

## Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program

### Program Update

January 2019 – June 2019

Desired Future Condition 1: <i>Biological Diversity</i> Conserve biological diversity across all landscapes.				
Strategies		H	M	L
1.1	Identify and promote stewardship of community green spaces such as town forests, village greens, and parks.	X		
1.2	Expand awareness and implementation of planning for urban and community forests at local and regional scales.	X		
1.3	Promote intentional development in villages and downtowns that support sustainable urban and community forests.		X	
1.4	Recommend and create model urban and community forestry language for inclusion in town plans, local regulations, and state planning documents.	X		

#### Town Forests Recreation Planning:

- Toolkit: Final draft of the toolkit will be available mid-June on [vtcommunityforestry.org](http://vtcommunityforestry.org). Toolkit will be officially launch late fall as part of town forest Summit.
- Planning for Town Forest Educational Events: Planning is underway for 10 events in VT Town Forests in 2019-2020. Events will include:
  - Town Forest Recreation Planning Summit in November, working with regional partners in NH and ME
  - Skill Builder Workshops- Series of workshops in town forests around the state on technical skills in recreation planning, including topics such as trail design, building, maintenance, targeted towards user groups and community leaders

#### Town Forests Leadership Training

- FPR, UVMEXT and VLT will be partnering on a new LSR grant 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 program that train community leaders on stewardship, and professionals on working with communities.

### **Municipal Technical Assistance**

- The majority of our assistance has focused on EAB planning and management. While EAB poses a significant challenge ahead for us, it is also proving to be an opportunity for communities to advance their urban forest management. Between the municipal EAB planning workshops, assistance with strategizing and training on rural roadside ash inventories, and reviewing EAB plans, we estimate that we've directly supported over 25 communities in 2019 so far.

### **Forest Planning**

- As part of a USFS grant called Forest Integrity, we are working with partners to provide guidance on local planning to protect forest blocks and habitat connectors. To help inform our education and outreach efforts, a survey was created and distributed to better understand the level of awareness about the requirement to include forest blocks and habitat connectors in town plans and the resources available, and how we can better support their efforts moving forward. The survey results provided a lot of insight to help guide our future work. Partners are considering a final deliverable that will outline the steps to a successful planning process, the resources available, and implementation strategies. Partners will reconvene on June 17th to outline progress with statewide forest conversion risk mapping, outreach through RPCs (particularly Central Vermont RPC), updates to BioFinder to produce an easier mapping for municipal planning, and review needs heard by municipalities as they begin to incorporate forest integrity into town plans.

<b>Desired Future Condition 2: <i>Forest Health and Productivity</i></b> Maintain and enhance forest ecosystem health and productivity.				
Strategies		H	M	L
2.1	Identify and facilitate research that improves our understanding of Vermont's urban and community forests.			X
2.2	Monitor for urban and community forest health and productivity including urban forest inventory and analysis (Urban FIA).		X	
2.3	Survey for potential urban and community forestry health threats, including non-native invasive species.		X	
2.4	Expand resources to assist communities to prepare for, mitigate, and recover from emergency events to urban and community forests including severe weather and invasive pests.	X		

2.5	Increase communities' capacity to create resilient urban and community forests including growing or acquiring high-quality trees.		X	
2.6	Prevent the introduction, slow the spread, and eradicate where appropriate non-native invasive species that impact urban and community forests.	X		

#### **Urban Forest Health Outreach and Education:**

- VTinvasives website:
  - Continued to improve the structure of EAB information on VTinvasives
  - VTinvasives E-News: 3 produced
  - Continued to support 'Report It' submissions
  - Managing listserv to provide updates to EAB Infested Area Map and state news.
- First Detectors: Held Forest Pest First Detectors training in Grand Isle in May: 24 attendees, very positive evaluations
- EAB Outreach Events:
  - We've focused on providing outreach to municipalities on planning for and managing EAB. The following events occurred.
    - EAB Municipal Planning workshops in Franklin County, southern Windham County
    - EAB Awareness Week Toolkit - 369 unique page views from April 1st until now
    - Vermont Flower Show: volunteers and staff interacted with 684 visitors to booth
    - Waterwise woodlands: interacted with 53 people
    - Maple Festival: interacted with 221 visitors to booth
    - Don't Move Firewood Display at Fair Haven Visitors Center: April & May
    - Tabled and distributed information at Black Ash Conference
    - Sustainability Academy Fair: interacted with 45 families
    - Trained Park Interpreters in invasive forest pests
- EAB Response
  - Purple Prism Traps (partnership with VAAFM and FPR): 30 people trained; will have 78 traps in 29 towns all around state
- Museums: Working on displays on EAB at three museums in VT: Montshire (adding ash activities); VINS and Birds of Vermont Museum will be hosting interpretives signs.
- Young Writers: Young Writers Project writing prompt on EAB held in the spring; 36 submissions and three winners were selected and read their winning pieces at the Arbor Day Conference. Pieces have been published in Burlington Free Press, Valley News, Northern Woodlands online newsletter, and

Young Writers website. From Young Writers Director: *I think more teachers have contacted me about this challenge than any we've done, so they're seeing it and sharing it with their students. Wonderful.*

Desired Future Condition 3: <i>Forest Products and Ecosystem Services</i>				
Maintain and enhance forest contribution to ecosystem services.				
Strategies		H	M	L
3.1	Facilitate opportunities to market and utilize urban wood including after natural disasters or pest infestations.			x
3.2	Facilitate opportunities for integrating agroforestry and urban and community forestry including integration with local food production.			x
3.3	Promote awareness and use of urban and community forestry practices for water quality protection in new land development and retrofits including low impact development (LID) and green stormwater infrastructure (GSI).	X		
3.4	Promote awareness and use of urban and community forestry practices to mitigate urban air temperatures and pollution.		X	
3.5	Promote awareness and stewardship of recreation in town forests and other public places.		X	
3.6	Explore opportunities for forest carbon credits for urban and community forestry in Vermont.			x
3.7	Identify and promote climate mitigation and adaptation strategies for urban and community forests.		X	

#### Water Quality:

- Resilient Right-of-Way Grant:
- Urban Component:

- o Green Street Vermont Guide: Guide is finished and has been printed. Digital downloads are available on [VT UCF's website](#) alongside new video tutorials on the first 10 (of 11) sections of the guide. The printed guide was distributed at Arbor Day Conference. Working on outreach plan and direct mailings to each municipality.

- o Technical Assistance: Work is finished in Milton, Shelburne, Williston, Rutland, West Rutland, and Burlington. Work initiated and continues in Colchester, Winooski, and Essex Junction. The final community will be Montpelier and work will begin in July.

- o Rural Component:

- o Assessments and Plans: Completed field work and final plans for seven towns. Calais, East Montpelier, Stowe, Hyde Park, Tinmouth, Johnson and Marshfield have all received action plans and recommendations regarding rural road vegetation. Stowe, East Montpelier, Hyde Park, and Tinmouth have provided comments on the draft through partner meetings; Calais, Johnson and Marshfield will do so this summer. Charlotte participated in rural roadside ash inventory training last summer as part of the Resilient Right-of-Way grant. Plainfield and Panton are the two remaining case study towns for the 2019 field season; Plainfield will complete ash inventory work and review rural road vegetation best practices in two sample locations and Panton will address water quality issues along roads as related to roadside trees and farming in or near the right-of-way.

- o Outreach: Based on the assessments completed, building a list of sceneries and correlated management practices and processes to include in new rural roadside vegetation management guide.

- o Lake Champlain Forest Watershed Management Partnership: Continue to explore collaboration with UVM Extension and American Forests on funding a position based out of UVM's SEA Grant to lead new partnership. UVM Extension, in partnership with VT Audubon, submitted a proposal to New England Forests and Rivers Fund to support this project.

Desired Future Condition 4: <i>Land Ethic</i>				
Maintain and enhance an ethic of respect for the land, sustainable use, and exemplary management.				
Strategies		H	M	L
4.1	Expand opportunities for students to learn about and engage in urban and community forestry through educational programming, service-learning, and internships.		x	
4.2	Support awareness and understanding of the social, economic and environmental benefits provided by urban and community forests and active engagement in their stewardship.			
4.3	Enhance relations with public media partners and efforts in social media.		X	

4.4	Facilitate Arbor Day in Vermont.		X	
4.5	Facilitate urban and community forest and forestry educational programming for educators, homeowners, municipalities, green industry professionals, and volunteers.			
4.6	Facilitate Vermont's Big Tree program.			x
4.7	Train and support urban and community forestry leaders including town Tree Wardens and Tree Boards.	x		
4.8	Train and support volunteer citizen scientists engaged in urban and community forestry.			
4.9	Engage professionals in urban and community forestry including arborists, planners, landscape architects, and foresters.			
4.10	Recognize urban and community forestry champions and model projects.		X	
4.11	Conduct technical assistance to communities to help them understand, evaluate, and/or implement actions to advance sustainable urban and community forestry programs.			

#### **Arbor Day:**

- Arbor Day Conference: Held on May 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Vermont College of Fine Arts. 12 workshops in total, plus a keynote. 155 attendees.
- Growing Works of Art Contest: ***Trees are Terrific in all Shapes and Sizes: share your tree story*** was the theme. 560 entries from 30 schools and home school families. [Winners were highlighted on Across the Fence.](#)
- Greening Schools on Arbor Day: Continued partnership with Horsford Nursery and gave a shade tree to [9 schools, listed here.](#)
- Tree City/Campus/Line USA: Arbor Day Foundation program designations announced for 2018:
  - Tree City USA Communities: Burlington, Essex Junction, Hartford, Middlebury, Montpelier, Rutland, Shelburne, South Burlington
  - Tree Campus USA: University of Vermont, Landmark College, Middlebury College
  - Tree Line USA: Vermont Electric Power Company (VELCO)

#### **Tree Steward Awards**

- Awards were given in the following categories:
  - Hamilton Award (for Tree Wardens): Geoff Beyer, Montpelier

- Leader Award: Lynn Wild, Montpelier
- Unsung Hero Award: Karla Ferrelli, Branch Out Burlington member
- Volunteer Group Award: Fairlee Town Forest Board
- Arbor Day Award (staff pick): Danielle Fitzko, outgoing UCF Program Manager

### **Public Places Awards**

- Partnered with VT Chapter of American Society of Landscape Architects, VT Planning Association, the Vermont Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and VT Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers. Award ceremony was held at the state house on Feb. 13.
  - **Honor Awards:** ArtisTree Community Arts Center, South Pomfret; Middlebury Downtown Park, Middlebury; The Vermont Town Forest Project, various towns statewide
  - **Merit Awards:** Hearse House entrance, Brooks Cemetery, Chester; Newport Waterfront and Downtown Master Plan, Newport; Riverfront Green Space, Lyndon; Route 7 Livability Study, St. Albans Town and St. Albans City; Taylor Park Master Plan, St. Albans; Underwood Park Master Plan, South Burlington

### **Forestry Education Programs**

- Teens Reaching Youth (TRY) - Forests and Trees: 6 teams (20 total youth) participated in this year's training. Each team taught the 6 lesson program to students in 3-5th grades this spring.
- ourVTwoods.org: Awarded a Working Lands Enterprise Board grant to support the greater promotion of the site and to improve the forest products sector on the site, deliverables include a 5-part podcast of Vermont's forest economy and Online VT Forester Continuing Education Credits (CEUs) through an archived webinar library.
- Professional Webinar Series: The series will continue through the summer with upcoming webinar on Worker Comp for forestry professionals
- Backyard Woods: Will run again this fall on the iSpring Learning Management platform.
- Project Learning Tree: Continue to work with partners to revision Project Learning Tree in Vermont.
- Arborist Support: Established an Arborists listserv in our MailChimp account and sent out email with information about EAB and disposal sites to VT arborists. Next ISA Certification exam will be held in July at the Essex Junction FPR office.
- Women Owning Woodlands VT- a new partner initiative of VT UCF, Vermont Coverts, Vermont Land Trust, Vermont Woodlands Association, UVM Extension and Women's Agricultural Network

### **Media/Communications:**

- Social Media: Continue to support our social media accounts. We have now integrated the whole team in contributing and rotate leads every week.

- Newsletters: Bimonthly TREEmail and biweekly VolunTREEmail continued.
- Website: Continue to maintain and improve the site - [www.vtcommunitforestry.org](http://www.vtcommunitforestry.org).
- Across the Fence: Arbor Day episode aired with focus on the Growing Works of Arts Contest. Upcoming episode on Active Forest Management in Town Forests and ourVTwoods.org

## **Volunteer Support**

### **Students and Educators:**

- Led a day of UVM's Forestry Camp, a requirement for all forestry majors. Students were introduced to concepts of urban forestry and toured both City Hall Park in downtown Burlington, as well as the Burlington Community Tree Nursery.

### **Publications:**

- Vermont Tree Selection Tool: The revised document was finalized, uploaded to our online tree selection tool, and 500 copies were printed.
- Rural Roadside Ash Inventory Guide: Developed YouTube videos to support the guide.
- EAB Management Options: Finalized and added to resources on our website
- Ash Tree Awareness: Created a customizable ash tree tag and press release for communities to host their own events.
- Ash ID poster for libraries: Created poster focused on ash ID and highlighting signs of EAB that was sent to all libraries in the state.

## **Financial Assistance to Communities:**

2019 Grants: EAB Planning Grants awarded to 20 municipalities/organizations; \$2,000 max. Projects are in process.

Desired Future Condition 5: <i>Legal, Institutional, and Economic Framework</i>				
Vermont has a legal, institutional, and economic framework in place for forest conservation and sustainability.				
Strategies		H	M	L
5.1	Expand funding opportunities to support local, state, and regional efforts for urban and community forest stewardship, health, and sustainability.		x	
5.2	Educate state leadership of programming efforts, opportunities, and challenges.	x		



5.3	Educate communities and citizens about urban and community forest policies, rules, and laws including Vermont's Tree Warden statutes.		x	
5.4	Advocate for policies, programs, and initiatives that assist in urban and community forest stewardship, health, and sustainability.		x	
5.5	Establish an appropriate level of infrastructure and staffing to meet changing needs.		x	
5.6	Foster strategic partnerships to deliver innovative urban and community forestry programming.	x		

### **Financial and Programming Partnerships**

UVM Extension: 2019 grant agreement is in progress. This was delayed due to delay in Federal funding.

#### US Forest Service:

- Prepared annual program narrative for federal funding.
- Received USFS LSR grants focused on Town Forests, Communications within FPR, and forests for water quality.
- Serving as co-chair of urban forestry assessment committee and serving as a liaison for technology transfer.
- Assisted in the development and pilot course of an online iTree Academy, intended for municipal staff and professionals.

Emergency Management: Submitted and still waiting to hear about a grant to FEMA to support communities in managing risk from EAB.

Vermont League of Cities and Towns: Have discussed potential funding opportunity to hold trainings on EAB/ash removal safety that may align with VLCT's Risk Management program.

Vermont Nursery & Landscape Association: Began 2-year term of serving on the board of VNLA.

### **Program Staffing:**

- Maintaining weekly check-ins and quarterly face-to-face planning meetings.
- Fill Program manager position (Elise started 5/26) and moving forward with filling Technical Assistance Coordinator position at FPR
- Elise attended Northeast-Midwest State Forester's Alliance – Urban Forestry Committee (aka all the program coordinators) meeting in Dover, DE
- Gwen attended and presented at the Urban Forestry Educators Conference in Chicago, IL
- Kate attended Aldo Leopold Land Ethic Summit in Craftsbury
- Ginger attended Black Ash Workshop in Chittenden/Grand Isle counties

**Council:** Supporting Council/Program efforts.