

Vermont

Program Overview

The Vermont U&CF Program mission is to "promote the stewardship of urban and rural forest landscapes to enhance the quality of life in Vermont communities." This mission recognizes the need to address environmental, economic, and social values of forests from the urban core, to suburban developments, to rural forest land. In partnership with the USDA Forest Service, the program focuses on issues relating to developing sustainable community programs by building in-house technical capacity, active community volunteerism, a basic assessment of needs, and recognition of the role trees and forests contribute to economic development and smart growth.

Program Accomplishments

Vermont's grant program provided financial assistance to 48 communities and organizations for a wide range of planning, planting, and maintenance projects. The program held its annual Stewardship of the Urban Landscape (SOUL) leadership program, a 35-hour training program for community residents wishing to learn more about trees and community forestry.

One graduate of this year's SOUL program has stopped the practice of tree topping in her town, Newport. Before attending the class, Roxana Bailey had never heard of a tree warden or the concept of community forestry. During the 11-week program, she learned that tree topping was an unacceptable practice. Noticing that most of the public trees in her town were topped, she approached the town and found out the tree warden position was vacant and city leaders did not intend to fill it. Both public and private trees suffered from severe, repetitive topping and were posing safety risks. Through several presentations at public meetings, she was able to convince the city council to reinstate the tree warden

position and to stop the practice of tree topping. She was soon appointed as the tree warden and in the 5 months since has worked one-on-one with city employees, teaching them how to properly plant, mulch, and prune trees. She has raised funds to plant memorial trees, coordinated community youth in planting seedlings along the river through town, and held a tree-planting and care workshop for the community. She is now forming a Tree Board and is working on initiatives to manage the municipal forests, partnering with the forestry instructor at the local technical high school. She claims her participation in the SOUL program has given her the strength to stand up in front of a group and the confidence to speak knowledgeably about proper urban forestry practices. Newport has long been one of the U&CF Program's "target" communities to help establish a proactive community forestry program.

Statistical Highlights

Number of participating communities: 147
Number of communities assisted: 145
Number of hours of training provided: 330
Number of days of volunteer assistance to program: 3,900
Number of Tree City USA communities (or equivalent): 2
Number of trees planted: 220

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