

Urban and Community Forestry Program

2016 Accomplishment Report – Massachusetts

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Introduction

With dense populations and vast town forests, along with a tremendous resource of town commons and conservation land, the people of Massachusetts have come to expect the steady comfort and beauty of trees in their neighborhoods. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Urban and Community Forestry Program (U&CF) helps communities and nonprofit groups protect, grow, and manage urban and community trees and forest ecosystems, with the ultimate aim of improving the environment and enhancing the quality of life in all of Massachusetts' 351 communities.

DCR provides assistance to communities of all sizes throughout Massachusetts through technical assistance, education, recognition awards, and grant funding in its efforts to build support for urban and community forest resources. In addition, the DCR U&CF Program has also chosen to directly fund programs that help promote, provide, and support DCR U&CF priority program activities. A good example of this is the funding that they have provided to the University of Massachusetts to help support an Extension Faculty position at its main campus in Amherst.

Key Accomplishments

Western Mass Tree Wardens

The DCR Urban and Community Forestry Program works closely with the Massachusetts Tree Wardens' and Foresters' Association (MTWFA), the oldest urban and community forestry organization in the United States. A subcommittee of the MTWFA serves as the State Urban and Community Forestry Council. Over 50 years ago, there were regional subgroups of the MTWFA that helped provide programming and networking opportunities locally. For many recent years, the only subgroup has been the Southeast Tree Wardens' and Foresters' Association. Working with the MTWFA, the University of Massachusetts, and Eversource, the DCR has helped to revive a Western Mass Tree Wardens Group (WMTW). The WMTW group provides educational and networking opportunities at an affordable price and in a convenient location.

In June 2015, the program started modestly with a dinner meeting and evening speaker, DCR Director of Forest Health Ken Gooch, who spoke about emerald ash borer (of particular concern to western tree wardens). Since then, the offerings have been quarterly dinner meetings on a variety of topics and formats: tree warden liability, preparing for emerald ash borer (a forum), planting to promote tree health and prevent pests, and herbicides on rights-of-way. Attendance has grown from 20 people to about 50 tree wardens, arborists, and others.

Through this program, we have been able to reach tree wardens in communities where we had previously not had contact. We have increased the knowledge base of western Massachusetts tree wardens, and the evening programs have brought together tree wardens and created an urban and forestry community in western Massachusetts.

Development of Factsheet Series

The U&CF Program has spent the last two years revamping, redeveloping, and in some cases creating new factsheets on a variety of topics. Long in need of an overhaul, the program now offers 14 factsheets on topics that include Caring for New Trees, DCR Urban and Community Forestry Program, Handling Ash, Growing Your Community Forest, Tree Inventories and Surveys, Investing in Urban Trees, Massachusetts Tree Laws, Planting 101, Setback Tree Plantings, Tree Boards and Committees, Tree City USA in Massachusetts, Tree Selection, and Trees and Roads. The factsheets serve as a way to not only spread appropriate information to assist communities, but also to help spread the word about the U&CF Program and other resources we can provide to communities. These factsheets now comprise the bulk of an initial outreach packet that can be distributed to tree wardens and others upon first contact.



Rick Harper, Extension Assistant Professor at UMass-Amherst, leads a planting demonstration at the fourth meeting of Western Mass Tree Wardens.



Amherst Tree Warden Alan Snow addresses the crowd at the second meeting of Western Mass Tree Wardens.

Statistical Highlights

Managing Communities:	37
Developing Communities:	156
Population of Participating Communities:	4,997,891
Volunteer Assistance Generated (hours):	31,955

