

Urban and Community Forestry Program 2011 Accomplishment Report – New Jersey

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Introduction

The New Jersey Community Forestry Program is a unique partnership between government, business, and volunteers caring for trees where people live, work, and play. Under the authority provided by the State legislature within the Community Forestry Assistance Act (P.L. 1996, Chapter 135), the program encourages, promotes, and assists cities and towns in the establishment, retention, and enhancement of trees and forest resources. The State Community Forestry Program is dedicated to making communities more livable by providing grants, technical assistance, training, and volunteer opportunities. The program continues to seek leading edge opportunities and innovative initiatives to build a sustainable statewide effort to manage local, publicly owned trees and forest. Through the use of Federal Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) funding, the goal of having a statewide community forestry initiative is ensuing.

Key Accomplishments

Last year, the New Jersey State Community Forestry Program reached a key and important milestone. With the continued support of Federal Urban and Community Forestry funds, the State eclipsed the 50 percent mark in the number of communities having or working on a Community Forestry Management Plan. This year that milestone has been critical in the marketing and support of the program. Even under the financial stress that our communities have been under this year, the program has grown by more than 10 percent, while maintaining 98 percent of communities that previously came to the program. This milestone and the continued growth have helped the New Jersey Community Forestry Council market the program to the legislature and to towns and cities not yet participating in the program. The success of New Jersey’s community forestry program can be directly attributed to the funds received by the State through the Federal Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program of the U.S. Forest Service.

Each year, the New Jersey Community Forestry Program seeks feedback from its participating municipalities. When the State or Federal governments seek to document accomplishments, it is here that we can find the direct outcomes that contribute substantially to meeting both State and Federal priorities. This feedback is in the form of an annual accomplishment report, required under the New Jersey Community Forestry Assistance Act, and supported by Federal Urban and Community Forestry funding. As was noted in last year’s written accomplishment report to the Forest Service, instead of giving

individual accomplishments of projects, New Jersey has decided to use the findings of our analysis of the municipal reports as our highlights. The result will once again show urban and community forestry activities statewide with an incredible accomplishment by cities and towns, all with the help of the New Jersey and Federal programs. New Jersey's program, with the assistance of the Federal Urban and Community Forestry Program, has built an enduring and wide reaching program that meets the mandates of both the State of New Jersey and the Federal Government. The overall accomplishments of our municipal governments are directly related to the support and assistance provided by the New Jersey Community Forestry Program and the Federal UCF Program.

Introduction

The following information has been compiled from all of the State of New Jersey municipal annual accomplishment reports (AARs) of 2010-2011 submitted by municipalities. Two hundred twenty-four annual accomplishments reports were submitted and reviewed. Outlines were made for each accomplishment report looking at 15 criteria areas: municipality, monetary support for the tree program, contact, number of people on boards, trainings, training interests, Arbor Day events, outreach, outreach ideas, budget, plan accomplishments, community forestry management plan, unattained goals and objectives, grants applied for, and municipality plans to apply for grants in the future. Of the 15 criteria areas, 7 of them were sorted through and used to compile statistics: trainings, Arbor Day events, outreach, budget, plan accomplishments, unattained goals and objectives, and grants applied for. After the criteria were sorted and compiled, certain trends were discovered about the 224 municipalities that submitted their AARs.

Trainings

The most attended training was the Shade Federation Meeting or CORE attended by **156** municipalities. The second most popular training was chainsaw safety attended by **25** municipalities. Some other training that was attended is as follows: Hazardous Tree Identification (17), Bartlett Seminar (17), Tree Planting Training by Rutgers (9), Pesticide Safety (4), Tree Identification (14), Tree Inventory Training (18), and Pruning Training (21). All together there were **73 different types** of training sessions compiled ranging from 1 to 156 participating municipalities.



A 5-hour CORE training session was provided to all new communities in the program.

Arbor Day Celebration Activities

The most popular activity was tree plantings in which **96** municipalities took part. Another popular activity was handing out tree seedlings, which **88** municipalities performed. Some other Arbor Day activities were a poster contest (7), poetry contest (3), having a booth at a festival (8), flyers (4), and a photo contest (1). There were 30 different activities compiled ranging from 1 to 96 participating municipalities.



Community-based tree planting in Newark, NJ.

Outreach

The most popular form of outreach was Tree City USA with 155 municipalities. Newsletters were another popular outreach for 43 municipalities. Other popular outreach activities were booths at events (30), a Web site (27), and flyers (25).

Budget

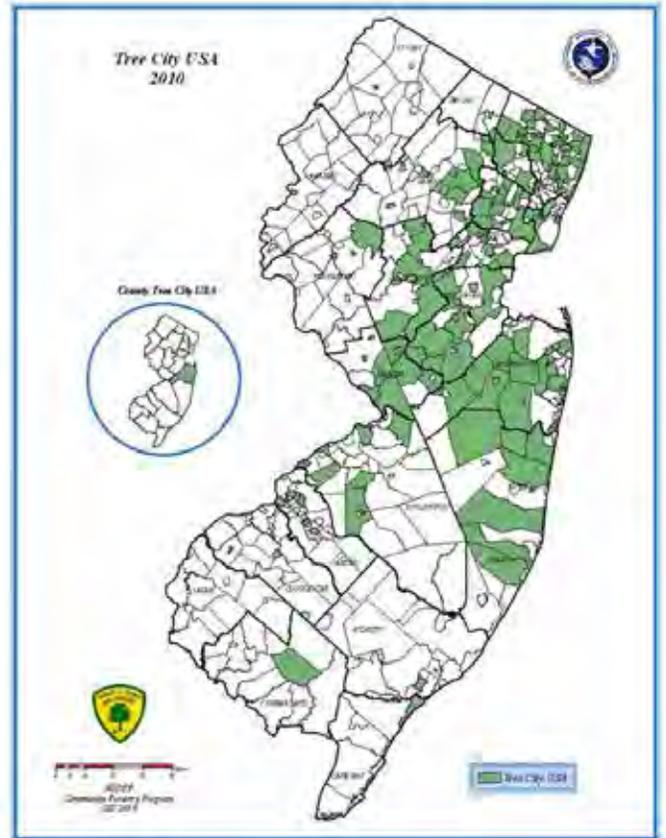
Out of the 224 municipalities that submitted an AAR, 189 submitted a budget. Please note that budgets were reported differently depending on the municipality's practices. Some municipalities recorded in-kind services with the volunteer rate and reported it into their budget, while other municipalities did not calculate any in-kind services into their budget. This means there is a large variance of actual budgets reported from municipalities. The budgets ranged from \$1,788,777 to \$1,000. The average budget was \$110,333.43 out of the 189 municipalities.

Community Forestry Management Plan Accomplishments

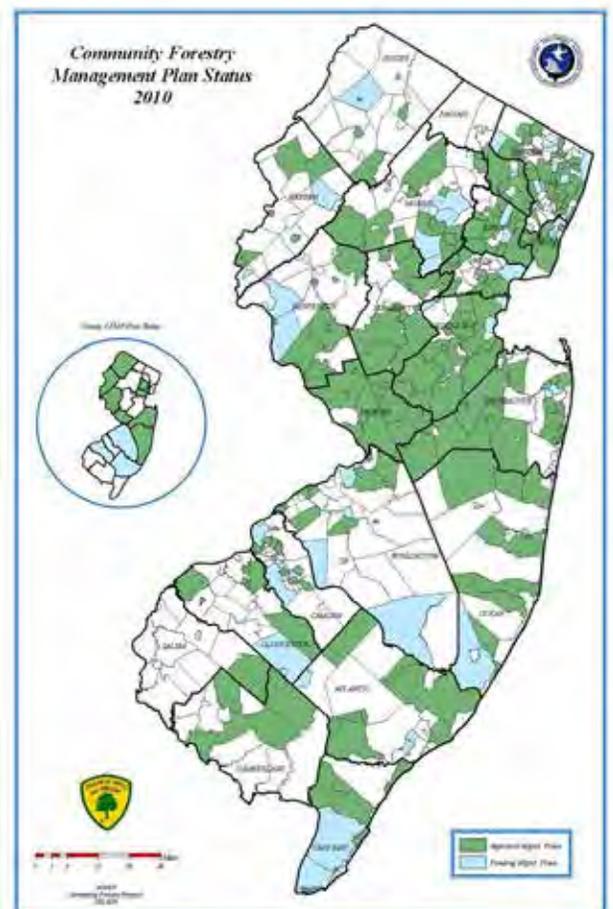
The top seven accomplishments achieved by the 224 municipalities were as follows: Hazardous Tree Identification (140), Tree Plantings (88), Hazardous Tree Removal (114), Tree Inventory (34), Pruning (45), Work performed on Community Forest Management Plants (38), and Tree City USA (90). The numbers are up for Hazard Tree risk management and removals due to the yearlong storm issue New Jersey had to deal with.



Just one example of the storm damage felt by New Jersey over the last year.



Map of the 172 Tree City USA communities in New Jersey (2010).



Map of communities who have or are working on a Community Forestry Management Plan (2010).

Community Forestry Management Plan Unattained Goals and Objectives

This area was once again largely unreported by most municipalities, maybe because even though funding is tight and in lots of cases not as available as in the past, communities must satisfy that requirement of the Community Forestry Act in order to get liability protection, hence “making” towns do activities even when funds are short. The Community Forestry Act promotes activities within our municipalities. Of the 224 AARs received, there were only 22 Unattained Goals and Objectives in 2010-2011. The top three Unattained Goals and Objectives that were reported were tree planting not achieved (10), inventories not performed (6), and lack of money (7). Most municipalities reported that weather hindered the tree planting goal and a lack of grant funds hindered completing inventories.

Grants

The last area compiled from the AARs was the grant data. According to the AARs, 177 grants were applied for by the 224 municipalities in 2010-2011. Municipalities ranged from applying for four of our grants (Green Communities, No Net Loss Reforestation, ARRA, and CSIP) to zero grants. Some towns found new funding sources to apply for such as the Sustainable Jersey Grants. Because the Business Stimulus Fund grant was offered twice, some communities listed these as available grants. The most popular grant is the Green Communities Grant, which is funded by a combination of Federal UCF monies and State Community Forestry funds through the sale of the Treasure our Trees License Plate. Each year the Community Forestry Council works at funding 100 percent of the applications received. This is due to the priority of the grant in developing management plans for cities and towns and how that leads to sustainability.

Of Special Note: New Jersey now has 10 National Big Tree Champions. Supported by Federal UCF funds, the staff has now trained volunteers to find and measure Big Tree finds throughout the State.



New Jersey's National Champion Swamp White Oak.

Statistical Highlights

Number of Participating Communities:	376
Volunteer Assistance Generated (hours):	43,559
Number of Tree City USA Communities:	172
Number of Growth Awards:	19
Number of Managing Communities:	252
Number of Developing Communities:	158
Population of Participating Communities:	7,534,069
Number of Communities with Advocacy/ Advisory Organizations:	398
Number of UCF Grants:	58
Number of Selected Communities for New Jersey:	566 (100%)

