

Connecting Urban Residents with Natural Resources

The Challenge

Reaching urban residents with information on forestry is an ongoing challenge given the small staff and limited financial resources allocated to metropolitan areas. The demand for educational programming in the Twin Cities alone could easily consume Northeastern Area staff located in St. Paul, Minnesota.

The Solution

In 1992, the Northeastern Area awarded \$10,000 to the Tree Trust to develop a School Environment Program for the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area. Using this investment as an enticement for corporate sponsorship, the Tree Trust leveraged these dollars into a \$1.5 million program.

The joint Northeastern Area and Tree Trust School Environment Program is a conservation education program that targets children enrolled in kindergarten to grade 6. The objective of the program is to provide teachers with the tools and training to teach urban forestry as a part of their school's curriculum.

The Tree Trust provides trees, shrubs, and perennials, and works with students, teachers, and parents to create an outdoor classroom on school grounds that students use for activities and projects throughout the school year.

Resulting Benefits

- The School Environment Program is embedded in the school's standard curriculum and is based on the development of critical-thinking skills. The students who participate have a solid foundation of conservation education integrated into their elementary learning.
- This partnership expands the Northeastern Area's capacity for providing conservation education programs in the Twin Cities.

The School Environment Program provides teachers with the tools and training to teach urban forestry.



Learning urban forestry can be fun!

- Because the Tree Trust places a high priority on working with schools in economic need as well as schools with large minority populations, Northeastern Area programs and forestry information reach a broader audience.
- Since 1992, the Tree Trust has completed forestry projects at 120 metropolitan schools and planted almost 12,000 and shrubs.
- On an annual basis, the Tree Trust reaches approximately 6,000 students and 300 teachers.

Sharing Successes

- In cooperation with the Northeastern Area's Midwestern Urban Forestry Center, the Tree Trust developed several workbooks designed to assist non-foresters with community forestry programs. These products have been distributed throughout the 50 states.
- Tree Trust employees have shared their expertise at conferences such as these: American Forests Urban Forestry Conference, the International Society of Arboriculture Conference, the Grassroots Summit, and the Midwest Environmental Education Conference.
- In 2000 the Tree Trust received the USDA Forest Service Conservation Education Outstanding Achievement Award.



USDA Forest Service
Northeastern Area
 State and Private Forestry

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