

Urban and Community Forestry Program 2010 Accomplishment Report – Illinois

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Introduction

The mission of the Illinois Urban and Community Forestry (IL UCF) Program is to provide information and technical assistance to units of local government and others that will encourage efforts to plan and implement local community forestry programs to plant, protect, maintain, and utilize the wood from trees in their local jurisdictions. Urban and community forestry management integrates natural, social, and economic systems to create a healthy forest resource and a safe environment for Illinois citizens. This mission is achieved by helping communities and other units of local government in the development or expansion of urban and community forestry programs. Illinois' statewide Urban and Community Forestry Program is part of a nearly \$5 billion green industry in Illinois that serves 80 percent of the State's population.

Key Accomplishments

Tree City USA Highlights

Illinois celebrated 34 years of participation in the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA program this year. The program continues to grow with 190 Tree City USA communities participating this year. For the 12th year since 1990, Illinois had the second highest number of Tree City USA communities in the Nation. Illinois ranks #1 in the country for the number of Tree City USA Growth Award Participants. Illinois UCF Tree City USA efforts alone serve about 7.4 million people, or more than 69 percent of Illinois' urban and community residents. Tree City USA is a highly respected and sought after recognition in Illinois. As an indicator of the importance of this program to communities, many have integrated Tree City USA as an icon on their community Web sites.

Emerald Ash Borer in Illinois

Being on the frontier of the national emerald ash borer infestation means that continued community assistance is needed. The IDNR continues to address emerald ash borer as a component of urban forest management within Illinois communities. The door hanger outreach continued this year with 100,000 additional door hangers being distributed to Illinois communities. The prototype is posted on the Web site for free access and local use in printing additional door hangers. This outreach has been extremely successful.

University of Illinois Benefits Study

A two-part study of urban benefits was conducted by the University of Illinois. The first part focused on the relationship between Illinois Tree City USA communities and Illinois natural resources. It was completed in September 2010. Results were provided at the March 2011 Central/Southern Illinois Tree City USA Conference.

Tree Inventories of Chicago Parks

Openlands staff and volunteers completed tree inventories in Chicago parks. The most notable tree inventory was in Chicago's Grant Park, which focused on the more than 300 surviving American elms and 1,500 hybrid elms that have been planted to replace the American elms that have been lost. The inventory is being used as a management tool for forestry maintenance crews and will also be used for strategic planning by the Chicago Park District.

TreeKeeper Training

Fifty-two citizens were trained as part of Openlands' Fall 2010 TreeKeeper class, one of the largest enrollments in the course's history.

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) Comprehensive Regional Plan

The Morton Arboretum was instrumental in getting urban forestry included in the comprehensive regional plan for the Chicago metropolitan area (Go To 2040). <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/strategy-papers/urban-forestry>

2010 Tree Census

The Morton Arboretum led data collection efforts for a regional i-Tree Eco analysis that will summarize the composition and benefits of the urban forest in the seven-county Chicago metropolitan area.

Chicago Wilderness Urban Forestry Task Force

Chicago Wilderness created an Urban Forestry Task Force dedicated to addressing the unique challenges of promoting woodland biodiversity conservation in a metropolitan and suburban environment.

Statistical Highlights

Managing and Developing Communities:	157
Population of Participating Communities:	76,760,992
Volunteer Assistance Generated (hours)	34,694