

Urban and Community Forestry Program 2010 Accomplishment Report – New York

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Introduction

The Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) Program in New York State is as varied as the State's people and geography, which ranges from densely populated areas downstate to rural and forested landscapes upstate. The program's goal is to empower communities to plan and manage their own green resources. Program managers continue to inform communities, agencies, not-for-profit groups, and citizens about the values of urban and community forestry. Training, tools, consultation, and technical support are made available to community leaders and volunteers. The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Urban and Community Forestry Cost-Share Grant Program, which is supported by the Federal program, is a community incentive that funds projects in support of tree planting and care, partnerships, and public awareness of the importance of urban trees. In 2008-2009, the New York grant program funded 46 community grants totaling near \$900,000. Although the fiscal condition of New York State prevented the contracts from being awarded, contracts have since received approval for release, allowing these communities to move forward with spring and fall 2010 projects. These grants also helped us improve our performance when counting new inventories and management plans. The New York U&CF Program encourages State environmental quality and energy agencies to evaluate and utilize urban tree planting and care efforts in their comprehensive strategies to mitigate environmental problems.

Key Accomplishments

Foresters and Central Office staff have supported their communities in 2010 by presenting numerous urban forestry workshops to fit the needs of specific parts of the State. Volunteers help in the coordination of these efforts, and green industry professionals volunteer their time to do the presentations and train the attendees. Workshops presented during 2009-2010 that helped New York meet its goals included:

Trees Forever in Region 2, a workshop to help create a healthy urban forestry [program] in New York City—This workshop included presentations on how to participate in the Million Trees Campaign, how to help your local college become a Tree Campus U.S.A., and how the New York State Saratoga Nursery makes contributions statewide and beyond by providing seedlings and maintaining seed banks of native trees and plant species.



EAB – The Threat to Western New York’s Forests in Region 9 and Keeping Our Community Trees Alive in Region 7—Both workshops presented biological data relating to the emerald ash borer (EAB) and community preparedness relating to budgetary and inventory options. U.S. Forest Service employee Michael Bohne participated in the Region 7 workshop along with Cornell University’s Mark Whitmore. A tree planting demonstration by Dr. Nina Bassuk took place to demonstrate the need to plant diverse species when facing the probable decimation of ash in the coming years.

Back to Basics on Long Island—This provided tools of the trade and hands-on demonstrations in tree climbing by the APHIS Asian Longhorned Beetle Team from Amityville coordinated by Marlene Bombara. In addition, the National Grid and Long Island Power Authority coordinated the “Live Wire” demonstration van that parked and demonstrated the safety measures needed to prune and otherwise handle trees around wires, and Long Island Arborist and SUNY Farmingdale Horticulture Instructor Larry Ferrandiz demonstrated advanced diagnostic tools in order to show what’s needed to ensure healthy tree establishment and growth. A large tree transplant was also demonstrated by Village of Lynbrook Highway Superintendent Phil Healy.

In one year, the needs of over 500 workshop attendees and 165 conference attendees were met in their respective areas of the State.

Snippets

Tree Planting – We partnered with the Million Trees Program to plant over 1,500 trees to reforest State land in Staten Island. DEC Region 2 staff, Central Office staff managers, and volunteers attended the Million Trees Planting day in April to make DEC’s tree planting contribution once again. The Natural Resource group coordinated the planting materials, and DEC staff contacted volunteer groups in an effort to dig, plant, and water in the plants. NYC Parks is well ahead of schedule in planting nearly 400,000 trees in just 3 years.

Green Job Training – DEC staff from New York City and program coordinator Mary Kramarchyk participated in a conference call with the U.S. Forest Service and the NYC DPR Green Apple Corps regarding coordination and sharing of resources to help New York City’s Million Trees Training Program. Best Management Practices and climbing training were provided to the attendees of the spring session of the training program.

Support/Volunteer Coordination Staff Added – The urban forestry staff has been working closely with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Nassau County on a cooperative agreement to provide technical urban forestry assistance to local municipalities. Seed funding to establish and support this position is being provided through a Federal urban forestry grant from the U.S. Forest Service. Performance measures met and deliverables targeted in this area of the State help to maintain the funding New York receives to support our statewide urban forestry program. On a (hopefully) temporary basis, staff at the Nassau County CCE will help fulfill the duties the long-vacant Region 1 Forester position would otherwise be responsible for.

Tree City USA – Advice and assistance were provided to the city of Lockport in Niagara County to get its municipal forestry program up to Tree City USA standards. The initial step was organizing its Arbor Day Celebration, which was held at Charles Upson Elementary School. At the ceremony students planted a sugar maple tree, presented artwork about tree benefits, and recited poems inspired by trees. The mayor also read a proclamation. Currently, we are reviewing its existing tree ordinance and formalizing a citizen tree board.

Tree Board and Ordinance Advocacy – In 2009, Central Office staff and Region 7 staff (Syracuse, NY) met with the Town of Dewitt Supervisor, Dewitt Advisory Conservation Committee, and the Town board, and made presentations on the benefits of having a tree board and how to participate in the Tree City USA Program. Region 7 ReLeaf member Ann Sullivan organized the meeting. Dewitt joined in the annual “tree buy” that many New York communities participate in each fall. A large order of trees is purchased from Schictel’s nursery and shipped across the Thruway from one end of the State to the other. Cities such as Ithaca, Troy, and Schenectady joined smaller communities like Dewitt and Fayetteville to plant bare-root trees with the help of volunteers and their highway departments. Dewitt is striving to meet the Tree City USA standards for 2010. Many other communities in New York State were visited by our forestry staff, as reflective in the increase in productivity in the 2009-2010 year.



Statistical Highlights

Number of People Living in Communities that Have, or Have Potential to Develop, Programs:	16,850,078
Number of People Living in Communities Provided Assistance:	14,284,173
Number of People Living in Communities Developing Programs:	4,004,787
Number of People Living in Managed Communities:	10,279,386
Volunteer Assistance Generated (hours):	234,275
Tree City USA Communities (Recertifying):	99
Tree City USA Communities (New):	1
Tree City USA Growth Awards:	18
Tree Line USA Utilities:	5