

Accomplishment Report 2007 – Pennsylvania

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State Program Overview

The Pennsylvania Urban & Community Forestry Program (PAUCF) is a partnership between the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry and Pennsylvania State University Extension Urban Forestry Program. Program coordination is provided by the central office of the Bureau of Forestry. Technical assistance is provided to communities primarily through five extension urban foresters, with additional assistance from Bureau of Forestry service foresters in the more heavily developed parts of the state. “Pennsylvania Community Forests” is a non-profit organization that advises the state on program direction, and provides a mechanism for disbursing grant funds to communities. The PAUCF is largely supported with funding from the U.S. Forest Service, which also provides valuable technical assistance to the State. The mission of the program is to help communities develop comprehensive and sustainable urban forestry programs to enhance quality of life.

In 2007 assistance was provided by extension urban foresters and/or service foresters to 505 Pennsylvania communities. In total counts, 1,807 “substantial assists” (face-to-face) and 38,626 “non-substantial assists” (mail, e-mail) were provided. Workshops at least three hours in length numbered 105 in 2007, while 155 shorter presentations were offered.

Every year about 5000 people receive two issues of the newsletter Urban Forestry News and two issues of the magazine Sylvan Communities, publications of Pennsylvania Community Forests. People use these publications to increase their knowledge and awareness of urban and community forestry. A new web site, www.patrees.org, which is a clearinghouse of tree related web resources for homeowners and tree enthusiasts, has been developed.

Program Highlights

Connecting Trees to Water Quality and Stormwater Management

Following the floods of 2006 a series of short seminars was developed by the extension urban forester for northeastern Pennsylvania that focused on the important role that trees and forests play in maintaining healthy watersheds and reducing stormwater runoff and the costs of flood events. A total of 12, 3-hour programs were delivered in various counties and municipalities reaching 690 people. Included in these programs was a train-the-trainer session for Penn State Master Gardeners which provided scripted

PowerPoint slides sets and printed materials that would allow them to replicate the watershed programs in their home counties. Another 3-hour seminar developed in partnership with Wilkes University, the Luzerne Conservation District, and the North Branch Land Trust, titled “Managing Stormwater in Our Communities,” had more than 70 people in attendance from 14 different municipalities and various engineering firms, conservation districts, and watershed associations.

UFORE Study of Effect of Tree Loss

In partnership with the U.S. Forest Service Experimental Station in Syracuse, the extension urban forester for northeast Pennsylvania recently completed an urban forest effects model (UFORE) hydrology study of Toby’s Creek. This creek is in a small urbanizing watershed outside of the City of Wilkes-Barre that has experienced rapid development in the past 20 years. This watershed study illustrated that tree canopy went from 57 percent in 1992 to 54 percent in 2005 with an average annual increase in runoff of 2 percent and a 3.3 percent increase in runoff for the 1-hour peak. The existing tree canopy cover of 54 percent in the Toby Creek watershed accounted for an 11 percent reduction in stormwater runoff and the pollutants associated with runoff.

Providing Training Opportunities for a Green Industry in Need

The care and management of municipal trees and forests is provided in large part by tree workers, arborists, and landscapers. Training is critical and in demand by professionals wanting to increase their knowledge and improve practices. The extension urban forester for northeastern Pennsylvania provides various training opportunities throughout the year such as the four day Arborist Short Course that was attended by 45 professionals, many of whom are preparing for the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist exam; a two-day Landscape Invasive Pest Management (IPM) & Pesticide Safety Workshop; and Pruning/Tree Risk Assessment/Safety workshops for electric utility line clearance crews and Pennsylvania Department of Transportation crews. A total of 1,095 green industry professionals attended extension programs focused on arboriculture, IPM, safety, and elevating the industries work standards.

Tree Tender Trainings for TreeVitalize

In partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resource’s (DCNR) TreeVitalize initiative, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and others, and with \$4 million in funding from the Pennsylvania DCNR, William Penn Foundation, and other sponsors, 512 people enjoyed 9 hours of hands-on training covering tree biology, planting and care, identification, and how to work within your community. Evaluations indicated participants would plant at least 576 trees. Follow-up showed plantings of more than 852 new trees and more than \$2,500 was raised for tree-related projects to meet the program goals of increasing tree cover. Additionally, two attendees started local shade tree commissions in Collingdale Borough and Upper Chichester Township this year.

Pittsburgh Urban Forestry Program Grows

The extension urban forester in southwest Pennsylvania continues to provide support, education, and technical assistance to the Pittsburgh Shade Tree Commission (PSTC) and the newly formed and financed non-profit, Friends of the Pittsburgh Urban Forest. Working together, these two groups have been making significant progress toward implementing the new management plan for Pittsburgh’s urban forest.

With funds raised through local foundations, the Friends group has hired two full-time staff members: an executive director and a university-trained urban forester. Contracts for priority-one removals, priority-one hazard pruning, and bare root tree planting are being administered by the Friends’ new forester. The staff has also expanded the Tree Tender program to a full 12 hours of training. After attending four, 3-hour evening classes and a Saturday field day, the first group of 49 volunteers graduated this fall.

A new urban forester has also been hired in the Pittsburgh Department of City Planning with funding approved by the PSTC. Responsibilities include participation in development and redevelopment projects in the city to assure best practices in regard to any trees involved; updating the city tree ordinance and integrating other ordinances pertaining to trees; and serving as a liaison between the city and community-based groups to help coordinate volunteer tree care and planting projects.

Inventory and Urban Canopy Planning

The northwest extension urban forester, in partnership with interns and Pennsylvania DCNR Bureau of Forestry foresters, provided inventories and management plans based on mobile community tree inventory methods for four municipalities in Crawford, Erie, and Clearfield Counties. Recommendations from this work led immediately to three municipalities contracting for required tree pruning and removal and the fourth municipality contracting for planting.

Arborist Certification's Role in Providing Improved Service

The northwest Pennsylvania extension urban forester is the Certified Arborist liaison for the Penn-Del Chapter of the ISA. He assigned 4,130 hours of continuing education credit comprising 315 venue divisions across 5 certification categories. He facilitated 9 certification exams, testing 180 candidates. These tests resulted in 87 new Certified Arborists, 6 tree workers, 3 utility specialists, and 3 Board Certified Master Arborists.

Chesapeake Bay Urban Tree Canopy Assessment

In early 2007, the extension urban forester for northeastern Pennsylvania initiated a Chesapeake Bay Urban Tree Canopy Assessment project in four neighboring municipalities in the Clark Summit-Abington area. Working closely with DCNR Bureau of Forestry and the four partnering municipalities, high resolution satellite imagery has been acquired and is being evaluated to measure the tree canopy cover in each community. The partnership will assist the communities to develop plans to increase canopy cover in needed areas, and protect existing canopy cover in other areas, in an effort to reduce stormwater runoff and non-point source pollution. This initiative is part of a larger multi-state program guided by the USDA Forest Service and the Chesapeake Bay Program. The procedures established will be implemented in other communities in the state in the coming year.

College Students Enlisted to Help with Inventories and Plans

In the last year, students from the Penn State School of Forest Resources under the guidance of the state extension specialist in urban forestry have finished computer-based street and park tree inventories for a number of municipalities. The boroughs of Huntingdon, Hummelstown, Lewisburg, Unionville, and Fort Indiantown Gap have all been assisted. The municipalities were provided a working copy of the inventory in Excel, a community tree plan that provided a summary of the inventory and management recommendations, and a presentation to officials about the inventory and the information found from it. These inventories have been a catalyst for tree removal, pruning, and planting in all the municipalities.

New Workshops for Professionals

With funding assistance from the ISA Penn-Del Chapter, the state extension specialist in urban forestry has developed three new multi-day workshops held at the School of Forest Resources. These workshops are: a 3-day Tree Care Short Course, a 2-day Tree Risk Assessment Course; and a 2-day Amenity Tree Assessment Course. The courses proved to be successful in their first year with about 30 arborists, tree commissioners, and municipal staff participating in each course.

Bare Root Planting Stock Used in Community Tree Planting

This year, as in past years, the northeastern area extension urban forester coordinated the ordering of some 1,500 2-inch caliper bare-root trees for community street tree planting projects. Trees are shipped

from a New York nursery, weighing a fraction of the cost of balled and burlap stock, and at about half the cost of a B&B tree of comparable size.

Statistics

Communities:	2,579
Communities reached:	800
Managing communities:	236
Population of managing communities:	1,464,449
Developing communities:	564
Population of developing communities:	5,211,633
Volunteer assistance hours:	55,567