed in Dallas, PA in partnership with Penn State Cooperative Extension and the DCNR Bureau of Forestry. Data was collected from 200 randomly selected 0.1-acre plots in Scranton. Specialists also acquired and analyzed aerial photos and land cover data in the Toby Creek Watershed. UFORE documents the ecological services provided by urban trees: air pollution removal, carbon sequestration, storm water reduction, nutrient retention, transpiration rates, energy

savings for nearby structures, and the compensatory value of the forest. Findings are expected in the summer of 2007.

- Selected four municipalities: Clark Summit Borough, Clarks Green Borough, South Abington Township, and Abington Township to take part in the Chesapeake Bay Urban Tree Canopy Assessment and Plan Development. The communities will assess and make plans to increase tree canopy cover while protecting existing canopy.
- Worked with Penn State's extension urban forester to assist five communities with downtown streetscape design projects. Three of the communities will be using structural soil technology developed by Cornell University for new sidewalks to assure more sustainable street tree growth.
- Participated in a campaign, *Think before You Top – Get the Facts*, to explain why lopping all of the branches from the tops of trees is harmful. The campaign reached more than 1.4 million people in five utility company billing fliers, and thousands more through workshops, conferences, home shows, newsletters, and public media.
- Supported the planting of over 6,000 bare-root trees in more than 25 northeastern Pennsylvania communities since 1998. Projected canopy increases are three times greater than typical canopy increases if conventional ball and burlap planting stock was used instead.
- Highlighted and toured Tunkhannock Borough's downtown as part of the NEPA Community Tree Association summer meeting, focusing on improving streetscape soils. More than 75 community representatives attended the workshop. correct interpretation?
- Provided a *Growing Your Futures Career Day* for 80 8th graders in Bradford and Sullivan Counties. Youth chose from more than 25 stations, staffed by natural resource professionals, where they learned about "green" careers through hands-on activities such as tree climbing, disease diagnosis, or GIS mapping.
- Two Shade Tree Commissions received awards for municipality and volunteers of the year from the Pennsylvania Urban and Community Forestry Council. The program provided scholarships to five community representatives to attend the State conference.
- Penn State Cooperative Extension supported the program by committing more than 50 percent of their local urban forester's time for on-the-ground technical assistance to more than 70 active projects and 3 training sessions that reached 102 professionals. This commitment continues to increase awareness throughout the region and contributed by addressing 13 managing communities and 10 developing communities to Pennsylvania's accomplishment reporting for urban and community forestry.

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