

Urban and Community Forestry Program 2010 Accomplishment Report – Minnesota

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Introduction

Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) in Minnesota is a statewide collaboration that unites many agencies, organizations, communities, decisionmakers, and citizens throughout the State. The challenges that we have identified are:

- Minnesota communities need quicker and more access to expertise, training and current technology, research, information, and technical assistance
- Heightened political awareness and support for State funding initiatives
- Increased partnerships among communities in greater Minnesota
- Loss of forest land to urbanization, disease, and insects
- Lack of vision for sustainable community design, ecosystem approaches

FTE Capacity:

UCF Program Coordinator	Ken Holman	1.00 FTE
DNR UCF Program Leaders	Region/Area	0.25 FTE
DNR Student Worker	Grad Student	0.50 FTE
UCF Volunteer Coordination & Technical Asst.	U of M	4.45 FTE
Forest Health Team UCF Work	FH Team	0.25 FTE
Clerical Staff	Michelle J.	0.05 FTE
Total State U&CF Staffing		6.50 FTE

Key Accomplishments

Rapid Assessment Survey and Citizen Monitoring Network

To prepare for invasive tree pests, a comprehensive statewide database of street and yard trees was needed. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) devised procedures for a rapid field tally and assessment of residential ash and elm trees, and carried them out in 789 Minnesota communities in 2006. For results, see: http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/treecare/forest_health/index.html (top of green box). A new U.S. Forest Service grant built on this by using a refined methodology to characterize the abundance, size, and health of all genera of neighborhood trees across the State. The project also enlisted and trained a network of Forest Pest First Detectors to provide a front line for the detection of significant invasive pests. First Detectors have been available to complement the efforts of city foresters and tree inspectors. An arborist trained in the First Detector curriculum found the first emerald ash borer (EAB) infestation (in

St. Paul) within 3 years of its introduction, instead of the usual 4 or 5 years. This gave local and State officials a significant jump on efforts to contain EAB.

EAB Rapid Response Model Communities Project in Greater Minnesota

This project by the University of Minnesota Department of Forest Resources and the University's Extension Service is designed to help communities in greater Minnesota prepare for the arrival of the emerald ash borer, which affects the health of ash trees (genus *Fraxinus*) throughout Minnesota. Each community will have energy audits; stratified inventories of private, public, and commercial tree populations; and a cost/benefit analysis of reforestation techniques. At the conclusion of the project in June 2011, model impact projections will be developed based on these analyses. Read more at <http://www.mntreesource.com/>.

Leveraging State EAB Grant Funds

Nearly \$2 million of Forest Protection Reserve funds was appropriated from the State Outdoor Heritage Fund (new source from a percentage of sales tax) for cities to plan and prepare for the invasion of the emerald ash borer and respond to new infestations. Of this, \$125,000 was used to develop a Community Preparedness Manual and EAB Plan Template, and to conduct 12 EAB Prep Workshops statewide to provide communities with the opportunity to plan ahead to spread the costs and losses associated with the impacts of EAB. See <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/fprappropriation/eaboutreach.aspx> for details. In addition, \$3 million in State funds was appropriated for the DNR Community Forestry Bonding Grants Program to plant shade trees on public land; replace trees lost to forest pests, disease, or storms; and establish a more diverse and resilient community forest. Priority is given to grant requests to remove and replace ash trees with infestations of the emerald ash borer. For details, see <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/forestmgmt/commforestbonding.html>.

Minnesota GreenCorps Pilot Program (an AmeriCorps Program)

The DNR joined the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Sustainability Team to launch GreenCorps. Information about GreenCorps can be found at <http://www.nextstep.state.mn.us/greencorps.cfm>. This program provided opportunities for recent college graduates to improve Minnesota's environment while gaining experience and learning valuable job skills. Minnesota GreenCorps members are working on sustainability and community forestry projects in four cities:

- Rochester
- Duluth
- St. Paul
- Woodbury



Corps members completed tree inventories, preparedness plans, and EAB outreach; and organized public Arbor Day celebrations (see photo on the following page). Program communities for 2010 to 2011 include the Three Rivers Park District, St. Paul, and Woodbury.

Council Board of Directors and Web Page Redesigned

The former Shade Tree Advisory Committee (MnSTAC) completed an overhaul of its Board of Directors, working subcommittees, and constitution. With 27 board members and much broader representation, the new MnSTAC is already more effective in its three primary activities: networking, technology transfer, and advocacy. This revitalization is reflected in a redesigned Web site, <http://www.mnstac.org/>, which will greatly improve communications and access for potential new members and the *Shade Tree Advocate* newsletter, found at <http://www.mnstac.org/newsletter.html>.



Participants take part in an Arbor Day planting in Woodbury organized by Minnesota GreenCorps member Whitney Olson. GreenCorps members in four Minnesota cities also completed tree inventories, preparedness plans, and EAB outreach.

Statistical Highlights

Number of Managing Communities:	55
Number of Developing Communities:	214
Population of Participating Communities:	3,486,801
Volunteer Assistance Generated (hours):	32,455