

1998 USDA URBAN FORESTRY

Massachusetts

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From individual trees to woodland parks to entire watersheds, the Massachusetts Urban Forestry Program has captured the imagination of residents and officials to maintain and improve the quality of life in their communities.

Program Components

Tree Inventories/ Management Plans
Technology Transfer
Grant Aid
Education and Outreach
Community Action

Highlights

Urban and community forestry maintained a high profile statewide. More than 800 large trees were planted along streets and in parks and community greenways using \$100,000 in matching funds from the state. The State Program documented a record **14,000 seat hours of training** and 4.27 million media impressions.

“We hope to heighten public awareness of the connection between trees and community well-being.”

Brooke Thompson-Mills, of the Stoughton Urban Forestry Committee, in *The Patriot Ledger*, April 13, 1998

The number of sustained Tree City USAs has tripled from 18 to 56 since 1994.

A monthly newsletter, *The Citizen Forester*, was mailed to an expanding list of community leaders including elected officials, tree advocates, municipal managers, and corporations.

The **Massachusetts Community Forestry Council** released a legislative report, *Trees, People, and Places*, and introduced it to lawmakers on the steps of the State Capitol. The Senate minority leader, Brian Lees, remarked that he had never seen so many of his colleagues join a release of this kind in his tenure in state politics. The publication covered the efforts of residents and professionals to protect trees across the state.

The **Metropolitan Area Planning Council** produced an educational video on the role of trees in urban watersheds. Focusing on the Mystic River, the council organized residents and local officials in adjacent communities to tie green interpretive ribbons around street and park trees that delineate the boundary of its watershed. The communities included **Arlington** (pop. 45,000), **Cambridge** (pop. 96,000), **Lexington** (pop. 29,000), **Somerville** (pop. 76,000), and **Watertown** (pop. 33,000), all of which have Tree City USA status.

The **Williamstown** (pop. 8,000) Elementary School converted its back playfield into an outdoor classroom designed by students and teachers. The miniature pasture/woodland/wetland site has been fully integrated into the K-6 curricula. The design included a new pathway providing access to an extended care facility.

STATE ACHIEVEMENTS REPORT

The Town of **Acton** (pop. 18,000) and the City of **Pittsfield** (pop. 49,000), guided by local non-profit groups and the Forest Health Program, compiled information on community arboreta. This resulted in professional maps of the tree collections and long-term plans for expansion and maintenance.

With assistance from University of Massachusetts-Amherst, the **Boston Greenspace Alliance** completed a tree inventory in the historic Franklin Park woodland designed by Olmsted in the 1880s. Investigations discovered an elaborate planting of tree types mimicking a transect from coastal Massachusetts to the Berkshire Mountains.



People of all races and ages participate in measuring community trees in Massachusetts.

The successful **Heritage Tree Care grants** continue to attract significant media attention on the ecological and cultural significance of large, established trees in highly visible locations. More than 100 prominent “Heritage” trees were pruned, cabled, and fertilized in 15 communities. The Town of **Wellesley** (pop. 27,000) treated the Station Oak which has stood on the town common since 1840. The Town of **Belmont** (pop. 25,000) improved the health of the Winslow Homer trees, planted by famous painter in the 1800s and appearing in his painting “Croquet on the Lawn.”

The state’s community action forester assisted 11 municipalities in organizing and training residents to inventory community trees. Cities and towns included **Holyoke** (pop. 44,000), **Westfield** (pop. 38,000), **Sturbridge** (pop. 8,000), **Maynard** (pop. 10,000), **Haverhill** (pop. 51,000), **Manchester** (pop. 5,000), **Marblehead** (pop. 20,000), **Chelsea** (pop. 29,000), **Arlington** (pop. 45,000), **Stoughton** (pop. 27,000), and **Fall River** (pop. 93,000). The survey and inventory data collected this year fueled media attention and debate in local government resulting in several master plans for the long-term planning and maintenance of street and park trees.

Federal Program Support

Dollars in thousands

The State Program	<u>FY 1995</u>	<u>FY 1996</u>	<u>FY 1997</u>	<u>FY 1998</u>
	297.2	288.9	256.0	365.7*

*Includes \$98,000 for a NUCFAC grant