

Earmarks

Congressional earmarks are funds designated to specific organizations, with congressional support, to implement Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) programmatic activities in specific States. These partnering organizations assist State and Federal agencies with implementing the goals and objectives of the overall program.

Metropolitan areas are home to 80 percent of the Nation's population, as well as one-quarter of the Nation's total tree canopy of approximately 74.4 billion trees.



Northeast Pennsylvania Urban Forestry Program

Program Overview

With funding from FY 2001, the Northeast Pennsylvania Urban Forestry Program continued to enhance communities in FY 2002 by improving and restoring the health of trees, forests, and green spaces, thus making the communities more livable. Earmarked as a special program by Congressman Don Sherwood, the program was directed by the USDA Forest Service, in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, through the Pennsylvania State Forester. Since 1995, the program has provided opportunities for integrating social and economic efforts with natural resource improvements through partnership building. Support has fostered community awareness and participation in stewardship-based activities on a regional scale and contributed to quality of life improvements.

Key Issues

- A changing economy and community infrastructure resulting from a decline in the mining-based industry and a rise in the tourism industry.
- A need for outreach and education to reverse a legacy of natural resource exploitation and exportation.
- Declining water, forest, and open space resources resulting from past and current land uses.
- A need for comprehensive planning that addresses natural resource issues.

Program Accomplishments

Tree Plantings

Generated 596 volunteer days working with 189 partners who helped with planting 733 shade trees, 439 flowering trees, 184 evergreens, and 1,396 shrubs in 41 communities. Plantings contributed to increased visibility and heightened awareness of the benefits of urban and community forestry.

Education

Provided training for 215 workshop attendees. Training resulted in revision of PP&L Electric's pruning specifications and training for 400 line-clearance trimmers. Training also brought 12 communities together in a regional collaborative to purchase bare-root trees for volunteer plantings, resulting in reduced cost and higher survival rates.

Hazardous Tree Remediation

Worked with six Shade Tree Commissions to assess 286 hazardous trees, remove 238 trees, and restore 139 to safe condition. The program contributed to a substantial reduction in maintenance hours during storm events and retained better than a 1:1 removal-planting ratio on all projects.

Rail-Trail Improvements

Involved 21 partners in reclaiming two highly visible trail corridors degraded by industrial activities and invasive plant material. This support generated interest and visibility that contributed to funding a trail feasibility study through the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

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Chicago Wilderness 2002 Accomplishments from FY 2001 Funding

Program Overview

The Chicago region—stretching from southeastern Wisconsin, through northeastern Illinois, and into northwestern Indiana—is one of a just a handful of metropolitan areas in the world that contains a high concentration of globally significant natural communities. This region holds some of the best-surviving remnants of the central Midwest's native ecosystems: prairies, woodlands, grasslands, and wetlands. The natural communities of this region, which include 200,000 acres of protected lands, are referred to as Chicago Wilderness. Chicago Wilderness is also the name of the coalition working to protect these natural areas. The USDA Forest Service is one of the more than 160 public and private organizations that have joined forces in an unprecedented alliance dedicated to protecting and restoring the region's natural heritage.

Key Issues

- Involving citizens, organizations, agencies, and corporations in biodiversity conservation efforts.
- Strengthening the scientific basis of midwestern ecosystem management.
- Restoring, managing, and protecting globally and regionally important natural communities.

Program Accomplishments

Urban Forestry Projects

Since its launch in April 1996, Chicago Wilderness has helped fund more than 180 collaborative projects across Illinois and Indiana. The Illinois Biodiversity Basics and the Chicago Wilderness Training Hub are programs aimed at increasing awareness, support, coordination, and training among educators for the recovery of biodiversity in the region.

The Mighty Acorns Program

More than 250 teachers and 8,500 urban students were involved in restoring their local native environments by participating in the Mighty Acorns Program. The program has grown from 3 partners in FY 1998 to 21 partners in FY 2002.

National Public Lands Day

On September 28, 2002, Chicago area residents joined a nationwide celebration of our country's public lands. Local volunteers joined an estimated 70,000 others across the country in this effort.

Chicago Wilderness Magazine

Some 15,000 copies, including more than 7,500 paid subscriptions, of this quarterly publication were distributed among 180 retail locations across the Chicago region.

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GreenStreets

Overview

The City of Chicago GreenStreets Program focuses on improving the quality of urban life through tree-planting and landscape programs. The 13-year initiative helps restore deteriorated neighborhoods and enhances public open spaces. Chicago is a leader in the use of trees to help reduce noise, air pollution, and summer heat levels. In addition, the GreenStreets Program provides tree-planting assistance to the Illinois Department of Transportation and Chicago neighborhoods devastated by the Asian longhorned beetle.

Key Issues

- Reforestation efforts in Chicago neighborhoods devastated by the Asian longhorned beetle (ALB).
- Expressway buffer initiatives to reduce air and noise pollution through tree planting.
- Revitalization of neighborhoods through tree planting and community action.
- Protection of trees from road salt through seasonal speed reduction policies.

Program Accomplishments

Asian Longhorned Beetle

More than 1,450 trees have been removed in the ALB quarantine zones. To date, 2,309 parkway trees and 334 private trees have been planted to replace the ones removed. A total of 247 property owners have been affected by the ALB infestation.

Tree Planting

Approximately 4,030 shade trees of varying species were planted throughout Chicago in fiscal year (FY) 2002. The GreenStreets Program expanded the city's urban forest by planting trees on school grounds, along transportation corridors, and around public housing and vacant lots. Nearly 445 trees were planted along Chicago's major roadways and expressways, including key corridors along 95th and Ashland to the Dan Ryan Expressway, 95th and Ashland to Western, and 95th and Western to 111th Street. This planting will reduce air temperatures in summer, improve air quality, reduce air pollution, suppress and mask noise, and beautify the urban landscape.



Talcott school is an example of a hundred school campus parks that transformed sterile asphalt land around schools into new park space and recreational uses.

Salt Mitigation Strategy

The city enacted a seasonal automobile speed reduction program in the winter to reduce the exposure of adjacent street trees to salt spray from passing cars. Studies are ongoing to determine the effectiveness of this program.

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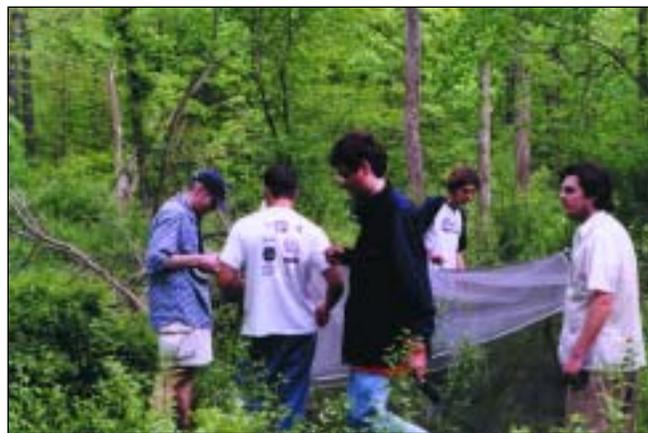
DePaul University

Program Overview

With continued Federal support through an earmark sponsored by Senator Richard Durbin in FY 2001, DePaul University's Environmental Sciences Program (urban forestry emphasis area) has been firmly established. The program is developing useful products in the area of Urban Forest Health. In a more general way, the goal of DePaul's urban forestry program is to develop and promote the science necessary for monitoring trees and to successfully restore and manage degraded lands in the region. The work of DePaul's Environmental Sciences Program staff is connected with many of the USDA Forest Service's other Chicago partners. Dr. Liam Heneghan co-chairs the Chicago Wilderness's science committee and coordinated the activities of the Invasive Species Task Force. Urban forestry projects at DePaul work in conjunction with partners such as the Chicago Botanic Gardens, Morton Arboretum, and several forest preserve districts in the Chicago metropolitan area.

Program Accomplishments

- Environmental Sciences staff and students conducted applied studies to understand the ecological effects of the invasive exotic plant buckthorn on ecosystem processes in natural systems. Their work is leading toward protocols for land managers interested in ecological restoration.
- Program staff has published on the effect of buckthorn leaf litter on soil nutrients and foodwebs, and has developed products such as a CD-ROM guide for land managers on soil microarthropods, functionally important but neglected components of regional biodiversity.
- The program is hosting, or is involved in the planning of several meetings in FY 2003 designed to open a dialog between regional scientists and land managers



Dr. Heneghan's Urban Forestry class using a malaise trap for the monitoring of insect populations in the Mary Mix McDonald Woods, in Glencoe, IL.

on the best management practices for resource management. The meetings include an Invasive Species Roundtable in February, a science forum in March (to be held in the Field Museum), and a meeting on the value of natural landscaping (cohosted with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency).

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