

Accomplishment Report 2007 – West Virginia

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State Contact

Robert Hannah
Urban Forestry Coordinator
WV Division of Forestry
Rt. 2, Box 1100
Fairmont, WV 26554
Phone: (304) 367-2793
Fax: (304) 367-2795
E-mail: bhannah@ma.rr.net
Web site: www.wvforestry.com
State Forester: Charles R. Dye

Overview

The West Virginia Urban and Community Forestry (WVUCF) program began in 1991 with the mission of encouraging municipal governments to begin providing long-term care for trees on public property across West Virginia. Three positions comprise the full-time urban forestry staff and deliver the program Statewide to cities and towns. Urban Forestry Coordinator Bob Hannah is responsible for overall program administration. Technical Specialist Jennifer Brashears educates community tree care providers with a variety of skills and knowledge necessary to successfully manage their urban forest. Partnership Coordinator Andy Sheetz develops financial partnerships from corporate sponsors to fund community tree care activities as well as coordinating volunteer programs.

The program continues to be challenged by a decreasing program budget and lack of dedicated state funding for urban forestry. However, recent reorganization of the Division of Forestry has allowed additional urban forestry assistance to be provided by landowner assistance foresters. In addition, program capacity and credibility has increased this year with the technical specialist obtaining Certified Arborist status from the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA).

Project Narratives

2007 Partnerships and Volunteer Tree Planting, Statewide

Objectives: Fostering municipal tree care, partnerships, corporate support, tree planting, and awareness

In 2007, the WVUCF program received support from sources including private foundations and West Virginia State University (WVSU). Part of these donations was used to support the Mountaineer Treeways program by purchasing containerized trees and seedlings. Additional donations promoted the Arbor Day Poster Contest throughout the State by providing art supplies for the schools of winning students.

The Mountaineer Treeways program was funded with donations from Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Dow Chemical Foundation and West Virginia State University (WVSU) totaling more than \$7,000. These donations purchased 3,100 bare root tree seedlings and 70 large, containerized trees. The large trees were planted on six high-profile sites by volunteers. These organizations will be recognized with Mountaineer Treeways signs placed by the Division of Highways. Some of these sites include:

- Cub Scout Pack 91 planted 10 trees at two newly built schools in



Each Mountaineer Treeways site is marked with a sign, provided by the WV Department of Transportation, to acknowledge the volunteer tree-planters.

the Martinsburg area. These schools did not have any trees before these were planted.

- Charleston Starbuck's employees planted 10 trees at Shawnee Park Golf Course in Dunbar. Huntington Starbuck's employees planted 10 trees at the West Virginia Welcome Center along eastbound Interstate 64 near Huntington.
- The West Virginia Urban and Community Forestry Council planted 10 trees along a major intersection of Interstate 79 near Morgantown.

The 3,100 tree seedlings were distributed to 20 volunteer groups across the State for planting on public property. Planting sites included schools, city parks and along public roads. The Mountaineer Treeways program involved 238 volunteers donating more than 1,180 hours and leveraged approximately \$12,800 of additional support.



Follansbee, WV proudly celebrates their arbor day with the state's 3rd place poster-contest winner.

Participation in the West Virginia Arbor Day Poster Contest increased by 30 percent from the previous year. The effort received financial support from the Oakland Foundation and cash prizes were awarded to the schools of the top three winning students for the purchase of art supplies. The West Virginia Forestry Association donated their annual \$100 US Savings Bond to the State winner of the contest.

The ongoing partnership with WVSU provided the WVUCF Program with an additional \$4,606 dollars to purchase 75 containerized trees for Statewide Arbor Day ceremonies. Tree planting ceremonies were held in each Tree City USA community. Division of Forestry employees also conducted Arbor Day plantings at more than 50 schools across the State.

Workshops and Training, Statewide

Objectives: Fostering municipal tree care, program building, sustained tree care, and technical assistance. The WVUCF program offers a variety of training courses and workshops to communities and volunteer groups. Topics range from tree pruning, basic tree care, tree selection and planting, and a new tree risk assessment workshop. Workshop request forms are mailed each year for communities and other interested groups to register. Many communities host multiple workshops throughout the year and collaborate with neighboring counties, parks and recreation divisions, tree boards, master gardener groups, and historic preservation organizations.

Tree Risk Assessment training was developed from materials produced by the U.S. Forest Service Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry in cooperation with the College of Natural Resources in the University of Minnesota. The course is designed to educate communities on the importance of tree risk management, liability issues, detecting and assessing tree defects, mitigating and reducing risk, and prevention of defects in trees. Response from communities receiving training has been outstanding. Technical Specialist Jennifer Brashears presented an abbreviated version of the program at the annual meeting of the Mid Atlantic Chapter of the ISA.

This year Brashears provided 1,259 training hours to tree care groups across the State. Educational workshops are an integral tool in our efforts to promote sustainable urban forestry programs. Awareness gained through such outreach has fostered political support for and volunteer participation in sustained and developing community forestry programs.

Municipal Tree Restoration Program, Statewide

Objectives: Tree Planting, fostering municipal tree care, program building, and technical assistance.

The West Virginia Municipal Tree Restoration Program (MTRP) began in 2000 as a cooperative effort between the West Virginia Division of Forestry, Allegheny Power, Appalachian Power and municipalities. The program is aimed at resolving tree-utility line conflicts through the planting of utility line-compatible trees under electric lines. The program brings an awareness of the importance of proper tree selection and pruning to communities across West Virginia. This leads to a greater value being placed on the appearance and health of street trees.

In the fall of 2006, 60 trees were planted through the program in four communities. In 2007, 20 communities participated in the program with a tree planting budget of more than \$55,000. Many of these communities are previous participants in the MTRP and others are first-time participants. One of the greatest benefits of this partnership is making additional communities aware of the need for and value of a municipal tree care program. Additionally, the program is helping to fill the need for grants dedicated to tree planting. The MTRP will continue to open doors of opportunity and foster long-term urban forestry programs in West Virginia for many years.

Statistics

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| Managing Communities: | 6 |
| Developing Communities: | 31 |
| Participating Communities: | 54 |
| Population Impacted: | 358,429 |
| Volunteer Hours Generated: | 2,216 |
| Tree City USA Communities: | 12 |
| Tree City Growth Awards: | 4 |
| Trees Planted: | 3,380 |
| Training Provided (hours): | 1,259 |

Program Components

Grants and Resource Assistance

 Demonstration City Grants

 Cool Community Grants

Awareness and Outreach

 Tree City USA

 Personal Contacts

Technical Assistance

 Technical Specialist

 Workshops and Training

 Educational Material

Partnerships

 Municipal Tree Restoration Program

 Corporate Sponsorship

Volunteer Participation

 Tree Advocacy Organizations

 Mountaineer Treeways