

Minnesota

Program Overview

Minnesota U&CF is a cooperative effort among many entities including Federal, State, local, nonprofit, and volunteer organizations. The Department of Natural Resource (DNR) U&CF Program seeks to strengthen advocacy by local leaders and to increase the capacity of local units of government to manage their community forest resources appropriately.

Program Accomplishments

Using Federal pass-through funds, the University of Minnesota (U of MN) College of Natural Resources (CNR) created a full-time position to support dissemination of research-based information, training of citizen volunteer Tree Care Advisors (TCAs), and updating and linking key Web sites in the State. This technician is vital to the coordination of technology transfer among principle partner agencies and organizations.

In FY 2002, TCAs began to accept leadership roles in the Minnesota Shade Tree Advisory Council. The new council president, co-chair of the Legislative Subcommittee, and editor of the e-newsletter are all graduates of the TCA Program. Their citizen perspective is proving invaluable in council meeting discussions of U&CF issues and in guiding the council's strategic planning.

DNR Forestry staff helped initiate several volunteer tree planting projects by collaborating with the Greenspace Partners, an organization of neighborhood groups in the Phillips and Powderhorn areas just south of downtown Minneapolis. The Greenspace Partners also began to clean up and landscape vacant lots that had become garbage-dumping sites. The Greenspace Partners are part of the larger Twin Cities Greening Coalition (of non-profit organizations), which supports grassroots environmental improvement activities in diverse, inner-city neighborhoods in both Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Over the past 5 years, U of MN researchers and the DNR have collected data from cities and performed autopsies on hundreds of wind-damaged and downed trees. Deep planting, resulting in stem girdling roots, was identified as the leading cause of whole tree failure. This work resulted in two publications and a companion video in English and Spanish, *A Practitioner's Guide to Stem Girdling Roots of Trees*.

A project in the city of Red Wing led to the collection and integration of key road information, including road surfaces, traffic control signs, and street trees, into one database available to all city departments. Using a Minnesota ReLeaf matching grant, the city adapted an existing database program for road surface characteristics to include data on street trees and planting spaces, resulting in the systematic monitoring and maintenance of public trees. In the process, summer workers were trained to collect and enter data, and the city staff was trained to assess risk of tree failures. Tree work orders and maintenance records are being integrated to provide for continuous updating.

Statistical Highlights

Number of participating communities: 455
Number of communities assisted: 96
Hours of training provided: 14,755
Number of days of volunteer assistance to program: 1,667
Number of Tree City USA communities: 120
Number of Tree City USA Growth Awards: 12

Contact

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