

Accomplishment Report 2007 – Indiana

November 2007

State Contact

Pamela Louks

Department of Natural Resources

Division of Forestry

6515 E. 82nd Street, Suite 204

Indianapolis, IN 46250

Phone: (317) 915-9390

Fax: (317) 915-9392

E-mail: plouks@dnr.IN.gov

Web site: <http://www.IN.gov/dnr/forestry>

Introduction

The Community and Urban Forestry (CUF) program provides statewide leadership to increase public awareness of the value of trees within a community's urban natural resource. According to Lt. Governor Becky Skillman, over 71% of Hoosiers live in urban areas. The CUF program assists and encourages Indiana communities in efforts to protect, expand, and improve urban forests. This assistance takes the form of reducing the impacts of land use change by preserving, conserving, and restoring the urban forest, development of urban forestry response plans, and strategically planting trees to aid in climate change and energy conservation issues. The program strives to help citizens make the connection between rural and urban forests and to incorporate the ideology that the urban forest is part of the community infrastructure. CUF achieves its mission by nurturing and forming a variety of partnerships throughout the state with its innovative grant programs.

Issues

- The need for urban forestry technical assistance is growing, and with limited staff and funds, we are unable to meet those needs due to the lack of urban natural resource awareness and financial resources from state, county, and local governments.
- Lack of municipal dollars to address even the most basic infrastructure issues; many small and medium towns in Indiana have crumbling gray and green infrastructure. They have no money to address these issues.
- Lack of 'future thinking' awareness regarding the "multi-purpose tool" use of trees to aid in current and future environmental stresses.

Opportunities

- With the lack of municipal dollars, our grant programs become even more important. We continue to work on seeking funds to pass through to these municipalities and work hard to connect them to potential partners and funds in their areas.
- The aging infrastructure and the new water standards give us a perfect opportunity to encourage the green connection to help with storm water costs; air quality etc.
- With the onslaught of so many entities getting on the "green bandwagon," this is a perfect time to find new, non-standard partners to address using trees as a multi-purpose tool to help the environment.

Key Accomplishments

Partnerships & Awareness/Outreach

ALCOA Foundation Tree Planting projects, Statewide

Purpose: The CUF Program was awarded a \$100,000 grant from the ALCOA Foundation to plant trees throughout the state on public property. We awarded funds to 13 communities who are in the process of planting 1,331 trees throughout the state. Each project had to include a media component, partners, and volunteers. To date, three of the projects have been completed with the rest slated for completion by June 2008. The project generated media interest in the corporate sector with newscast blurbs given by National Public Radio stations.

Urban Forestry Management Course, Indiana University, School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA)

Purpose: Dr. Burnell Fischer established an urban forestry management course at IU/SPEA with grant funds. This environmental public policy school was the perfect fit for this course which now has two semesters under its belt. The class has doubled in size, and the university has made the decision to permanently add the course to its SPEA curriculum. National, state, and local urban forestry professionals speak throughout the course. Students completed a public tree inventory of Bloomington using the I-tree Suite of tools, and eight students have been placed in urban forestry internships for various entities or advanced to full-time, entry-level career positions in urban forestry.

Reaching Out

TREES INDIANA, Northeast Indiana/Fort Wayne (Indiana's second largest city)

Purpose: Youth Greening Communities: Trees Indiana's mission is to inspire and educate Indiana's youth to become stewards who plant, protect and maintain their community trees. The start-up of this new non-profit has been very successful in its first year with 2,577 volunteer hours reported. One of their many program offerings is the **TreeKeeper Ultimate Journey Program**. Partnering with The Boys and Girls Club of Fort Wayne, Trees Indiana works with youth ages 6-12. Through education, youth are inspired to take action on behalf of the environment by planting trees in their neighborhoods.



*TREES INDIANA youth count tree rings
Photo: TREES INDIANA*



Greencastle Street Department plants ceremonial Veterans Memorial Tree on the parkway.

Greencastle Veterans Memorial Highway, Greencastle

Purpose: This project has created interest in the urban forestry program on a city-wide basis. The project honors veterans from all wars when a family or friend pays for a tree to honor a veteran. The trees are purchased and planted in a city-wide event on Arbor Day along a new highway in the community which is called the Veterans Memorial Highway. The event has grown exponentially and will end up adding to the urban forest of this community and engaging more people to support trees in Greencastle.

**Comprehensive Natural Resource Management
Indianapolis Reference City project, Marion County**

Purpose: Lower Midwest tree planting benefits, costs, and economic benefits. We partnered with INDY Parks with federal funding dollars and tree steward volunteers to assist with information gathering for this project.

Erosion control workshops for contractors and developers, North Central Indiana

Purpose: The CUF program was invited to present our new publication *Protecting Trees During Construction and Trees and Species Tolerances to Construction Stress* at the required Elkhart County erosion control workshop for contractors and developers. More than 70 contractors and developers heard about trees, their value to stormwater projects, how to protect them, and species to incorporate. The reaction was positive and has spurred some of the participants to ask for more information regarding urban forestry. Comments from the contractors and developers ranged from, “I have had to mitigate with trees to the tune of over \$100,000, and was happy to do it,” to “I did not know there were ways to protect or lists that explained the sensitivity and tolerance of specific species.” Getting this information to groups we do not normally talk to is crucial and leads to the protection and conservation of urban natural resources and the urban forest.

Inventories, Statewide

Purpose: Through our federal grant program, we were able to fund seven inventories, five management plans, and two work plans. In addition, 2 inventories were done by CUF staff bringing the inventory total for this year to 10 with 1 city financing their own. Of these 11, 6 are layered into the geographic information system (GIS) base. In addition, three existing inventories were layered into new community GIS bases. Out of 568 cities and towns, 61 now have inventories, most of which were done with federal funds passed through by CUF.

Program Highlights

Managing and developing communities:	82
Population of participating communities:	3,464,093
Volunteer Assistance generated (hours):	37,115
Tree City USA:	56
Tree City Growth Awards:	11