

# Urban and Community Forestry Program 2010 Accomplishment Report – Maryland

## State Contact

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## Introduction

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) preserves, protects, enhances, and restores Maryland's natural resources. The Maryland DNR Forest Service is the State agency responsible for the management and protection of the State's urban forestry resources. The group within the Maryland Forest Service with direct oversight of these resources is the Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) Program.

The U&CF Program protects existing trees and forests by implementing and enforcing laws, licensing individuals that perform tree care work, and training local government employees about tree care. The program reaches out to citizens through tree planting opportunities and the Maryland Urban and Community Forest Committee. The program recognizes counties, towns, and other groups for involvement in the care and planting of trees within their jurisdictions. The U&CF Program supports five full-time equivalent employees, and numerous other field staff members perform U&CF duties on a part-time or as-needed basis.

## Key Accomplishments

### **Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) Initiative**

**Objective:** Increase tree canopy in urban areas.

The Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) Initiative has become a component of the Maryland Commission on Climate Change as Action Plan #16, "Managing Urban Trees & Forests for Greenhouse Gas Benefits" (AFW-2), as well as a goal of the Chesapeake Executive Council Riparian Forest Buffer Directive No. 03-01. The Initiative continues to be an overarching program for the Maryland Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry Program.

The UTC Initiative started with three cities—Annapolis, Cumberland, and Baltimore City—and Baltimore County (29 census designated places). The Initiative expanded due to interest from Bowie, Edmonston, Greenbelt, Hyattsville, and Rockville. All of these communities have received tree canopy assessments conducted by the University of Vermont and funded by the Chesapeake Bay Trust's Urban Greening Initiative grant program and the Maryland Forest Service. Three communities developed goals: Annapolis (50 percent), City of Baltimore (40 percent), and the Frederick County Board of Education (20 percent). The remaining communities have experienced difficulty in adopting goals and are struggling to determine the direction to proceed. However, some communities (such as Greenbelt with 62 percent canopy coverage) have not adopted a goal but are moving ahead with planting plans to maintain their tree cover.

In order to better serve the older, more developed communities, the Maryland Forest Service has changed the emphasis of the UTC Initiative to include a more landscape-based approach. In addition to reaching out to individual towns and cities, the emphasis has been redirected toward counties, particularly counties with significant urban areas. With this shift in focus, those highly urban communities that encompass census-designated places (with no staff or budget) can benefit. Anne Arundel (31 communities) and Howard (5 communities) Counties have had assessments completed. Montgomery (47 communities) and Prince George's (22 communities) Counties are currently waiting for the results of their UTC assessments. The county assessments are being completed or have been completed by the University of Vermont. Anne Arundel and Howard Counties are having difficulty determining a goal, while Prince George's County may have adopted a goal prior to having a completed assessment. With this change in direction, the goal of the Chesapeake Executive Council Riparian Forest Buffer Directive No. 03-01 ["Establish urban tree canopy goals for 50 percent (74 communities) of the area developed primarily before stormwater management regulations (pre-1984) by 2020"] can be accomplished.

### **Marylanders Plant Trees**

**Objective:** Create a citizen tree planting initiative program.

In summer 2008, the Maryland Forest Service was tasked with developing a citizen component of the UTC Initiative. This new program would assist citizens with planting trees in their neighborhoods and ultimately increase the canopy coverage of the State.

On Arbor Day 2009, Governor O'Malley launched the Marylanders Plant Trees Initiative (<http://www.trees.maryland.gov/>) to encourage Marylanders to plant 50,000 trees by the end of 2010 with a grand total of 600,000 trees by 2020 to promote a more sustainable future for generations to come. This program is part of the Smart, Green & Growing statewide initiative.

Similar to Baltimore County's "Growing Home" campaign, the Marylanders Plant Trees Initiative utilizes a coupon to entice citizens to plant trees. The \$25 coupon can be used to purchase a native tree with a net value of \$50. A Web site was developed to provide technical assistance on tree planting such as right tree-right place and other tree planting tips. The Web site also contains the list of acceptable native trees for coupon use, a list of participating nurseries, and lastly a page in which citizens can report the number and location of their tree plantings. This information is automatically tallied into a registry dial on the Web site and the Maryland BayStat site. In this manner, citizens can track the Initiative's progress on a weekly basis. The most interesting aspect of the Web site is the Tree Benefits Calculator designed by Davey with funding from the U.S. Forest Service. The Benefits Calculator was updated to allow multiple trees to be inputted and will allow the State to obtain statewide benefits based on the trees registered.

The program is now finishing its second year. Montgomery County developed a similar program, "Leaves for Neighborhoods," that reimburses Montgomery County citizens \$25 for every \$75 dollar tree purchased at participating nurseries. Citizens in this county can utilize both \$25 coupons (total \$50) for every \$75 tree purchased. In order to keep the program in the public's mind, prizes have been given out by a monthly drawing to those citizens that have registered a tree. A school challenge program was created to encourage students to purchase and register trees in their school names. The school that has the most registered trees wins a DNR environmental outdoor day. The Lucy School located in Frederick County won this year. Since Arbor Day 2009, **46,985** trees have been registered.

### **Statistical Highlights**

Volunteer Assistance Generated (hours):	72,614
Number of Tree City USA Communities:	34
Number of Tree Campus USA Colleges:	0
Managing and Developing Communities:	365
Population of Participating Communities:	4,245,617