

New Products in Urban Forestry

USDA Forest Service
Northeastern Area
State and Private Forestry



New products and tools with applications across the landscape

Description: Creating and disseminating science-based information and tools is an important focus within the Northeastern Area (NA). Urban managers and forestry practitioners look to the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, for state-of-the-art training, tools, resources, and technical expertise that is easily accessible. Technology transfer products, when used strategically and collectively, can inform decision-making and become a catalyst for positive environmental, social, and economic changes in the landscapes.

Key Issues:

- State and local partners, nonprofit groups, and other Federal agencies comprise an effective network to disseminate technology across NA.
- Products targeted to help specific audiences achieve clear outcomes are the best use of limited funding and technical assistance.
- Easy internet access has revolutionized distribution, use, and replication of available tools and technology.
- It's important to track and evaluate the use and impact of products to make sure they reach targeted audiences and contribute to high priority outcomes.
- Productive community tree programs are the most cost effective management tool for UCF, but require a commitment of tools, resources, and focused assistance.

Project Status: In 2007, urban and community forestry technology transfer efforts in NA's Durham, Morgantown and St. Paul Field Offices (DFO, MFO, and SPFO, respectively) resulted in the development of new urban forestry resources targeted at specific audiences and outcomes.

Delivered 2007

i-Tree Training – Three i-Tree training workshops were delivered in NA to assist State partners, nonprofits and communities in the use of i-Tree to identify and manage the structure, function, and value of urban trees. Participants learned how to use UFORE, STRATUM, Mobile Community Tree Inventory (MCTI), Storm Damage Assessment Protocol, Tree Inventory PDA, and Sample Inventory Generator software. More than 90 participants attended the training in the Northeast, Midwest and Mid-Atlantic. Follow-up communications with attendees show almost half of the participants are currently moving forward with related efforts.

Storm Planning and Response Workshops – DFO, in partnership with State UCF programs in Vermont and New York, delivered four storm preparedness workshops to help communities prepare for and mitigate storm damage to urban trees. Training was in response to early winter storms in Buffalo, NY, that caused significant damage. Workshops were planned for web distance learning and videotaped for distribution on DVD.

Urban Watershed Planning Workshop – The Maine Forest Service, U.S. Forest Service, and Maine Resource Conservation and Development Area, Inc., sponsored a 1-day workshop attended by 36 participants that focused on protecting and enhancing watersheds from the edges of urban areas outward to the rural environment. Service training covered Volume 1 and II of the recently released Chesapeake Watershed Program Urban Forestry Watershed Manuals as well as roles of stakeholder groups in protecting watershed resources.

Stem Girdling Roots: The Underground Epidemic Killing Our Trees - This photo-rich guide

describes the problems with stem girdling roots (SGRs), prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. Written for homeowners, landscapers and all who are responsible for tree care, it is intended to demystify the cause of many tree health issues that result in early tree death of all species of trees and shrubs. It is available electronically on the U.S. Forest Service web-site or through through the University of Minnesota, Department of Forest Resources.

Forestry Images – The U.S. Forest Service and the University of Georgia’s Bugwood Network worked together to develop an urban forestry component in the Forestry Images photographic reference library. This work provides an easy to use interface with more than 600 high-resolution, high-quality images that graphically span urban forestry and arboriculture professions. To view see: <http://www.forestryimages.org/urban.cfm>.

FY 2008 Delivery Planned

Management Planning Workshops – Management planning is considered an important step in fostering a sustained urban and community forestry program (UCF) but little formal training is available to help practitioners develop and write management plans. In FY 2007 the U.S. Forest Service UCF partnered with the National Arbor Day Foundation to design a training curriculum that addresses the development and implementation of urban forestry management plans. Three 1-day workshops in the Mid-Atlantic, Midwest, and Northeast States will respond to an array of regional approaches. The training is planned for late summer/early fall 2008 with a series of “pre-training” educational web-casts.

Electronic Tree Risk Calculator (ETRAC) - ETRAC enables users to use handheld PDAs in the field to complete tree risk assessments and then use desktop freeware to generate tabular reports and budget analysis tools based on defined risks associated with individual datasets. This project phase addressed the need to bypass the cumbersome active sync process for field data transfer. Beta testing for the updated program is planned for spring 2008.

Benefits of Trees DVD: A Living Investment – Three videos, a 15-minute, 5-minute, and a 90-second public service announcement have been developed that promote the value of trees in our lives and communities. Viewers travel from place to place and meet professionals, scientists and community members, who present the science based facts. The DVD was developed for community leaders, residents and decision makers in key positions to support UCF programs.

Tree Owner’s Manual – This is an easily reproducible reference piece about care over the course of a tree’s life. It is intended for use by garden centers, nurseries, landscapers, arborists and homeowners. The booklet has instructions for planting, tips for troubleshooting common tree care issues, recommended services related to tree care and cautions related to tree care safety. The manual will be printed in limited quantities for initial distribution and distributed via internet with related educational information.

Fire Performance Plant Selector - This searchable database tool is intended to help urban foresters, firewise professionals, and homeowners make informed decisions on how a particular plant in a particular location might influence fire movement and structure safety in fire-prone areas. The pilot is available as a CD ROM. Additional funding is pending for conversion and expansion as a web-based tool.

Introduction to Environmental Planning and Zoning – This three volume manual with corresponding training presentations is intended to assist urban foresters and natural resource professionals communicate land use principles to communities. It is intended to be used for training and public education related to conservation planning. The presentations focus on topics such as “Why Plan?” “Completing Natural Resource Assessments,” “Zoning Tools,” and “Low Impact Development.”

Planning and Management of Natural Resources: A Guide for Municipal Commissions – Developed by the Pennsylvania State University School of Forest Resources in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, this downloadable publication will help urban foresters and community decision makers understand the role planning commissions, tree commissions, and environmental advisory councils have in managing community green infrastructure and the value of doing so. The publication will be available electronically on the U.S. Forest Service internet or through Pennsylvania State University bookstore.

Budget History: UCF Project funding unless otherwise noted.

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<i>(\$ Thousands)</i>				
	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
i-Tree Training	NA	*30	NA	NA
Storm Planning and Response Workshops	0	0	10	0
Urban Watershed Planning	*	*	5,000	*
Management Planning Workshops		20	*	*
Stem Girdling Roots	*	*	*	*
Forestry Images	0	0	0	0
Electronic Tree Risk Calculator	NA	15	8.5	0
Benefits of Trees DVD	37	0	9	0
Tree Owner's Manual	*	*	*	*
Fire Performance Plant Selector	***13	0	0	**15
Environmental Planning and Zoning	0	10	3	0
Guide for Municipal Commissions	0	12.5	0	0
Totals	\$	\$	\$	\$

*Pending costs from MW ** National Fire Program, ***2008 funding pending.

Future Direction:

- Planning related to the effectiveness of technology transfer in accomplishing the broader mission of the US Forest Service is currently underway to assure marketing strategies, successes, and product evaluations contribute to measurable outcomes.

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Jan 2008