

2008 Accomplishment Report – New York

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Introduction

The Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) Program in New York State is as varied as the State's people and geography, ranging from densely populated areas downstate to rural and forested landscapes upstate. The program's goal is to empower communities to plan and manage their own green resources. Program managers continue to inform communities, agencies, not-for-profit groups, and citizens about the values of urban and community forestry. Training, tools, consultation, and technical support are made available to community leaders and volunteers. The Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) Urban and Community Forestry Cost-Share Grant Program, which is supported by the Federal program, is a community incentive that funds projects in support of tree planting and care, partnerships, and public awareness of the importance of urban trees. In 2008, the New York grant program funded community grants totaling nearly \$900,000. The U&CF Program encourages State environmental quality and energy agencies to evaluate and use urban tree planting and care efforts in their comprehensive strategies to mitigate environmental problems.

Key Accomplishments

Staff and Community Volunteers Work Together

New York's urban forestry program grew in new directions while maintaining and enhancing staff development and training. Regional volunteer ReLeaf committees gained members through recruiting and programming. Long Island ReLeafers encouraged growth with their own efforts at recruitment. More than 20 new members joined the volunteer group. Networking, interaction, and sharing of services resulted from these new partnerships. The development of a recent training session on hazardous trees netted more than 90 attendees, including municipal staffers, certified arborists, elected officials, and landscape architects. Long Island ReLeafers are also responsible for the first countywide tree protection ordinance, passed this year. These volunteers worked for almost a full year crafting appropriate wording and practices that would pass muster with the Nassau County Legislature. These volunteers accomplished these goals with the help of regional and central office staff.

New York City (NYC) Mayor Bloomberg challenged New Yorkers to generate ideas for achieving an environment for a sustainable future. His plan that resulted—PlaNYC—will help ensure a higher



New York City Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC is addressing five subject areas to ensure a sustainable environmental future for the city.

quality of life for NYC's residents and will contribute to a 30 percent reduction in global warming emissions. The One Million Trees initiative is a public/private partnership with nonprofits and volunteers joining to plant 1 million trees in 10 years. Subcommittees will serve all facets of this movement. Regional and central office staff members were invited to sit on the PlaNYC One Million Tree Advisory Boards of outreach, stewardship, and research. To date, more than 110,000 trees have been planted, more than 400 residents were educated at NYC ReLeaf workshops, and numerous nonprofits trained hundreds of citizen stewards to take care of NYC's newly planted trees.

Trees Pay Us Back

New York's grant program had 128 applications seeking funding from a total of \$900,000 in State matching funds. Projects included 46 tree planting programs and green infrastructure projects, and start-up funding for a local Tree Advisory Board. Rain gardens and stormwater management projects were funded in NYC and Syracuse.

"Forest Infrastructure Tools for Urban Communities" was a project selected for funding by the U.S. Forest Service as part of its redesign competitive allocation, but delayed because of western fires. The project was to implement green infrastructure practices in environmental justice neighborhoods around the New York/New Jersey Harbor to improve water quality. Interest and support within DEC and with the various organizations and the public proved that it was an idea whose time had come. News of this project provided justification for exploration into a green infrastructure initiative in Syracuse, in lieu of gray construction. In addition, a statewide initiative is being formulated that will bring together a variety of divisions within DEC to focus on shared goals and specific projects.

Statistical Highlights

Number of NY Communities that Have, or Have Potential to Develop, Programs:	765
Number of People Living in Communities Provided Assistance:	12,782,787
Number of People Living in Communities Developing Programs:	3,155,070
Number of People Living in Managed Communities:	9,627,717
Volunteer Assistance Generated (hours):	106,647
Tree City USA Communities:	100
Tree City USA Growth Awards:	11
Tree Line USA Utilities:	5