

Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program

Program Update

June 2019 – September 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: Continue to build out toolkit on vtcommunityforestry.org and revise toolkit components based on partner feedback. Soft launch to partners and communities planned for October 1. Formal launch in November as part of ME, NH, and VT 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:
 - Community Forestry Summit on November 21st, working with regional partners in NH and ME
 - Skill Builder Hands-on 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
 - Webinar Series- on various components of the toolkit

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 train community leaders on stewardship, and professionals on working with communities.

Municipal Technical Assistance

- The majority of our technical assistance has continued to be focused on EAB planning and management. We are supporting upwards of 20 towns to some degree in their roadside ash tree inventory efforts. Between June and September, our staff either trained volunteers to conduct, or participated in actual data collection for the towns of: Guildford, Putney, Bristol, Ferrisburgh, Middlebury, Starksboro, Ripton, Monkton, Plainfield, Shelburne, Northfield, Charlotte, Grand Isle, and North Hero.

Forest Planning

- The USFS funded Forest Integrity project continues this year with partners Jim Duncan and Jen Pontius (FEMC), Clare Rock and Bonnie Waninger (CVRPC), Jamey Fidel (VNRC), Jens Hilke (VT F&W), Keith Thompson and Danielle Fitzko (VT FPR), and Joanne Garton and Elise Schadler (VT UCF). A subcommittee of this group met on Aug. 28th with Sam Lincoln (VT FPR) to discuss how Act 171 and our Forest Integrity planning can work in concert with the forest products industry to support working landscapes in Vermont.

Desired Future Condition 2: <i>Forest Health and Productivity</i> 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
 - 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. Eleven participants signed up to become Forest Pest First Detectors, the other participants plan on taking one or more of the following actions: join a local EAB task force, participate in an ash inventory, educate others on EAB (through social media, presentations, community tree walks) or work on a town management plan. Very positive evaluations. We are planning a series of shorter "advanced" workshops for Forest Pest First Detectors for the fall and winter. The first one will be training people who want to increase our capacity by assisting with site visits of suspicious trees.
- EAB Outreach Events:
 - We've focused on providing outreach to municipalities on planning for and managing EAB. The following events occurred.
 - EAB Public Meeting, Bristol
 - EAB Public Meeting, Ferrisburgh
 - EAB and the Rural Roadside for VT Local Roads, Arlington and Vershire
 - EAB and Public Spaces, Vermont Recreation & Parks Association annual meeting
 - EAB for Master Gardeners, UVM and Berlin Extension Office
 - EAB for Shelburne Farms Volunteer Tour Guides
 - EAB Management Along Rural Roadsides for VT Road Crews - training in collaboration with VTC and Northeast Woodland Training (Game of Logging)
 - EAB public meeting in Addison Co (Regional Planning Commission transportation committee)
 - EAB public meeting in Brookfield
 - EAB public meeting in Milton - broadcast on Lake Champlain Access TV
 - Tabling at Sustainability Academy Fair, VINS Incredible Insect Festival, Derby Days, Addison County Field Days, Rutland State Fair
- EAB Response
 - Purple Prism Traps (partnership with VAAFM and FPR): 30 people trained; 78 traps installed and monitored in 29 towns all around state; 2 EAB caught in a trap in Alburg resulted in expansion of the Infested Area
 - Partners met in July to discuss a more coordinated approach to site visits of potential EAB infestations; UCF taking the lead on developing a form email for inquiries and for developing an app for partners to use to track data at and location of site visits.

- Museums: We created four visually engaging movable interpretive signs for use on trails at museums and nature centers. The signs cover: how to identify ash trees, signs and symptoms of emerald ash borer, and where to report suspicious trees, and are accompanied by a box holding handout sheets with additional detailed information (see attached photos). The signs are moveable and were up at the Vermont Institute of Natural Science, and the Montshire Museum of Science in July and August (combined visitorship of 42,267 during that time), and will be at the North Branch Nature Center and the Birds of Vermont Museum in September. The signs were such a hit that we had additional signs made that will be available for communities to use in their town forests and parks.

EAB Planning

- Participate in FPR's EAB team biweekly calls to identify state planning for the pest.
- Presented on EAB's impact on our State Parks for the FPR Commissioner at his annual district field trip in Grand Isle County.
- Have met with VTrans to discuss the need for an EAB plan for state roads and highways.
- Participating in regular meetings with utility companies to discuss EAB planning and preparedness.
- Working with East Montpelier, Calais, and Plainfield on EAB management plans based on inventory data.

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:**
 - 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. Becky Tharp from Watershed Consultants has been contracted to do at least four presentations at conferences within the coming year to get the guide into the hands of the right audiences in Vermont.
 - Technical Assistance: Work is finished in Milton, Shelburne, Williston, Rutland, West Rutland, and Burlington. Work continues in Colchester, Winooski, Essex Junction, and Montpelier and will wrap up by the end of September.
 - **Rural Component:**
 - Assessments and Plans: Completed field work and action 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. 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 is completing ash inventory work with students from the Maple Hill school and will present results to the select board this winter. Panton is addressing water quality issues along roads as related to roadside trees, vegetation, storm runoff and farming in or near the right-of-way.
 - Outreach: Based on the assessments completed, we are building a list of sceneries and correlated management practices and processes to include in new rural roadside vegetation management guide to be released by June 2020.
- Lake Champlain Forest Watershed Management Partnership: Hiring is underway for the new Watershed Forestry Program Coordinator, a position based out of UVM's SEA Grant, funded in part by American Forests, PUR Project and UVM Extension.

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: Planning for 2020 Conference is under way!
- Growing Works of Art Contest: 2020 Contest announcement drafted and will be sent out to all middle and elementary schools in the end of September. Contest entries are due March 13, 2020. This year's theme is *Trees are Superheroes- Share your Tree Story!*
- New Recognition Programs: Tree Campus k-12 and Tree Campus Healthcare have been introduced by the Arbor Day Foundation; the program is helping to promote.
- Tree Warden Summit: First time summit is planned for October 5, 2019. [You can see the agenda here.](#)

Energy Saving Trees:

- 2019: We ran the program in St. Albans City, Barre City, and Rutland City this year, offering 150 free trees in each community (450 total) to private homeowners. On June 1st, we ran tree pick-up events in all three cities.
- 2020: We would like to continue to run the Energy Saving Trees Program and are exploring sustainable funding sources. We are exploring the option of allocating some of our annual grant funds to support the program temporarily.
- RGGI: Will be submitting a proposal to the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative to support EST.

Vermont Big Tree Program:

- We are updating the archaic Vermont list of Big Trees; the plan includes remeasuring trees, updating our database, and sharing location details of public trees on our website.

Forestry Education Programs

- Teens Reaching Youth (TRY) - Forests and Trees: Training date is set for December 5. We will have between 4-7 teams of teens this year. This may be the last year of this program. Lauren Traister (UVM EXT) coordinates this program and she is looking for more funding.
- 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: Continues through the fall with presentations schedule on Invasives Earthworms and White Ash Resistance to EAB.
- Backyard Woods: Currently promoting the fall 2019 program.
- Project Learning Tree: Continue to work with partners to revision Project Learning Tree in Vermont.
- Arborist Support: Held ISA Certified Arborist Exam in Essex. We are currently compiling a contact list of ISA Certified Arborists who hold their Category 3a Pesticide Applicator License to post on our website to guide people in who to reach out to if interested in having ash treated.
- 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.
- Across the Fence: Upcoming episode on Active Forest Management in Town Forests and ourVTwoods.org

Volunteer Support

Students and Educators:

- Proposed a project to students in NR206: Environmental Problem Solving at UVM; project focus would be developing a database of how communities in other states are and have approached management of ash and EAB. Unsure whether any students will select the project.

Financial Assistance to Communities:

2019 Grants: As needed, supporting 20 communities currently working on their EAB Planning Grant projects.

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: 2019/2020 grant agreement is in progress.

US Forest Service:

- Serving as co-chair of urban forestry assessment committee and serving as a liaison for technology transfer.
- Assisted in the evaluation of pilot course of online iTree Academy, intended for municipal staff and professionals.
- Working on a Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) grant proposal focused on rural roadside forest management and town capacity.

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. Upcoming meeting to discuss Tree Warden Statutes.

Vermont Nursery & Landscape Association: Serving on the board of VNLA; participated in summer meeting

Program Staffing:

- Maintaining weekly check-ins and quarterly face-to-face planning meetings.
- Moving forward with filling Technical Assistance Coordinator position at FPR

Council: Supporting Council/Program efforts.