

# 2009 Accomplishment Report – Indiana

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## 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 percent 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 incorporate the ideology 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

- This is the first year that we have had multiple grant projects turn back funds due to the economic issues in their communities.
- SUSI data revealed that Indiana only has 1 tree for every 6 Hoosiers along city streets. Since street trees are the environmental benefit drivers, this is an unacceptable number.
- Sprawl and bulldozing of urban woodlots continue to be an issue. In spite of our efforts, there is still not much “buy in” that the preservation/conservation of urban woodlots and building with nature are the best environmental options for communities—and that they will generate more revenue. Instead, developers and planners plant new trees as opposed to keeping the more mature, established service providers. In fact, one person in the building trades stated, “What is the big deal with losing woodlots and bulldozing trees? We plant new ones!”
- SUSI data has revealed that we have too many ornamentals along city streets when we really need large, maturing species (where space permits) in order to generate the maximum benefits.
- Municipalities are still reeling from the Indiana property tax reform, which will continue to decrease budgets at least until 2011. Put the national economic collapse on top of that, and many can barely sustain services. Urban forestry programs, if they DO manage to make it through these times, are just “holding their own” and not expanding.

## Opportunities

- Using the SUSI data, we can begin a new awareness campaign of the services trees offer and cite the need for development and redevelopment projects to include areas for the planting of large, maturing tree species—as opposed to leaving small sites for ornamentals.

- Using SUSI data, we can be more visible in a variety of ways that will promote the need for urban forestry management and the need for dollars to address environmental issues through urban forestry.

## Key Accomplishments

### Partnerships & Awareness/Outreach

Project: Twyckenham Boulevard Planting (3 phases)

This tree planting project was funded in two grant cycles spanning three seasonal plantings. It was completed this year in May. The partner’s volunteer involvement required training for each tree planter, additional funding was generated, and the promotion/awareness has been phenomenal. This total project resulted in 283 trees planted along a new sprawling, undeveloped 1-mile stretch of boulevard/roadway and included 1,181 volunteer hours, 439 volunteers, and 4 corporate donors.

Tree City USA continues to fuel awareness. This year, our travels took us to 25 of our 64 Tree Cities and one Tree Campus USA. Our Tree Boards are becoming much more sophisticated in their advisory management roles and more creative with their Tree City/Arbor Day events, which have taken on a patriotic tone.

### Reaching Out

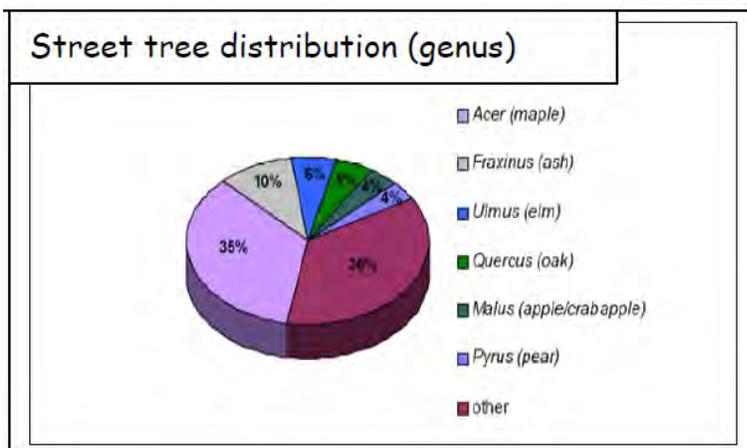
Project: Indiana State Fair

Indiana Community Tree Stewards and Indiana Urban Forest Council members spent over 100 hours staffing the CUF display at the Indiana State Fair. Over 1,500 handouts on tree care were given to property owners and tree lovers. Our display was housed in the Ball State Horticulture Building and the visitors to this building come seeking information. According to responses from our volunteer staff, the 17-day run was well worth the time, effort, and tax dollars spent to “advance our cause.”

### Comprehensive Natural Resource Management

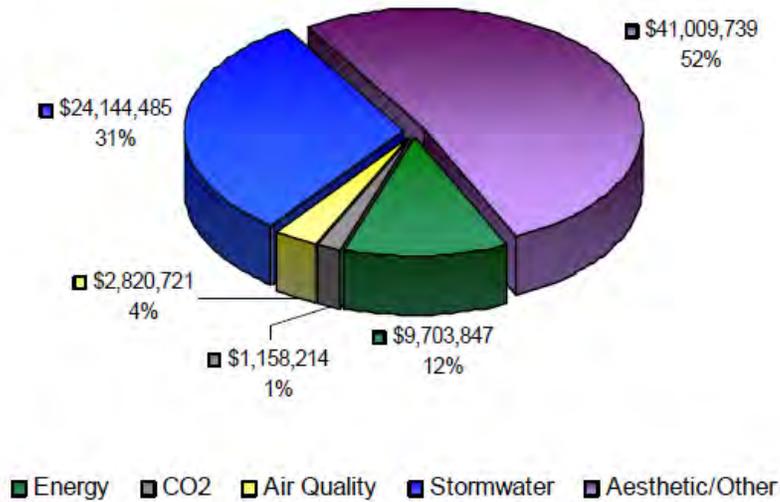
Project: Sample Urban Statewide Inventory (SUSI)

The data has been collected, the analysis is in, and the results are being disseminated to the State as a whole and to the 23 SUSI communities who were part of this project. When we let folks know that Indiana has over 850,000 vacant tree spaces along city and town streets, that our urban forest is providing taxpayers with over \$79 million dollars in benefits for every dollar spent, people took notice. A statewide news release gave the general figures, local papers captured their community or regional information for SUSI with followup interviews, and report cards were given to SUSI cities and towns along with the Executive Summary of their urban forest with recommendations. These actions are making a difference in the way we do business. One urban forest manager from a SUSI community summed it up: “I am excited to take this information back to my city and to begin to manage our urban forest and budget needs based on this information.” A mayor in one of the SUSI communities was concerned with the grade the city received on its urban forest (C+). He wants to know how to get to an “A.” Yet another mayor did not want the information brought forth, saying he had no money (due to the property tax restructuring) to address the issues the SUSI data brought forth, which caused him grave concern. After some good dialogue, he did request that the information be presented at a city council meeting.



**\$** The urban forest is providing ecosystem service values of \$79,000,000.

**Figure 1. Estimated Statewide Benefits From Indiana's Street Trees**



Tree Lafayette Twyckenham Blvd. Planting and thanking donors.



Middlebury Tree Board members want to make an immediate impact by planting very large stock!

**TOPPING IS POISON TO TREES!**



**TOPPING**

- CAUSES DECAY AND EVENTUAL DEATH
- STRESSES TREES
- CREATES TREE HAZARDS
- MAKES TREES UGLY
- COSTLY TO MAINTAIN
- TREES LOSE ECONOMIC VALUE

**TAKE THE CLURE**

HIRE ISA CERTIFIED ARBORISTS AND REPUTABLE CARE FIRMS TO PRUNE TREES PROPERLY.

WHEN SELECTING TREES TO PLANT, CHOOSE ONES THAT WILL FIT THE PLANTING SITE WHEN THEY REACH THEIR MATURE SIZE.

DON'T PLANT TREES WITH A HEIGHT OF OVER 25 FT. MAXIMUM.



Display poster that drew Hoosiers to our display



Lane Ralph, Senator Lugar's aide and President of Greencastle Tree Commission honors soldiers and the benefits of trees

## **Statistical Highlights**

Managing and Developing Communities:	93
Population of Participating Communities:	3,495,774
Volunteer Assistance Generated (hours):	68,878
Tree City USA:	64
Tree City Growth Awards:	11