

Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program

Program Update

April 2020 – June 2020

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: The [Toolkit](#) is live.
- Planning for Town Forest Educational Events: In-person events changed to online webinar series.
 - o **June 2**: Toolkit Tour & Town Forest Recreation Initiative Community Participant Case Study
 - o **June 9**: Trails & Wildlife
 - o **June 16**: Trails and Downtowns
 - o **June 23**: Trail Building and Maintenance
 - o **June 30**: Mountain Biking 101
 - o Bench Building Workshop. This event is on hold because we would be using Riverbend Tech Center's shop to assemble benches. If Riverbend opens this fall we will reschedule.
 - o Community Governance Training (Sept)- postponed

Town Forests Leadership Training

- FPR, UVM Extension, 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 programming that trains community leaders on stewardship, and professionals on working with communities.
- Forester Facilitation Training: to be delivered online this fall as part of the new grant to build capacity and community engagement of forestry professionals
- Summer intern (hosted by VLT) will be working on compiling demonstration site case studies.

Municipal Technical Assistance

- Ash Inventory: We continue to support towns statewide in ash inventory efforts. Between March 2020 and June 2020, we shifted ash inventory training to case-by-case support and one on-line training with the Richmond Conservation Commission and volunteers. We trained volunteers on use of the Collector app via Zoom. We have provided technical assistance over email and phone to Marshfield, Shelburne, Middlesex, and Grafton.
- EAB Planning: We continue to support towns statewide in planning for EAB. Between March 2020 and June 2020, we provided online presentations on Municipal EAB and Ash Tree Management to the town of Richmond and to the Black River Action Team, which consisted mostly of volunteers from Springfield.

Forest Planning

- Forest Integrity Project: This USFS funded project continues to move forward as per the one-year extension to August 2021. 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. Partners completed the survey to municipalities that assessed perceptions of and support for the wood products industry. Partners have not met between March 2020 and June 2020. Ideas still under exploration include:
 - Campaign or resource to support urban forest planning in town planning processes
 - More direct technical assistance to municipalities (through RPCs) to support integration of forest integrity language/Act 171 language in municipal plans

Desired Future Condition 2: *Forest Health and Productivity*

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: 1 produced.
- Continued to support 'Report It' submissions. There has been an incredible increase in reports concerned about Asian Giant Hornet. We created [a new page on VTinvasives](#) in hopes to reduce the number of reports. Our partners at the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets are working on sending out a press release as well.
- Managing listserv to provide updates to EAB Infested Area Map and state news.

EAB Response & Planning

- Vermont Agency of Transportation has contracted with Bear Creek Environmental to develop an EAB management plan/strategy; UCF continues to be included in the planning process and advises Bear Creek and VTrans through project bi-monthly meetings.
- Vermont utility companies continue to meet quarterly on EAB; the last quarterly meeting in March 2020 focused on COVID-19 impacts to fieldwork, utility company revenue, and budgetary impacts. GMP continues to remove ash trees within the central Vermont infested area. The utilities continue to share resources and information on EAB management in Vermont and nationwide.
- EAB brief for House Ag & Forestry Committee was developed by FPR staff to bring up the issue as a topic for discussion within the committee.
- UCF is working on a suite of case studies about how municipalities have and are managing for EAB, here in Vermont and beyond.

EAB Outreach Events

All in-person EAB Outreach events for the past quarter were cancelled due to COVID.

EAB Trailhead Project

Almost **400 Trailhead Signs** have been distributed to Vermont Forests, Parks and Recreation; the Green Mountain Club; the Green Mountain National Forest; and the Vermont Mountain Biking Association to post on their trails. The goal of this project is to educate hikers and other recreationists on how to identify ash trees and the signs and symptoms of EAB and to report suspect trees to VTinvasives. We have more laminated signs available - contact ginger.nickerson@uvm.edu to get one for your town's trailhead!

EAB Awareness Week

- Seven towns will be doing Ash Tree Tagging events for EAB Awareness Week: Monkton, Hartland, Windham, Northfield, Ludlow, Middlebury, and Grand Isle. Due to COVID, the winners of the "EAB Awareness Community Kit" decided to postpone their events until the week of September 9th - 12th (Grand Isle will hold theirs in August). Each of these seven towns will be profiled on social media on a different day of the week.
- County Foresters have been challenged to hold an ash or EAB awareness walk in every county during the month of September. Stay posted for a walk near you!

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 (extended to 9/30/2020):

Urban Component

- Green Street Vermont Guide: Digital downloads are available on [VT UCF's website](#) alongside new video tutorials on the first 10 (of 11) sections of the guide. Watershed Consultants has one more outreach presentation to continue this summer.
- Technical Assistance: Complete.

Rural Component

- Assessments and Plans: The town of Panton received its report on roadside vegetation initiatives and climate resilience in its right-of-ways upon completion of the online Climate Adaptation and Resilience Planning course. A graphic designer is now engaged to layout text and images for the upcoming outreach booklet due out in July.
 - Presentations: We summarized the upcoming Resilient Right-of-Ways guidance booklet during an Arbor Day presentation in May 2020.
 - Technical Assistance: East Montpelier is receiving ongoing technical assistance as they implement a pilot ash removal project in conjunction with the Resilient Roads committee formed as a result of this grant-funded project.
- Lake Champlain Forest Watershed Management Partnership: Alison Adams was hired in March 2020 as Watershed Forestry Coordinator. The position will be based out of UVM's SEA Grant, funded in part by American Forests, PUR Project and UVM Extension. We have 2 years of funding for the position.

Energy Saving Trees/Vermont Community Canopy

- 2020: We have selected three new communities to work with this year; Brattleboro, Bradford, and Hardwick will each receive 100 free trees for residents; the free tree pick-up day schedule for June has been postponed until August.
- RGGI: Still waiting to hear any news on the proposal we submitted to the Public Service Board to request funds from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative to support the program in the future.

Desired Future Condition 4: *Land Ethic*

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: 5th annual Arbor Day Conference was postponed.
Turned into a series of 5 webinars: Town Forest Management, Forest Pests & Diseases, Resurgence of Red Spruce, Edible Landscapes, Resilient Right-of-Ways. Between 40-80 attendees at each webinar- many new people to the UCF Program.
- Growing Works of Art Contest: This year's theme was *Trees are Superheroes- Share your Tree Story!* [2020 Contest Winners here](#). Across the Fence was not able to be filmed, so we asked students to send in clips of them reading their stories and [we made our own video](#). There were 210 entries from 15 schools and 5 homeschool families.

- o Tree City/Tree Campus/Tree Line USA: 2019 Designees below. We promoted on social media and e-newsletter.
- o Tree City USA:
 - o City of Burlington, *26th year*
 - o Village of Essex Junction, *5th year*
 - o Town of Hartford, *17th year*
 - o City of Montpelier, *18th year*
 - o Town of Middlebury, *2nd year*
 - o City of Rutland, *28th year*
 - o Town of Shelburne, *3rd year*
 - o City of South Burlington, *12th year*
 - o City of Winooski, *1st year*
- o Tree Campus USA:
 - o Landmark College, *4th year*
 - o Middlebury College: *10th year*
 - o University of Vermont: *7th year*
- o Tree Line USA: VELCO, 13th year
- o Tree Steward Awards: Promoted on social media, e-newsletter, and press release. Tree steward award recipients will receive **new UCF t-shirts** as recognition.
 - o Hamilton Award: Dan Adams, Brattleboro & Russ Barrett, Northfield
 - o Leader Award: Tim Parsons, Middlebury College
 - o Unsung Hero Award: Tom Gray, Bradford
 - o Volunteer Group Award: Rutland Blooms
 - o Arbor Day Award: Resilient Roads Committee of East Montpelier
- o Greening Schools on Arbor Day: Schools shut down before we could make this program happen, but we had one request still come in and Horsford's Nursery & Gardens donated 1 tree.

Tree Wardens

Tree Warden Statute Amendments: The amendments were voted out of committee and passed in the House in late May. We are waiting to see if they will be picked up by the senate.

Vermont Big Tree Program

We are updating the VT Big Trees Program. Site visits are on hold for now, but we hope to utilize the summer to re-measure trees that haven't been visited in 10+ years.

Forest Pest First Detectors

Purple Prism Traps

We met with FPR's Forest Protection and County Forester leads, VAAFM, and the Vermont Land Trust staff to develop a coordinated strategy and together identify high priority locations for the traps. Because of COVID we did not hold our usual in-person trainings on how to hang and monitor the traps, rather, we worked with VAAFM to create [this video](#) on putting together the traps. Forest protection helped us distribute **120 traps to 34 FPDF volunteers**. VLT is also helping with hanging traps and communicating with us about their trap tree efforts.

On-Line FPDF Course

We could not hold the regular field-based FPDF training that had been planned for the NEK in April. The next "introductory" FPDF usually happens in the fall, so we have decided to err on the safe side and create an on-line, self-paced introduction to Forest Pest First Detectors, where volunteers can learn about the ecology and monitoring for a number of different invasive insects. We are in the process of developing this now.

Backyard Woods Course

Typically this program runs in the fall, but we offered a spring course- free of charge. We have 100 participants and 50+ people on the waitlist. There were no in-person walks, but 4 live webinar sessions with experts. Excellent feedback and engaged landowners!

Forestry Education Programs

- **Teens Reaching Youth (TRY) - Forests and Trees:** Only 1 of the 4 teen teaching groups were able to complete their 6 lesson series before school was closed. We will be working on getting the teaching kits returned and considering alternative ways to deliver this program for next year.
- **ourVTwoods.org:** We partnered with VT Coverts and UVM's Center for Research on Vermont on a 5 part podcast, "Heartwood". A call for voice memos went out in May. Stay tuned for the first episode.
- **Professional Webinar Series:** We worked with Tamarack Media to design and build an online archived webinar library to support licensed foresters with on-demand VT Forester Continuing Education Credits (CEUs). [It is live and can be viewed here.](#)
- **Women Owning Woodlands VT-** Continue to support this partner initiative of VT UCF, Vermont Coverts, Vermont Land Trust, Vermont Woodlands Association, UVM Extension and Women's Agricultural Network. In-person June summit has been postponed. Spring survey of woman landowners garnered over 800 responses.

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 continue.

- Website: Continue to maintain and improve the site - www.vtcommunitforestry.org.

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: 2020/2021 grant agreement is in process.

US Forest Service: We submitted a US Forest Service Urban Forest Health & Resilience grant proposal in February and were funded for \$65,000. This will support another round of emerald ash borer management grants for planting/removing ash trees.

Financial Assistance to Communities

- o 2019 Grants: Supported 20 communities currently working on their EAB Planning Grant projects. Most grants closed out in; 5 have been extended. Gwen is working on ways to better highlight grant recipients' work and stories.
- o 2020 Grants: Proposals for our Caring for Canopy grants program and special Emerald Ash Borer Management grants program were due in mid-January. We received requests for over \$51,000 in the Caring for Canopy grants program (with \$25,000 to allocate) and \$60,000 in the EAB Management program (with \$45,000), making it the most competitive grant round we've had in recent years. The grants review committee selected

11 proposals to fund in the Caring for Canopy program and 3 proposals to fund in the EAB Management program. Grant agreement development is in process; some extensions will be needed. [See grant awardees here.](#)

Program Staffing

- Maintaining weekly check-ins online.
- Elise Schadler welcomed Margo Louise Fuller on Friday, April 3rd. She is currently on maternity leave and will be back one day/week in July, and will continue to work part-time through August.
- Joanne and Gwen participated in a regional meeting of northeast UCF Programs, as well as a regional Northeast-Midwest State Foresters Alliance meeting.