

WHO WE ARE

USDA Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry Program is the only dedicated urban forest program in the federal government. It is a technical, financial, and educational assistance program, delivering nature-based solutions for climate and environmental justice, and green jobs where more than 84 percent of Americans live, work, and play. The program is delivered in partnership with 63 state and territory forestry agencies, more than 30 national partners, and more than 150 community tree groups.





PROVIDING EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE

In FY2021, the UCF Program distributed \$31.9 million in funding to state forestry agencies and non-profit partners, helping communities perform tree inventories, prepare management plans and policies, and train staff and community residents to plant and care for trees. In partnership with NASF and state agencies, \$2.5 million was competitively allocated in the new State Urban Forest Resilience program, distributing funds to eighteen recipients to restore urban forests due to catastrophic losses from forest pests and build climate change resiliency. Another \$1 million was competitively awarded the National Urban Forestry Challenge Cost Share Program addressing Ten-Year Action Plan goals.

Below are some FY 21 project examples on how we lead out on change and national priorities:

PLANNING FOR DISASTER RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

The Storms Online project, a partnership with Southern Group of State Foresters, has created a series of virtual training courses that will prepare State agency personnel, municipal arborists, and community staff to deal with the damage to community forests after destructive weather events. It contains three modules: one focuses on training urban forest strike team members to conduct tree risk assessments after storms which improve public safety while retaining viable tree canopy; another focuses on preparing state coordinators to assist storm-damaged communities by deploying the urban forest strike team; the last, provides valuable information that communities can use to develop storm plans which improves their storm readiness and resiliency.



PROMOTING SHARED STEWARDSHIP

We partner with the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Environment, the City of Helena, and the University of Vermont Spatial Analysis Lab to co-develop a transformative approach to achieving community tree canopy and wildfire mitigation goals. By combining high-resolution land cover with parcel administrative data, an approach popularized through urban tree canopy assessments, project partners have revealed an unmatched level of information on the area's wildland-urban interface. This information provides insight regarding risk, resource needs, and tradeoffs that community managers will use to prioritize fire mitigation efforts, determine appropriate places for future tree plantings, and aid in landowner education.



IMPROVING FOREST CONDITIONS

We competitively awarded funds to the Fostering Community Forest Resilience in the Great Plains project that engages Nebraska, South Dakota, and Wyoming to collaboratively respond to community forest health threats and manage for the benefit of nearly 6.3 million people in more than 1,500 cities and towns. This project will use a two-pronged approach to address this challenge: 1) expand forest data that can be used at local, state, and regional levels to improve management decisions; and 2) improve education and outreach to decision-makers responsible for the shared stewardship of our community forests.





ADVANCING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

We supported the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM) to provide green space access in the economically disadvantaged City of South Tucson, where there is less than one acre of designated park property. The Greenway project is a partnership connecting municipal, state, and non-profit organizations to increase local tree canopy, engage the community in volunteer beautification events, and connect the public to larger areas of green space. DFFM has partnered with the City of South Tucson and Tucson Clean and Beautiful to conduct bilingual outreach through community events, connect with schools and support Youth Tree Leaders, and plant native trees along the greenways.



IMPROVING FOOD ACCESS

With the University of Puerto Rico, we aided the Capetillo Garden and Community Forest, which is a community-led urban forest in the heart of San Juan. The forest boasts a community garden, a hoop house, and many fruit trees that provide fresh food and a place for educational and community activities. This project will help document forest conditions through a new tree inventory and identify tree management practices that will help increase forest resiliency to climate change and hurricanes. By engaging neighbors and students in fruit tree planting to enrich the existing fruit tree offerings, we will be helping communities steward, conserve and restore urban and community forests.

TRAINING THE FUTURE WORKFORCE

We planned, administered, and assisted in delivering the 2021 i-Tree Academy in partnership with Davey Institute and ReGreen Springfield. The four-month, online i-Tree Academy course trained 46 students from across the United States. Instruction focused on the hands-on use of the i-Tree suite of tools used to inventory, assess, and report on the value of trees and forests. Students represented urban foresters, city foresters, college professors and students, scientists, and community leaders. Final capstone projects focused on canopy assessment, ecosystem benefits, stormwater, social injustice, tree equity, and other innovative means by which the tools can be used.





BRIDGING TECHNOLOGY & SCIENCE

In partnership with Pacific Island Forestry Committee, Smart Trees Pacific, and California Polytechnic State University, we have developed the first comprehensive database of urban and community trees planted across the Pacific. Pacific Island SelecTree is a mobile-friendly, searchable website that catalogs important tree characteristics for over 250 commonly found urban and community tree species. Along with information on tree performance, the database pulls together local information on invasiveness, biocultural uses and stories, and common indigenous names to ensure access by all audiences, from local islanders to specialists.



PROMOTING COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERISM

In partnership with Anchorage Parks Foundation, we supported youth crew and volunteers to improve urban parks across Anchorage, Alaska. As part of the foundation's Youth Employment in Parks program, youth crews will plant trees, revegetate trails, and remove invasive species on public lands in Anchorage, providing crew members meaningful first job experience and natural resource management training.