

Urban and Community Forestry Program 2017 Accomplishment Report – Maine

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Introduction

Project Canopy: Building Long-Term Community Forestry Programs has a vision that every community in Maine will actively and wisely manage its community forestry resources in a sustainable manner, and that all Maine citizens become well informed about the proper management of these resources and the benefits derived from them. In FY 2017, *Project Canopy* will work to improve understanding of the benefits of tree cover in urban areas and communities, encourage maintenance of trees and community forests, and expand the number of communities managing their natural resources and the population affected by program assistance. The greatest priority for this grant period is to select priority communities and begin implementing strategies 1.6, 1.7, 1.9, 1.11, 1.12, 3.5, 3.8, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7 in the [Maine Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy \(June 2010\)](#). A core priority is to increase the number of communities with tree boards, ordinances, public tree inventories, management plans, and professional arborists and foresters.

Project Goal

Maintain healthy trees and woodlands in urban and community areas.

Project Objectives

1. Encourage proactive efforts at the municipal level to maintain healthy urban and community forests.
2. Provide information and technical and financial assistance to municipalities.
3. Reduce the impacts of land use change, fragmentation, and urbanization of forest landscapes.
4. Moderate the impacts of catastrophic events.
5. Protect and improve air and water quality.
6. Manage trees and forests to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
7. Maintain and enhance the economic benefits and social values of trees and forests.
8. Build and enhance partnerships that increase the effectiveness of State urban forestry programming and improve Maine's urban and community forests.

Community Accomplishments¹

Maine communities are making long-term investments in quality of life through street tree assessment, education, and tree planting.

Multiplier Effect

Grant projects in Brewer, Bar Harbor, Easton, and Arrowsic produce unexpected external investment by private industry, academia, wide ranging interest groups, and communities.

College of the Atlantic - Bar Harbor

The College of the Atlantic (COA) arboretum project intended to pull together a two-phased, facilitated process to engage area interest groups and landowners in a discussion of forest resources on Mount Desert Island while also addressing ongoing maintenance of the COA arboretum (photo 1). The Mount Desert Island Forest Task Force formed as a result of this, hosting public presentations of the Maine Audubon and Maine Forest Service program “Forestry for Maine Birds” and Firewise programs, along with Maine Project Learning Tree curriculum training for area teachers. Many opportunities arose as part of the forums, including connections between COA’s head gardener and the Arnold Arboretum, and future collaboration between Arnold and COA faculty and students on plant collection efforts in the Northeast, focusing on native plant species.



Photo 1. Historic copper beech worked on as part of a Project Canopy grant with the College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor.

Brewer Community Schools

The Brewer Schools Community Maple Project sought, through a Project Canopy grant, to transform 11 acres of town-owned open space into an actively managed sugar bush and use the operation of this sugar bush to implement a natural resource-based curriculum within the school system. More than 1,000 students were involved in the making of syrup, sap collection, learning about the physics of sap flow, processing tools, the history of maple production, tree identification, and forest management.

¹ The period covered by this report is 7/1/2016 to 6/30/2017.

Forty-seven teachers were involved in the delivery of project-related curricula. Many of the high school students were involved in the education of students in younger grades. A mobile sugar shack was constructed as a complementary effort to the grant, and demonstrations were held on Maine Maple Sunday. With the coverage generated in the media, the school was able to secure donations to the project from area consultants, including forest management work and sponsorship by a maple equipment company.

Maine Tree Foundation

The Holt Research Forest (HRF) was established in 1983. In 2014, the Maine Tree Foundation (MTF) became the owner of the HRF and collaborator with the University of Maine. With this change came a renewed interest in the purposes of outreach and education, in addition to continuing long-term research work. As part of a Project Canopy grant, several things happened. (1) MTF created a comprehensive forest management plan to integrate the outreach/education objectives with research. The plan is an educational tool to define and prioritize educational objectives, and plan for possible research-related timber harvesting. (2) Built an informational kiosk to introduce the public to the HRF. (3) Using the Project Learning Tree Pre-K-12 curriculum, provided educational outreach to area schools, the Arrowsic community, and the larger natural resource community in Maine. Although the MTF originally planned to utilize grant funds in support of a structure on the HRF to house educational programming, it was not able to do this. As a result of the planning work, several groups came out in support of the construction of an outdoor classroom on the site, including the Certified Logging Professionals, Sustainable Forestry Initiative, and several suppliers of dimension lumber and Advantek, helping MTF realize its goal of providing a full-service educational facility at the HRF (photo 2).



Photo 2. Building the outdoor classroom at Holt Research Forest in Arrowsic.

Town of Easton

Easton recently completed an update to its Comprehensive Plan, including public participation, which outlines several goals for the Community Tree program. Many trees are present in Easton’s “urban” landscape that enhance the quality of life and the beauty of the village area. Some of these trees were planted and are maintained by residents, and some were planted as part of earlier grants offered by the State. One of the goals of the Comprehensive Plan is to maintain and improve the quantity and quality of community trees in the growth areas of the town. Strategies to accomplish this goal include the purchase and planting of healthy, disease-resistant, and attractive trees in the newly established housing areas in the growth area. As a result of a recent Project Canopy grant, the town, with the support of the high school Envirothon team, selected sites and species, and planted 20 new shade trees and 150 evergreens as part of the school wind break. Through this work, the town recognized the need to evaluate and inventory these new trees along with existing street and shade trees. The Envirothon team conducted an assessment with the help of Project Canopy staff and is utilizing the University of Maine at Presque Isle to develop additional mapping and online resources for residents to research and understand their trees and the urban canopy (photo 3).



Photo 3. Students plant a tree in Easton, one of Maine’s northernmost communities.

Statistical Highlights

Managing Communities:	34
Developing Communities:	143
Population of Participating Communities:	1,006,658
Volunteer Assistance Generated (hours):	5,579

