

# Urban and Community Forestry in the Northeast and New York

USDA Forest Service  
Northeastern Area  
State and Private Forestry



## *Improving the Nature of Cities and Towns*

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**Description:** The U.S. Forest Service works in collaboration with State forestry agencies, local governments, and nonprofit organizations to sustain healthy communities. With Federal support, State forestry agencies provide technical and financial assistance to complete urban forest inventories and management plans, natural resource assessments, and to strategically plant and care for trees. These actions create jobs, reduce storm water runoff, conserve energy, and clean the air, creating healthier communities with an improved quality of life for residents. The Urban and Community Forestry Program in New York City demonstrates this collaborative work.

### **Key Issues:**

- The objective of the Forest Service in urban areas is to maintain and enhance the benefits that communities derive from their forests and trees.
- About 125 million people live in the Northeast, 19.4 million in the State of New York, and roughly 8.4 million in New York City.
- Tree cover in New York State averages 38 percent, but in New York City it averages only 24 percent.
- Forest Service studies conclude that every \$1 spent on planting and maintaining trees in New York City results in \$5.60 in annual benefit. This is over a 5:1 return on the investment!
- Mayor Michael Bloomberg in 2008 announced a goal of planting 1 million trees, to reach 30 percent tree cover by 2030, to help clean the air, cool the city, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

### **Accomplishments:**

- With the help of the Forest Service, State forestry agencies assisted more than 3,950 communities in the Northeast and Midwest in 2010, improving the quality of life for nearly 61 percent of the region's population.
- The New York Department of Environmental Conservation's Urban and Community Forestry Program assisted 258 communities, benefiting 73 percent of the State's population.
- Since 2008 the New York City Parks Department planted nearly 400,000 trees towards the goal of 1 million trees.
- After severe storms hit New York City in 2010, the Forest Service, New York Department of Environmental Conservation, and Cornell Cooperative Extension delivered training on storm response and tree risk assessment to local government staff.

### **Forest Service Funds Supported:**

- A tree mortality study on newly planted trees resulted in improved planting and stewardship efforts in New York City and around the world.
- Fifty living memorial parks and spaces dedicated to the victims of terrorism, their families, communities, and the nation were established.
- Trees and other plants were specifically placed to reduce storm water runoff into the New York/New Jersey harbor.
- Over 2,000 trees lost to Asian longhorned beetle infestation were replaced from 1998 to 2008.

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