

Accomplishment Report 2007 – Wisconsin

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Introduction

The mission of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) urban forestry (UF) program is to encourage, enable and enhance sound management of Wisconsin's urban forest ecosystems. The DNR provides UF technical, financial and promotional assistance to local governments, nonprofit organizations, businesses and other interested groups through its Urban Forestry Working Group. Led by a state coordinator, a grant manager, six regional coordinators and seven half-time specialists, statewide policy development and implementation is managed with a team approach in partnership with the Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council.

Critical Issues

Emerald Ash Borer

Bi-weekly meetings of the emerald ash borer (EAB) multi-agency working group focused efforts on directing policy and resource development. A joint meeting of DNR UF & Forest Health, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP), University of Wisconsin Extension, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), and USDA Forest Service on EAB preparation and response identified both progress by all agencies and gaps that need to be addressed. UF provided information on EAB impact on Wisconsin's urban forests for DATCP Secretary Nilsestuen's congressional visit in Washington DC. Other actions included a lead article for the Wisconsin Urban & Community Forests newsletter. Reprint requests were subsequently received from several states.

EAB Outreach

Can you say EAB Toolkit? A monumental amount of time was spent by DNR staff to complete this project in time for the Wisconsin Arborist Association (WAA) / DNR Annual UF Conference Workshop. This first-of-its-kind resource is designed to provide information in preparation for emerald ash borer. UF staff led this effort with content support provided by DNR Forestry, DATCP, UW-Extension, USDA Forest Service and the UF programs of Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana. The toolkit is available at <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/uf/eab>. A mechanism was also developed for those who currently have a toolkit to update items as revisions become available.

Milwaukee County Parks and DNR co-sponsored an EAB Summit. The 3-hour workshop pulled together participants from southeast Wisconsin representing municipal, county, state and non-profit organizations. Presenters from DNR, DATCP, USDA Forest Service, APHIS and UW provided the latest information on biology, identification, management, surveys, firewood rules, plans and lessons learned along with a

resource packet. Other Summits in Green Bay and Beloit had 100 attendees. These summits provided a great venue to get the information out and represented another successful partnership for UF.

Throughout the year other informational EAB meetings were presented by DNR Forest Health/Pest Management personnel, UW-Extension, DATCP and Natural Resource Conservation Service. Within the west central area at least seven municipalities are actively preparing for emerald ash borer via inventories, public awareness/education campaigns, preparedness/response plans, & staff training. EAB has people's attention! Forty people, including communities that have not regularly participated, attended an informational meeting that featured presentations by DNR, DATCP, USDA Forest Service and UW-Extension. Overall, 195 participants attended the meetings including UF consultants, city foresters, tree services, utilities, village presidents & council members along with county extension agents and nursery representatives

Bus Trip to Illinois

The Dane County Tree Board and DNR sponsored an EAB tour to Kane County, IL. The agenda included meeting with local, state and federal officials dealing with EAB in Illinois as well as a hands-on session with bark peeling of infested logs. A wealth of information was shared among the 38 participants who included Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council members.



Participants in the Illinois bus tour watch closely as an emerald ash borer-infested log has its bark peeled.

Leadership and Networking

In the southeast four communities are conducting tree inventories spurred on by EAB and the need to know details (number, location, condition and size) of public ash trees. One of the EAB Readiness Plan UF grants provided by DNR involves four North Shore communities (Brown Deer, Bayside, River Hills and Fox Point) and Schlitz Audubon Nature Center. This consortium will also develop a regional public information and educational program and determine possible marshalling yards/staging sites.

The municipal networking group for Wisconsin's Northeast Region (NEWUFWG) organized a workshop to train staff on pruning small street trees (up to 10 years old). The program was targeted to staff that do not have any formal training in tree care. A local arborist company volunteered time to instruct the training program. Two, day-long programs were offered. In total 43 people attended from 10 different communities.

Funding Support

In Waupaca, Wood, and Portage Counties Golden Sands RC&D worked to erect three billboards on three different highways during April & May urging folks to not prune oaks from April - July. Residents were directed to the Golden Sands Home website which had a direct link to the DNR oak wilt page.

The oldest incorporated Village in Wisconsin – Sauk City (pop. ~ 3,100) received a UF grant to conduct a street tree inventory and develop a municipal tree ordinance. Sauk City intends to become a Tree City USA and develop a community forestry program. They are also working on a highway reconstruction project to minimize the impacts on a signature stand of oaks in the community.

The City of Adams (pop ~ 2,000) received tree species advice for their USDA Rural Development grant to reconstruct three miles of city streets due to sewer & water work. This enabled the city to narrow many

of the streets, which in turn widened the boulevards and terraces from 6' - 13' in width. The city used some of the funding for tree planting. Even though the streets were narrowed many trees still had to be removed and a spring planting was planned.

Urban Assessment

An urban canopy pilot project was completed for the City of Middleton. The project used high-resolution satellite imagery to delimit land cover classes throughout the city. CITYgreen software was then used to quantify the benefits of the urban forest at current levels and projected using increased canopy scenarios.

The results of the Urban Forest Health Monitoring pilot study were received from the US Forest Service. The DNR will assess the results of the urban pilot study in conjunction with the programmatic spatial UF definition and UW Stevens Point to develop a statewide assessment method. The assessment will likely work on a 5-year rotation to provide a continuously updating database of Wisconsin's urban forest components.

Legislation

Governor Doyle signed Assembly Bill 36 into law by on May 30, 2007. It is now 2007 Wisconsin Act 13 <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/2007/data/acts/07Act13.pdf>. The law allows the WDNR to expedite urban forestry grants to communities following catastrophic storm damage in an urban area for which the governor has declared a state of emergency. Testimony by Dick Rideout, UF Coordinator, and Jim Warren, DNR Land Management section chief, and others at legislative hearings on the bill resulted in unanimous passage in all committees and houses and signature by the Governor. Governor Doyle thanked Representatives Mary Williams and Barbara Gronemus, as well as Senator Robert Wirth, for their work on the bill.

UF Advocacy

The voice and role of the Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council has been amplified through increased leadership and organizational development. The Council identified & ranked urban forestry critical issues within program goals of public awareness; technical support and management; and advocacy and program support, and will use the results to focus study and action. Based on these identified issues and backed by the Urban Forest Health Monitoring data quantifying the value and benefits of Wisconsin's urban forests, the Council has increased dialog with local, state and national decision makers on the benefits provided by Wisconsin's urban forest resource.

Statistics

Managing and Developing Communities:	246
Population of Participating Communities:	2,940,230
Volunteer Assistance generated (hours):	10,583