

2008 Accomplishment Report – Rhode Island

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
E-mail: paul.dolan@dem.ri.gov
Web site:
<http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bnatres/forest/>

State Forester

Catherine A. Sparks, Chief
Rhode Island Division of Forest Environment
1037 Hartford Pike
North Scituate, RI 02857
Phone: (401) 647-3367
Fax: (401) 647-3590
E-mail: catherine.sparks@dem.state.ri.us

Introduction

A key goal of the Rhode Island Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Program is to restore and maintain the State's green infrastructure. The program encourages cities and towns to develop a UCF plan and to incorporate this into their city or town comprehensive plan. Program staff maintains 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 Environmental Management (RI DEM) is building a UCF constituency through alliances with the nonprofit RITC, city and town tree societies and committees, an army of tree stewards, and a well-informed Rhode Island legislature and executive branch.

Key Accomplishments

Creating a New Forest in Rhode Island

On April 26, 2008, more than 200 people joined in celebrating Arbor Day in a new way, by witnessing and participating in the beginning of a forest, and by honoring the important work of arborists in Rhode Island. The Arbor Day Fair was held at Goddard Memorial State Park in Warwick, RI. The event showcased demonstrations by arborists, displays by tree-related organizations, and information about proper planting and mulching methods, tree pruning, and maintenance. Of course, the heart of any Arbor Day celebration is tree planting, and this year tree planting was taken to the next level. Working with the park staff, a team of Rhode Island arborists, and a small army of tree stewards, more than 100 trees were planted, reforesting an area that had been cleared for decades. This was the official site of the State Arbor Day ceremony hosted by the State Division of Forest Environment and the RITC. It included the Rocky Hill School and many local dignitaries.



More than 200 people turned out for Rhode Island's Arbor Day Fair at Goddard Memorial State Park in Warwick, RI. The celebration included activities for kids, tree planting, and demonstrations. Additional photographs of fair activities are on the following page.

Helen Walker Raleigh Champion Tree Program: Champion Tree Update

The spring and summer period were a very busy time for RITree's Champion Tree inspectors, Kate Sayles, Allison Szyba, and Douglas Dalton. They had been out beating the bushes across the State, so to speak, in search of big trees. Along the way, they discovered some amazingly LARGE trees. One such specimen is the Giant Sequoia (*Sequoia sempervirens*) located in Bristol's Blithewold Gardens. While not a "new" find, this handsome tree is billed as one of the biggest of its kind east of the Mississippi River. The Sequoia has a trunk circumference of 16' 4" and is 85 feet tall. Remarkable for a tree that is growing about 3,000 miles from its native range along the coastline in northern California. The methods used in this registry will make future work very easy. All records are GPS located and entered onto a special computer program able to sort by county and town, among other attributes. Funding and technical assistance to develop the registry came from many different sources, which has truly made it one that has ownership from the whole forestry community.

2008 RITree Stewards Symposium

The first annual Tree Steward Symposium was held on March 29, 2008, at the University of Rhode Island's Kingston Campus. The symposium is designed to keep everyone in the loop. Speakers presented the latest information about tree technology, identification, and maintenance. Tree Stewards Education Coordinator Margaret Brookner had an open forum to let tree stewards know about future projects and to give them an opportunity to network and exchange ideas. John T. Campanini, Jr., RITree's Technical Advisor, addressed the many concerns of tree stewards not having enough time to commit to their springtime needs. There was also a presentation on the Champion Tree Program. The program presently has nearly 550 tree stewards who give their time freely, helping to spread the message of tree care across the State. Records show that nine of them have done something very special: all had logged more than 350 volunteer hours and were recognized at the annual conference.

Community Projects

Tiverton - The Ranger School Landscape and Enhancement Project is a community-wide effort being undertaken to complete the tree planting plan for the school grounds and to enhance the facility with an additional tree grove. The enhancement aspect encompassed a site for a public display of art, which involved the school's student body. The community's involvement and cooperation are an essential element for the success of the project. The Tree Commission and the Arts Council are working together to provide the leadership to see that the goals of this project are fulfilled. The Tiverton School Committee, the Ranger School administration and staff, and other town officials are supportive of this project. The Ranger School Parent-Teacher Organization and other private citizens and business entities will be taking an active role in this public venture. The students' connection with the intended art works will be a key



ingredient of the project. The planting of the trees; the establishment of the tree grove with the placement of student ceramic tile art work, which would depict nature themes; and the outdoor sculpture will create a sense of place within the school grounds. The grove will be the centerpiece of this project, intended to serve as a functional outdoor learning space. The grove will provide a link to nature that will impart an opportunity to relate to the enjoyment and inspiration derived from nature, while serving as a resource for student learning and artistic creativity.

Providence - City Forester Douglas Still announced the key findings of the yearlong Providence Tree Tally at a news conference held at a Smith Hill neighborhood park in late June. The results show that Providence's 25,000 street trees are worth nearly \$81 million. Complete inventory results can be viewed at <http://204.17.79.244/pforest/index.html>.

East Providence - Nearly 80 percent of this community's street tree inventory has been completed according to Tree Warden Michael Bartlett. The tree count currently stands at 4,307 trees with about a quarter of this town's 190 linear miles of roads still needing to be surveyed.

Portsmouth - Portsmouth is the most recent community in Rhode Island to attain Tree City USA status.

Statistical Highlights

Number of Communities:	40
Communities Assisted:	21
Managing Communities:	17
Tree City USA:	11
Volunteer Hours:	4,700