

2008 Accomplishment Report – West Virginia

State Contact

Robert Hannah, Urban Forestry Coordinator
West Virginia Division of Forestry
P.O. Box 40
Farmington, WV 26571
Phone: (304) 825-6983
Fax: (304) 825-6987
E-mail: robert.l.hannah@wv.gov
Web site: <http://www.wvforestry.com/urban.cfm>

State Forester

Charles R. Dye
West Virginia Division of Forestry
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East
Charleston, WV 25305
Phone: (304) 558-3446
Fax: (304) 558-0143
E-mail: rdye@wvforestry.com

Introduction

The West Virginia Urban and Community Forestry 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. The program includes three full-time urban forestry staff who deliver the program statewide to cities and towns. The Urban Forestry Coordinator, Bob Hannah, is responsible for overall program administration. The Technical Specialist, Jennifer Brashears, educates community tree care providers with a variety of skills and knowledge necessary to successfully manage their urban forest. The Partnership Coordinator, Andy Sheetz, develops financial partnerships from corporate sponsors to fund community tree care activities as well as coordinates volunteer programs.

The program continues to be challenged by a lack of dedicated State funding for urban forestry. However, the communities in the State's Eastern Panhandle will soon receive additional support from a new position within the Division of Forestry. A Watershed Forester has recently been added to Division staff with emphasis on the Chesapeake Bay tributaries. This position will significantly enhance the Division's ability to promote riparian stewardship in urban and rural areas. A U.S. Forest Service Redesign Grant to support the program's Cool Community initiative will also greatly increase the Division's efforts over the next year.

Key Accomplishments

Title: 2008 Mountaineer Treeways Matching Grants and Tree Planting

Location: Statewide

Objectives: Fostering municipal tree care, Partnerships, Corporate support, Tree planting and Awareness

Increased corporate sponsorship allowed us to expand the Mountaineer Treeways program beyond traditional volunteer tree planting efforts. This year, a new competitive grant opportunity allowed communities to plant larger trees along transportation corridors. These grants required an equal local match, which doubled the effectiveness of each donated dollar. Three communities received grants this spring:

- Morgantown planted 18 trees along the entrance to a residential neighborhood,
- Putnam County Parks planted 40 trees in a well-used community park, and
- Parkersburg planted 18 trees at a major intersection along a newly constructed highway.



A Mountaineer Treeways planting event was held at the Hazelton rest area on I-68 by the West Virginia Urban and Community Forestry Council.

The traditional seedling planting component of the program was also very successful this spring. Three thousand one hundred seedlings were distributed to 23 groups, including small communities, scouts, 4-H, and civic organizations. Planting sites included schools, city parks, and along public roads. These Mountaineer Treeways seedlings generated 229 volunteers who donated more than 1,380 hours and leveraged approximately \$11,885 of program support.

Our ongoing partnership with West Virginia State University again provided \$2,997 to purchase 43 large trees for statewide Arbor Day ceremonies. Tree planting ceremonies were held in each Tree City USA community and over 20 schools across the State. Our Urban and Community Forestry Council planted nine of these trees at a new rest area in cooperation with the Department of Highways.

Title: Chesapeake Bay Forester

Location: Potomac Tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay – Eastern Panhandle

Objectives: Protecting critical watersheds, Urban and rural riparian corridor management and support and Technical assistance

As a stakeholder in the West Virginia “Potomac Tributary Strategy” (PTS), the West Virginia Division of Forestry is committed to being a major player in the health of the Chesapeake Bay. Consequently, the West Virginia Division of Forestry has recently employed a Chesapeake Bay Watershed Forester. Our urban forestry staff will be working closely with this individual to ensure that specific goals in the PTS are met. These goals include establishing and maintaining riparian forested buffers, promoting and protecting contiguous forest resources through education and outreach, and coordinating efforts with local partners and agencies. These partners include the WV Conservation Agency, WV Department of Environmental Protection, WV Stream Partners Program, Chesapeake Bay Implementation Committee, Potomac Valley Project CommuniTree, and numerous communities and watershed groups.

It is critical that our new Chesapeake Bay Forester also establishes working partnerships with the many local stakeholders within the Potomac tributary. Empowering these local groups to develop and implement projects will prove invaluable to developing these partnerships. Accordingly, we are applying for a U.S. Forest Service Redesign grant to begin making planned goals a reality. This Chesapeake Bay Forest Enhancement Initiative will focus on a multifaceted outreach campaign targeting municipalities, homeowners associations, watershed groups, and other nonprofit partner groups. It will include conducting two workshops dealing with green space and the effects of forest fragmentation; enhancing watershed health in urban areas through tree plantings, stream corridor enhancement, and increasing the percentage of tree canopy in subdivisions; and assessing and controlling invasive plant species threatening the Potomac watershed forests. We are excited about the opportunities this initiative will offer.

Title: Potomac Valley CommuniTree

Location: Eastern Panhandle

Objectives: Tree Planting, Fostering municipal tree care, Program building, and Technical assistance

An exciting new effort to bring volunteers and communities together to plant and care for trees is underway in Hardy, Hampshire, and Grant Counties. The purpose of Potomac Valley CommuniTree is to establish a regional advisory organization to promote tree planting in urban areas, along riparian corridors, and on other public lands. Current partners include the WV Conservation Agency, WV Department of Environmental Protection, Town of Moorefield, city of Petersburg, Town of Wardensville, and the Hardy County Park Commission. An inaugural tree planting celebration was recently held in a new county park and attended by over 100 volunteers. The event involved the planting of 28 trees as well as many other educational activities such as tree identification, forest management principles, wildfire prevention, and a tree planting and care workshop. Our Chesapeake Bay Forester will also work closely with this organization to accomplish tree planting goals identified in our Potomac Tributary Strategy.

Statistical Highlights

Managing Communities:	6
Developing Communities:	37
Participating Communities:	80
Population Impacted:	413,184
Volunteer Hours Generated:	2,994
Tree City USA Communities:	11
Tree City Growth Awards:	4
Trees Planted:	3,551
Training Hours Provided:	1,192



Volunteers help plant trees during Moorefield's Arbor Day in 2008.



Parkersburg celebrates its Tree City USA status during Arbor Day 2008 festivities.



A banner welcomes participants of a Project CommuniTree 2008 event.



Project CommuniTree volunteers plant a tree in Baker Park in 2008.