

Accomplishment Report 2007 – Rhode Island

October 23, 2007

State Contact

Paul C. Dolan

Urban and Community Forestry Program Coordinator

Rhode Island Division of Forest Environment

1037 Hartford Pike

North Scituate, RI 02857

Phone: (401) 647-3367

Fax: (401) 647-3590

Email: paul.dolan@dem.ri.gov

Web site: <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bnatres/forest/>

Introduction

A key goal of the Rhode Island Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Program is to restore and maintain our green infrastructure. We encourage cities and towns to develop a UCF Plan and to incorporate this into their city or town comprehensive plan. We also maintain strong partnerships with community tree groups, the Rhode Island Tree Council (RITC) and other municipal and state partners by promoting tree planting, tree inventories and urban forestry educational events.

The Rhode Island Division of Forest Environment (RIDEM) is building a UCF constituency through alliances with the non-profit RITC, city and town tree societies and tree committees, an army of tree stewards, and a well-informed Rhode Island legislature and executive branch.

Newport Tree Commission

The City of Newport is known for her regal trees. One of the oldest tree societies in the nation is the Newport Tree Society. Increasing public awareness of the value of trees and their role in defining Newport continues to be a high priority of the Tree Commission and the Tree Society. The group deals with the care of elderly specimen trees as well as the need to replace 200 trees a year to keep a healthy and vibrant urban forest. The Commission's Vice Chairman, James Sullivan, has created a program called "Bridging the Ages." The program brings together elderly and young residents from the same low income housing developments to plant trees, giving them a sense of pride in their neighborhood and fostering a mentoring relationship between them. This program and Arbor Day celebrations represent the other side of their work: building community through trees. This is the work that was started by a determined and enthusiastic tree society, whose members should be very proud of what they have accomplished. The two groups, working together, provide us with an excellent model of how a city or town can accomplish what we all know is needed in our state: communities where tree resources are valued, well maintained, and where the principles of good urban forestry are implemented.

Forestry Outreach

With the environmental education program now being under the umbrella of UCF, there is more opportunity for outreach in the adult education arena, in addition to our standard programs for tree stewards and the general public. This year's programs included a workshop on Hazard Trees, and a seminar on Trees, People and the Law.

Habitat for Humanity

In April, RITree participated in two Habitat for Humanity projects in North Providence. The landscapes for the two newly built houses were being coordinated by members of the Rhode Island Federation of Garden Clubs, and RITree offered to plant a tree at each site, as part of our Arbor Day Planting Program.

RITree members planted the trees, and properly mulched them, while other volunteers were busily planting shrubs and other greenery. We were pleased to teach the new homeowners about the care and planting of young trees. RITree hopes to continue our partnership with this important organization

City of Providence to Implement New Tree Management Program

The City of Providence will soon be implementing a new tree management program called TreeKeeper. Created by the Davey Resource Group, this software is designed for municipalities looking to better track and manage their urban forests and forestry programs. Once operational, TreeKeeper will track constituent calls, inspection reports, and work orders. The source of the system's baseline data is from the 2006 Providence Tree Tally, which will constantly be updated through daily use and routine work. TreeKeeper also has geographic information system mapping capabilities, allowing for efficient routing of inspections and tree crews.

Helen Walker Raleigh Champion Tree Registry

Beginning in the 1970s, Richard Champlain, a noted ecologist from Jamestown, measured and recorded hundreds of native and naturalized trees throughout Rhode Island. Through the generosity of many donors, including Helen Walker Raleigh, and technical support from leaders in the forestry community, RITree is now able to continue the project that Champlain started years ago. RITree, the Division of Forest Environment, the Rhode Island Natural History Survey, the Society of American Foresters, and the International Society of Arboriculture are currently compiling the Champion Tree list. They will be measuring trees to find the largest of each species, using a formula developed by American Forests, that incorporates a tree's height, circumference, and crown spread.

In May, RITree hired three field examiners to record and document Rhode Island's Champion Trees, using Champlain's list and records compiled by volunteers in previous years. Their work also includes the many outstanding ornamental specimens planted a century or more ago.

2007 Arbor Day

A total of 58 Arbor Day events were held across Rhode Island in 2007 under the RITCI's "Trees Are Cool" Program. Besides tree planting festivities, many of these events featured guest speakers, music, and refreshments. They were organized by businesses, local government agencies, non-profits, and volunteers. Most of the cities and towns participated, with several holding multiple celebrations for a total of 90 trees planted. The Trees Are Cool Program provides free trees, mulch, and planning assistance to any applicant willing to conduct an Arbor Day celebration on public land. Financial support was from RITree, and a private nonprofit group. Technical support was available through the RIDEM Division of Forest Environment. This year marked the seventh year of this event. There have been more than 500 celebrations with a total of 650 trees planted.

A major Arbor Day event was the planting of a new liberty tree, propagated from the last standing liberty tree in the country, a tulip poplar that was lost to Hurricane Floyd in 1999 from the grounds of St. John's College in Annapolis, MD. The RIDEM and the U.S. Park Service



hosted the state's Arbor Day celebration at the Roger Williams National Memorial on North Main Street in Providence.

Internship/Minority Training

This program introduces inner city youth to urban ecology issues through a series of lectures and field trips throughout the state. The program is geared to have students develop a better appreciation for natural resources and the urban environment.

In the same vein, there is a program for inner city adults, in which they are taught to be tree workers. This intensive 3-week course gives them enough information and practical experience to take the state arborist exam and start pursuing a career in arboriculture.

Statistics

Number of Communities:	40
Communities Assisted:	32
Sustained Communities:	11
Tree City USA:	11
Volunteer hours:	5,877
Federal Support:	\$200,000
State and Local Match:	\$205,827