

Urban and Community Forestry Program 2016 Accomplishment Report – New York

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Introduction

New York's foresters and members of the New York State Urban Forestry Council 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 2016.

Key Accomplishments

The State Urban Forestry Program and members of the New York State (NYS) Urban Forestry Council (the Council) teamed up with the Arbor Day Foundation to participate in two new programs: the Community Tree Recovery Program and the Energy-Saving Trees Program.

Community Tree Recovery Program

The Community Tree Recovery (CTR) Program found its roots in the city of Rochester. One thousand trees were distributed in record time to tree enthusiasts attending the annual Lilac Festival held in Highland Park in the city of Rochester in western New York. Rochester is a “managed community” and is well managed by the forester/certified arborist in charge of their trees. A contingent of forestry technicians on staff help to maintain, inventory, and conduct forest health assessments based on their forest management plan's recommendations. Rochester's ability to manage day-to-day tasks and complete grant-funded special projects made them an excellent venue to host the CTR Program. Hard hit by the emerald ash borer, Rochester – A City in a Forest – was anxious to participate in this Arbor Day lead event. Volunteers from the NYS Urban Forestry Council and the local ReLeaf committee assisted in the giveaway with the intention of replacing or saving the canopy of 3,604 ash trees in street tree plantings or in parks. New owners of trees were given a tree planting instruction and information sheet giving details about the tree they selected.

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. PSEG of Long Island, the Long Island utility, partnered with local volunteers and their customers to plant 1,000 trees. Five species appropriate for the zone were selected and offered to customers through an online registration system. The i-Tree tool can be used to estimate the amount of energy benefits as well as other benefits like cleaning the air and storm water

runoff. Long Island's high rate of development, overdevelopment, and impervious space gives it the distinction of having the lowest tree canopy in New York State. Storms like Sandy, Irene, and Lee have changed the mindset of its residents about trees. The fear of trees is a real thing to them. The EST Program, coupled with many other urban forestry-related activities, will help restore some of the canopy lost either during these storms or by the taking down of trees because of the fear created by these storms.

An additional partnership between the Council and the State program was the offering of the Arbor Day Community grants. The goal of this program is to assist any community without the components of a tree program to form a tree board and celebrate Arbor Day. This successful program received 46 applications for \$10,000 in grants, \$1,000 per award. In its second year, this program has saved the State program hundreds of hours of time and many reams of paper used to create State contracts had the State program managed this type of grant.

The involvement of the Council grant committee has been beneficial to Council membership and to communities alike. The exchange of experience and resources makes every project successful. Eleven grants were awarded with most having Arbor Day celebrations in the spring. Several elected to experience fall planting, which provides an optional time of year when tree planting can be done. This grant helped that State program achieve 11 more tree boards and the potential for 11 more Tree City USAs. This grant has also lead some communities to hire professionals to manage local tree programs. Some have already been awarded recognition by the Tree City USA program. The Council and the State program look at this grant as a stepping stone or an introduction into the network of urban forestry professionals in New York. The State Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) grant program gives extra points to communities that are Tree City USA communities. In the last round of EPF grant funding, 75 percent of the projects awarded were to recognized municipalities.

The Council and ReLeaf committees partnered with the New York Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture, another strong partner of the State program. Members assisted by volunteering to present or provide assistance at workshops. The workshop topics included advanced arboriculture practices; winter tree identification; Tree Risk Assessment Qualification information sessions; tree/sidewalk conflicts; OSHA safety standards for tree takedowns; and forest health topics such as the Asian longhorned beetle, emerald ash borer, oak wilt, and others. This outreach provides an opportunity to build partnerships with attendees both during and after the workshop. Local foresters gain a working relationship and provide assistance to many of the municipalities and volunteers from tree boards that attend these outreach events.



A Long Island ReLeaf volunteer gives tree planting instructions at the Energy-Saving Trees Program tree giveaway on Long Island in April 2016.



Consultant Chris Luley demonstrates the use of arborist tools in assessing trees during a tree risk workshop.

Statistical Highlights

Managing Communities:	104
Developing Communities:	224
Population of Participating Communities:	14,803,089
Volunteer Assistance Generated (hours):	391,123
Tree City USA Communities:	111 Recertifying, 6 New
Tree City USA Growth Awards:	13
Tree Line USA Utilities:	6
Tree Campus USA:	18

