

Accomplishment Report 2007 – Vermont

October 23, 2007

State Contact

Danielle Fitzko
State Urban Forestry Coordinator
Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation
103 S. Main Street, Bldg. 10 South
Waterbury, VT 05671-0601
Phone: (802) 241-3673
Fax: (802) 244-1481
E-mail : danielle.fitzko@state.vt.us
Website: www.vtcommunityforestry.org

Program Summary

The Vermont Urban and Community Forestry (VTUCF) program's mission is to promote the stewardship of urban and rural forest landscapes to enhance the quality of life in Vermont communities. This mission recognizes the need to address environmental, economic and social values of forests from the urban core, to suburban developments, to rural forestland. The program assists in developing sustainable local programs by providing technical and financial assistance, information and education. The program team consists of the state coordinator, a community involvement coordinator and five district urban and community foresters. The Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Council, which is composed of twenty members representing professional associations, educational institutions, nonprofit groups, regional officials, tree boards, and state agencies, works in partnership with the VTUCF program to identify the state's urban and community forestry needs and determine program direction.

Stewardship of the Urban Landscape (SOUL) Goes High-Tech

In cooperation with University of Vermont Extension, SOUL is a unique leadership and tree steward training program that provides opportunities for Vermont citizens to enhance their leadership and technical tree skills to become more involved in urban and community forestry in their own communities. While the program has been successful since its inception in 1996, we struggle to bring in large numbers of participants, to offer the training across the State due to limited staff, and to stay engaged with past graduates. To address these issues, we made significant changes to the program in 2006. Improvements included offering the course over Vermont Interactive Television (VIT) to increase access to the program across the State, using past SOUL graduates as site facilitators to maintain engagement with graduates and to mentor trainees, recognizing participants as Vermont Tree Stewards so they felt part of a larger network, and improving participation during class discussion through changes to the SOUL manual. In just one year, the program's graduation numbers increased more than 400 percent with more than 60 new Vermont Tree Stewards from across the State.

Street Tree TREEage Brings Volunteers Out

Armed with the desire to save her neighborhood's distressed public trees and the knowledge gained through the SOUL 2006 training, a South Burlington resident has organized a small army of neighborhood volunteers to save their community's trees. With the support of the city and their community association, the volunteers have cared for more than 200 public trees since May. Common activities include removing excess mulch from around the trunk and cutting stem girdling roots. In addition to the physical work, they also started an educational campaign to teach their neighbors how to care for all the trees in the neighborhood, both public and private. What is next for this dynamic team of tree medics? Plans are underway to establish a South Burlington community nursery.

Communities Are Getting Reacquainted with Their Town Forests

Because of a movement in the early to mid-1900s, many Vermont communities own town forests. Initially, they were set aside for forest products or watershed protection, but they are now being recognized for the numerous other services they provide. To help communities across Vermont maximize the community benefits derived from these community assets, and to help support the creation of new town forests Statewide, a team of more than 30 public and private partners including the VTUCF program came together to start the Vermont Town Forest Project. The project coordinated by the Northern Forest Alliance acts as a statewide resource center developing informational materials and holding educational events including an annual Vermont Town Forest Summit. In addition to supporting numerous outreach events in 2006, the VTUCF provided both financial and technical assistance in developing a stewardship resource guide to act as an owner's manual with information ranging from management planning and implementation to creation of town forests. To learn more about the project, visit

www.northernforestalliance.org/townforest.htm.

A Picturesque Town

Peacham is a small town located in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. It is often labeled as the most photographed town in the state. Back in 2004, the town was awarded a Trees for Local Communities (TLC) Planning Grant to complete a Planting and Landscape Management Plan for its three villages and town cemetery. During the inventory phase, it became obvious that many of the stately trees, often the focus of the famous photographs, were suffering from disease, old age, and storm damage. They quickly recognized the need for stewardship of the resource and a five-member tree board was appointed by the selectboard in 2006. The tree board is hard at work implementing the plan and just recently completed another TLC grant to plant 16 trees.



More than two dozen volunteers helped plant 16 trees in Peacham.