

2009 Accomplishment Report – Vermont

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Introduction

The Vermont Urban and Community Forestry (VTUCF) Program's mission is to promote the stewardship of urban and rural forest landscapes to enhance the quality of life in Vermont communities. This mission recognizes the need to address environmental, economic, and social values of forests from the urban core, to suburban developments, to rural forest land. The program assists in developing sustainable local programs by providing technical and financial assistance, information, and education. The program team consists of the State coordinator, a community involvement coordinator, and five district urban and community foresters. The Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Council, which is composed of 20 members representing professional associations, educational institutions, nonprofit groups, regional officials, tree boards, and State agencies, works in partnership with the VTUCF Program to identify the State's urban and community forestry needs and to determine program direction.

Key Accomplishments

Williston Grows Arborists

Since the fall of 2008, the Brennen Woods Street Tree Pruning Crew has volunteered to maintain the health and beauty of trees on the local streets as part of Williston's Pruning Initiative for Neighborhood Trees, or PINT. With the help of a Trees for Local Communities (TLC) grant, Williston conducted a tree inventory in 2005, finding that 96 percent of the public trees would benefit from pruning. Since Public Works could not tackle the task alone, the town's 2007 Community Forestry Plan outlined a strategy to develop a citizen pruner program. With the help of another TLC grant in 2008, PINT was created. The Brennen Woods Crew is 16 volunteers strong and consists of several Vermont Tree Stewards who received training from the VTUCF's SOUL program and green industry professionals.

Together they pruned 95 trees in 139 hours in 2009. The crew is proud of their work and is looking forward to pruning the remaining 344 trees in the neighborhood. The program is a success and is ready to move forward in other neighborhoods without further grant money.



Volunteer members of the Brennen Woods Street Tree Pruning Crew in Williston, VT, are hard at work.

City Strives to Turn Main Street into A Green Street

The city of St. Albans has been working diligently over the past 5 years to develop strategies to strengthen and foster a healthy vibrant downtown. As part of those efforts, the city recently worked with the community to develop a master plan for the district. Congruent to the planning process, we were collaborating with the city to conduct an urban tree canopy assessment (UTC). The UTC assessment showed the city's existing canopy cover as 27 percent, which is low compared to other urban areas nationally and in Vermont. Further analysis of the UTC data identified the city's downtown UTC as only 7 percent, making St. Albans and its downtown a high priority for tree planting efforts in the State. In addition, the city is home to two watersheds that are listed on the U.S. EPA Impaired Waters List due to stormwater runoff. It was no surprise that during the planning process, increasing tree canopy cover and watershed health rose as top priorities. The city accepted the challenge and is moving forward with engineering plans to make Main Street a green street by retrofitting the street so that the new tree pits accept and treat stormwater runoff. The UTC assessment gave the city the motivation to make street trees a top priority and to take advantage of new urban forestry green infrastructure technologies to help elevate some of the ill effects of large areas of impervious surfaces. Their efforts, the first of this scale in Vermont, will lead towards better stormwater management, downtown revitalization efforts, and promotion of smart-growth development patterns intended to relieve pressure on surrounding rural areas.

Tree Stewards Creating Headlines

Since graduating from the Stewardship of the Urban Landscape (SOUL) Tree Steward Training program in 2008, Barbara Gameroff has been busy writing a column in her local weekly newspaper, The Stowe Reporter. Her column, called Greenspace, offers practical tips to homeowners on everyday actions that can save energy, money, and the environment. A main focus of the column is urban and community forestry, and she has written on topics from Arbor Day to proper mulching. Her column reaches over 10,000 readers and is making a difference for the trees of Stowe and surrounding communities. Following in Barbara's pen strokes is Marie Ambusk, 2007 SOUL graduate and founder of TREEage in South Burlington, whose moto is "making a difference in our community...one tree at a time." Marie started writing her TREEage column in The Other Paper in 2009 and states, "My goal is not to only reach out to her neighbors by working on community trees together, but by writing a column about trees to empower others." These ladies are using the power of print media, reaching a combined readership of over 20,000, to give urban trees and forests a voice.



The Stowe Reporter's Greenspace column.

Statistical Highlights

Number of Communities:	255
Managing Communities:	17
Developing Communities:	53
Volunteer Assistance Generated (hours):	10,825
Tree City USA:	10