

1995-1996 Annual Report

Recommendations to the Secretary

Part of the Council's charter is to make annual recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture on issues related to urban and community forestry. Based on the Council's diverse make up and its combined knowledge of urban and community forestry, our recommendations are:

- That the USDA continue its leadership role in providing educational, technical, and financial assistance to support the nation's urban forests
- That the USDA remain a strong advocate for the science and application of urban and community forestry and work to strengthen its research capacity
- That the USDA continue its successful work in building partnerships that help to achieve significant public benefits by leveraging public and private fiscal and human resources.

Ongoing national support and leadership will provide state and local governments with the resources and expertise necessary to create and maintain vital and sustainable urban and community forestry programs.

The State of Urban Forestry

A Message from the Chair
Genni Cross

Background

Urban and community forestry is defined as the management of trees and related natural resources in populated areas, from the inner city to the developing urban fringe and within small communities. Between 1991 and 1995 the field of urban and community forestry grew rapidly.

During that period, federal support and funding increased for almost every aspect of urban forestry. Through the USDA Forest Service's State and Private Forestry, each state received funding for its own core program and matched that funding dollar for dollar. In many states, funding also extended to community groups and nonprofit organizations for local urban and community forestry projects. Urban forestry research conducted by the Forest Service, universities, and private industry also increased. The real growth in urban forestry, though, amounted to much more than just funding. The real growth came in the increased awareness that developed, among individuals and municipal leaders, of the

contributions urban trees make to the economic, social, and environmental well-being of communities. This awareness increased the number of communities actively managing their forests and led to the involvement of community groups and individual citizens in efforts to improve urban forests.

So many community-based urban forestry groups were formed that in some states, statewide programs emerged to serve the local groups. National organizations were formed to help community groups learn from each other's programs and work together for common goals. Established organizations, that had been active in urban forestry long before 1991, grew and increased their effectiveness.

Across the country, utility companies became active urban forestry partners. Vegetation management programs were changed to reflect new thinking about how to care for trees and shade tree planting programs were created to reduce energy needs for heating and cooling.

Professional and industrial associations developed new standards for the practice of urban forestry and there was a tremendous rise in the number of people who sought out training or certification programs to increase their urban forestry knowledge.

As a condition of receiving federal funds, each state formed an urban forestry advisory council to help decide how best to use the funds. These councils varied greatly in their form, approach, and influence but they all got people actively involved in urban forestry.

But activity, interest, and success were not the only trends in urban forestry in the years between 1991 and 1995. Another clear trend was that budgets for municipal tree programs were declining. As city after city made budget cuts, urban and community forestry programs lost funding.

It is easy to think that urban trees are a luxury that can be ignored during lean times, but this is not the case. As is true with so many other management issues, urban forests respond better to steady long-term planning and management than to short-sighted, quick-fix, or cost-saving programs. Managing a living resource as a low priority item today, and expecting to assure its productivity tomorrow, is a formula that does not work. There are many compelling reasons to consider urban and community forestry an essential component of a city's infrastructure and a necessary condition for a sustainable community.

1995-1996

The questions facing the urban forestry community now are significant. With all the research that has been done, with all of the volunteers that have been mobilized, with all of the students who have been taught, and with all the increased recognition and understanding of the value of urban trees, will support for urban and community forestry continue to grow? Have cities learned the value of the resources they own?

It is clear that decision makers at every level of government have learned there is immense grass roots support for urban and community forestry. The USDA Forest Service, the National Association of State Foresters, and other federal and state agencies have become urban forestry advocates. Thousands of cities too, have begun to treat their urban forests as the valuable resources they are, gathering citizen support to augment municipal efforts. But there is still much to do.

In the coming years, we must invest in our urban and community forests and that means investing in all of the disciplines that support them. With adequate investment we can have healthy, beautiful, sustainable urban and community forests that contribute to healthful, livable, and sustainable cities and communities.

Council Vision

The National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council seeks to establish sustainable urban forests for all communities. Sustainable urban forests can assist in providing jobs, creating healthier economies, developing stronger communities, and improving ecosystems. The Council's goals include:

- Cultivating an understanding and appreciation of the social, economic, environmental, and aesthetic value of trees, forests, and related resources in cities and communities.
- Fostering self-sustaining municipal and community volunteer programs.
- Coordinating and developing multicultural professional training and education programs for urban foresters, arborists, and others working in related disciplines.
- Stimulating additional funding from traditional and nontraditional sources.
- Supporting significantly expanded research and assuring widespread distribution of the findings.
- Promoting partnerships with the private sector.

Emerging Issues

Following are the issues the Council believes should be taken into consideration when determining future urban and community forestry policy.

- Good research, information, communication, and the exchange of technological knowledge are keys to strengthening urban forestry programs and empowering communities and urban forestry professionals.
- A holistic view of urban forestry reveals a continuum of urban and community forestry-related issues and concerns from inner city gardening programs to wildfire and pest programs in urban/rural interface areas. A holistic view also shows that a concern for urban trees cannot be entirely separated from concerns about urban air quality, storm water runoff, wildlife habitat and other related ecosystem concerns.
- Providing information to people about the importance of urban and community forestry or marketing the value of urban and community forestry programs is a

necessary part of a long-term strategy to develop and maintain healthy urban and community forests.

- As part of a long-term plan for healthy urban and community forestry programs nationwide, it is important to assess the values, perceptions, and needs of our nation's growing multi-cultural population with respect to urban and community forestry. The development of multi-lingual educational materials will be a key to reaching this population with an urban and community forestry message.
- Tools and techniques are needed for restoring ecosystems to a more natural state after they have been damaged by construction, storms, and invasive species. Restoring (urban) ecosystems to a more natural state includes planning for species diversity in both plants and wildlife, and using indigenous species where appropriate. Using the same tools and techniques on new projects can prevent many problems in the future.
- Understanding and practicing good urban forestry can benefit many small communities that are struggling to retain businesses or bring businesses back to a newly revitalized downtown area. Healthy urban forests give communities a more livable image and can assist in improving their economy.

Challenge Cost-Share Grant Program

What follows are highlights from the Council's recent Challenge Cost Share grant program, a sampling of national-level urban and community forestry organizations, and a list of current books, pamphlets, and internet sites for those seeking additional information.

To date, 33 projects have been supported by the Council's challenge cost-share grant program. Projects are leveraged by at least equal amounts of non-federal funding and contribute to the knowledge and application of urban and community forestry.

Recently Funded Projects

Urban Ecological Analysis: Modeling the Air, Water, and Energy Cost and Benefits Produced By Urban Forests

This project will provide a detailed economic analysis for the cities of Austin, Baltimore, and Milwaukee of the air, water, and energy benefits produced by urban forests. The benefits will be documented for use by city decision makers so that the true value of urban forests, as a part of the urban infrastructure, is known and can be factored into local resource allocation and budget decisions.

American Forests

Grant Amount: \$135,000

Matching Amount: \$135,000

The Forests Where We Live

This project will produce a one hour documentary by the Foundation for Excellence in Louisiana Public Broadcasting that documents the latest research findings on the environmental, economic, and social benefits of urban and community forests to

American cities.

Foundation for Excellence in Louisiana Public Broadcasting

Grant Amount: \$120,000

Matching Amount: \$123,506

Public Knowledge of Urban Forests Benefits and Values in Commercial and Retail Environments

This project will document the benefits and costs of trees in commercial and retail business districts of Seattle. The influence of the urban forest on the behavior of visitors to retail districts will be determined along with the understanding of business owners about the contributions that trees can make to their business enterprises.

University of Washington, College of Forest Resources

Grant Amount: \$64,629

Matching Amount: \$ 64,629

T.R.E.E.S. Transagency Resources for Environmental and Economic Sustainability

The focus of this grant is the development of a pilot project for integrated watershed management on an urban forest landscape. The project will demonstrate the benefits of combined use of strategic tree planting, greenwaste chipping, and mulching with cisterns and gray water systems. Documenting the economic and environmental benefits in water and energy conservation, stormwater mitigation, improved air quality, waste reduction, and erosion control are the project goals.

TreePeople

Grant Amount: \$150,000

Matching Amount: \$ 345,000

A Study for the Effects of Vegetation on Microclimate and Residential Energy Use in Ann Arbor, Michigan

Energy conservation attributable to trees through shade, evapotranspiration, and wind shielding translates to lower utility bills and diminished peak load energy demands. This project will monitor air temperature, wind speed, and wind direction in different urban forest sites to determine the relationship between micro climate and energy use.

ACRT Inc.

Grant Amount: \$ 55,000

Matching Amount: \$ 60,250

Common Knowledge: Turning Local Gems Into National Treasures

This project will provide a national assessment of available education and training programs and materials for community forestry groups across the country to access and use for their programs. The project responds to the recent growth of urban and community forestry programs and the need to provide reliable information about organizing, planning, fundraising, partnership building, and tree planting.

American Forests

Grant Amount: \$100,000

Matching Amount: \$ 100,000

Evaluating Air Quality Effects of Urban Trees: Developing Directionally Sound Programs for Use In State Ozone Attainment Goals

The main focus of this project is on the overall effect that trees have on ozone in city environments. The analysis will be used to determine the impact of urban vegetation on air quality, greenhouse gas reduction, cooling and heating energy use, and emissions of volatile organic compounds by vegetation in cities. This research will aid in developing directionally sound ozone programs, thereby creating cost-effective ozone control strategies using urban vegetation.

ACRT Inc.

Grant Amount: \$175,000

Matching Amount: \$ 208,000

Growing Hope: Children, Trees and Urban Public Housing

The purpose of this project is to determine whether access to "green" outdoor spaces plays an important role in children's intellectual, moral, and social development. It compares the developmental outcomes for children living in urban public housing whose everyday play spaces have trees and grass to their counterparts whose everyday play spaces are barren. The concern is whether or not this barrenness has anything to do with academic achievement, delinquency, and violent crime.

University of Illinois, Department of Natural Sciences and Environmental Sciences

Grant Amount: \$200,000

Matching Amount: \$ 201,025

National-Level Urban Forestry Agencies and Organizations

The following list, while not inclusive, provides a view of national-level organizations, involved in urban and community forestry.

Alliance for Community Trees

ACT provides support for nonprofit organizations involved in planting trees and educating the public about the benefits of trees in urban areas. Organized in 1993, the group has grown to 50 member organizations throughout the United States.

American Association of Nurserymen

The primary focus of the Association is to support member in their effort to operate more effectively and profitably. The Association's members serve the public by providing a diverse mix of plants, related products, and services for urban and community forestry programs.

American Community Gardening Association

A nonprofit organization of professionals, volunteers, and supporters of community gardening and greening in urban, suburban, and rural communities. The organization recognizes that community gardening improves the quality of life for people by providing a catalyst for neighborhood and community development, stimulating social interaction,

beautifying neighborhoods, conserving resources and, creating opportunities for recreation and education.

American Forests

American Forests is the nation's oldest citizen conservation organization and a leading force in the protection and management of forest resources in America. In addition to its general research and education programs, it operates the Global ReLeaf Program, the National Urban Forest Council, and the Citizen Forestry Support System to encourage people to plant and care for trees.

American Society of Landscape Architects

The organization is comprised largely of formally trained and educated landscape architects whose work is reflected in the design of urban and urban/wildland interface landscapes. Current efforts are directed toward urban ecosystem management and the design and care of sustainable landscapes.

American Telephone and Telegraph Telephone Pioneers

A volunteer community service organization of AT&T employees in the United States and Canada. Pioneer chapters adopt environmental projects across America including planting trees in parks, forests, and cities with Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and planting seedlings on the grounds of schools each Arbor Day.

Conservation Fund

The organization works with private and public partners to protect land and water resources. Concerned with conserving open space, parklands, water resources, wetlands, wildlife and waterfowl habitats, the fund promotes the understanding that conservation is essential to the economic and environmental health of the nation.

Garden Clubs of America

The nonprofit organization's 191 member clubs work with communities and community groups to provide information and knowledge on restoration, improvement, and protection of urban environments. The member clubs promote urban greening activities through the establishment of community gardens and tree planting projects.

International Society of Arboriculture

A nonprofit organization for municipal foresters and professionals in arboriculture and urban forestry. Membership totals over 9,000 including 7,000 Certified Arborists. Major programs include funding urban forestry research (over \$100,000 per year) and certification programs designed to improve the knowledge of urban forestry professionals.

Minority Environmental Association

Members are minority professionals, business owners, and organizations who are developing ties with environmental groups. The Association advocates community involvement that furthers environmental and economic interests. Interests include

environmental justice, sustainable communities, and the need for more minorities to become involved in setting policy and making decisions.

National Arbor Day Foundation

A major program of the foundation is the Tree City USA program. This program has recognized over 2,000 municipalities for their urban forestry efforts. Other programs include Tree Line USA, Conservation Trees, Trees for America, Arbor Day Farms, and Rain Forest Rescue.

National Association of Conservation Districts

The association represents the nation's nearly 3,000 soil and water conservation districts. The association works to promote and establish the wise use of soil and water resources. While their work is founded on soil erosion, it has expanded to cover key areas of natural resource management in urban environments.

National Association of Service and Conservation Corps

The association represents a growing number of state and local youth corps. They work to strengthen the quality of existing youth corps programs and promote the development of new corps. The association participates in environmental, youth employment, and training coalitions. Many of these projects are similar to the forestry and park projects of the 1930's Civilian Conservation Corps.

National Association of State Foresters

The association represents the directors of the state forestry agencies from all fifty states, seven US Territories, and the District of Columbia State forestry organizations provide statewide linkage, program management, and delivery systems for the skills and technical services that encompass the USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program.

National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges

The association represents 194 institutions including 75 land-grant colleges of which 17 are historically black institutions. The association provides a forum for the discussion and development of policies affecting higher education and public interests. Member institutions provide education in teaching, research, and public service in a variety of fields including forestry and natural resources management.

National Tree Trust Foundation

A nonprofit organization that has distributed trees to over 500 community groups across the nation. The Trust planted over 1.1 million trees in 1996. Their Growing Together program is established in 31 states and has involved over 100,000 students in tree planting efforts. Through their grant program they have provided over \$1 million in grants to 53 organizations in 29 states.

National Trust for Historic Preservation

This is the only national, private nonprofit organization chartered by Congress to encourage public participation in the preservation of sites and buildings significant in

American history and culture. Their Main Street USA program addresses the care and maintenance of urban street trees in downtown revitalization efforts.

Rotary International

Through local groups, this organization delivers an international environmental program - Preserve Planet Earth. The program calls for each of the more than 27,000 local groups worldwide to be involved in planting trees, particularly with school aged children. The organization recognizes tree planting programs as a major community service activity.

Society of American Foresters

An organization of 18,000 members involved in allied areas of professional forestry. The organization has an urban forestry working group. This group provides support through conference organizing, newsletters, and continuing forestry education credits for professional foresters.

Society of Municipal Arborists

The organization's approximately 500 members promote interest in the planting and maintenance of public trees and the preservation of public open space. The organization and many of its members are actively involved in research on urban street trees. Also, the organization administers Municipal Forestry Department and County Forestry Department accreditation programs.

USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

A federal partner in the USDA supported system of extramural scientific research, higher education, and extension. Urban natural resource efforts are directed toward applying the results of urban ecosystem management research, strengthening urban ecosystem stewardship ethics, and advocating the efficient use of urban ecosystem resources.

USDA Forest Service

The lead federal agency for providing technical and financial assistance and research on urban and community forestry for the nation's 45,000 cities and towns where 80% of the US population resides. The Forest Service works with State Foresters and other partners to deliver the financial and technical assistance available through its Urban and Community Forestry Program.

USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service

This federal agency is responsible for providing watershed and soil conservation programs and assistance to communities and rural landowners. Working in cooperation with the nation's Soil and Water Conservation Districts and other partners they deliver resource planning and implementation assistance to rural landowners and the nation's cities and towns.

USDI Fish and Wildlife Service

This federal agency conserves, protects, and enhances fish and wildlife habitats for the benefit of the American people. Working with state and local governments and private

landowners the agency develops and disseminates informational materials and provides technical assistance on habitat restoration and environmental education.

USDI National Park Service

This federal agency is committed to implementing a sustainable network of protected federal, state, and local areas. Through its Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program the agency works cooperatively with partners to preserve healthy natural environments. Assistance is also available for trail building and river/corridor restoration efforts.

Selected Contributions to the Literature

Books

Bradley, Gordon A. (ed.) 1995 *Urban Forest Landscapes: Integrating Multidisciplinary Perspectives*. University of Washington Press. Seattle, WA

Grey, Gene W. 1996 *The Urban Forest: Comprehensive Management*. John Wiley and Sons. New York, NY

Kollin, Cheryl and Michael Barratt (eds.) 1995 *Inside Urban Ecosystems. Proceedings of the Seventh National Urban Forest Conference, American Forests*. New York, NY.

Shigo, Alex L. 1995 *Tree Basics*. Shigo and Trees, Associates, Durham, NH.

Smith, M.A.L., A.G. Endress, G.R. Smith, J.E. Lloyd, R.D. Neely, R.K. Stutman, J.J. Ball, K.D. Coder, and T.L. Wadley. 1995 *A Guide to the Plant Health Care Management System (2nd ed.)*. International Society of Arboriculture, Savoy, IL.

Videos

Greening Our Cities: Bringing Nature Into the Place We Live. American Forests, Washington D.C.

Landscape Below Ground. International Society of Arboriculture, Savoy, IL

Pruning Standards and Practice for the 21st Century. International Society of Arboriculture, Savoy, IL.

Root Injury and Tree Health. International Society of Arboriculture, Savoy, IL.

Software

CITYgreen: Measuring Urban Ecosystem Values. American Forests, Washington, D.C.

Southern Trees: An Expert System for Selecting Trees. University of Florida, Gainesville, FL.

Council Members

Genni Cross, Chair
The Trust for Public Land/California ReLeaf

Patti Armstrong
Finny Farms

David Bernard-Stevens
President, North Platte Chamber of Commerce

Larry Biles
USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

Cara Boucher
Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Gordon Bradley
University of Washington

Kim Coder
University of Georgia

Joan Comanor
USDA Forest Service

Mark Francis
American Society of Landscape Architects

Richard Henkel
Princeton Horticultural Services

Suzanne Malec
Chicago Department of Environment

Stewart Pequignot
NASF Urban Forestry Committee

Virginia Plauche
Louisiana Urban Forest Council

Annabeth Surbaugh
Johnson County Commissioner

