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Missouri's 2006 Accomplishment Report

Introduction

The mission of the Missouri Department of Conservation's (MDC) Community Forestry program is to promote the development of sustainable community forests throughout Missouri. The MDC assists communities through enabling grants, promotion and coordination of volunteer-driven community forestry programs, local coordination of the Tree City USA program, and numerous opportunities for training. A state coordinator leads the effort which includes seven Urban Foresters whose primary responsibility is the delivery of community forestry assistance. In addition, 58 field foresters also have some community forestry responsibilities. Statewide policy development and implementation is managed in partnership with the Missouri Community Forestry Council using a team approach.

Action and Advocacy for a Healthy Community Forest

The Heartland Tree Alliance (HTA) is creating a healthier urban forest in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Working under the umbrella of Bridging the Gap, Inc., this organization has focused their efforts on engaging people in the Greater Kansas City region, encouraging them to take action and advocate for a healthy community forest. HTA hosted its first Arbor Day event this spring planting 99 trees in the Kansas City, MO urban core neighborhood of Ivanhoe. Thirty partners were involved and 90 volunteers engaged. The funding for trees and all other supplies was provided by The National Arbor Day Foundation through a grant from The Home Depot Foundation. The event was honored with a special appearance by Eco Elvis (see photo). In addition to the Arbor Day event, HTA offered several workshops, pruning work days, young tree care workshops, as well as staffing booths at area special events.

Missouri Community Forestry Council

The Missouri Community Forestry Council (MCFC) continues to grow as an organization. In 2006 a fantastic conference was hosted with over 200 people in attendance. For many years MCFC had partnered with the Missouri Parks and Recreation Association (MPRA) to offer an annual conference. Due to the size of the MPRA conference and the associated space limitations, MCFC elected to separate their organization and offer a stand alone conference. Attendance at previous conferences has hovered around 70 people, so the jump in registration was astounding. The St. Louis Regional MCFC group worked hard to offer a broad pallet of topics and engaging speakers.

Comprehensive Natural Resource Management

An astounding 11 community tree inventories were undertaken by Missouri municipalities through assistance from the Tree Resource Improvement & Maintenance (TRIM) cost share program. These eleven projects were part of the forty-one total projects were funded through TRIM in 2006. The projects utilized a total of \$304,293 in state funds and leveraged \$232,763 in local resources. A bonus cost share percentage rate is available to communities which are certified by The National Arbor Day Foundation as a Tree City USA. This “carrot” has proven effective in promoting both the Tree City USA program as well as comprehensive natural resource management in communities. Five new communities joined the Tree City USA program in 2005 and an impressive 15 communities earned Tree City USA Growth Awards. Many of the activities undertaken to earn the Growth Award were enabled by funding through the TRIM program.

Community Forestry Planning

Through a convenience contract an individual was hired to assist communities with developing planting and tree management plans for specific sites of interest. Through this convenience contract, seven communities received a detailed tree plan for a specific site of interest.



Eco Elvis makes a special appearance at an Arbor Day Tree Planting in Kansas City's Ivanhoe neighborhood.