

## Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program

### Program Update

June 2020 – September 2020

| Desired Future Condition 1: <i>Biological Diversity</i><br>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 were changed to online webinar series and were very successful!
  - **June 2**: Toolkit Tour & Town Forest Recreation Initiative Community Participant Case Study - **59 participants**
  - **June 9**: Trails & Wildlife - **57 participants**
  - **June 16**: Trails and Downtowns - **80 participants**
  - **June 23**: Trail Building and Maintenance - **52 participants**
  - **June 30**: Mountain Biking 101 - **31 participants**
  - Bench Building Workshop. This event is on hold until 2021
  - Community Governance Training - planning postponed until fall

#### Town Forests Leadership Training

- FPR, UVM Extension, and VLT have begun work on a new LSR grant titled 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 project to build capacity and community engagement of forestry professionals - in progress. Curriculum is currently in development.
  - Summer intern (hosted by VLT) has been working on compiling demonstration site case studies and best practices.

### **Municipal Technical Assistance**

- Ash Inventory: We continue to support towns statewide in ash inventory efforts. Between June 2020 and September 2020, we continued to support ash inventory training to case-by-case support. We have provided technical assistance over email and phone to over a dozen towns, provided ash inventory application training to 17 people in four towns and organizations, and assisted the Town of Shelburne with ash inventory data collection.
- EAB Planning: We continue to support towns statewide in planning for EAB. Between June 2020 and September 2020, we provided an online presentation on Municipal EAB and Ash Tree Management to the towns of Richmond and Springfield, to the Chittenden and Rutland Regional Planning commissions, to municipal road crew members and town administrators through VT Local Roads.
- Coffee Chat: Joanne was the guest of honor during a VT Covert's Friday coffee chat focused on urban forestry in VT in August.

### **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. Project updates during this quarter include:
  - CVRPC's contract has been amended and extended to include more direct technical assistance to municipalities statewide to support integration of forest integrity language/Act 171 language in municipal plans.
  - VNRC's contract will be extended until May 2020 to accommodate one final deliverable - the completion of the updated Community Strategies for VT's Forests and Wildlife guide.
  - UVM's contract expires in September; we are eager to see the final deliverables.
  - UCF will be utilizing some of the funding from this project to support urban forestry municipal planning documents; we are waiting to see if the Tree Warden Statute amendments are picked up by the Senate this fall before moving forward.

**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.
- Managing listserv to provide updates to EAB Infested Area Map and state news.

**EAB Response & Planning**

- Vermont Agency of Transportation contracted with Bear Creek Environmental to develop an EAB management plan/strategy; UCF continues to be included in the implementation process of the Bear Creek management plan and will work with VTrans as it refines the plan.
- 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.
- UCF will soon be releasing a suite of 6 case studies about how municipalities have and are managing for EAB here in Vermont and beyond.

- UCF worked with FPR to produce a 1-pager as a reminder of Slow-the-Spread recommendations (forest products industry as intended audience)

### **EAB Outreach**

All in-person EAB Outreach events for the past quarter were cancelled due to COVID. We participated in two webinars and made a short video.

### **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. An additional 88 signs have been distributed to 24 towns that have requested them for their trail systems. 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](mailto:ginger.nickerson@uvm.edu) to get one for your town's trailhead!

### **Municipal EAB Management Case Studies**

We developed six EAB Municipal Management Case Studies to help municipalities determine the best approach to ash management for their unique situations. The case studies were drawn from interviews with six municipalities in the Midwest, New England and Vermont that vary in terms of population, percentage of public trees that are ash, and resources. Approaches are categorized as Preemptive – removing healthy ash prior to arrival of EAB; Selective – using various strategies to spread removals out over time, including using insecticide treatments to delay death of trees; and Reactive – removal of trees once pest has arrived. Each case study focuses on the economic costs and lessons learned by the municipality.

### **Checklist and Resources for Managing EAB in Town Forests**

While municipalities will need to treat or remove potentially hazardous ash trees in their public rights-of-ways, we are encouraging communities with municipal forestlands, such as Town Forests to preserve ash as much as possible (once they have removed any hazard trees). To this end, we partnered with County Foresters and Vermont Land Trust foresters to create a planning guide to help municipalities make good silviculture decisions for Town Forests in the context of EAB. The step-by-step planning checklist is designed to be flexible and can be adapted to meet the needs and capacities of different communities. We plan on expanding and adapting this resource to include other invasive forest pests in the future. The final planning checklist and resource list will live on the UCF website and can be accessed through the Town Forest and the Community Preparedness webpages.

### **EAB Awareness Week**

- Nine towns will be doing Ash Tree Tagging and other events for EAB Awareness Week: Monkton, Hartland, Windham, Northfield, Ludlow, Middlebury, Morrisville, Jericho, 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. Each of these nine towns will be profiled on social media on a different day of the week.
- We are partnering with the Vermont Land Trust to encourage people to submit a story, poem, drawing, photograph, or memory of an ash tree that is meaningful to them at: Vermont Land Trust <https://vlt.org/ash>, and will be highlighting one of these each day of the week.
- We will be promoting a different webinar each day of the week, highlighting different aspects of emerald ash borer and ash management.
- Each day of the week we will also be promoting one of the [Top Ten Recommendations for Managing Ash](#)

| 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.
- Technical Assistance: Complete.
- Presentations: Watershed Consulting Associates held two final online trainings on the Green Streets Guides in August (for a total of 5).

#### Rural Component

- Assessments and Plans: “Resilient Right-of-Ways: A Guide to Community Stewardship of Vermont Backroads” is in the final weeks of edits before going to print in September 2020. The guide covers everything from drafting community tree plans to addressing invasive plants through adaptive roadside mowing.
- 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. Plainfield is continuing their roadside ash inventory with help from UVM’s Unmanned Aircraft System program (drone flights).

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: Brattleboro and Bradford have been selected as our partner communities this year; each community will receive 150 free trees for residents; the free tree pick-up day is scheduled for September 19.
- 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. We will resubmit this fall.

FPR Climate Forester: Ali Kosiba was hired as FPR’s Climate Forester this spring; UCF has been included on her Climate Advisory Team and plans to meet with Ali soon to discuss future collaborations.

| 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**

- Growing Works of Art Contest: Working on 2021 contest details. Theme: Healthy Trees, Healthy Lives.

### **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 this fall; Commissioner Snyder has reached out to members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Energy. UCF staff have asked key stakeholders in committee members' districts to reach out as well.

### **Vermont Big Tree Program**

We are updating the VT Big Trees Program, but our work with ANR's IT gurus is on hold (lower priority than some major projects). We have received many, many nominations over the past couple of months (more people spending time in the woods?), so we are hoping to move on this as soon as possible.

### **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 44 FPFd volunteers, in 50 Towns in 12 counties**. VLT is also helping with hanging traps and communicating with us about their trap tree efforts.

#### On-Line FPFd Course

We could not hold the regular field-based FPFd training that had been planned for the NEK in April. The next “introductory” FPFd 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

We hosted a spring course, free of charge with 100 participants. We hope to offer a fall course as well.

#### Greening Schools Program

Horsford Nursery has offered 10 free trees to schools since the program had been cancelled this spring.

#### Forestry Education Programs

- Teens Reaching Youth (TRY) - Forests and Trees: The program will not run this school year.
- ourVTwoods.org: We partnered with VT Coverts and UVM's Center for Research on Vermont on a 5 part podcast, “Heartwood”. 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.
  - Spring survey of woman landowners garnered over 800 responses.
  - We are submitting a USFS LSR grant proposal focused on enhancing this network and the on-the-ground impacts it can have.
  - 9/24 webinar for practitioners to engage with the WOW network.

#### Media/Communications:

- Social Media: Continue to support our social media accounts. We have 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](http://www.vtcommunitforestry.org).



### Desired Future Condition 5: Legal, Institutional, and Economic Framework

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 has been executed.

US Forest Service: We will be submitting a Landscape Scale Restoration Grant proposal to support the Women Owning Woodlands Network through demonstration projects, trainings, mentorship, and enhancing communications.

Urban Forest Economic Study: VT is one of 11 state partners engaged in an economic impact study of urban forestry in the northeast region. A survey was sent to a random selection of key stakeholders in VT in August.

### Financial Assistance to Communities

- 2019 EAB Planning Grants: Most grants closed out in; 2 are still in process, after having been extended. Gwen is working on ways to better highlight grant recipients' work and stories.
- 2020 Grants:
  - Caring for Canopy grants program and special Emerald Ash Borer Management grants are in process; [See grant awardees here.](#)

- EAB Management grant projects partners (East Montpelier, Northfield, Essex/Essex Junction) will be part of a suite of case studies about ash removal along rural roads; project participants have checked in regularly with UCF staff. UCF staff have participated in regular check-ins with the USFS and other participating states (Ohio and Indiana).
- 2021 Grants: Ash Tree Management Grants are open and accepting proposals until October 30th; we have \$50,000 to allocate for ash tree removals (and replacement plantings), innovative ash wood utilization, and ash management on high-use municipal lands such as high-use town forest trails. The funding is coming from a special pot of USFS Forest Health & Resilience funding, for which UCF applied.

#### **Program Staffing**

- Maintaining weekly check-ins online.
- Elise has slowly transitioned back after a long maternity leave; both kids will be back in daycare in September (fingers crossed) and she'll be back to work full-time.
- Joanne has been shadowing Montpelier's arborist, Adam McCullough, to learn the ropes of arboriculture and support public tree management in our capital city. She hopes to take the International Society of Arboriculturists certification exam this fall.
- All UCF staff are working from home for the foreseeable future; we will see each other in person for the first time since March at our September quarterly meeting (outdoors!).