

VT Urban & Community Forestry Program Quarterly Report
September 2021 – December 2021

Desired Future Condition 1: Biological Diversity		
Conserve biological diversity across all landscapes.		
Strategies		Priorities
1.1	Promote sustainable planning, use, and management of public greenspaces in villages and downtowns, such as village greens, town forests, parks, trails, playgrounds, and other public gathering spaces.	✓
1.2	Increase awareness, support, and implementation of planning for urban and community forests at local, regional, and statewide scales.	✓
1.3	Encourage long-term conservation efforts such as acquisition and planning by partners to keep forests forested and address forest fragmentation.	
1.4	Promote biological diversity and resiliency in urban and community forests through planning, use, and management that sustain diverse forest types and tree species, conditions, and age.	

Town Forests Recreation Planning

- **Forests for the People project:** The 5-year project wrapped up on 9/30/21. The Town Forest Recreation Planning Toolkit (on the VT UCF website) and 10 robust town partnerships to engage in planning for recreation in town forests were the highlights of the project. UCF's Program Manager Elise Schadler and UVM Extension's Kate Forrer took our USFS Grant Rep, Karl Honkonen to the Devil's Den/Wright's Mountain Town Forest in Bradford and then to the Hartford Town Forest (where we were joined by Jon Bouton!) to show off the good work accomplished by this project. Congratulations are due to Kate for leading this great effort.
- **Bench Building Workshop:** Cosponsored by VLT and Newbury Town Forest Committee, was held at Tucker Mountain Town Forest. A small group of volunteers from Newbury, Sharon, Orange, Duxbury, and Windsor came together to build 8 benches. The hands-on workshop was funded by Land Ethic Vermont, a collaborative movement to develop, maintain, inspire, and promote a land ethic amongst the people of Vermont, and was coordinated by UCF, the Vermont Land Trust, and the Tucker Mountain Town Forest Committee.
- **Community Governance Project and Training:** The Northern Forest Center wrapped up its 6-month town forest community governance study for us. The project was guided by a small advisory team made up of staff from FPR, UVM Extension, and the Vermont Land Trust with the objective of better understanding models of community governance of town forests statewide and gaps in knowledge and

challenges faced by the groups and individuals that maintain and steward them. Three surveys went out to different audiences and several focus group conversations were held with practitioners, including a good number of FPR's County Foresters. The Northern Forest Center produced a comprehensive report detailing the findings and held a practitioner's presentation of findings and discussion (~25 participants). UCF is developing a webpage on the project and findings will be incorporated into partner organization ongoing and future work.

Forest Planning

- **Forest Integrity Project:** This USFS Landscape Restoration Grant project continues to move forward with an end date of 6/30/22. Project partners are Forest Ecosystem Monitoring Cooperative (FEMC), Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC), the Vermont Natural Resources Council (VNRC), VT Fish & Wildlife, and VT Forests, Parks & Recreation. Project updates during this quarter include:
 - VNRC's contract was extended until the end of the year to accommodate updates to *Community Strategies for VT's Forests and Wildlife* guide and accompanying checklists (or a decision matrix) for each of the chapters focused on implementation strategies.
 - CVRPC continues to work with municipalities and other RPCs to assist in incorporating Act 171 Forest Integrity language into town and regional plans; they will begin an update to their own regional plan, which will be used as a case study for the larger project.
 - UCF is under contract with the Vermont League of Cities and Towns to support the new tree warden statutes, as well as partnering with 10 municipalities to draft shade tree preservation plans (more on this under DFC #5 below).
 - A Scope of Work was developed and sent out to marketing firms/contractors for a **communications project** to develop a suite of short videos to communicate planning requirements under Act 171 and the tools that have been developed to support municipalities. We hope to select a contractor and start this project by the new year.

Vermont Tree Selection Guide and Tool

Last summer Joanne and Elise met with Bob Popp, a Biologist with VT Fish & Wildlife, to discuss edits to our VT Tree Selection Guide and VT Tree Selection Tool. The discussion focused on specific species that are on the state's rare, threatened, or endangered plant list, as well as those that might be potentially invasive if planted outside of a "horticultural setting". We have:

- Reviewed the guide and have made draft edits to clarify the intent of the guide and better align with other Agency of Natural Resources guidance and lists regarding tree plantings and species selection.

- Convened a small group from UCF Council (thank you to Bill, Tim, and David!) to discuss edits and further refine.
- Sent the revised species list to John Padua and Charlie Plonski (wholesale nursery growers/sourcing) to ground truth against availability and use on the landscape; both are currently reviewing.

Desired Future Condition 2: Forest Health & Productivity		
Maintain and enhance forest ecosystem health and productivity.		
Strategies		Priorities
2.1	Identify, facilitate, and/or transfer research by academic, government, or community-led science initiatives that improves our understanding of urban and community forests, including urban forest inventory and analysis (Urban FIA).	
2.2	Survey, monitor, and support slow the spread and prevention efforts of invasive species that impact urban and community forests.	
2.3	Expand resources to assist communities to prepare for, mitigate, and recover from threats to urban and community forests including severe weather, fragmentation, climate change, and invasive pests.	✓
2.4	Increase communities' capacity to create resilient urban and community forests through growing or acquiring high-quality trees and a diversity of species.	
2.5	Encourage landscape level planning and management activities that maintain health, productivity, and ecological functions of urban and community forests in light of climate change.	
2.6	Conduct technical assistance to communities, including volunteer groups, in order to help them understand, evaluate, and/or implement actions to advance sustainable urban and community forestry programs.	✓

Urban FIA: As we near the completion of the first full cycle of data collection for Urban FIA (7 years), the USFS and the Northwest-Midwest State Foresters Alliance are beginning to facilitate discussions about how to access and use the data.

Municipal Technical Assistance

- Ash Inventory and EAB Planning: UCF continues to support municipalities performing ash inventories and monitoring the health of public and private ash. Between September and December 2021, the towns of Halifax and Peacham received assistance on inventory methodology and data management.
- Public Tree Inventory: Our public tree inventory tool was first launched back in 2014; we are currently working with ANR IT to modernize the tool, add new fields, and integrate with ArcGIS Field Maps (Collector is sunseting). Towns with experience using the tool, such as Charlotte, have been helpful in providing feedback about the new version of the tool. This quarter we assisted the towns of Shrewsbury, Mount Holly, Brownington, and Brandon inventory of their public village/street trees using our existing Public Tree Inventory tool. Additionally, we have been providing technical assistance to Brattleboro regarding the use of their 2015 public tree inventory to guide future planning for the urban forest.
- Aux: Joanne traveled south to meet with the Brattleboro Tree Advisory Committee, including the tree warden, to develop goals regarding Brattleboro's urban tree care, discuss grant eligibility for community tree planting and maintenance, guide the municipality's ability to write a shade tree preservation plan to align historic municipal tree policies with current tree warden law, and discuss the development of broader invasive species management within the municipality as it pertains to tree health and longevity.

Resilient Urban Forests for All

VT UCF received special funding from the USFS to design a new technical and financial assistance package that we are launching in 2022. We recognize that in many Vermont municipalities, tree planting, and maintenance is guided by local volunteers, community groups, and municipal staff with many other duties. Despite attempts to invigorate a sustainable municipal tree program, many municipalities lack training, funding, and volunteer and staff commitment that ensures a thoughtful and well-supported urban forestry program. VT UCF is seeking two urban municipal partners willing to utilize technical and financial assistance to invest in their urban forest and the community that cares for it throughout the 2022 calendar year. The intent of the [Resilient Urban Forests for All Assistance Package](#) is to support and grow downtown trees and forests in Vermont's most populated areas in partnership with communities that lack capacity and need assistance to advance their urban forestry programs. Selected partner municipalities will receive a package valued at over \$20,000 that includes funding for strategic planting or tree maintenance, inventory work by a UCF intern, tree care supplies and resources, and trainings for staff and citizens. Applications are due in early December.

Urban Forest Health Outreach and Education: VTinvasives website

- Continued to improve the structure of EAB information, including improvements to the EAB map, on VTinvasives.
- VTinvasives E-News: 1 produced.
- Continued to support 'Report It' submissions.
- Contributing to listserv management to provide updates to EAB Infested Area Map and state news.

EAB Response & Planning

- In late 2020 UCF released a suite of [6 case studies](#) about how municipalities have and are managing for EAB here in Vermont and beyond; we are in the process of developing an additional 7 case studies for current EAB-related grant recipients; field site visits to Waterbury and Northfield to document and interview key project participants took place this quarter.
- As part of the two special USFS Forest Health & Resilience grants we received (2019 & 2020) to increase financial support to municipalities in the face of EAB, we coordinated a series of hands-on trainings for municipal road crews and professional arborists.
 - **Municipal Trainings:** Lead by Emmett Shutts, Regional Trainer with the Davey Tree Expert Company and with assistance from Scott Davis from Chippers, Inc., the full-day demonstration trainings focused on safety for all staff working with EAB-infested trees (and other hazardous roadside trees), highlighting both methods to assess risk and to safely remove infested trees as well as the real benefits of well-trained arborists and chainsaw operators to control the felling of risk trees. Details of the trainings:
 - Tuesday September 8th, held in Essex Town with ash removals at Indian Brook Reservoir, 17 participants representing Ferrisburgh, Bristol, Cambridge, Essex Junction, Colchester, Essex Town, Shelburne, and South Burlington
 - Wednesday September 9th, held in Montpelier with ash removals at Hubbard Park, 18 participants representing Waitsfield, Weathersfield, East Montpelier, Johnson, Ludlow, Mount Holly, Williamstown, Morristown, Hanover (NH), Montpelier, and Newfane as well as staff from the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission and FPR.
 - **Arborist Training:** UCF hosted *Managing EAB Infested Ash: A Forum for Professional Arborists* to an audience of over 30 practicing Vermont arborists. The discussion was led by Tim Walsh, Cooperate Safety Director for the Davey Tree Expert Company and based in Ohio. Topics covered in the robust session included safe climbing, pruning, and removal of ash trees infested EAB, as well as experiences with insecticide treatment and training needs of professional arborists in the state.
- Elise presented on VT's approach to municipal support re: EAB to the members of the Northeast-Midwest State Forester's Alliance Forest Health Committee at their annual meeting in Burlington.

Pest Outreach

- The Forest Pest Outreach Program (FPOP), which funds Ginger’s position, is conducting an educational campaign targeted to recreationists in 2021. This will consist of a combination of press releases and social media campaigns targeting birders, Nordic skiers, snowmobilers, hikers, fisherpeople, hunters, mountain bikers and other outdoor recreationist groups about the signs and symptoms and how to report multiple invasive forest insects. It will include information on EAB as well as other pests such as Asian long horned beetle (ALB), spotted lantern fly, hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA), and oak wilt.
 - Created new forest pest identification cards. Gwen designed new wallet-sized identification cards with VTinvasives.org branding for EAB, HWA/EHS and SLF. We are in the process of distributing 5,000 of the cards to Forest Pest First Detectors and state forestry staff.
 - Ginger is partnering with Kate Forrer and Lisa Sausville to produce two episodes for their podcast series, [Heartwood](#)
 - the cultural and ecological significance of black ash in the face of Emerald ash borer
 - the benefits of diverse tree plantings in urban settings
 - We will be holding three webinars for professional foresters on invasive pests. We have applied for SAF credit.
 - Jumping Worms (Josef Gorres)
 - Current status of hemlock woolly adelgid and elongate hemlock scale in Vermont and the potential effects of climate change (Jim Esden and Savannah Ferreira)
 - Ecological, silvicultural, and cultural consideration for ash preservation in northern forests (Tony D’Amato)

Desired Future Condition 3: Forest Products & Ecosystem Services		
Maintain and enhance forest contribution to ecosystem services.		
Strategies		Priorities
3.1	Facilitate opportunities to utilize urban wood including after natural disasters or pest infestations.	
3.2	Identify and facilitate opportunities to integrate local agroforestry into urban and community forestry in public spaces.	

3.3.	Promote awareness and use of urban and community forestry practices to protect water quality in rural and urban Vermont landscapes through implementation of low impact development (LID), green stormwater infrastructure (GSI), and sound silvicultural practices that support resilient community trees and forests.	
3.4	Promote awareness and use of urban and community forestry practices at the municipal level to adapt climate change strategies that mitigate urban air temperatures, water and air pollution, and support biodiversity.	✓
3.5	Monitor and explore opportunities for forest carbon credits for urban and community forestry in Vermont.	
3.6	Promote awareness and stewardship around the ecosystem services of community forests and other public spaces.	
3.7	Fund, promote, and record progress on implementation of best practices and outreach initiatives that support functional ecosystems at local and regional scales.	✓
3.8	Facilitate impact mitigation of invasive forest pests at regional and statewide levels and the associated ecosystem services and cultural losses resulting from infestations and the decline of specific impacted tree populations.	

Climate Change

A new version of the **Vermont Climate Assessment** was released by UVM in November: <https://site.uvm.edu/vtclimateassessment/>. It contains an updated analysis of observed and projected changes in the VT climate (see [here](#)) as well as a specific chapter on forests (see [here](#)) that includes a section on urban forests and climate change that Elise, Joanne, and FPR's Climate Forester Ali Kosiba contributed to.

Energy Saving Trees/Vermont Community Canopy

- Fall 2021: In September UCF gave 484 free trees away to residents of Burlington, Colchester, and Winooski as part of the program's [Vermont Community Canopy Program](#). This is the fifth year that UCF has partnered with the Arbor Day Foundation to run this free tree giveaway; funding for this round came from both the Vermont Department of Health's Climate & Health Program as well as the Department of Environmental Conservation's Air Quality and Climate Division.

- Spring 2022: Gwen has already started planning for the next round of the VCC program. We'll be working with Burlington, Rutland, and Montpelier and will focus on reaching underserved audiences, perhaps focusing on housing trusts and affordable housing in each community.
- Funding: We have one more year of funding to run the spring 2022 program through an air quality settlement fund via the Air Quality Division at the Department of Environmental Conservation. We have funding to run a fall 2022 program in the two selected Resilient Urban Forests for All partner municipalities (see DFC #2 above).

Green Stormwater Infrastructure

- UCF was involved in drafting a proposal for a multi-year, strategic *Trees for Main Street Initiative*, let by ACCD (and UCF Council's) Richard Amore. The project would support design and installation of engineered tree support systems (Silva Cells, CU Structural Soil) in up to 20 downtowns statewide. We met with DEC to discuss the project and at this time, it is not something that can be funded through VT Clean Water funds. However, we like the idea, so will keep the proposal fresh and an eye out for potential funds.

Desired Future Condition 4: Land Ethic		
Maintain and enhance an ethic of respect for the land, sustainable use, and exemplary management.		
Strategies		Priorities
4.1	Create awareness and foster recognition of the ecological, social, cultural, and economic contributions that urban and community forests provide to Vermont, and the need to sustain forest health and productivity to ensure continued benefits for this and future generations.	✓
4.2	Maintain and expand public outreach, social media, and technology transfer.	
4.3	Educate and engage the public, including students, in urban and community forest stewardship and community science, including Vermont Tree Stewards and Forest Pest First Detectors.	
4.4	Educate landowners, tree wardens, forestry professionals, professional arborists, municipal staff, and land managers on the benefits of urban and community forest stewardship.	✓
4.5	Promote the implementation and demonstration of sustainable forest management on private and public lands, including town forests.	

4.6	Promote urban and community forests as an opportunity to respond to the COVID 19 global pandemic and help Vermont communities restore civic life, build social connections, spark economic vitality, and improve environmental sustainability.	✓
4.7	Support volunteer groups, particularly municipal tree committees, conservation commissions, and town forest committees, in issues of community governance and leadership.	

Arbor Day

- We have started to plan for next spring's Arbor Day Conference and will tentatively be hosting an in-person event at Vermont Technical College in Randolph on Friday, May 20th.

Vermont Big Tree Program

- We have been slowly, painstakingly lifting up the VT Big Trees Program and a public-facing map and updated database this summer and fall and will be doing a soft launch of the new program in early 2022.
- The old Big Trees database was out of date and most of the existing 145 State champion trees on the list had not been remeasured in at least a decade. Many of the records lack accurate location information and/or contact information for the landowner or original submission contact. This summer, Gwen and a variety of co-measurers have revisited and remeasured trees using our new AcrGIS Survey 123 form to log the location and information on the trees. Based on ability to actually locate the trees, contact landowners, etc., there are now about 70 trees remeasured and about 70 vacant tree species on the list. We hope to have a network of volunteers to help certify and measure trees next year to complete a full list.

Forest Pest First Detectors

- Purple Prism Traps: Fifty FPDF volunteers as well as staff from FPR monitored 112 traps in 61 towns during the 2021 EAB flight season. End-of-season trap checks resulted in several confirmed EAB samples and new infestations. New infestations were detected in Hartford, Brookfield, and Belvidere. The [updated map](#) can be found on VTInvasives.

- Reorganization of materials on our website to create on-line toolkit: Currently materials related to community engagement and working with municipalities on pest preparedness are in a number of different locations on two of our websites and are a little difficult to locate for someone not familiar with the sites. As part of our website reorganization, we will be placing these materials in one location for Forest Pest First Detectors to use and share with other volunteers.
- There will be an on-line Forest Pest First Detector training this spring, running for 8 weeks in February - March. This training will be open to anyone, but we will be marketing it specifically to birders. We are partnering with VT Audubon and possibly the VT Center for Ecostudies on the course. In addition to the on-line component, course participants will have the opportunity to participate in live webinars by VT Audubon and other birder organizations, and there will be three field trips where participants can have first hand practice with host tree identification and looking at signs and symptoms of infestations (EAB in the Islands, HWA in southern VT, and a visit to a sugarbush to talk about Asian Longhorned Beetle and perhaps jumping worms). The field trips will be co-led by Forest Health staff from FPR.

Backyard Woods Course

- 2021 Course: The fall course ran through October and November. There were 55 participants and 3 field walks, led by Ethan Tapper and Hannah Dallas.

Forestry Education Programs

- Professional Webinar Library: We continue to maintain an on-demand forestry webinar library for VT licensed foresters to get free CEUs.
- Elise presented on urban forest health concepts and arboriculture to a UVM Forest Ecosystem Health class in November.
- ourVTwoods Phase 2 funded: Thanks to funding from High Meadows Fund, UCF's Kate Forrer is continuing to lead the upgrading of ourVTwoods.org. Based on partner feedback gathered in Phase 1, the second phase of the project will implement online tools to support the following identified, strategic goals for the website to: 1) become an aggregator of forestry outreach and education opportunities; 2) support broader (and automatic) dissemination of partner communications, and 3) create new marketing resources to engage a broader audience
- Women Owning Woodlands (WOW) VT: We continue to support this partner initiative of VT UCF, Vermont Coverts, Vermont Land Trust, the Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation, Vermont Woodlands Association, UVM Extension, and the Women's Agricultural Network.

- Thanks to funding from the High Meadows Fund, a two day training on facilitating learning circles was hosted this quarter, in partnership with the American Farmland Trust. There were 18 participants from across Vermont.
- The WOW project funded by the USFS Landscape Scale Restoration grant will begin in earnest in early 2022; partners have convened and subawards to partner organizations are in development.

Town Forests Stewardship Demonstration and Leadership Training

FPR, UVM Extension, and the Vermont Land Trust continue to work on the USFS Landscape Scale Restoration project, ***Community Forests as Models of Stewardship***. The goal of this project is to highlight community forests as models of stewardship through planning, developing, mapping, and promoting stewardship demonstration sites, addressing various management challenges, new educational programming that trains community leaders on stewardship, and professionals on working with communities. Highlights this quarter include:

- Forester Facilitation Training: Planning is underway for a winter webinar series to address some of the common challenges facing professionals in town forest planning; potential topics include virtual community engagement and navigating conflicts in community planning.
- Community Leadership Training and Toolkit: Planning is underway to develop new educational resources for municipal officials and volunteers engaged in town forest stewardship planning, management activities and decision making.
- Demonstration Project Library: We conducted 2 focus groups with potential user groups to inform our work with partners to develop a template for a demonstration library, to be hosted by VT ANR. The demonstration library is designed to highlight best practices in forest planning and management in town forests in Vermont.

Media/Communications:

- Social Media: Continue to support our social media account (Facebook); the team rotates posting responsibilities.
- Newsletters: Bimonthly TREEmail; monthly VolunTREEmail.
- Listserves: A listserv has been created for the municipalities with which we are partnering to develop pilot Shade Tree Preservation Plans so that they can share information, network, and ask questions.
- Website: Continue to maintain and improve the site - www.vtcommunityforestry.org. We are well into the “discovery” process for our rebuilt website and the contract to rebuild with Tamarack Media will be developed soon so the project can move forward this coming winter/spring. The site will have a new look and a revamped architecture (organization).

- Podcast: Through a partnership with VT Coverts, UCF has been hard at work on a series of podcasts, called [Heartwood](#). The podcast intends to connect Vermonters to our forests, forest management, and the forest economy. Bonus: theme music for the podcast written and performed by UCF's own Joanne Garton! All five episodes have been produced and were released in September, distributed using Anchor to Spotify, iTunes, and other podcast platforms.

Desired Future Condition 5: Legal, Institutional, & Economic Framework		
Vermont has a legal, institutional, and economic framework in place for forest conservation and sustainability.		
Strategies		Priorities
5.1	Sustain and expand funding opportunities to support local, state, and regional efforts for urban and community forest stewardship, health, and sustainability.	✓
5.2	Educate state leadership, including legislatures, secretaries, commissioners, and division/department directors of programming efforts, opportunities, and challenges.	
5.3	Educate communities, volunteers, and residents about urban and community forest policies, governance models, rules, and laws including Vermont's Tree Warden statutes.	✓
5.4	Advocate for policies, programs, and initiatives that assist in urban and community forest stewardship, health, and sustainability.	
5.5	Strive to strategically identify emerging issues and meet immediate challenges and establish an appropriate level of infrastructure and staffing.	
5.6	Foster strategic partnerships to deliver innovative urban and community forestry programming and support organizational capacity.	✓
5.7	Promote and cultivate cross-program and cross-agency cooperation and communication, within Vermont as well as with regional and national partners, to improve efficiency and effectiveness.	
5.8	Maintain and develop data management systems, ensure indicators are appropriate to monitor progress, and share data among partners to enhance internal and external communications and collaborations.	
5.9	Support professional development, continued learning, and succession planning for program staff.	

5.10	Foster an organizational culture within the program that rewards excellence, celebrates accomplishments, encourages teamwork, and recognizes achievements.	
5.11	Increase access to the benefits of trees and urban and community forests for all Vermonters by applying a lens of environmental justice, equity, diversity, and inclusivity across programming.	✓

Tree Wardens

- **VLCT Project:** We continued to work with Vermont League of Cities and Towns’ Municipal Assistance Center to support tree warden resource development and training. In this quarter we wrapped up the last two deliverables on VLCT’s contract:
 - VLCT has created a [Tree Law webpage](#) , a [Tree Warden FAQ](#), and a [Tree Law Roles and Responsibilities](#) page and document.
 - In November Joanne Garton joined a staff attorney from VLCT in leading a virtual training to provide an overview of the roles and responsibilities different municipal officials play in complying with municipal tree law. 78 municipal officials, staff, and tree wardens from over 50 towns attended the training.
- **Tree Warden Reporting Button:** We worked with ANR-IT to develop an [online reporting “button”](#) (form) on the Forestry Division and UCF webpages to feed into our growing tree warden database. Certification of tree warden by each municipality is now required by statute, and so far over 150 towns have reported.
- **Tree Warden Summit:** VT UCF hosted the second annual tree warden summit in Middlebury in October. Joanne and Gwen guided 14 tree wardens through discussion about EAB management, ash tree preservation with insecticide, development of shade tree preservation plans, and urban tree care priorities as they pertain to town highway and public works crews.
- **Shade Tree Preservation Plans:** As part of the guidance UCF is providing related to the amended tree warden statutes, we are working with 10 selected municipalities over 13 months to draft municipal shade tree preservation plans. The components and goals of the plans are outlined in the statutes, but we are working with each community individually to develop a suite of templates for communities of varied size, population, and land use. The program supports East Montpelier, Monkton, St. Albans, Charlotte, Hartford, Johnson, Middlebury, Mount Holly, Shrewsbury, and West Windsor until March of 2022. Unofficially, we’re also working with the Town of Shelburne to update their comprehensive urban forest management plan and include required components of a shade tree preservation plan and have met with volunteers in the Town of Calais regarding their plan. In this quarter, Joanne assisted Shrewsbury, Middlebury, Mount Holly, and West Windsor with shade tree preservation plan drafts and public tree inventory training.

Financial Assistance to Communities

- 2021 Grants:
 - Ash Tree Management Grants: 7 municipal projects were funded and are underway. [See grant awardees here](#). We will be developing case studies on these projects.
 - Arbor Day Tree Planting Grants: We awarded 18, \$1100 Arbor Day Tree Planting grants. We offered these small grants with no match requirement and the focus was tree planting; several of these projects have already closed out. [See grant awardees here](#).
- 2022 Grants:
 - Growing Urban Forests in the Face of Emerald Ash Borer Grants: This special grant opportunity, thanks to a USFS grant, will allow UCF to continue to support tree plantings to replace removed ash in our most populated areas. Thanks to Ann and Bonnie for sitting on the grants review committee; we are funding 7 projects for a total of just over \$60,000. [More information here](#).
 - Vermont Community Garden Network subaward: We are in discussions with the Vermont Community Garden Network to grant them funding from our FY21 core budget to design and run a mini-grant program to support planting of fruit and nut trees at community garden sites statewide.
 - Caring for Canopy Grants: Our standard grants will be available this year; applications are due in January and we'll have \$50,000 to allocate.
- UCF staff are considering how to better tell our story through the projects funded and municipalities supported financially over the years. We are starting to add these to our website and are making some alterations to our [Community Map](#) to be able to show the impact of UCF's funding statewide.

Financial and Programming Partnerships

UVM Extension: Our 2021/2022 grant agreement to support our UCF staff at Extension has been executed and is supporting Gwen, Kate, and Ginger's UCF-related work.

US Forest Service:

- We have just received confirmation that the \$50,000 bump in our UCF core funding that we received for FY '21 will be renewed for FY '22.

- Between the Infrastructure Bill that was signed by President Biden in November and the Build Back Better (Reconciliation) Bill that is anticipated to pass by the end of the year, there is potentially a game-changing amount of funding headed towards urban forestry, green spaces in cities, and climate change action. More to come, and all very exciting!
- Elise has stepped down from the Northeast Midwest State Foresters Alliance (NMSFA) Urban Forest Assessment Committee and has stepped onto the Trees & Public Health Committee.

Urban Forest Economic Study: VT is one of 11 state partners engaged in an economic impact study of urban forestry in the northeast region. This quarter we heard preliminary results from the researchers on the project and will be reviewing a draft state impact report.

Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity (JEDI) work

- Utilizing input from all team members, the group drafted an external-facing statement regarding justice, equity, diversity and inclusivity in VT UCF, addressing the work that the team is undertaking to advance JEDI initiatives at personal and programmatic levels. The group also updated measurable goals for the program to approach over the short- and long-term. The team is committed to self-reflection and learning about justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in urban and community forestry from BIPOC sources and existing partner organizations, including the diversity and equity committees at UVM and ANR.

Professional Development

- Kate continues her EdD program at UVM this fall, remotely.
- Kate participated in a 2-day training on how to facilitate learning circles.
- Ginger is participating in a podcasting course through Berkeley Advanced Media Institute.
- Joanne took CPR and Stop The Bleed training course offered by the State of Vermont and FPR in November.
- Joanne took her ISA Certified Arborist exam in December (proctored by Elise and Gwen).
- Elise participated in the virtual Partners in Community Forestry Conference (held in person in Louisville). The conference was inspiring and energizing, even in a virtual format.

Program Staffing

- Maintaining weekly check-ins online.
- Our December quarterly staff meeting was held online via GoToMeeting. We focused on the website rebuild, our 5-year strategic action plan, and our continued focus on JEDI.
- All UCF staff continue to work from home; State of Vermont transitioned into an official telework/hybrid work system as of 9/1.
- We anticipate hiring a summer intern through the UVM Rubenstein School perennial internship program and hope to hire a UVM Field

Naturalist graduate student next spring.

Council

- Ethan Tapper, FPR's Chittenden County Forester, has stepped down from Council after 5 years of service.
- We are still seeking 2 members to sit on the leadership team.