

# ACHIEVEMENTS REPORT

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## **2. The Federal Program**

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In addition to providing leadership and financial and technical assistance to individual states and organizations in order to manage natural resources effectively in populated areas, the Federal Urban and Community Forestry Program provides a national and regional context that helps the states to respond to natural disasters and crises as well as emerging issues.

At the federal level the Urban and Community Forestry Program is driven by a periodic assessment of issues and opportunities identified by a cross section of individuals dealing with urban issues. Rapid growth and development in metropolitan regions and small communities and the negative impacts of that growth on forest, air, and water quality have been identified as key issues to be addressed by natural resources managers in urban areas. These issues are the focus for the national strategy entitled *Vital Communities Through Healthy Ecosystems*. The strategy is implemented in cooperation with the National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council, state foresters, and other partners at the federal, state, and local level.

At the regional level the Northeastern Area has developed the *Urban Forestry Five-Year Plan, 1995-1999*, which reflects the national program. The plan emphasizes an improved quality of life through ecologically-based natural resource stewardship and provides a framework in which the twenty Northeastern Area states and the District of Columbia participate while maintaining autonomy to identify, prioritize, and develop their own plans.

Effective, long-term solutions depend on close cooperation among government agencies and the public being served to meet the economic, social, and environmental needs in all communities. Within the Northeastern Area problems are identified and resolved at the local level with the government providing technical and financial support as needed.

The technical assistance provided to state urban and community forestry programs includes assessing and monitoring the health of our urban forests. The USDA Forest Service is meeting the challenge of adapting its more traditional forest health assessment and monitoring sciences to the unique conditions of the urban forests.

Various federal program activities, such as forest health, natural resource conservation education, and economic action are integrated with the urban and community forestry program to provide technical support to state and local urban forestry functions.