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Rhode Island's 2006 Accomplishment Report

Introduction

A key goal of the Rhode Island Urban and Community Forestry Program is to restore, and maintain our green infrastructure. We encourage cities and towns to develop an Urban and Community Forest Plan and to incorporate this into their city and or town comprehensive plan. We also maintain strong partnerships with community tree groups, the Rhode Island Tree Council and other municipal and state partners by promoting tree planting, tree inventories and urban forestry educational events.

The Rhode Island Division of Forest Environment is building an urban and community forestry constituency through alliances with the non profit Rhode Island Tree Council, city and town Tree Societies and Tree Committees, an army of tree stewards, and a well informed Rhode Island legislature and executive branch.

City of Warwick - Warwick, Rhode Island is the second most populated community in a state. Since 1999 they have been a Tree City USA and in 2000 qualified for the growth award from the National Arbor Day Foundation as one of the best and expanded programs in the country. In 2004, the city cut its tree planting allocation drastically. The landscape staff approached the state forestry division and the tree council about solutions. It was discussed with them a new and innovative system of a pot in a pot nursery. This system would allow them to buy whips, plant them and in a couple of years have them to a size that they could plant them on city streets. The city received a grant from the America the Beautiful program to use as seed monies. The major reason for awarding the grant was the realization that this program would be a great cost savings to the community, but also a great educational tool to others wanting to venture into this type of endeavor.

2006 Arbor Day - A total of 92 Arbor Day events were held across Rhode Island in 2006 under the RI Tree Council's "*Trees Are Cool*" program. Besides tree planting festivities, many of these events featured guest speakers, music, and refreshments. They were organized by businesses, local government agencies, non-profits, and volunteers. For the 4th year in a row most of all 39 Rhode Island cities and towns participated, with several holding multiple celebrations. The "*Trees Are Cool*" program provides free trees, mulch, and planning assistance to any applicant willing to conduct an Arbor Day celebration on public land. Financial support was from RI Tree, the Federation of Rhode Island Garden Clubs, and a private nonprofit group. Technical support was available through the RIDEM-Division of Forest Environment.

One of the major events was the celebrating of a tree planting ceremony at State Forestry Headquarters celebrating the 100th year anniversary of forestry in the state. Rhode Island celebrates Arbor Day on the last Friday in April.

Forestry Outreach - With the environmental education program now being under the umbrella of urban forestry, there is more opportunity for outreach in the adult education arena, besides our standard programs for tree stewards and the general public. Training was conducted for the state's 600 plus licensed arborists. This year's programs included a PDA workshop to help communities conduct tree inventories, a course on basic arboriculture, and a workshop entitled "Storms over the Urban Forest" - a program to help communities with storm preparedness and response. We still continue a fall and spring tree steward program. Last year's pilot program with the Department of Transportation maintenance crews has been expanded to an annual program to train 100 workers on safety issues, planting, pruning, and invasive species.

Internship/Minority Training - Last year we reported on the Rau Fastener Planting Project which was a project to rehabilitate a neighborhood by plantings and improving housing. This summer high school students from this area participated in a program called Summer Sweeps, where they were introduced to Urban Ecology through a series of lectures and field trips throughout the state. This program was geared to have students develop a better appreciation for natural resources and the urban environment.

Introductory Tree Worker Class - Arboriculture businesses are always looking for new and ambitious employees, but have a tough time finding them. The Center to Advance Minority Participation in the Construction Industry, RIDEM Division of forest Environment, RI Tree Council, Local Arborists and National Grid have developed the Tree Worker Program. The purpose of the training is to provide the students with the basic knowledge and skills needed to enter the industry as an entry level tree worker or laborer. In April of this year the first class of 19 students graduated and now almost all have been placed with tree companies in the state.

Franciscan Missionaries of Mary - A 15 acre tract of land on the border between Providence and North Providence is where this mini arboretum is located. In an effort to assess and manage the area, the Mission contact the Rhode Island Tree Council. The partnership that developed has been nothing short of miraculous. The plant material has been inventoried, memorial plantings done, and notable trees and landscaped areas revitalized. The buildings and ground are an exceptional location to conduct tree steward classes and other workshops.

Statistical Highlights

Number of Communities	40
Communities Assisted	30
Sustained Communities	10
Tree City USA	09
Volunteer hours	6688
Federal Support	\$200,000
State and Local Match	\$382,490