Accomplishment Report 2007 – Maine

October 15, 2007

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Program Overview

Project Canopy, Maine's Urban and Community forestry (UCF) program, heightens public awareness of the community forest – what it is, and why it is important. The program promotes comprehensive community forest management and builds and supports sustainable local community forestry programs.

In the past year, Project Canopy worked with the Project Canopy Leadership Team, Maine's Tree City USA communities and field staff to increase public, government, and elected official awareness of the value of community forests and Project Canopy. During Arbor Week 2007, program staff hosted the most well-organized and attended awards ceremony in years. The event highlighted the economic and ecological benefits of UCF, demonstrating those benefits by using several specimen trees at the State House. Each tree was quantified using the STRATUM program and a large price tag was placed on the trunk. Representative Ted Koffman, Chair, Committee on Natural Resources, provided the keynote. The governor and dozens of state representatives were in attendance for the program.

Though the Project Canopy director position was vacant the first four months of the fiscal year, and the community forestry specialist was out on maternity leave, the program staff maintained assistance to participating communities and engaged additional non-participatory communities.

Issues/Opportunities

Maine is at a critical juncture in its economic growth. Both the general public and our elected officials have come to the realization that scattershot development threatens to undermine the value or "brand" that we call Maine. In the last 15 years, an area the size of Rhode Island has been converted from farms and forest to scattered house lots and subdivisions. Some 70 percent of Mainers now live outside town centers and cities. This has happened while our population was hardly growing. In recognition of this, the governor has created the Council on Maine's Quality of Place, which among other things will propose investments "that will ensure the long-term protection and enhancement of Maine's quality places." Several bond packages have already been approved, and others are pending election this November, that

will make investments in riverfront community development, historic preservation, and parks and trails. The challenge to Project Canopy will be to make UCF a relevant part of the discussion on preserving and enhancing quality places. These bonds also provide an opportunity to leverage the federal investment in UCF projects with state and local funding.

Funding

In 2006 and 2007, Maine's Project Canopy Assistance program funded 35 projects demonstrating sustainable urban and community forest management, 10 of which were with communities that were previously non-participatory. Of the 35 projects, 7 used the funding to create sustainable urban forest management plans for town owned woodlands. Another five communities are using the funding for street tree inventory and management plans. The remaining 23 cost-share grants were used to fund a variety of projects including downtown district tree planting enhancements, vacant lot enhancement and city nursery improvements. The Project Canopy Assistance Program continues to be one of the best tools to reach out to those communities not participating in the program, as well as those that are participating but not yet fully managing their community forest resources.

Training

Project Canopy continues to prioritize education and training for volunteers and city staff. An educated citizenry is the most effective tool to create viable, sustainable local UCF programs.

In 2006 and 2007 Project Canopy worked with state and regional partners to deliver training to 186 adult program participants. We partnered with the New England Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture and the Maine Arborists Association to offer technical training on the topic of climbing and rigging safety. Thirty participants attended the full-day training facilitated by leading experts Bruce Duffy and Melissa LaVangie. This was the second training co-sponsored by Project Canopy and the Maine Arborists Association. Both organizations have observed the lack of opportunity for arborists and professional municipal staff to enhance their skills through attending local seminars. Many such programs are offered out of state, at a considerable distance and expense for people to travel. Both Project Canopy and the Maine Arborist Association intend to continue collaborating to offer technical programs locally to enhance the skills of our client base.

Community Projects:

Bangor

The City of Bangor is ambitiously taking on not one, but three projects this year. Starting from the foundation, the city will be making upgrades to the Grandview Nursery. Started in the 1970's under then-Forester Rolland Perry, the Grandview Nursery has provided the city with a sustainable and cost effective source of nursery stock. The city plans to expand the acreage, doubling the size of the existing nursery. At the same time they plan to extend the irrigation system, incorporate educational signage, and increase the space between plantings to more efficiently dig trees using mechanical means. The City of Bangor is going through a renaissance period, and the products of the nursery are in high demand for stormwater projects, park and recreational areas, and waterfront and open space developments.

Secondly, the city forester along with the Tree Board would like to increase involvement, and raise awareness with residents and business owners of the urban forest resource. The city will hold a series of public strategic planning visioning sessions. Alongside that, the city will be updating and enhancing the current tree inventory, and planting trees in a barren arterial corridor that connects an inner city neighborhood with the downtown community.

Lastly, the city will be working with an outside contractor to conduct pruning of 66 mature shade trees that are currently too tall for the City Forestry Department to address.

L.C. Bates Museum and Arboretum
The Good Care for Young Trees project goal is to inform the community about the care of young ornamental and shade trees. The museum will develop and implement ongoing school and community programs that will use the young trees in the collection at the L.C. Bates Arboretum to demonstrate and teach the care of immature urban trees. The science educator will develop and present the programs, which will include:

- An ongoing indoor/outdoor discovery program
- A tour and inspection of the young arboretum trees
- Seasonal tree care demonstrations and hands-on activities designed to engage the community in understanding tree care
- A cable TV-7 program of the Good Care for Young Trees program
- A special event to introduce the new program to the public
- A self-guided backpack tree care exploration kit

Mature trees in the arboretum will be used to demonstrate the results of correct and improper tree care.

Portland
The City of Portland Parks and Recreation Department maintains several city-owned forested parklands. Currently none of the woodland areas have an inventory or management plan. This project will inventory and plan for 4 of the forest areas including Mayor Baxter Woods (30 acres), Baxter Pines (4 acres), Pine Grove Park (6.5 acres), and Evergreen Cemetery Woodlands (100 acres) for an overall total of 140.5 acres. The goals of Portland's forest plan are to inventory and map current conditions, and develop short-term and long-term strategies for the management of the woodlands. A public relations component will be included in the process in order to educate the public on the forest plan. A public meeting will be held to inform constituents on the findings before making final recommendations. Currently uses include recreation, ecological and environmental education, wildlife habitat, and open space. Threats to the woodlands include invasive species, overuse, and competing land use. Establishing a forest plan for these areas is vital to protecting these resources for the future.

Maine Forest Service Forester Peter Lammert holds seedlings to be distributed at the Friendship Village School; a tree, located behind him, will be planted in honor of 2007 NADF poster contest winner Kelsea Wotton.

Statistics

Number of people living in communities provided educational, technical and/or financial assistance: 750,930
Number of both actively managing and developing communities provided assistance: 113
Volunteer assistance generated (hours): 6,628
Tree City USA communities: 14
Tree City USA growth awards: 2