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## **West Virginia's 2006 Accomplishment Report**

### **Introduction**

The West Virginia Urban and Community Forestry Program began in 1991 with the mission of encouraging municipal governments to begin providing long-term care for trees on public property across West Virginia. Three positions comprise the full time urban forestry staff and deliver the program statewide to cities and towns. The Urban Forestry Coordinator, Bob Hannah, is responsible for overall program administration. The Technical Specialist, Jennifer Brashears, educates community tree care providers with a variety of skills and knowledge necessary to successfully manage their urban forest. The Partnership Coordinator, Andy Sheetz, develops financial partnerships from corporate sponsors to fund community tree care activities as well as coordinating volunteer programs. Additional program assistance is provided by Division of Forestry Landowner Assistance Foresters.

Although the state UCF program continues to be challenged by a decreasing program budget and lack of dedicated state funding for urban forestry, the recent reorganization of the Division of Forestry has allowed a limited contribution to municipal tree care programs by Landowner Assistance Foresters.

Additional accomplishments have resulted from U.S. Forest Service scholarships which allowed four municipal employees to become Certified Arborists in the fall of 2006. Charles Town (1), Moorefield (1) and Parkersburg (2) sent staffers to a study class before taking the exam. The state Technical Specialist has also taken the exam and will add a Certified Arborist to the state staff.

### **Program Components**

- Grants and Resource Assistance
  - Demonstration City Grants
  - Cool Community Grants
- Awareness and Outreach
  - Tree City USA
  - Personal Contacts
- Technical Assistance
  - Technical Specialist
  - Workshops and Training
  - Educational material
- Partnerships
  - Municipal Tree Restoration Program
  - Corporate Sponsorship
- Volunteer Participation
  - Tree Advocacy Organizations
  - Mountaineer Treeways



Outreach and awareness are essential elements of the West Virginia urban forestry program. Bob Hannah helps celebrate Arbor Day in Follansbee, WV with Kassidi Reitter, the 2nd place Arbor Day Poster Contest winner for the state and Follansbee Mayor Paesano.

## **A Green Welcome for West Virginia Visitors -- 2006 Mountaineer Treeways**

In 2006, the Mountaineer Treeways Program distributed approximately 3,400 tree seedlings and 58 1" caliper trees to 26 volunteer groups across the state. The trees and tree seedlings were made possible through generous donations from Dow Chemical Foundation (\$5,000.00) and Appalachian Electric Power (\$1,000.00). Two hundred ninety-four volunteers contributed 2,641 hours to plant and care for the trees and tree seedlings statewide.

Boy Scout Troop 91 applied to Mountaineer Treeways for a seedling project at the Falling Waters rest area near Martinsburg, WV. This is the first rest area motorists encounter in WV on the southbound side of Interstate 81 in the Eastern Panhandle. Working with the WV Division of Highways, Boy Scout Troop 91 planned a tree planting and received permission to plant eleven of the larger trees at the rest area. West Virginia Division of Highways provided and installed a Mountaineer Treeways sign which recognizes the efforts of the scouts.

The City of Petersburg's Tree Board planted twelve trees at Michael Brothers Park. Six volunteers donated twelve hours to the planted the trees. WV DOH donated and erected a Mountaineer Treeways sign at this location also.

The Morgan County Commission planted 300 tree seedlings at various locations throughout the county. Most locations were abandoned floodplain property recently obtain by the county. Sixty-two volunteers, donating 200 hours, planted the trees. WV Division of Forestry employee, Herb Peddicord, Morgan County Management Forester, organized the event.

## **Small Town Finds Big Values -- Summersville Forestry Council**

Summersville is a small city in south-central West Virginia that has realized the large benefit of managing their urban forest. First, community volunteers began by organizing and participating in several tree planting events sponsored by the Division of Forestry. These volunteers soon realized that more work and organization were needed and started communicating this to city officials. In 2004, a tree board was formed and conducted monthly meetings to become organized and to initiate various tree care activities.

Summersville has recently developed a municipal tree ordinance and will achieve Tree City USA status in 2007. The city has made significant improvements in its capacity to manage its urban forest in only 2 short years. This has been accomplished by taking advantage of numerous grants, forming partnerships, and through the dedication of local volunteers. Summersville has built a solid foundation to ensure a healthy and attractive community forest for many years to come.

Current year highlights in Summersville include:

- Mountaineer Treeways volunteer tree planting initiative resulting in the planting of 45 trees. This involved encouraging and organizing scout troops, students and local citizens to for tree planting and maintenance activities.



Volunteers relax during a Mountaineer Treeways planting event.



Reviewing planting plans in Summersville, WV

- Demonstration City Grant for \$5,370 that funded a professional public tree inventory, management plan and tree management software.
- Cool Community Grant for \$3,056 to plant 36 trees to cool the parking lots at the new National Guard Armory and Convention Center. The completed project will provide numerous trees to address heat island issues and mitigate temperatures.
- Developed and adopted city's first public tree ordinance.

### **Strong Foundations Support Community Trees -- Technical Publications**

A guide for selecting and properly planting trees for a variety of West Virginia planting sites was developed by the West Virginia Urban and Community Forestry Technical Specialist. The "Choosing & Planting Trees for Cities and Communities" brochure was published with a grant from West Virginia State University. It has been widely distributed to municipalities and community tree boards as well as being utilized for workshops and training.

The state has also developed a manual for municipalities establishing Community Tree Banks to provide a cost-effective source of trees. The manual covers topics such as: "Pot In Pot" propagation, field production, irrigation, pest control and a materials list. This publication resulted from an on-going effort involving the Town of Moorefield, Hardy County Parks and the Division of Forestry. The manual will be utilized to encourage other communities to begin establishing tree banks.