

2008 Accomplishment Report – Indiana

State Contact

Pamela Louks
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Division of Forestry
5785 Glenn Road
Indianapolis, IN 46216
Phone: (317) 591-1170
Fax: (317) 591-1210
E-mail: plouks@dnr.IN.gov
Web site: <http://www.IN.gov/dnr/forestry>

State Forester

Jack Seifert
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Division of Forestry
402 West Washington Street, Room W296
Indianapolis, IN 46204
Phone: (317) 232-4116
Fax: (317) 233-3863
E-mail: jseifert@dnr.in.gov

Introduction

The Community and Urban Forestry (CUF) program provides statewide leadership to increase public awareness of the value of trees in the urban forest. According to Lt. Governor Becky Skillman, over 71% of Hoosiers live in urban areas. The CUF program assists and encourages Indiana communities in efforts to protect, expand, and improve the urban forests. This assistance takes the form of reducing the impacts of land use change by preserving, conserving, and restoring the urban forest, and developing urban forestry management, work, and emergency response plans. Tree planting assistance focuses on strategically planting trees for their ecological benefits on the environment and human health. The program strives to help citizens make the connection between rural and urban forests and to realize that the urban forest is part of the community infrastructure. CUF achieves its mission by nurturing and forming a variety of partnerships throughout the State with its innovative grant, education, and outreach programs.

Issues

- The need for urban forestry technical assistance is growing, and with limited staff and funds, we are unable to meet all of those needs. For example, we received 28 requests totaling \$256,736 for our 2007 Putting Trees to Work grant program. We were only able to fund 13 projects (most at a reduced amount) totaling \$100,000.
- This year, the State of Indiana implemented property tax restructuring, which, within the next year, will make municipalities and counties begin to reel from lack of tax revenue. This lack of dollars, for most cities and towns, will not allow them to address even the most basic infrastructure issues. We are already seeing the impact of this reduction as urban forestry and park budgets are reduced, and at times eliminated.
- Rapid, unplanned growth is taking its toll on Indiana's urban natural resources of which the urban forest is the one component that touches all aspects of urban natural resources, and can actually hinder or enhance the health of the rural forest in our State.

Opportunities

- With the lack of municipal dollars, our grant programs have become increasingly important. We continue to work on seeking funds to pass through to these municipalities via corporate donations, foundation grants, and State and Federal funds. We also keep connected to other sources of funds and partnerships they may tap into. We were able to tap into a corporate donor called ExacTarget, which enabled us to award \$12,235 in tree planting grants to five new communities.
- The aging infrastructure and the new water standards give us a perfect opportunity to encourage the green connection to gray to help with stormwater costs and air quality, among other items.
- We will now focus funds more tightly. In the past, we were able to fund a variety of tree planting and urban forestry initiatives. We funded start-up nonprofits, city foresters, and consultants. But now, due to

very limited Federal funding and the competitive formula, we have found it necessary to refocus our grant efforts. This has resulted in a grant program called Make your Trees Count for inventories, ecological assessment, management plans, work plans, and emergency response plans. To date, we have \$100,000 in requests, and will only be able to fund \$75,000.

Key Accomplishments

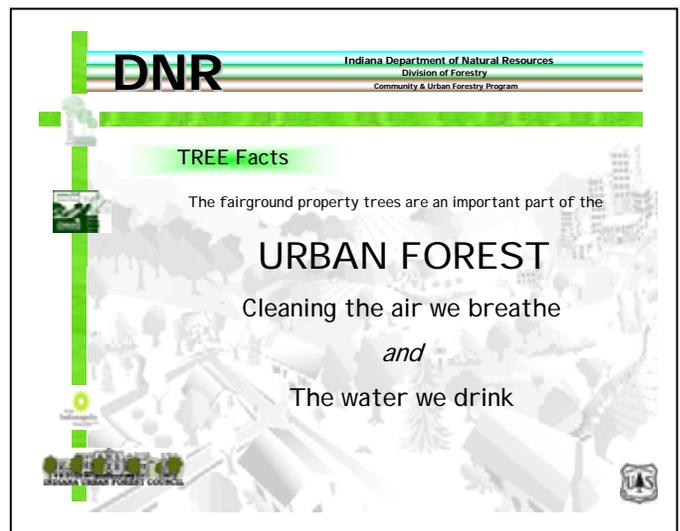
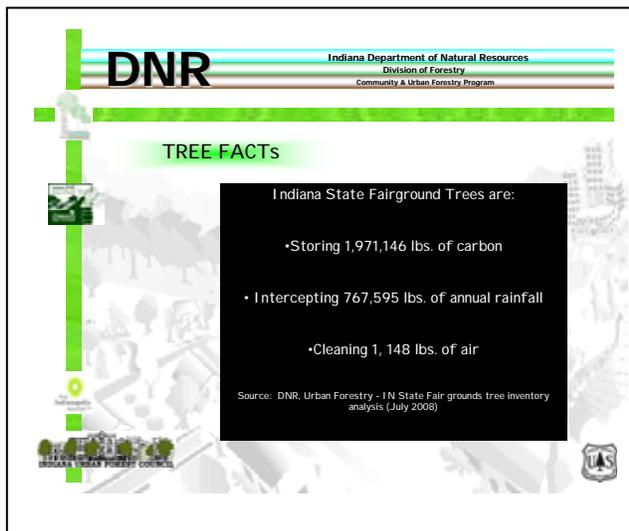
Partnerships & Awareness/Outreach

Project: Indiana State Fairgrounds Tree Inventory

Location: Indiana State Fairgrounds, Indianapolis

Purpose: The CUF Program was invited to the Indiana State Fairgrounds to help the ground staff identify their trees so that they could meet criteria for the 2008 theme “Year of the Tree.” The theme focused on trees as products until urban forestry came on the scene. CUF offered to do a complete street tree inventory; train staff in proper tree identification, selection, and care; upload the inventory; and train staff on updating and managing the inventory. The tradeoff was that if CUF did all that, then, in addition to having an air-conditioned booth to house our display, we would also be allowed to hang signs about the benefits of urban forestry in key areas throughout the fairgrounds in trees that shaded benches and picnic tables. Tree Stewards and Indiana Urban Forest Council members were invited in to help collect the data. When the data was electronically collected on handheld computers, a STRATUM analysis was completed, and signs developed that focused on key ecological factors, inventory count, and general benefits of trees. We hung 12 signs throughout the fairgrounds and had a display inside the very popular AG/HORT Building, which was staffed by CUF employees, Indiana Urban Forest Council members, city foresters, and 26 Tree Stewards throughout the 12-day event. Our partners in this endeavor answered more than 500 tree questions, and distributed more than 1000 pieces of information on how to select and plant a tree, the benefits of trees, species lists, and arboriculture practices, among others. The entire fair was attended by 859,619 Hoosiers and out-of-state guests. Partnerships formed or renewed included the Indiana State Fair, Purdue Extension, and Indiana Hardwood Lumbermen’s Association (which paid for our booth space).

Key signs at the State Fair touched thousands of Hoosiers:



Reaching Out

Project: Tree planting with Rupert's Kids

Location: Three inner-city parks; Marion County

Purpose: Rupert's Kids is an organization "designed to teach valuable job skills and instill a sense of confidence and self worth that will lead each of the members of Rupert's Kids towards stable housing, employment, and relationships which, in turn, will help them become independent contributing members of their communities." This particular project involved 18- to 24-year-old men planting trees in three inner-city parks.

Lindsey Purcell and Paul Pinco of the Indianapolis Urban Forestry Program wrote the grant to expand their arboriculture mentoring outreach to these disadvantaged youth and to get some much needed work done in Indianapolis parks. These young men have "received intensive services in nearly every social service system in the region. Because these young men and women are unable to achieve and sustain stable housing and employment, most return to situations that originally led to the challenges they currently face. Through work programs such as landscaping and home renovation, members of Rupert's Kids learn skills and values that will lead them towards stability in their lives in housing, employment, and relationships."

(<http://www.rupertskids.org/home.html>)

Comprehensive Natural Resource Management

Project: Putting Trees to Work (PTW)

Location: Statewide awards totaling \$100,000; 13 projects funded; 28 requested

Purpose: Grant program for municipalities and nonprofits to select and plant trees for their ecological functions. We funded six complete street tree inventories, five remedial planting projects, and two management projects.

PTW Project Highlights:

- A. Whiting in northwestern Indiana was awarded a grant to plant trees for brownfield reclamation, trail screen, and noise buffer along BP Oil Refinery along Lake Michigan.
- B. Greendale in southeastern Indiana was awarded a PTW grant to plant native trees along park trail to mitigate stormwater runoff and soil erosion at Schenbelt Pond.

Statistical Highlights

Managing and Developing Communities	132
Population of Participating Communities	3,476,775
Volunteer Assistance Generated (hours)	66,937
Tree City USA	61
Tree City Growth Awards	14