

# 2009 Accomplishment Report – Missouri

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## Introduction

The mission of the Missouri Department of Conservation's (MDC) community forestry program is to promote the development of sustainable community forests throughout Missouri. MDC assists communities through enabling grants, promotion and coordination of volunteer-driven community forestry programs, local coordination of the various National Arbor Day Foundation (NADF) programs, and numerous opportunities for training. A State coordinator leads the effort, which includes eight urban foresters whose primary responsibility is the delivery of community forestry assistance. In addition, 58 field foresters also have community forestry responsibilities. Statewide policy development and implementation are managed in partnership with the *Missouri Community Forestry Council* using a team approach.

The top emerging issues/opportunities include:

- Assisting communities that sustained major damage to their community forest in the past 36 months from ice and wind
- Responding at the State and community level to emerald ash borer
- Addressing urban sprawl and forest fragmentation along transportation corridors

## Key Accomplishments

### Comprehensive Natural Resource Management

A series of workshops were held to enable MDC employees and communities to better integrate natural resource concerns into planning and urban growth/development. Ninety-four MDC employees attended a 1-day workshop. This represented 98 percent of the Forestry Division's professional staff. The purpose of this workshop was to hone our field staff's understanding of how communities plan and grow, positioning them to provide technical support to communities as they address natural resource concerns.

A half-day regional workshop titled **Distinguishing Your Community by Its Natural Resources** was held in five different locations. In general, participants at all sessions were from city, State, and county government. Local school districts, regional planning councils, and other volunteer groups also attended. The workshop offered in St. Peters was held in conjunction with a meeting of the Missouri Chapter of the American Planning Association. It attracted 90 people.

All work on this project was done in partnership with the Missouri Association of Councils of Government, the Mid-America Regional Council, Patti Banks Associates, and various Regional Planning Councils.

It is difficult to measure the impact of the above investment of time and energy. From the Missouri Department of Conservation's perspective, a significant outcome of this project is the initiation of a partnership between MDC, the Missouri Association of Councils of Government, and the various Regional Planning Councils.

**Partnerships**

Working in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service Northern Research Station staff, a Nature Explorer Classroom was built at Columbia's West Boulevard Elementary School. A Nature Explorer Classroom is an outdoor classroom designed to encourage children to experience the outdoors by building: think hollow logs, trees, sticks to build forts, interesting plants, etc. The Nature Explorer Classroom is a program of the NADF. The U.S. Forest service staff was eager to partner on this project as was the city of Columbia and a local Boy Scout Troop. The MDC contracted with a landscape designer to create a plan for the area. The U.S. Forest Service secured almost \$25,000 in funding. The school was excited about providing a place to let their children explore nature.

The MDC, U.S. Forest Service, and the school are pioneering a new way to work together to encourage outdoor nature play for children. This Nature Explorer Classroom will serve children attending school as well as a preschool and neighborhood families during nonschool times.



**Emerging Threats**

Emerald ash borer continues to threaten our State. Response this past 12 months has been made in partnership with the Missouri Department of Agriculture, USDA APHIS, and the USACOE St. Louis District. The MDC undertook much of the public outreach, issuing numerous press releases, securing paid radio air time prior to Labor Day and Memorial Day, mailing information to all campgrounds, and making numerous presentations to groups like the Missouri RV and Campground Association, the Missouri Parks & Recreation Association, and various University of Missouri Extension Master Gardener programs, to name a few. Coordination between the Forest Health and Community Forestry programs continues to strengthen as we each capitalize on individual strengths. The MDC Community Forestry Coordinator serves as the Co-Chair of the Communications Committee on this interagency committee.

**Statistical Highlights**

Managing and Developing Communities:	146
Population of Participating Communities:	2,923,161
Volunteer Assistance Generated (hours):	21,942