

## **URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY**

### ■ **Budget History:**

Year: 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001  
Amount(millions): **2.7 21.0 23.8 24.7 27.0 28.3 25.4 25.5 26.8 30.5 31.3 40.0 (proposed)**

### ■ **Program Focus:**

The protection and care of trees, forests, watersheds and related natural resources in cities, towns, and communities.

### ■ **Target Audience:**

45,000 communities and metropolitan areas where nearly 80 percent of the nation's population live and work.

### ■ **Delivery System and Partnerships:**

- Delivery system through regional structure with State Forestry agencies in all 50 states, territories, islands, and D.C.
- Partnership with grassroots nonprofit tree planting organizations in major cities across the country.
- Engaged with tree boards and grassroots citizen groups in cities, towns, and neighborhoods nationwide.
- USDA co-lead with NRCS on Urban Resources Partnership in 13 major U.S. cities.
- Extensive partnerships with national conservation and professional societies.

### ■ **Major Emphasis Areas:**

- Creating awareness and educating people on the importance of sustaining the natural environment where they live;
- Engaging citizens in active volunteer work to protect, establish, and care for trees, forests, and greenspace;
- Employing state-of-the technology to create informed public policy decision-making about natural resources;
- Providing technical support to local governments and citizens to:
  - **Ensure greening efforts are technically and biologically sound and sustainable;**
  - **Maintain and improve water and air quality;**
  - **Mitigate stormwater flooding and urban heat island effects; and**
  - **Protect habitat, and watershed and airshed functioning in face of urban development and sprawl.**
- Building local commitment and capacity to protect, establish, and care for trees, forests, and related natural resources through assistance in the development of local legislation, plans and budgets;
- Creating and expanding partnerships to ensure the sustainability of natural resources in cities and developing areas.

### ■ **1999 Accomplishments:**

In 1999, the Urban and Community Forestry Program assisted **10,663** communities (nearly one quarter of the cities and towns in the nation). States reported they have rated **3,801** communities having sustainable urban forestry programs (700 more than reported in 1997) Over **1,450,000** training hours were delivered to local governments and grassroots organizations, and nearly **1,000,000** hours of volunteer assistance were generated. Community grants are made available on a 50/50 matching basis: typically for every federal dollar allocated for urban forestry, **\$2.40** is leveraged in cash or in-kind services.

### ■ **Key Issues:**

Important connections exist between the livability of cities and the service functions provided by trees, forests, and related greenspace/openspace in urbanizing environments. Cumulative effects of multiple individual actions have major effects on landscapes, the amount of land available for production of goods and services, and the functioning of natural systems. There is also a direct relationship between livability of communities and their social and economic well-being.

The Federal role for this program includes providing information and technical assistance and creating understanding of the importance of maintaining, restoring, and improving the health of trees, forests, and natural resources the face of economic development. The role also includes restoring much needed greenspace to declining areas in older, more mature cities. Activities focus on retaining, protecting, and improving the role and contribution of the urban forest to watershed functioning and wildlife habitat; maintaining and improving air and water quality; and improving the livability, and associated human and economic health of communities.

Demonstration and technical assistance include the retention and placement of trees, forests, and related vegetation to mitigate stormwater flooding, air, water, soil, and noise pollution; reduce energy use; mitigate heat island effects; reduce fire hazards at the rural/urban interface; and maintain and restore landscape character and a sense of place.

The Urban and Community Forestry program serves as an effective link between an array of governmental and private resources and grassroots organizations to raise and address natural resource related environmental issues at community, county, state, regional, and national levels. Public value for the program is evidenced by the participation of more than 10,000 communities and people from

7,000 volunteer organizations in the program, annually. The numbers of requests for federal assistance and grants exceeds the capacity of the existing program by eight fold.

#### ■ **Examples of On-going Efforts:**

- Creating awareness and educating people on the importance of sustaining the natural environment in communities working with National Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA recognition program, American Forests Urban Forestry and Global ReLeaf programs, the Society of Municipal Arborists, TreePeople with their T.R.E.E.S. Landscapes for Sustainable Living project, the National Alliance For Community Trees and member affiliates in 35 major cities, and an educational partnership with the Intl. Society of Arboriculture.
- Engaging citizens in active volunteer work to protect, establish, and care for trees, forests, and greenspace through American Forests Global ReLeaf program, the National Tree Trust community tree planting grants program, and a grassroots focus with the National Alliance for Community Trees.
- Employing state-of-the-art GIS technology to assist communities in conducting urban ecosystem assessments. Most recent were the Puget Sound/Seattle Metropolitan Area City Green Ecological and the Chesapeake Bay City Green Ecological Assessments which were featured recently in *Time* and *US News and World Report* magazines as well as in USA Today.
- Maintaining and improving water and air quality and mitigating stormwater flooding, air pollution, and urban heat island effects through conducting benefit/cost studies that lead to informed local public policy decision-making about natural resources. The most recent example was seed funding that led to the creation of the T.R.E.E.S. Watershed Control and Water Conservation Cost-Benefit Model in Los Angeles by Andy Lipkis the leader of TreePeople in LA.
- Insuring community greening efforts are technically and biologically sound and sustainable and address such issues as invasive plant, insect and animal species through technical support to local governments and citizens on how to properly protect, establish, and manage trees, forests, and associated vegetation in cities, towns, and governments. Current examples include the work with combating the Asian Longhorn Beetle in New York City and Chicago.

The *Livability/Lands Legacy* related work will be targeted toward expanded partnerships with non-governmental organizations on policy and project level work to manage, protect and restore trees, forests, and associated vegetation in communities experiencing rapid economic development and land use changes (urbanization) and in the restoration of natural resources in older, more mature cities and towns. Particular focus will be on engaging these non-governmental organizations in volunteer efforts and in gaining in-kind and financial support for community based activities.