

Urban and Community Forestry Program

2016 Accomplishment Report – Illinois

State Contact

Reinee Hildebrandt
Urban Forestry Program Administrator
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Division of Forest Resources
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62702
Phone: 217-785-8771
Fax: 217-785-2428
E-mail: rhildebrandt@dnrmail.state.il.us
Web site:
<https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/Forestry/UrbanForestry>

State Forester

Tom Wilson
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Division of Forest Resources
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62702
Phone: 217-785-8774
Fax: 217-785-2438
E-mail: tom.wilson@illinois.gov
Web site:
<https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/Forestry/UrbanForestry>

Introduction

Illinois' statewide Urban and Community Forestry program is part of a \$4.7 billion green industry in Illinois. The purpose of the program is to help communities and other units of local government develop and expand local urban and community forestry programs. This program serves to increase awareness of the important role of the urban forest in providing 87.8 percent of Illinois' citizens with the amenity values of shade, protection from winter winds or summer heat, protection from air and noise pollution, and reduction of storm water infiltration rates. Through Illinois' program, sound tree care and urban/community forest management practices are encouraged so that Illinois citizens can live in a healthy urban forest that provides a physically, socially, and psychologically safer community environment.

With Federal funding, we were able to sustain the Urban and Community Forestry Program Administrator's position, focus efforts on updating the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Urban and Community Forestry Web site, and continue sharing technical tree-related information with Illinois municipalities and interested parties. Thirty-two electronic issues of the Tree City USA Newsbits were distributed this past year.

Key Accomplishments

Tree City USA Program

Tree City USA is the core element of the State Urban and Community Forestry program. The Tree City USA (TCU) Program partnership with the Arbor Day Foundation provides substantial opportunity for local program growth. This program element alone serves nearly 7.7 million people, or more than 60 percent of Illinois urban and community residents. Illinois had 176 municipalities (with seven new communities) participating in the TCU program, sustaining Illinois as #3 in the Nation for the number of Tree City USA communities.

Through this program, the State assists and monitors the health and integrity of local municipal forests. Tree City USA-designated local municipal programs help provide fresh air, shade and heat island temperature reduction, water management, wildlife, and other health benefits and cost savings. There is great pride in Illinois by those living in an environmentally sensitive, well-managed Tree City USA community. Tree City USA-designated municipalities are engaged in making improvements to their citizens' living environment by maintaining healthy urban forests. This is a task that has become increasingly difficult with the emerald ash borer and other forest health issues plaguing our municipal forests. Emerald ash borer in Illinois is still an issue even though the Illinois Department of Agriculture

removed their quarantine this year. Communities are still dealing with the issue, especially in the central and southern part of the State. In northern Illinois, some communities are in the last stages of tree removal and have begun extensive tree planting campaigns. The average tree planting to removal ratio in Illinois Tree City USA communities is 3:5 (or 0.6 to 1) trees planted for each tree removed.

Tree City USA communities this year spent more than \$94 million to manage and sustain their trees. With these funds they planted 61,943 trees, pruned 198,765 trees, and removed 91,253 trees. The major breakdown in tree-related costs in millions of dollars is \$19.4 for tree planting, \$19.2 for tree removal, \$20.7 for tree pruning, \$26.2 for management costs, \$6.6 dedicated to only emerald ash borer management, \$1.2 for municipal utility/tree management, less than \$0.5 million for volunteer time, and \$4.2 for other costs. The Illinois per capita rate is \$13.19 as compared to the national average of \$7.48.

In addition to Tree City USA, a total of 23 TCU municipalities also received the GROWTH award, which is our lowest number since the beginning to the program, making Illinois drop to #4 in the Nation. NOTE: Illinois still ranks #1 in the Nation for the longest number of years as #1 in the Nation. Illinois also has 15 Tree Campus USA participants.

To celebrate the 40th Year of the Tree City USA program, Illinois went back to the 1970s strategy of hosting local award luncheons. Six local luncheons, most with presenters, were held. These informal presentations were greatly enjoyed by the participants, especially in the central and southern part of the State.

State Grants and Other Programs

IDNR's State program provides technical advice and information through the IDNR Urban and Community Forestry Web site, IDNR Clearinghouse, Springfield Urban Forestry Administrator office, TCU Newsbits electronic newsletter, and DNR field offices.

Statistical Highlights

Managing Communities:	133
Developing Communities:	89
Population of Participating Communities:	8,060,416
Volunteer Assistance Generated (hours):	5,053

