

# Urban and Community Forestry Program

## 2010 Accomplishment Report – Massachusetts

### State Contact

Eric Seaborn  
Urban and Community Forestry Coordinator  
Department of Conservation and Recreation  
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600  
Boston, MA 02114  
Phone: 617-626-1468  
Fax: 617-626-1449  
E-mail: [Eric.Seaborn@state.ma.us](mailto:Eric.Seaborn@state.ma.us)  
Web site: [www.state.ma.us/DCR/](http://www.state.ma.us/DCR/)

### State Forester

Vacant  
Massachusetts Bureau of Forestry  
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600  
Boston, MA 02114  
Phone: 617-626-1459  
Fax: 617-626-1449

### Introduction

With dense populations and vast town forests, along with a tremendous resource of town commons and conservation land, the people of Massachusetts have come to expect the steady comfort and beauty of trees in their neighborhoods. Through technical assistance, education, and grant funding, the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) provides assistance to communities in their efforts to build support for community forest resources. Urban Forestry Challenge Grants support local efforts to develop sustained urban and community forestry programs in Massachusetts towns and cities. The Challenge Grants program is an amalgam of prior popular grant offerings such as Planning and Education grants; Heritage Tree Care grants, which provide funds for professional care of large and historically significant trees in public landscapes; and Mass ReLeaf grants that support tree planting projects throughout the Commonwealth. In FY2010, the DCR continued to offer Urban Forestry Environmental Justice Challenge Grants as a special category of the larger grant program to focus resources on those communities and populations in the State that are most in need.

### Key Accomplishments

In FY2010, the DCR participated in the national process of conducting state-by-state Forest Resource Assessments with the subsequent development of Forest Resource Strategies. This effort was mandated by Congress as expressed in the recently passed Farm Bill. DCR Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) staff served as the lead for the DCR Bureau of Forestry for this project. The Massachusetts documents were completed and submitted to the U.S. Forest Service by the required deadline. The DCR Urban & Community Forestry Program is now focusing efforts on the priority areas identified within these documents as a subset of realistic goals for the foreseeable future. These documents will function as our guidance document for annual work plan development. In FY2009, the DCR completed the construction of a new Web-based community status reporting system that will be accessible to the general public and serve as a clearinghouse of community forestry program information for each community in the Commonwealth. In FY2010, the DCR worked to disseminate the Web location of this interactive tool to municipal leaders and the public. The Web site for this system is <http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/dcr/forestry/forestry23.html>.

In FY2010, the highest priority for the DCR U&CF Program was the response to the Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) infestation in Worcester County. DCR program staff continued to work with the USDA to implement a replacement tree planting program funded with monies passed from APHIS through the U.S. Forest Service to the DCR. This planting program was restricted to replacing trees on properties from which trees had been removed due to infestation. Planting under this program was completed in May of 2010 with some 850 trees planted. DCR U&CF program staff managed all aspects of this effort, from

writing the grant to securing the funds, selecting a planting contractor, meeting with landowners, ordering trees, supervising the plantings, paying the bills, and managing all other aspects of implementing and completing this work.

Concurrent with the USDA-funded ALB restoration effort, the DCR submitted a grant proposal to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Program to create a broad-scale reforestation program for the ALB quarantine area. The grant was accepted and funded at the level of \$4,449,000. DCR U&CF staff members were assigned the task of designing the implementation plan and establishing the program. Throughout FY2010, DCR U&CF staff dedicated the bulk of staff time to hiring and training reforestation personnel, purchasing program equipment, creating program systems and functions, and conducting public outreach about the program. The result of this effort is the establishment of the Worcester ALB Reforestation Program comprised of 10 Foresters, 1 Program Coordinator, and 45 seasonal planting laborers who will plant at least 15,000 trees throughout the ALB quarantine zone over the next 18 months.

Due to its heavy commitment to the ALB situation, DCR U&CF was not able to maintain other elements of its standard program. For example, in FY2010, the DCR was not able to conduct the annual Tree City USA Forum and Awards Ceremony. The DCR did review the applications of 82 participating Tree City USA Communities and is in the process of delivering award materials to municipal leaders. Ironically, the ALB situation did provide DCR U&CF staff with opportunities to speak to more community leaders in group settings due to the high level of interest throughout the Commonwealth in the status of the infestation. This increased public exposure is reflected in the CARS data in the increased number of developing communities that resulted because the DCR staff was able to offer assistance to more communities in these group settings.

In FY2010, the 351 Tree Wardens and more than 3,000 friends of urban forestry throughout the State were kept abreast of issues, new research, and events through our monthly Citizen Forester newsletter. This past year, the Citizen Forester highlighted topics such as urban soil science and management, the role of urban trees in combating air pollution, stormwater management and urban tree cover, and emphasizing the importance of qualified personnel in municipal forestry departments. Publishing and distributing the newsletter was not as consistent as has been common practice in past years due, again, to the heavy commitment of program staff to the ALB situation and to the Forest Assessment and Strategy document development.



American Recovery and Reinvestment Act DCR foresters and seasonal laborers plant trees at Red Cross Offices located at 2000 Century Drive in Worcester, MA.



Newly hired DCR seasonal employees are being trained to plant container-grown and balled and burlapped trees at the Odd Fellows Home in Worcester, MA.

To the extent possible given time constraints, the DCR worked closely with the U.S. Forest Service and other Federal agencies on innovative forestry/urban forestry initiatives such as Urban Connections, the Urban Ecology Collaborative, the Northeast Urban Research Station NEURON event, and Boston's Urban Forest Coalition. In addition, the DCR continued to work closely with and support the Urban Natural Resources Institute of the U.S. Forest Service Northern Research Station.

### **Grants**

In FY2010, the DCR awarded \$205,546 to 14 communities and groups through the Urban Forestry Challenge Grant Program. These grants provided funding for a broad spectrum of projects including management plan development, inventory work, ordinance development, tree planting, and public education and awareness.

In FY2010, the DCR funded the following exemplary Urban Forestry Challenge Grants in addition to 11 other excellent projects:

#### **Charles River Watershed Association – \$27,000 Request/\$27,635 Match**

This grant funds the implementation of LID and green infrastructure installations in the rehabilitated school yard of the German School on Everett Street in Allston–Brighton. The project will serve as a demonstration of the utilization of urban forestry for stormwater control, mitigation of the heat island effect, and neighborhood improvement with green infrastructure.

#### **Fenway Garden Society – \$3,332.50 Request/\$3,332.50 Match**

This grant provides professional arboricultural care for mature trees in the Back Bay Fens and for the planting of three new trees. The project will be conducted in accordance with the parameters of the original historic landscape plan created by Frederick Law Olmstead.

#### **City of Fall River – \$30,000 Request/\$30,000 Match**

This grant provides for the hiring of a full-time professional arborist to serve as a consultant to the city forestry program. The city was recently forced to cut funds for a consulting arborist due to fiscal shortfalls within the city budget. This grant will sustain the improved performance of the municipal forestry program and will hopefully serve as impetus for the city to reallocate funds for the arborist position.

#### **State Urban and Community Forestry Council**

In FY2010, the Advisory Board supported the DCR program by participating in grant reviews and reviewing the annual narrative for Federal funding.

#### **Volunteer Program**

The DCR employs a Community Action Forester who works to develop volunteer and partnership efforts, primarily in western Massachusetts. The Program Coordinator and the Community Action Forester work with many communities that are initiating innovative approaches to urban and community forestry including comprehensive regional assessments, youth employment programs, citizen training programs, and community planting programs to maximize local resources, harness volunteer energy, and train future stewards. In FY2010, staff time dedicated to volunteer and community involvement was curtailed due to the ALB response effort.

Tree boards have assumed new prominence throughout the Commonwealth. Many communities now have officially appointed tree boards, some growing from ad hoc committees created to address a specific tree-related issue. Currently there are 116 citizen tree boards (or equivalent groups) in Massachusetts. Tree boards support the work of tree wardens, organize fundraising and educational activities, and in some cases, provide leadership for a municipal tree program. We are continuing to encourage and

facilitate the formation of additional groups. In FY2010, the DCR conducted its annual Tree Stewards Training Workshop at the Harvard Forest in Petersham. The training targeted tree committee members, municipal natural resource decisionmakers and staff, municipal Department of Public Works employees, Tree Wardens, and citizen activists. The training was conducted largely under the leadership of the Community Action Forester.

Massachusetts enjoys a high degree of professionalism among several partner organizations operating at the municipal level as the hands-on caretakers of the urban forest. The Massachusetts Arborist Association, in partnership with the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, coordinates a training and certification program for arborists. Some 700 arborists hold the Massachusetts Certified Arborist credential. More are certified, additionally or exclusively, by the International Society of Arboriculture. In FY2010, the DCR continued its support of professional development for municipal arborists and tree wardens by awarding a grant to the Massachusetts Tree Wardens and Foresters Association (MTWFA). The association used the funds to defray some of the costs associated with a series of professional development classes and the Association's annual conference. The DCR and the MTWFA continued the process of developing a long-term vision for the MTWFA, including specific steps to increase the level of expertise of members and Tree Wardens in general. The MTWFA and the DCR also continued the process of revising Massachusetts General Law Chapter 87, which establishes the position and authorities of the Tree Warden in every community in the State.

### **Statistical Highlights**

Managing and Developing Communities:	221
Population of Participating Communities:	3,659,983
Number of Volunteer Hours:	In excess of 20,000