

Urban and Community Forestry Program

2011 Accomplishment Report – Pennsylvania

State Contacts

Rachel R. Billingham
Community Forestry Coordinator
E-mail: rbillingha@state.pa.us

Ellen Roane
Urban Forestry Coordinator
E-mail: eroane@state.pa.us

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and
Natural Resources
Bureau of Forestry
P.O. Box 8552
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8552
Phone: (717) 783-0385
Fax: (717) 783-5109
Web site:
<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/pucfc/index.html>

State Forester

Daniel A. Devlin
Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and
Natural Resources
Bureau of Forestry
400 Market Street
P.O. Box 8552
Harrisburg, PA 17105
Phone: (717) 783-0389
Fax: (717) 783-5109
E-mail: ddevlin@state.pa.us

Introduction

The Pennsylvania Urban & Community Forestry Program is a partnership among the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry, Penn State Extension Program, and Pennsylvania Community Forests (a.k.a. Pennsylvania Urban and Community Forestry Council), with financial and technical support from the U.S. Forest Service. The mission of the program is to assist communities in developing comprehensive and sustainable urban forestry programs for the purpose of enhancing quality of life.

Key Accomplishments

Urban Tree Canopy Assessments

Significant progress has been made in completing urban tree canopy (UTC) assessments in the State by working with communities to adopt canopy goals and strategizing where to prioritize planting. With technical assistance from the Bureau of Forestry, the cities of Lancaster, Clarks Green, and Clarks Summit have adopted canopy goals and are actively working toward achieving them. Assessments have also been completed for Abington, Waverly, State College, Penn State University, and all of Lancaster County.

The benefits of planting trees toward an established canopy goal are being quantified by the Bureau of Forestry. Credit is being awarded toward community MS4 permits, the Lancaster County Water Resources Plan, and the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP). The city of Lancaster is currently developing a stormwater utility based on the quantified benefits provided through the UTC work.

Through a Forest Service grant, the Bureau of Forestry has contracted with AMEC to establish a UTC Web mapping tool. This product will make UTC data and tree benefits calculators available to varied audiences within a community via the Internet. Initial stages of work are underway.

Urban Tree Canopy and Stormwater Management

The Pennsylvania Urban Forestry Program is working to connect trees and forests to water quality and watershed health. A high-quality slide presentation has been developed by the Extension Urban Forester in northeast Pennsylvania explaining the role trees and forests play in taking up pollutants before they reach waterways and in reducing stormwater runoff. Full-day workshops for engineers, municipal staff, elected officials, and urban foresters have continued in 2011. Presentations by urban foresters are combined with the expertise of university researchers studying the effects of green infrastructure to provide compelling educational programs. Attendance has been at or near full capacity at each one.

Street and Park Tree Inventories

In the past year, students from Penn State's School of Forest Resources, under the direction of Dr. Bill Elmendorf, completed street and park tree inventories for the cities of Lancaster, Easton, and State College; and the campus of Franklin and Marshall College. The work was completed utilizing MS Access-based software developed by a Penn State University Ph.D. candidate for use with GPS-enabled hand-held computers. The data can also be downloaded to i-Tree software to provide the value of ecosystem services that trees provide to a community.

In addition, Extension Urban Forester Scott Sjolander led municipal managers and volunteers in preparing and presenting five tree inventories utilizing i-Tree Streets software. To date, i-Tree software has not been used extensively in Pennsylvania. Scott introduced it to communities through park and reconstruction project inventories in Tionesta, Lawrence Park Township, Edinboro, Ellwood City, and Conneaut Lake.

In Bloomsburg, a college town where one Shade Tree Commission member is also a college professor, GIS students were engaged to complete an i-Tree Streets inventory of public trees. As a public outreach piece, posters detailing the ecological benefits that trees provide were developed and displayed publicly.

An Urban Forest Effects (UFORE) analysis was completed for the city of Scranton in 2010. On Arbor Day 2011, Dr. Dave Nowak presented the findings of the Scranton UFORE study to the mayor, city officials, and some middle school students.

TreeVitalize Accomplishments – Statewide

Involvement in the TreeVitalize Program continues. In each of the metropolitan areas, a county or regional government entity serves as a "Metro Partner" to help distribute and administer community grants. In Erie and Lancaster, the State was initially unsuccessful in establishing such regional partners willing to take on the added duties involved. During 2011 partnerships have been successfully established in both regions, and municipal grants will be awarded during the next grant round in March 2012.

To date nearly 300,000 trees have been planted across the State, including larger caliper trees planted on streets and in parks, seedlings planted into riparian buffers, and backyard trees planted on private property.

Municipal grants are tied to a full-day educational "Tree Tenders" workshop, which must be attended by representatives of each planting project. Tree benefits, biology, planting, and care are taught through a series of lectures and field demonstrations. These are held in various locations around the State, with instruction provided by Extension and Bureau of Forestry staff.

Individual workshops on tree benefits and tree care are also offered on an ongoing basis by the Extension Urban Foresters. The first “Community Tree Management Institute” was held in 2011 to provide more advanced guidance in establishing sustained urban forest management programs. In addition, the Arborist Short Course for arborist certification through the International Society of Arboriculture was offered in three locations.

A significant setback to the State’s urban forestry program occurred in 2011 when one of four regional urban forestry positions was eliminated due to lack of funds. As Federal allocations have diminished, the State has been unable to fund all four positions. The region served includes Pittsburgh, the second largest city of the State.

Marcellus Water Education Team

Pennsylvania Extension Urban Foresters have been involved in educating communities about the potential impacts of gas drilling in the Marcellus shale formation. An informative factsheet entitled “[Introduction to Hydrofracturing](#)” was developed and a Web-based factsheet entitled “Tracking Gas Development Online” is being finalized.

Statistical Highlights

Managing Communities:	241
Developing Communities:	174
Participating Communities:	415
Population Impacted:	6,843,142

