

Urban and Community Forestry Program 2011 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, which has been reflected in the CARS Report for 2011. 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

Million Trees New York City Program

The Million Trees NYC program has provided an opportunity for State involvement in its activities, including the State Coordinator and Regional Forestry staff participating on the Million Trees NYC Advisory Board in a number of capacities. Even though New York City is a "managed" community, efforts that involve meeting tree canopy goals, job training assistance, forest restoration, and stewardship projects continue to involve forestry staff and the public. This program benefits from State forestry support and funding. Last year, New York City Parks and the New York Restoration Project utilized State Environmental Protection funds to support tree planting and stewardship. The Million Trees Program reached the 500,000 planted trees milestone. The program's activities included thousands of hours of volunteer time to restore city and State land. During each planting season, several days are dedicated to tree planting activities by our foresters, specifically for the Million Trees NYC program.



Volunteers help plant trees as part of the Million Trees NYC effort.

Details of one particular New York City planting involved a restoration project on a road culvert that had been plugged by millings that were dumped to widen the road shortly before DEC ownership. The area was inundated with water for years and most of the trees died in this 0.5-acre area. There was concern that the area would be established by invasive trees, shrubs, and vines if we only drained the site and did nothing else. It was decided that the area would be reforested to help ensure establishment of the native forest type. Region 2 Lands and Forests and Operations staff reopened the culverts, removed all hazard trees, and prepared the site for planting (upper left photo below). The New York City Parks Natural Resource Group provided the trees and helped manage the site. The actual planting was done largely by Region 2 Natural Resource staff, PS25 students, AmeriCorps personnel, and some of the New York City Parks staff (upper right photo below). Approximately 1,000 trees were planted at the North Mount Loretto Site on April 29, 2011, as part of the Million Trees NYC initiative.



Road culvert restoration site before planting.



Road culvert restoration site 3 months after planting.

Serving Communities through Bare-Root Tree Planting Efforts

Besides New York City, New York's Urban and Community Forestry Program serves 766 other communities. Cornell University has helped the State U&CF Program educate many people about the effective ways to maintain and grow a healthy urban tree canopy. Planting bare-root trees, particularly during the fall tree planting season, has become a popular practice in large cities and smaller towns. Those communities participating in a fall tree "buy" event and subsequent bare-root tree plantings include, but are not limited to, Buffalo, Rochester, Ithaca, Syracuse, Fayetteville, Manlius, Dewitt, Schenectady, Albany,¹ Troy,¹ and Rensselaer.¹

Two hundred fifty-four bare-root trees were delivered to Onondaga County for various municipalities and organizations. Cornell Cooperative Extension also planted "Missouri Gravel Bed" bare-root trees that were procured locally, bringing the total number of planted bare-root trees to 260.



Bare-root trees await planting.

Many of the communities participating in the bare-root tree "buy" event and the plantings have been doing so for 10 years! Municipalities use their Department of Public Works staff and receive assistance largely from volunteer tree boards associated with their tree board. This year Boy Scouts and local tree steward volunteers participated in the plantings. Good weather, lightweight bare-root trees, and lots of organization helped get a healthy contingent of volunteers to the planting sites.



People take part in bare-root tree planting efforts in New York State in fall 2011.

¹ Capital District Community Gardens, nonprofit participation.

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:	14,594,611
Number of People Living in Communities Developing Programs:	3,981,155
Number of People Living in Managed Communities:	10,613,456
Volunteer Assistance Generated (hours):	247,681
Tree City USA Communities (Recertifying):	93
Tree City USA Communities (New):	2
Tree City USA Growth Awards:	11
Tree Line USA Utilities:	5

