

Illinois

Program Overview

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Division of Forest Resources, U&CF Program helps communities and other units of local government develop or expand U&CF Programs; increase the awareness of urban forestry in Illinois; and plant, protect, and maintain trees in open spaces, green belts, parks, and residential developments. The Illinois U&CF Program helps communities and urban areas sustain the health and integrity of the forest resources in and around their communities. The IDNR works toward establishing and maintaining local community forestry programs by providing technical assistance, disseminating information, enhancing partnerships, and providing resources and recognition.

Program Accomplishments

Through the volunteer coordination provided contractually through the University of Illinois for Central and Northern Illinois, a new Regional U&CF Council was created in the south suburban area of Cook and surrounding counties. This council has served as a vehicle for providing technical assistance and educational training in the areas of tree risk management, new tree planting technologies, and tree and development concepts. The project was organized and conducted by Scott Bretthauer, extension specialist in urban forestry, the IDNR's contractual community forestry volunteer coordinator for Central and Northern Illinois.

The Springfield Urban Forestry Administration established the first ever Blue Ribbon Committee on U&CF. The committee's purpose was to review and provide recommendations on the future of U&CF in Illinois. The committee recommended that the core program be maintained, funding be provided for the U&CF Grant Program, dedicated U&CF staff be hired, and educational outreach on the important topics related to tree care continue to be provided.

Several new communities were reached through contractual support of Southern Illinois University. A tree seedling distribution program was used to initiate conversation with communities that typically had not requested or received community forestry assistance. This outreach program worked with 22 new communities. These communities received nearly 350 seedlings for planting on public property. Once communication lines were opened, the opportunity was used to distribute educational and informational brochures in addition to the free seedlings. Time was spent with each community individually to discuss the importance of good community forest management. Specific management issues discussed included proper tree-planting techniques, including placing the right tree in the right place; proper tree care; and proper tree pruning, including the negative impacts that topping has on trees. Also, information was provided about the Tree City USA Program. This project was organized and conducted by David D. Close, community forestry volunteer coordinator for Southern Illinois University.

Statistical Highlights

Number of participating communities: 227
Number of communities assisted: 227
Number of Tree City USA communities: 172
Number of trees planted (seedlings): 44,575
Number of days: 973
Number of hours of training provided of volunteer assistance to program: 1826

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