

Urban and Community Forestry Program

2017 Accomplishment Report – New Hampshire

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Introduction

The New Hampshire Urban and Community Forestry Program exists through a long-term partnership between the New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands and the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension. Staff members work cooperatively to present information on a variety of urban and community forestry topics statewide.

The Urban Forestry Coordinator is responsible for statewide program administration and manages both the Urban Forestry Center and Shieling Forest. The coordinator also provides technical assistance to communities statewide. Mary Tebo Davis, the Community Forestry Volunteer Coordinator, is employed by University of New Hampshire (UNH) Cooperative Extension to administer and carry out the statewide Natural Resources Stewards Volunteer Program. Extension Specialists at UNH and County Extension Field Specialists offer both scientific information and technical assistance to communities. The NH Division of Forests and Lands also employs a Community Forester to provide technical assistance to communities in the central and western part of the State. The Community Forestry Advisory Council meets biannually and provides guidance for the statewide program. The Council consists of members from UNH Cooperative Extension, New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands, U.S. Forest Service, New Hampshire Department of Transportation, public utilities, arborists, landscapers, municipal employees, and community leaders.

Urban Forestry Center

The Urban Forestry Center in Portsmouth was a gift to the people of New Hampshire by the late John Elwyn Stone in 1976. The 182-acre property includes an administrative office, forestry education center, woodland walking trails, a community garden, and several demonstration areas. More than 30 educational programs are presented annually to enhance the public's knowledge and understanding of urban and community forestry topics. The Center also provides a meeting facility for use by conservation-related organizations.

Shieling Forest

Shieling Forest in Peterborough was a gift to the State of New Hampshire by the late Elizabeth Yates McGreal in 1980. The 45-acre property includes a meeting room, walking trails, and an American chestnut seed orchard. The facility features the use of several local wood products, including a timber frame porch constructed with trees harvested from the property. More than 10 educational programs are presented annually to increase awareness and promote wise use of our natural resources. A meeting room is provided for use by local conservation-related organizations.

Key Accomplishments

Volunteer Accomplishments

New Hampshire's Natural Resources Stewards (NRS) Volunteer Program is a partnership between UNH Cooperative Extension, NH Division of Forests and Lands, NH Department of Fish and Game, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and County Conservation Districts, Great Bay Community College, and the USDA Forest Service. After completing nearly 100 hours of training, volunteers donate more than 40 hours of service in local communities to promote the benefits of natural resources. This year volunteers contributed almost 12,000 hours assisting New Hampshire communities by serving on land protection boards, working on landscape projects, conducting tree inventories, and working on a variety of other projects.

Our staff is currently assisting with NRS training in Concord at the NH Fish and Game Headquarters. The 12-week training brings together community volunteers and college students to learn about natural resources. The classroom and hands-on training sessions are presented by a variety of industry and educational professionals from around the State. The 2017 class will graduate 26 volunteers; they will join more than 250 active volunteers to assist with Urban and Community Forestry Program activities throughout the State.

Community Success Stories

A new Wood-Mizer® portable band sawmill was recently purchased by the Urban Forestry Center to be used as an educational tool to demonstrate the benefits of using local wood. The mill was used at several projects throughout the State last year, including milling logs that were harvested after the 1938 hurricane devastated the forested landscape across many New England States. The white pine logs were purchased from landowners and farmers by the U.S. Forest Service in an effort to reduce fire danger and help the local economy. Most of the ponds in the State were filled with logs to prevent wood deterioration, and thousands of logs were milled for war efforts. Local historians have seen a few logs float up each year in ponds around Concord and wanted to utilize the lumber. Our staff was able to mill several small logs, and the lumber was displayed during several presentations about the '38 hurricane.

The mill was also operated at the Gilmanton Elementary School as part of an annual Arbor Day event. Community Forester Scott Rolfe and UNH Cooperative Extension County Forester Andy Fast milled a few logs and taught the students about selecting and using trees as a resource. The students used the lumber to build several projects at the school. The mill was used to mill two hazard trees that were removed in Portsmouth, and members from the Trees and Greenery Committee were able to view structural damage inside the tree to aid in proper tree evaluation techniques. The mill is available to assist communities with repurposing historically significant trees.



Gilmanton Elementary School students and others watch as several logs are milled.

The historic Gateway Park, located in Manchester, has stood vacant for more than 10 years after the dismantling of an old playground. UNH Manchester and UNH Cooperative Extension are working with city and local stakeholders to restore and redesign this small urban park. The community and area businesses have been part of this restoration through public planning workshops and events such as *Bubbles, Ideas and Ice Cream* that included Manchester’s long-term Mayor Ted Gatsas (pictured below) working with neighborhood youth and families to elicit ideas.



Left: Manchester Mayor Ted Gatsas meets with young citizens to explore options for restoring historic Gateway Park. Right: Adults take part in the park’s restoration efforts.

The use of an Integrated Design Process over the course of three workshops in the spring of 2017 enabled many different organizations and individuals to be involved in the conceptual design, which was finalized in September. The goals of the design are to improve the conditions of the natural environment, work with existing plants and trees, and promote respectful interaction between people and the environment. Gateway Park can serve as a model for future development of urban parks by use of a community process.

Staff Updates

Scott Rolfe, Community Forester for the NH Division of Forests and Lands, accepted a supervisory position in the Forest Management Bureau and has continued to assist our program during the transition period. Our program staff reviewed the position responsibilities and conducted several interviews to select a new Community Forester. The new candidate is anticipated to start work in early December and will be a great asset to the program. UNH Cooperative Extension also had several County Foresters retire who were integral to our program and is working to refill the positions.

Community Forestry Advisory Council

Members of the Community Forestry Advisory Council created a new display for the Farm and Forest Expo in Manchester, NH, on February 17 and 18, 2017. The display featured a large ball-and-burlap tree with cartoon-style word bubbles that explained how trees should be planted, pruned, and cared for to ensure successful growth. The booth was featured at the main entrance of the Expo hall and was seen by thousands of attendees. The council also sponsored a seedling planting activity during Discover Wild NH Day hosted at the NH Fish and Game Headquarters in Concord on April 29, 2017. Council members assisted with potting more than 1,000 seedlings grown at the NH State Forest Nursery in Boscawen.

Statistical Highlights

Managing Communities:	68
Developing Communities:	89
Population of Participating Communities:	1,147,560
Volunteer Assistance Generated (hours):	11,906

