

Urban and Community Forestry Program 2016 Accomplishment Report – Maryland

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Introduction

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) preserves, protects, enhances, and restores Maryland’s natural resources. The Maryland DNR Forest Service is the State agency responsible for the management and protection of the State's urban forestry resources. The group within the Maryland Forest Service with direct oversight of these resources is the Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) Program.

The U&CF Program protects existing trees and forests by implementing and enforcing laws, licensing individuals that perform tree care work, and training local government employees about tree care. The program reaches out to citizens through tree planting opportunities and the Maryland Urban and Community Forest Committee. The program also recognizes counties, towns, and other groups for involvement in the care and planting of trees within their jurisdictions. The U&CF Program supports four full-time equivalent employees; numerous other field staff members perform U&CF duties on a part-time or as-needed basis.

Key Accomplishments

State Program Performance

Urban and Community Forestry Community Accomplishment Reporting System (CARS) Target Form:

Accomplishment/Performance Measure	Measure Type	2016 Final	2017 Target
CARS Number “Managing” Communities	National	183	183
CARS Number “Developing” Communities	National	335	335
CARS Number of Volunteer Hours contributed	National	60,000	60,000

Significant Community Projects

Urban Tree Canopy Initiative

Objective: Increase Tree Canopy in Urban Areas

The Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) Initiative continues to be an overarching program for the Maryland Forest Service U&CF Program. The Initiative is a component of the Maryland Commission on Climate Change as Action Plan #16, “Managing Urban Trees & Forests for Greenhouse Gas Benefits.” It is also a goal of the 2014 Chesapeake Watershed Agreement, which states a Tree Canopy Goal & Outcome of expanding urban tree canopy by 2,400 acres by 2025. Maryland is tasked with 45 acres per year (540 acres by 2025). The Initiative

is also reflected in the Maryland Forest Action Plan: Strategy 2016–2020 Resource Strategy IV.B.1 – Support Livable Green Communities.

To achieve these goals, the Maryland Forest Service U&CF Program staff helps local governments, other State agencies, and homeowner associations through technical assistance with tree protection during development and mitigation plantings, urban tree canopy assessments and developing implementation plans, developing and updating forest conservation ordinances, hazard tree evaluations, specimen tree care, and other forestry issues. Some key accomplishments in FY 2016 include the following:

1. The Maryland Urban and Community Forest Committee (MUCFC), a volunteer group, was recognized in October 2015 with the 2015 MAC-ISA Gold Leaf Award for its work in enhancing Maryland’s urban forest canopy through their grant and recognition programs.

MUCFC helps grassroots community groups fund tree planting and education projects statewide through a grant program. The program helps unfunded and under-funded communities such as school groups, service organizations, homeowner associations, and other volunteer-based groups conduct forestry-related projects on public lands. The maximum grant awarded is \$1,500. Matching through other grants, in-kind services, or utilizing the Tree-Mendous Maryland Program’s reduced-cost trees is highly encouraged. In spring 2016, the grant program continued to help groups fund projects such as inner-city street tree plantings, park plantings, and a food forest project. MUCFC also recognizes communities for their tree-related activities, which include tree plantings, tree maintenance, and educational programs through a program similar to the Arbor Day Foundation’s Tree City USA recognition program. This program, PLANT (People Loving And Nurturing Trees), recognizes communities, such as Boy Scout troops, schools, and homeowner associations, who are not eligible for Tree City USA, as well as cities and towns. In April 2016, 67 communities were recognized for their tree plantings and other tree-related activities.



The Maryland Urban and Community Forestry Committee received the Gold Leaf Award from the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture.

2. Through a partnership with a local county government, the Maryland Forest Service has assisted in increasing forest cover in Allegany County.

For Arbor Day 2016, the Maryland Forest Service provided assistance to various community groups with their planting projects, which resulted in the planting of 625 trees on 13 public properties throughout Allegany County. The projects included tree plantings at the county fairgrounds, four schools, two colleges, a veteran’s cemetery, and a State park. This was made possible through three Forest Service programs: the Gift of Trees program, Tree-Mendous Maryland’s Reduced Tree Cost program, and the Maryland’s Forest Conservation Act. The Gift of Trees program allows people to have native trees planted in honor or memory of a family and friends or to honor or celebrate an occasion. It is a \$40 donation that enables one tree to be planted on public land. The Tree-Mendous Maryland program oversees the arrangements for the tree to be planted either in the county requested by the donor or anywhere in the State. The Tree-Mendous Maryland Reduced Tree Cost program enables local governments and grassroots community groups planting on public lands to purchase native trees and shrubs at a reduced cost. By combining the first two programs, a \$40 donation purchases a small containerized tree with mulch.

In addition to the urban plantings, an additional 30,000 seedlings from the Maryland Forest Service’s John Ayton State Forest Tree Nursery were planted on some 40 acres of private, county, and State lands such as

Green Ridge State Forest. These seedlings were purchased through funding from the State's Maryland Forest Conservation Act program. Compliance with the act is required by any project on 40,000 square feet of area that needs a sediment control permit or subdivision permit from local or State governments. Forest mitigation, either planted or retained, is required for the land disturbance. If a planting or retention site cannot be located, then the applicant makes payment into the State or local fee-in-lieu fund. The State or local program is then responsible for planting the required mitigation acres with the funds.



The Maryland UCF Program partnered with Allegany County to support the planting of 625 trees on 13 public properties.

Statistical Highlights

Managing Communities:	184
Developing Communities:	334
Population of Participating Communities:	4,750,167
Volunteer Assistance Generated (Hours):	13,191

