


Trees and Our Environment



**National Urban
and Community
Forestry Advisory Council**

2007 Annual Report

A Letter from the Chair

Hello:

Trees have been doing their jobs since our country's very first settlements took shape. Even as our early communities were laid out, trees have been part of the planning process. Trees are a constant, working every day to provide balance in our landscape.



There is no debating the fact that trees provide our environment with much-needed beauty, improve air quality, combat erosion and stormwater runoff, and preserve wildlife habitats.

Climate change has prompted much talk and debate. Carbon dioxide is absorbed by trees through photosynthesis and stored as carbon in biomass (trunks, branches, foliage and roots) and soils. Carbon sequestration in forests and wood products helps offset fossil fuel emissions, a key driver of human-induced climate change.

Catastrophes – whether tornadoes, hurricanes or ice storms, or in more recent years invasive species – continue to ravage many communities, with growing consequences. The urban tree canopy changes as we try to make our urban areas more impervious to these events through development and societal advancements.

Yet trees are often left out of the plan. We know about the heat island effect in urban areas from concrete, steel and asphalt. Studies tell us that by planting trees, we reduce that effect. Studies also show how people are affected by trees (or lack of them) in their neighborhoods. Trees are central to quality of life and can reduce costly social problems, according to studies by a University of Illinois College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) team. The team found that planting more trees in urban areas can result in fewer calls to police, less strain on social services, less demand for medical services, and more supportive environments for healthy childhood development.

Wood energy is another consideration as we deal with climate change. We can responsibly utilize trees as an energy source, and it's critical not to dismiss this and say, "Someone else will solve this problem." New York is one of many cities taking responsibility to use trees to achieve climate protection goals. PlaNYC, introduced in 2007, includes planting one million more trees, expanding park space, and other initiatives which are expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent by 2030. It's not only about planting trees, but also about maintaining the urban forest.

Every level of government, from villages, towns, cities and states to federal entities, need not overlook the critical role of the urban forest. Trees are as essential as transportation, education, fire, security, or any other part of our infrastructure – and even more so with climate change. Over 2,500 users nationwide now use the i-Tree System Assessment to evaluate the structure, function and value of urban forests, helping to improve tree management and advocate for increased funding support.

Trees create a natural line of defense for our communities. By weaving trees into urban planning and maintaining them with a sense of educated respect, we can realize the benefits of truly caring for the urban forest.

Joe Wilson
Chair



Recommendations to the Secretary

HONORABLE SECRETARY,

We welcome you in your role and are pleased to present you with this 2007 Annual Report of the National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council.

As a groundbreaking effort to gather constituent input on the health and status of the urban forest, NUCFAC conducted a public listening forum in 2007. This forum encouraged citizens, policy-makers and tree professionals to share their input about places where urban forests have been hardest hit by catastrophic storm events.

These events also highlight the need for the urban forest to have one “voice.” More and more groups are collaborating to form one voice to speak on behalf of the urban forest. Such collaboration is as important as ever as we face a national crisis, as resources continue to diminish, and as we continue to advocate the role of the urban forest in the community. As they collaborate, these groups recognize that change is needed to assess the health of the urban forest, continue research and define national priorities.



Our recommendations to the Secretary this year are based on our 10-Year Action Plan, input from our public listening forum and discussion with collaborators in support of urban forestry. We recommend:

1. Support and encourage active involvement of all people in urban and community forestry at the local, state, regional and national levels – including underserved populations. Develop strategy to include nonprofits and strengthen the role of volunteers.
2. The Federal Government should put in place a budget of \$100,000,000 annually to aid in accomplishing this action plan by 2016. This would support the assessment of the extent, health and function of urban forests, management programs, outreach, program funding, research and program enhancement. In addition, this budget would enable the country to:
 - Demonstrate energy efficiency and climate protection on a citywide scale in select locations.
 - Put science findings to work for people through strong technology focus.
 - Increase technical capacity at national, state and local levels.
 - Initiate specific steps to engage children in nature right in their own communities.
3. Complete data collection and land cover analysis standards for local (city, town and other localities) inventories and assessments.
4. Create Catastrophic Event Mitigation Strategies Best Management Practices. (See separate “Report to the Secretary of Agriculture on Catastrophic Storms and Urban Forests.”)



5. Provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions about public financing models for funding urban forestry.
6. Increase USDA Forest Service research and development (R&D) investment in urban forest research to \$24 million by 2015.
7. Integrate urban forestry as an element within other programs and units of the USDA Forest Service and leverage support with other agencies by 2010. Urban Forestry offers solutions for the Department of Energy, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Federal Emergency Management Agency and others.

We also welcome the new chief of the U.S. Forest Service. We support her goals of identifying and promoting innovative tree care strategies to mitigate storm damage and set industry standards for tree care. By acting on these recommendations, our country can rejuvenate, maintain and realize the long-term benefits of our treasured national urban forests, where 85 percent of our population lives.

Project Highlights

THE CHALLENGE COST-SHARE GRANT PROGRAM

An important way the National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council can fulfill its vision and make a positive impact on community forests nationwide, both now and in the future, is through its annual Challenge Cost-Share Grant Program.

Each September, a request for preproposals is distributed nationwide. Preproposals are then evaluated by the Council to ensure that they meet the specified criteria and demonstrate merit relative to the other proposals. Selected applicants are then invited to submit full proposals for final judging in this competitive program.

In all cases, project funding must be matched on at least a 50-50 basis from non-federal

sources, and the project must have national scope, application, and distribution of its findings. Projects that will have only a local impact (i.e., local tree-planting projects) do not qualify under this program. Grant categories are established annually and are used to meet the Council's goals.



COMMUNITY FORESTRY MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE OFFERS UNIQUE EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Community Forestry Management Institute (CTMI) is a unique series of advanced educational sessions, specifically tailored to the needs of municipal tree

managers who seek additional training and information in urban forestry. Texas Cooperative Extension and the Texas Forest Service partnered with several municipalities to expand on a program originally developed by the Oregon Department of Forestry. CTMI offers a variety of learning opportunities such as lectures, place-based learning, web-based learning, field trips, team building, leadership skills development, and projects.

The program consists of five sessions offered periodically throughout the year. Two of these are intensive, multi-day sessions providing participants with tools and training to effectively care for trees in their community. Three single-day sessions allow participants to discuss their program accomplishments, examine technical topics, and provide input to municipal tree management discussions about real problems. A great strength of CTMI is that each training session is available on CFEgroup.

January

		New Year's Day 1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

CFEgroup (<http://CFEgroup.org>) is a web-based “store front” for continuing forestry education opportunities. It was developed by a partnership of the Texas Cooperative Extension Forestry Unit and other forestry professionals. CFEgroup fulfills the need to remain relevant to its constituents, compete with their busy personal and professional schedules, and to remain at the forefront of all education efforts.

From the site, anyone can create an account and purchase high-quality continuing education training modules. Each module offers continuing education units (CEUs) from key professional associations and regulatory agencies. A primary feature of CFEgroup is its account management system, which allows the user to permanently store, track and submit CEUs. CFEgroup currently offers courses in four topic areas: Arboriculture, Forest Management, Urban Forestry Management, and the Urban-Wildland Interface.



RETURN OF THE AMERICAN ELM Documentary Film Draws National Attention

The story of the American elm, the most loved and planted shade tree in American history which many thought would never recover from the devastation of Dutch elm disease, is the subject of a new 49-minute documentary film. Since premiering at the DC Environmental Film Festival in 2007 and following several successful community screenings, the documentary is being used by urban forestry groups, garden clubs, and beautification committees to raise awareness and support for urban greening.

The American Elm: Magnificent, Imperiled, Renewed uses historic photos, archival footage and extensive interviews to chronicle the role of the American elm from colonial times to the present. It features interviews with residents, mayors, experts, and community forestry leaders from Minnesota to Massachusetts and from Kansas to the Carolinas.

This NUCFAC-supported documentary is part of a media campaign to bring national attention to the availability of disease-tolerant pure American elms and the importance of large canopy trees to help communities address a range of

environmental and social issues, including global warming.

Featured on *NBC Nightly News*, the documentary has been a catalyst for coverage in *USA Today*, *The Washington Post* and on National Public Radio, which called the American elm “the arboriculture comeback story of the year.” A companion article to the documentary was the cover story in the spring 2007 issue of *American Forests*.

The story of the American elm is in many ways the story of urban and community forestry in the United States. So, the documentary includes the rise of community forestry and citizen tree groups, and the tragic consequences of over-planting one species of tree, as great as it may be.

The American Elm was produced by Community-Based Communications in cooperation with Tree Trust, Casey Trees, Elm Watch, American Forests, Alliance for Community Trees, TreeLink, Riveredge Farms, Davey Tree, the National Park Service, Thomas Campanella and others.

For more information, go to www.theamericanelm.net or contact Dan Smith, Producer, at (202) 349-1894 or dsmith@caseytrees.org.

February

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3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14 <small>Valentine's Day</small>	15	16
17	18 <small>President's Day</small>	19	20	21	22	23
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