

Urban and Community Forestry Program 2017 Accomplishment Report – New York

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Introduction

New York's foresters and members of the New York State Urban Forestry Council/ReLeaf members work directly with communities across the State to improve and protect the forest canopy. The benefits of trees in urban areas far outweigh the monetary investment and provide an opportunity for volunteers and professionals to gain pride in their work. Saving energy and restoring the urban forest canopy was a theme of much of the work in New York in 2017.

Key Accomplishments

Volunteers Restore New York's Forests

The State Urban Forestry Program and volunteers worked with the Arbor Day Foundation to supply trees for three community tree giveaways to support tree recovery efforts. Working with local forestry partners, using tools to identify where to plant more trees, and gathering the energy and support of volunteers, program staff involved homeowners to help restore the forest following devastation taking place in two areas of western New York and the loss of forest cover and shade to overdevelopment on Long Island.

Emerald Ash Borer in Western New York

The emerald ash borer, an invasive insect from Asia with no natural predator, has been attacking America's native ash tree population since 2002. In 2009, the pest was discovered in New York (a State with more than 900 million ash trees), making its way to the communities of Syracuse and Buffalo. The millions of ash trees that help make up the cities' urban tree canopy have either died or are at high risk of succumbing to EAB. Unfortunately, not much success has been found to stop the devastation, and infested trees die within 2 to 4 years of infestation. The Community Tree Recovery Program supplied homeowners with 1,000 trees in April of 2017. Setting up the tree giveaway programs built partnerships through tasks involving planning with towns/counties and cities to create the appropriate tree list, organizing the actual tree giveaway event, and outlining the expected activities by all partners involved. Working with a variety of community leaders bridged many common goals to enhance urban and suburban settings in these areas. The public was anxious to participate and showed up in the rain at both events to pick up their trees. Participating partners included New York ReLeaf volunteers, New York State Urban Forestry Council members, Cornell Cooperative Extension educators, and master gardeners. On the day of the events, partners helped distribute trees and educate new tree owners about planting and care techniques.



Volunteers at the Buffalo Community Tree Recovery Campaign volunteer organization include city of Buffalo, Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Erie County, CCE Erie County Master Gardeners, TruGreen, and New York State DEC staff.



Residents line up to pick up their tree from the Buffalo Community Tree Recovery Program at 8:30 a.m. The program ran out of trees within 1.5 hours.

Energy-Saving Trees Program

The council and the State Urban Forestry Program also participated in the Energy Saving Trees (EST) Program tree giveaway on Long Island. In the second year of this program, the Public Service Electric and Gas Company (PSE&G) of Long Island partnered with local volunteers and their customers to plant 1,000 trees. This PSE&G program was first launched in 2016 with the help of DEC’s urban forestry staff but has since received sustainable funding from the utility’s Tree Foundation. Five species appropriate for the zone were selected and offered to customers through an online registration system. The i-Tree tool estimates the energy benefits derived from tree planting as well as other benefits such as cleaning the air and storm water runoff. Long Island’s high rate of development, overdevelopment, and impervious space gives it the title in New York State as having the lowest tree canopy. The EST program, coupled with many other urban forestry-related activities, will help restore some of the canopy lost during these storms or removed because of the fear created by these storms. The 2017 program funded \$43,000 worth of 3- to 5-gallon trees.

Partnership Coordinator Sally Kellogg gave a presentation about these accomplishments to a national audience at the 2017 Partners Conference.

Statistical Highlights

Managing Communities:	108
Developing Communities:	229
Population of Participating Communities:	15,278,553
Volunteer Assistance Generated (hours):	447,921



A nearby Buffalo resident picks up his tree at the Buffalo Community Tree Recovery Program.