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Vermont's 2006 Accomplishment Report

Introduction

The Vermont Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) program's mission is to promote the stewardship of urban and rural forest landscapes to enhance the quality of life in Vermont communities. This mission recognizes the need to address environmental, economic and social values of forests from the urban core, to suburban developments, to rural forestland. The program assists in developing sustainable local programs by providing technical and financial assistance, information and education. The program team consists of the State Coordinator, a Community Involvement Coordinator and five District Urban and Community Foresters. The Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Council works in partnership with the state to identify the state's UCF needs and determine program direction.

Issues / Opportunities - Yearly, as we work to engage local communities in urban and community forestry, we observe many communities who are gaining ground while others are waning. Our goal is to assist in the creation of community programs that will eventually become self sustaining. However, community dynamics are in constant flux with leadership changes or budgets constraints. Such changes will even affect our most long standing successful programs. This is why it is important for our program to maintain contact with communities and continue to stay engaged at all program levels. By recognizing the need to maintain annual communication with communities, we hope to be there when opportunities or needs arise. We offer perennial workshops, periodical publications, frequent listserv notifications, but most importantly we try to provide one-on-one correspondence and by having a geographically dispersed workforce, it allows the ability to make site visits. Recognizing the value of perpetual communication, we will continue to work on ways to increase this important tool. Each of the community highlights below focuses on the various reasons communities get engaged or re-engaged in urban and community forestry. They also showcase how our communication tools allowed us to act on the opportunity.

Potential Tree Removal Brings the Community Together - Often, what brings about a community's awareness of the benefits of having an active urban forestry program is an event that has a negative impact on the resource. The Town of Randolph learned of the benefits of having an active urban forestry program the hard way. While in the past, Randolph had an active program, with a change in leadership and loss of key volunteers, the UCF program took a back seat to other local priorities. This past year, a large crabapple tree was slated to be removed to accommodate the expansion of a municipal building. There was a resounding response from the community in favor of protecting the tree. Concerned about the fate of other trees in Randolph, the Conservation Commission contacted the UCF staff to begin a dialogue about long term care of the Town's urban landscape. The outcome: the Conservation Commission applied for and received a state UCF grant to conduct a comprehensive inventory and write a management plan. A local arborist has offered his time to work with several other volunteers to conduct an inventory of trees in their town. Instead of harboring on the possible loss of one tree, this Town is moving forward to

recognize the value of all their trees. The UCF program will provide assistance periodically throughout the inventory, development of the management plan and implementation thereafter.

Volunteers Comb the City Looking At Trees - With two consecutive grants from the state UCF grant program, the City of St. Albans has taken to the streets to conduct a city wide inventory. This comes after the City determined, in order to stimulate revitalization of its' downtown, it needed to address the declining condition of the City's urban forest. For many years, our staff has been working to get the City of St. Albans to take charge of their public tree resource. With limited funds and lack of City staff, the revitalization group turned to their new volunteer Tree Warden Jeff Young for assistance. Jeff, a frequent participant in the UCF program's educational workshops, recruited our assistance as well as fellow master gardeners to comb the streets to assess the City trees and green spaces. Since then, it is easy to pick out a Master Gardener on the streets because they are walking around looking up at the trees. Jeff and the Master Gardeners recognized the trees needed more care than the City could currently afford and have now taken on the role of citizen pruners. This coalition of tree enthusiasts is very progressive and they have just begun to switch all there data to the new i-Tree software with the assistance of UCF staff. St. Albans has definitely recognized the value of green to their City and we are glad they knew who to call for assistance.

Non Stop Enthusiasm - Last year we reported on the development of a strategic urban forestry management plan for the Town of Williston. This community has experienced a 56% population increase in the last ten years resulting in many new housing developments and hundreds of new public trees. The development of such a plan is only valuable if the community embraces it and acts on the recommendations. UCF staff has been there to help with several high priority objectives identified in this comprehensive plan. With funding from a state UCF grant, they are updating an old tree ordinance, developing planting and maintenance specifications for both in-house and contract work, and inventorying outlying areas that were not included in an original inventory. One of the key findings in the report was to retain professional staff. We have been working to encourage the Town to move in this direction for many years. This year, discussions have begun on how to internally train or hire professional staff. There seems to be no end to the enthusiasm which has carried the Town this far. We expect them to serve as a model for other communities experiencing this rate of growth. UCF staff is committed to maintaining the momentum in this community. If their enthusiasm or other circumstances cause their program to wane, we will be there to guide them.



Nightfall doesn't stop the learning. Here, Gary Salmon, District Urban and Community Forester, instructs the 2006 class of the Stewardship of the Urban Landscape how to properly plant a tree.

Budding artists display their Arbor Day posters with Vermont's Governor, Jim Douglas at the 2006 Arbor Day Ceremony.



Volunteers in the Town of Brandon collect the DBH on this large tree while conducting a town tree inventory this summer.