

Urban and Community Forestry Program 2011 Accomplishment Report – Indiana

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Introduction

The Community and Urban Forestry (CUF) program provides statewide leadership to increase public awareness of the value of trees in the urban forest. Over 71 percent of Hoosiers live in urban areas, and, according to recent data, over 65 percent live within communities. Because of this, the assistance the CUF programs provide is steadily increasing due to the demand of our varied customer base. CUF program assistance includes visits to municipalities to encourage and promote the protection and expansion of urban forests. This assistance takes the form of reducing the impacts of land use change by preserving, conserving, and restoring the urban forest; encouragement of tree and land conservation ordinances; simple and comprehensive tree inventories with management and work plans; and emergency response plans. Tree planting assistance focuses on strategically planting trees for their ecological benefits for the environment and human health. The program strives to help citizens make the connection between rural and urban forests and to realize that the trees in the urban forest clean the air we breathe and the water we drink. CUF achieves its mission by nurturing and forming a variety of partnerships throughout the State with its innovative grant, education, and outreach programs.

Key Accomplishments

Partnerships & Awareness/Outreach

There are more ways to conserve energy than by using energy saving appliances. This was the thought of Jason Lietz, Forestry Supervisor for the Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO)—also a Tree Line USA. When the LaPorte County Nursery had trees that were going to be plowed under, Jason had an idea. Why not water and protect these trees and provide them free to schools, libraries, and municipalities to be strategically planted around public buildings for energy conservation? Good idea. And, he recalled that CUF already had energy conservation guidelines and parameters in place along with a proven track record of providing and administering tree plantings and grant funds. The result? A partnership between CUF, NIPSCO, Arbor Metrics, and the LaPorte County Nursery that resulted in 600 trees being planted strictly for energy conservation with NIPSCO electric customers in northern Indiana.

A partnership was established between the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Entomology and CUF for a Great Lakes Basin Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Restoration grant. The DNR Division of Entomology and CUF worked together to develop an application that would help municipalities in the Great Lakes Basin develop management, planning, and planting projects to mitigate the issues EAB has caused, is causing, and will cause in the Great Lakes Basin. Together, we have awarded \$129,502 in Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funds to 10 projects in municipalities, park lands, and urban land trusts that are infested with EAB. Projects include comprehensive ash tree inventories with response and

restoration plans, treatments for significant ash trees, and urban forest restoration in key watershed/stormwater areas.

The Keep Indianapolis Beautiful (KIB) Pogues Run Art and Nature Park project is an excellent example of an extended project that protects and improves an urban watershed and wildlife area. The trees for this project were funded by two grant cycles from CUF Federal pass-through funds as well as several thousand partnership dollars and hundreds of KIB volunteer hours.

In order to garner an understanding of the issues that face the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) when planning road work, CUF spoke at Purdue Road School and invited INDOT to be part of the Indiana Urban Best Management Practices (BMP) Task Force. INDOT accepted, and this has proven to elicit a good amount of information sharing and, hopefully, understanding. INDOT will help draft Urban Forest BMPs for planting along State rights-of-way.

In an effort to help a small community with limited funds and to generate awareness of urban forest issues among our Indiana DNR District Foresters, CUF carried out a tree inventory in New Harmony. This historic community is very dependent on its citizen volunteers. The Park Board, which acts as the Tree Board, joined us on inventory day with golf carts to drive the inventory takers. CUF, along with three District (traditional) Foresters and our Conservation Education Director (who had a public TV film crew with him), inventoried 500 trees for the community and provided interviews and background on urban forestry. With teams consisting of one tree board member and one forester, everybody learned from one another.



A District Forester shows the New Harmony inventory crew how to measure a tree.



A New Harmony Tree Board member examines staking material left in a tree.



A District Forester calls out tree data as a New Harmony Tree Board member keys it into a hand-held computer.

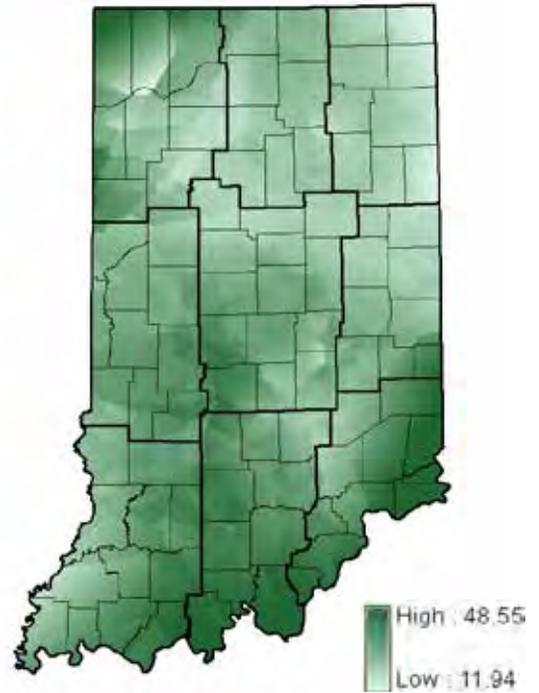
Assessing and Addressing Indiana's Urban Tree Canopy

The Indiana Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) project was completed and gives Indiana a comprehensive view of its urban forest tree canopy and the street tree population. This project measured the UTC of six communities, which were selected from the communities in the Sample Urban Statewide Inventory (SUSI) project. Consultants used advanced remote sensing surveys. An additional 102 communities were selected based on population, and their UTC was assessed using the U.S. Forest Service i-Tree canopy software. These two methods produced data that determined the average UTC for First, Second, and Third Class cities and towns (Indiana's legal designation for municipalities). The State was divided into nine urban forest regions, and the results were used to extrapolate regional UTC averages and a statewide UTC average. This project was made possible by urban forest funds from the U.S. Forest Service, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry. The addressing portion of this project is grant dollars awarded to municipalities and nonprofit organizations in the lean canopy areas defined by the UTC project.

In addition, any urban forest inventory project funded with State or Federal funds must now have an analysis of the data using i-Tree Streets or other type of data analysis tool that breaks down the tree population into its ecological functional components. It must also include a media component and public meeting component where the data is shared with lawmakers and the rest of the citizens in the community.

Statistical Highlights

Managing and Developing Communities:	121
Population of Participating Communities:	3,157,981
Volunteer Assistance Generated (hours):	80,643



Urban tree canopy cover in Indiana.