

October 24, 2006

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Illinois' 2006 Accomplishment Report

Introduction

The mission of the Illinois Urban and Community Forestry (IL UCF) program is to provide information and technical assistance to units of local government and others that will encourage efforts to plan and implement local community forestry programs to plant, protect, maintain, and utilize the wood from trees in their local jurisdictions. Urban and community forestry management integrates natural, social, and economic systems to create a healthy forest resource and a safe environment for Illinois citizens. This mission is achieved by helping communities, and other units of local government in the development or expansion of local urban and community forestry programs. Illinois= Statewide Urban and Community Forestry program is a part of a \$4.7 billion dollar green industry in Illinois that serves 80% of Illinois' population.

Tree City USA Highlights

Illinois celebrated 30 years of participation in the National Arbor Day's Tree City USA program this year. The Tree City USA program is the basic foundation of the IL UCF program. There are 183 Illinois Tree City USA communities placing the state for the tenth year since 1990 as #2 in the nation. Illinois= ranks #1 in the nation for the number of Tree City USA Growth Award Participants. Illinois UCF Tree City USA efforts alone serve about 7.38 million or over 68.6% of Illinois' urban and community residents. Tree City USA is a highly respected and sought after recognition in Illinois. As an indicator of the importance of this program to communities, many have integrated Tree City USA as an icon on their community websites. Tree City USA communities spent \$83 million dollars on local tree care in Illinois. The breakdown is \$44.785 million for in-house personnel; \$14.39 million for tree purchases; \$15 million on contractual services and the remaining on other operating expenses such as fleet management and office expenses. While the minimum Tree City USA requirement is \$2 per capita, Illinois= Tree City USA communities spend on the average \$11.57 per capita with the highest per capita recorded as \$59 per capita. Since 1991, Illinois' Tree City USA communities have gone from removing ten trees for each one planted to a ratio of planting one tree for each tree removed. Many communities have moved into a systematic approach to tree care and community forest management. Our cities are safer and our urban forests are healthier as a result of participating in this program. This shows the positive impact that the USDA Forest Service (USFS) and IL Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) UCF program initiatives have had on the local community forestry program development.

Emerald Ash Borer in Illinois

The confirmed identification of emerald ash borer in June created a change in focus for Illinois communities that included increased public relations, information and awareness campaigns; increased survey and detection efforts; and increased partnerships with other state and federal agencies including the Illinois Department of Agriculture and the USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). At the Annual TREE CITY USA Conference, all Illinois TREE CITY USA communities were provided with an

AEmerald Ash Borer (EAB) Community Readiness Plan@. This document provided a check list of urban forest management considerations to help communities plan for an infestation. Fortunately, the Tree City USA information on EAB along with many years of USDA FS/IDNR grants for 61 communities to develop inventories and management plans put Illinois Tree City USA communities in an advanced readiness mode. Because of the USDA FS funding of the Illinois UCF program, 183 Illinois municipalities have ordinances in place for nuisance and plant/disease health issues and many can generate a list of ash trees by street address for urban forest health monitoring purposes.

Inner City Accomplishments

Illinois continues to provide oversight and monitoring for Inner City Initiative projects through IL UCF Grant programs and outreach. The Inner City Initiatives fit within the USDA FS defined eligible cities that are identified by older and more densely populated residential sections of a city in which low income and/or minority groups predominate. A grant project funded tree planting within a park renovation in Alton, IL. Other funded projects include: 6

park/neighborhood tree planting projects, 1 tree inventory/forest health monitoring project, 1 pocket park enhancement project, 1 inner city street tree planting, and 3 tree care/management education projects that emphasized inner city outreach. These funds have made a great impact in the Peoria area. The Peoria, IL East Bluff Neighborhood Association leadership wrote, “So many people are grateful to IDNR for having been given the opportunity to install a community park in their backyard. This park would not have been possible without having the funding available through this grant. I am passing this along, as you need to know that this is appreciated by many.”



First confirmed emerald ash borer infested tree in Illinois.

Southern and Central Illinois Systematic Approach to Serving Communities

Through a partnership with the Southwestern Illinois Resources and Conservation Service, the IDNR has created a systematic approach to serving the communities in southern Illinois. The assistance provided to these communities includes help with tree inventories, urban forest management plans, tree ordinances, the Tree City USA Program, forestry education workshops, Arbor Day programs, and regional urban forestry council projects.

TREES COUNT! Northern Illinois Technical Service Initiative

A service contract with an urban forestry consultant provides technical assistance related to tree inventory and management plan development. . In 2006, Beecher, Elburn, Gridley, Hampshire, Indian Head Park, and Steward, IL received this support. The contractor is responsible for documenting in-kind match provided by the municipality. Only Tree City USA communities with a population of less than 5,000 are eligible for this free service.