

Wisconsin

Program Overview

Wisconsin's urban forest resource covers more than 1.7 million acres and is home to more than 4.3 million people. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides urban forestry assistance to local governments, nongovernmental organizations, businesses, and other interested groups through the Urban Forestry Working Group led by a State coordinator, six regional coordinators, and three half-time assistants. This group, in partnership with the Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council, develops statewide policy and implements it through a team approach.

Program Accomplishments

Wisconsin, partnered with USDA Forest Service Forest Health Monitoring, joined with three other States to pilot two new Urban Forest Health Monitoring protocols. The intent of the protocols is to standardize methods of assessing the urban forest resource to enable science-based decisionmaking and planning. Stage one assessed the entire resource across ownerships, duplicating the Forest Inventory and Assessment (FIA) plot design. Stage two assessed only urban street rights-of-way where communities have the most management authority. Data from these pilots will help refine the protocols and develop methods to implement them nationally. Wisconsin provides 50/50 cost-share urban forestry grants using State and Federal funds. In FY 2002, 61 grants were awarded to local government and nonprofit groups.

The urban forestry program revised its strategic plan in a successful effort to update its goals and objectives, establish more specific performance measures, and improve its usefulness. Responding to the findings of the DNR's multiyear urban forestry program study, the plan not only identifies new directions and partners, but also contains a detailed implementation plan and specific output and outcome-based performance measures for each of its seven goals.

Urban forestry's flagship publication, *The Forest Where We Live*, was revised and republished. This 16-page, full-color bulletin was featured as a center supplement

to the Wisconsin Natural Resources Magazine, which has more than 400,000 readers. An additional 25,000 copies were reprinted to use as the foundation for technical and public awareness efforts. In a more local effort, urban forestry was featured in *Wisconsin Forests Forever 2002*, an annual supplement in the Wausau Daily Herald, in an effort to integrate urban forestry with traditional forestry in the northcentral part of the State.

FY 2002 marked the 10th anniversary of the DNR partnership with the Wisconsin Arborist Association (WAA) to conduct an annual conference and trade show. In 1992, the WAA annual conference attracted about 250 attendees and 30 show vendors. Currently, the combined annual and urban forestry conference boasts 600 participants and 60 trade show vendors.

With 139 Tree City USA communities, Wisconsin ranks 3rd in the Nation. The 30 Tree City USA Growth Awards rank it 4th in the Nation. All five of the Wisconsin investor-owned utilities, plus two electric co-ops and one municipal utility, achieved Tree Line USA, which ranks it 1st in the Nation, tied only with Texas.

Statistical Highlights

Number of participating communities: 290
Number of communities assisted: 216
Number of hours of training provided: 4,906
Number of days of volunteer assistance to program: 2,450
Number of Tree City USA communities: 139
Number of Tree City USA Growth Awards: 30

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