

Urban and Community Forestry Program

2010 Accomplishment Report – Rhode Island

State Contact

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Introduction

The Rhode Island Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Program was established in 1991 to promote sound and sustainable urban forestry and arboriculture practices in Rhode Island cities and towns. Program activities are guided by the elements of the 1999 Rhode Island Urban and Community Forest Plan. The UCF Program works closely with the Rhode Island Tree Council and others to restore and maintain the State's green infrastructure.

Presently, the UCF Program coordinator is a contractor to the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) and works under the supervision of the State Forester. The Rhode Island Tree Council serves as the State's urban forestry advisory council. The State's volunteer coordinator requirement is fulfilled by the participation of a technical advisor and others working for the Tree Council.

The focus of the Rhode Island UCF Program is providing direct technical assistance to communities. Key program activities include the annual celebration of Arbor Day, promotion of Tree City USA certification throughout the State, and management of the *America the Beautiful – Tree Rhode Island* grant program. Additionally, the program oversees the licensing of commercial arborists and ensures that each community has a tree warden as required by Rhode Island law.

Key Accomplishments

Arbor Day

The Rhode Island State Arbor Day celebration was held at Central Falls High School on April 30, 2010. The event was attended by school students and local dignitaries, as well as the Director of RIDEM and the State Forester. Once again, other Arbor Day plantings and planting ceremonies were held throughout the State in each Tree City USA community and other potential Tree City USA communities.

Anniversary awards for the Tree City USA program were delivered and/or presented to 11 Rhode Island communities during this period. The State has a combined total of 131 Tree City "years" among these communities. The cities of Providence and Newport will be celebrating 25 years and 20 years, respectively, during the upcoming season.



Rhode Island celebrated Arbor Day at Central Falls High School April 30, 2010.

America the Beautiful – Tree Rhode Island Grants

A new round of *America the Beautiful – Tree Rhode Island* grants was announced at the State Arbor Day ceremony in Central Falls on April 30, 2010. The new grants will total \$94,000 and will capture an anticipated \$117,882 in matching funds or services. This year's 13 grant recipients were comprised of eight municipalities, four nonprofit organizations, and the Rhode Island Tree Council. Project activities will include tree planting in support of sustainable tree programs, development of municipal tree nurseries, pruning of selected large trees, and tree plantings with social and cultural significance.

Urban Tree Canopy Assessment Grants

In October 2009, the Urban Tree Canopy Tool Development and Assessment, Goal Setting, and Implementation Grant (UTC grant) pass-through of \$72,000 was divided among the urbanized municipalities of Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls.

- City of Providence – The majority of work from the original \$36,000 of funding has been completed, trees were planted, and paperwork is being completed. The city is slated to receive an additional \$18,000 for further goal setting and implementation measures as explained below.
- City of Pawtucket – The city received the Draft Tree Canopy Report in May 2009. To date, no goal setting activities have been completed; however, representatives of the Rhode Island UCF Program and the Rhode Island Tree Council have met with the Pawtucket City Forester to initiate the next phase of the project. The City Forester is interested in developing a municipal off-ROW planting program as a means of implementing canopy increase.
- City of Central Falls – Due to a deteriorating fiscal condition over the past year, the city found it necessary to abandon their \$18,000 award in July 2010. This funding will be distributed to the city of Providence to further their ongoing canopy increase implementation measures.

Rhode Island Tree Council

The Rhode Island UCF Program has continued to provide financial and programmatic support for the Rhode Island Tree Council.

The Rhode Island Arbor Day Fair was held this year at Warwick City Park on May 8, 2010. Over 100 trees were planted near the entrance way to the park, with dozens of volunteers participating in the planting activities. The Arbor Day Fair is supplemented by a Mulch Day, which serves as a followup maintenance activity for the previous year's plantings. This year's mulch day activities occurred at Goddard State Park and Roger Williams Park on June 5, 2010. The Rhode Island Tree Council has also initiated the Trees for Troops program, providing a tree planting service to memorialize or honor service personnel and others at the Veteran's Memorial Cemetery in Exeter, RI.

The Rhode Island UCF Program also participates in the Rhode Island Tree Council's Tree Stewards training course that is held every spring and fall. Each year the Rhode Island Tree Council graduates approximately 60 students after a 6-week course on arboriculture that includes tree biology, tree identification, soils, pruning, tree health care, and tree planting. Each of the course graduates is required to provide at least 30 hours of volunteer time in the realm of urban and community forestry.

The Rhode Island UCF Program has been working with the Rhode Island Tree Council towards the development of off-ROW planting programs in more towns throughout the State. Presently, three municipalities (Providence, Warwick, and Newport) have these programs, and a fourth municipality (Warren) was added this year. Additionally, the UCF Program has held preliminary meetings with the urban foresters from three municipalities (Providence, East Providence, and Newport) regarding the creation of a Suburban Tree Consortium. Using multiyear contract growing arrangements with wholesale nurseries, the consortium would promote better quality of tree planting stock and allow for a more buyer-directed species selection over time.

Other Activities

- The Rhode Island UCF Program, in conjunction with the Rhode Island Chapter of the Society of American Foresters, held a 1-day Arborist Workshop on October 1, 2009, titled, "What Killed Your Tree?"
- The Rhode Island UCF Program participated in the RIDEM Great Outdoor Pursuit at Lincoln Woods (May 23, 2010), Beavertail State Park (June 13, 2010), and Arcadia Management Area (July 11, 2010). UCF Program personnel set up a self-guided tree identification test course, led plant identification tours, and were available to answer questions about trees and urban and community forestry. An estimated 500 to 700 people attended each of these gatherings, and 200 individuals were involved in the tree activities.
- In conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service and the Rhode Island Tree Council, the Rhode Island UCF Program offered a 1-day workshop relative to urban forest storm preparedness. The workshop, "Storms & Trees Workshop: Planning, Response, and Cost Recovery," was held on September 23, 2010, and was attended by over 30 people.

Statistical Highlights

Number of Communities in Rhode Island:	40
Number of Communities Assisted:	30
Number of Managing Communities:	17
Number of Trees Planted:	366
Federal Support:	\$118,000
State and Local Matching:	\$187,200
Tree City USA Communities:	11
Volunteer Assistance Generated (hours):	5,723