

## Region 2 Rocky Mountain Region

### Program Overview

The Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) program focuses its efforts on helping communities develop and sustain their own forest resource management programs through technical and financial assistance delivered by a partnership of Federal and State forestry with many local partners, communities, and organizations.

- Fifty-three percent or 1,000 of the communities in the five-State region have a level of program development from project level to the fully sustained project. This number represents an increase of communities over last year. In 2003, the region anticipates that a 5-percent increase will bring the number of communities the program works with to nearly 1,100.
- Volunteerism and education are integral parts of the programs.
- Of major significance is the local leverage of \$28.8 million, or nearly 15 times the Federal investment. States, local communities, businesses, and citizens made these investments.

### Goals

- Establish and enhance relationships with local, State, and other Federal agencies and entities in support of developing capacity at the community level.
- Support the development of cultural values that recognize the importance of natural resources in populated places.
- Increase the capacity of State forestry agencies, local governments, and communities with the private sector to create and implement local programs that will sustain and improve urban and community natural resources.

**Encourage people to become actively involved in managing and protecting their urban and community forest and natural resources, especially in the areas of natural disaster prevention and response.**

### Issues

- Rapid and unplanned urbanization is creating significant natural resource degradation, compounding local social and economic issues. Environmental justice issues arise in urban areas as a result of changing demographics and the cities' inability to respond to restoration needs.
- Local communities are not able to care for and maintain their forest resources because of increasing demand for services and the declining ability to meet demands.
- Our urban forests are aging, the health of natural resources is declining, and pollution is increasing--making inner city urban areas less desirable places in which to live, work, and play.

- Community risk to natural disaster has been identified as a high-priority issue; however, risk reduction at the community level remains a challenge to smaller communities and those with limited resources.

### Program Highlights

In Oglala, SD, a tornado ripped through the small town. Urban forestry has responded by meeting with the residents and hearing the message that people want trees. A small grant has helped to reestablish a community forest. On September 26, 2000, community volunteers planted 102 landscape trees, and in May and June of 2001, they planted another 141 trees. This effort brings together Federal, State, and local governments with Sioux tribal members in an effort to revitalize community and incorporate native culture.

Grant programs remain strong throughout Nebraska, the home of Arbor Day. In South Omaha, members of St. Joseph's church worked with local community volunteers to plant trees in a blighted neighborhood. The grant helped to bring together a troubled community in a positive fashion. Nebraska Forest Service also worked with other State agencies, such as the health department, on sustaining neighborhood efforts.

The city of Casper, WY, continued with a greatly enhanced approach to managing their urban forest. During the year, they planted 1,459 trees and pruned more than 100 mature trees. A change of local ordinances authorized the community to manage its boulevard trees, and \$100,000 was allocated from the city budget to continue with the work. The State forester also assisted technically with an inventory of the urban forest and updated the inventory with the city's Geographic Information System (GIS).

Colorado Cares Day had its first community forestry program this year at the Capital Park in Denver. The program presented results from an urban ecosystem assessment that demonstrate the economic and ecologic value of trees. This effort is being followed by an urban carbon credit and forest health project.

In Parsons, Tonganoxie, and Hoisington, KS, a coordinated effort has assisted the communities to remove hazardous trees and maintain other damaged ones, to replant tornado-devastated areas, and establish a social framework for providing long-term management of the community forests. After a tornado, hazardous trees are identified and removed; damaged trees are cared for; and new trees are planted.

# Colorado

## Program Overview

There are 396 cities and towns in Colorado. The U&CF coordinator, in conjunction with district foresters, provides technical and educational support to more than 330 communities, most of which are organized under a volunteer tree board/program. The Tree City USA Certification and Recognition Program is one measure of the success of local volunteer efforts.

## Program Accomplishments

In fiscal year (FY) 2002 the U&CF division underwent a major change. In February, the division conducted interviews for the division supervisor position and selected Ralph Campbell. In October, U&CF added two assistant staff positions. Keith Wood, who will be in the Broomfield office, will serve the Denver metro area and assist with the Eastern Slope districts. Vince Urbina, whose office will be in Grand Junction, will assist districts and communities on the Western Slope.

Two people from Colorado won National Arbor Day Foundation Awards in 2002. Phil Hoefer received the Frederick Law Olmsted Award and Gertie Grant with Denver Digs Trees received a Project Award.

The Colorado State Forest Service, the Colorado Tree Coalition, the International Society of Arboriculture—Rocky Mountain Chapter, and the City and County of Denver teamed up to sponsor Tree Spree. Tree Spree, an event open to the public, includes educational displays, a tree-climbing championship, and a bike ride. The bike ride raises funds that are split between the International Society of Arboriculture and the CTC for research and tree-planting projects.

The U&CF held many other educational workshops around the State, covering topics that currently affect communities and the State as a whole. The major topics include wildland urban interface issues, hazard trees, droughts, and general tree care.

A resident from the town of Lamar won the 2002 statewide National Arbor Day Poster Contest, a program that is expanding throughout the State. In FY 2002, the number of submitted posters tripled from that of FY 2001.

In FY 2002, 90 communities in the State of Colorado were designated as Tree City USA communities. Many of these smaller communities do not have a city forestry department but rely upon volunteer tree boards to provide information and expertise to city leaders. The U&CF coordinator, the district staff, and the CTC work together to ensure these people are well informed

through various tree care workshops, onsite training, and tree-related seminars.

The Colorado State Forest Service helped the CTC produce the 2003 Notable Trees of Colorado calendar, which depicts 12 notable trees from around the State and includes tidbits on the planting, care, and management of the urban forest.

## The U&CF Council

Colorado's State Council, the Colorado Tree Coalition (CTC), is growing in number and visibility throughout the State. The coalition provides financial and technical assistance to many communities throughout the State. In FY 2002, 22 communities received grants totaling \$40,127. This funding resulted in adding 3,425 trees to the urban forest. Through the partnership with the USDA Forest Service, along with other nonprofit groups and corporations, the CTC has been able to award 272 communities with grants totaling \$410,076 in the past 11 years. This effort resulted in planting 54,931 trees and completing many educational brochures and publications.

## Volunteer Program

Strong partnerships are being formed with tree boards and communities and also with nonprofit groups. The State coordinator has helped link together many groups such as the Colorado Tree Coalition, the International Society of Arboriculture, Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, and volunteer tree boards to preserve, renew, and enhance community forests throughout the State. Each year volunteers contribute more than 10,000 days of service.

## Statistical Highlights

Number of participating communities: 298  
Number of communities receiving technical assistance: 330  
Number of hours of training provided: 7,246  
Number of days of volunteer assistance: 9,033  
Number of trees planted: 8,750  
Number of Tree City USA communities: 90

## Contacts

Ralph Campbell  
Community Forestry Coordinator  
Colorado State Forest Service, CSU  
Fort Collins, CO 80523  
970-491-6303 (phone)  
970-491-7736 (fax)  
e-mail: rcampbl@lamar.colostate.edu

# Kansas

## Program Overview

Kansas has a total of 925 incorporated and unincorporated cities and towns, which comprise 902,000 acres of land and represent 79 percent of the total State population of 2.5 million. The Kansas Forest Service's (KFS's) U&CF Program focuses on 638 communities of these communities. These communities are home to 76 percent of the State population. The KFS's program priorities are (1) organization of local volunteer "tree boards" to advise the government on public tree activities, (2) tree planting, (3) tree care and maintenance, (4) dead tree removal, and (5) waste wood use.

## Program Accomplishments

The 30th annual weeklong Arborist Training Course, cosponsored by the Kansas Forest Service and Kansas Arborist Association (KAA), trained 40 arborists. Since 1975, more than 1,260 individuals have taken the course, with more than 200 of the students going on to become certified arborists with the KAA. In addition, the staff of the KFS, working with other local and State organizations, provided 52 total community forestry-related training and outreach events across the State to reach more than 4,910 individuals. Eleven of the events were U&CF-topic-specific, day-long training events; 22 supported conservation and education efforts to K-12 students; and 19 were engagements and presentations to local and State civic organizations across the State. Capacity building continues to be a priority of the agency. Recognizing the need to build upon partnerships and collaboration, a special emphasis continues to be placed in working and developing relationships with other "green" interest groups within the State. The KFS's U&CF coordinator attended business-related meetings and activities and initiated dialogue for future cooperative efforts among the Kansas Arborist Association, Kansas Nursery and Landscape Association, and other green industry organizations.

## Volunteer Program

The U&CF coordinator, in conjunction with eight district foresters, provides technical and educational

support to more than 130 communities, most of which are organized under a volunteer tree board/program. The Kansas Tree City USA Certification and Recognition Program is one measure of the success of local volunteer efforts. During the past program year, 97 communities were certified as Tree City USA communities. The combined volunteer efforts of more than 506 individuals serving on local tree boards, with the support and assistance of their local district foresters, coordinated the planting of more than 20,544 trees, pruned more than 88,396 trees, and removed an additional 10,493 trees that were dead or dying or represented hazards. These communities, which represent more than 62 percent of the population of Kansas, spent more than \$14 million in managing and protecting the State's community forest resources.

## Statistical Highlights

Number of participating communities: 213  
Number of technical assists to communities: 130  
Number of training hours provided: 4,801  
Number of days of volunteer assistance to program: 1,950  
Number of trees planted: 20,544  
Number of Tree City USA communities: 97  
Number of community assessments: 7  
Number of community inventories: 8  
Number of community management plans: 13  
Number of U&CF workshops and training events: 11

## Contact

Eric Berg  
Community Forestry Coordinator  
Kansas Forest Service  
2610 Claflin Road  
Manhattan, KS 66502-2798  
785-532-3308 (phone)  
785-532-3305 (fax)  
e-mail: EBerg@oznet.ksu.edu

## Nebraska

### Program Overview

During FY 2002, the Nebraska Forest Service launched new initiatives in three areas in addition to maintaining the normal function of the community forestry program. Addition of a second assistant and redistribution of priorities among the three staff enabled those initiatives to be successful.

### Program Accomplishments

#### Nebraska Tree Improvement Program

We know through research and studies that trees that are properly maintained in an urban setting tend to last longer and are more vigorous and healthy than those that are not. The Nebraska Legislature established the Tree Recovery Program (TRP) to help communities with tree removals. The program is aimed at removal and replacement of hazardous or dangerous trees. But there remains a great need for public tree maintenance. The Nebraska Forest Service received a special grant from the USDA Forest Service to try a pilot program of tree maintenance. The three communities approved for the program are York (pop. 7,940), Gretna (pop. 2,249), and Gothenburg (pop. 3,347). Each community agreed to a matching grant up to \$10,000. The trimming had to follow trimming methods from the ANSI A300 standards. The community forestry staff took before and after photos to record the immediate benefits of the trimming. Gretna used its funds to clean up trees in a community park. Gothenburg and York trimmed street trees for visibility, safety, and vehicular clearance. The program was so well received in York that the Public Works Department continued trimming past their matching cost for the grant. The pilot will run again in 2003 with a few changes. Communities receiving the grants must have populations of less than 2,000 and must use a certified arborist to do the trimming.

#### Utility Training for Directional Pruning

In the past, power companies have used trimming techniques on trees near power lines that required topping the tree or rounding it over, if not completely removing it. Research and studies have shown that this technique has a negative effect on tree health and vigor. It also leaves communities with disease, insect, and rot problems. At the same time, allowing power companies to practice these outdated pruning techniques gives homeowners and others the improper idea of how to prune a tree. The Nebraska Forest Service is redoubling efforts to provide directional pruning workshops to the utility companies in Nebraska. This full-day workshop consists of three morning talks (tree anatomy, general pruning, and directional pruning) and afternoon hands-on directional pruning in the outdoors. The workshop enables the Nebraska Forest Service to reach an industry that touches many trees and enables the power companies to fulfill their requirements for a safety/education class.



Gothenburg Pruning.

#### Tree City USA 2002

During FY 2002, the Tree City USA Awards program in Nebraska was expanded. In the past, the celebration consisted of a 2- to 3-hour program during which the community representatives meet at the State Capitol in Lincoln, get their picture taken with the Governor, receive their awards, and return to their communities. In April 2002, the Nebraska Forest Service provided a day-long event to recognize the 110 communities that achieved Tree City USA status.

Nebraska Community Forestry grant programs remained strong in FY 2002. A total of 82 projects were completed for a total of \$537,000 and 6,159 trees and shrubs planted. The total cost of all projects was \$963,000. These projects included tree removal, tree planting, tree improvement, and scholarships for tree activists to attend educational meetings and seminars.

#### Contact

David Mooter  
State Coordinator  
Nebraska Forest Service  
8015 West Center Road  
Omaha, NE 68124  
402-444-7804 (phone)  
402-444-6430 (fax)  
e-mail: dmooter2@unl.edu



Arbor Day celebration.

## South Dakota

### Program Overview

The purpose of the U&CF Program is to help State forestry agencies help local tribal governments and the private sector improve the management of trees and forests in urban areas and community settings.

### Goals

Provide a "Strategic Plan for South Dakota Urban Forestry Assistance" that clearly outlines the goals of this program.

Provide an aggressive challenge grant and subgrant program for local groups and agencies to implement projects outlined in the strategic plan.

Develop and implement an aggressive public information campaign to address the need for urban forestry programs in our communities.

Strengthen the Tree City USA program in South Dakota by doubling the number of designated communities by FY 2007.

Complete street tree inventories for at least 10 percent of the communities in South Dakota by FY 2005.

Maintain an accurate Big Tree Register for South Dakota within national guidelines and standards.

### Program Accomplishments

#### **Sinai Re-Greening Project**

This project is helping establish a community forest for the storm-ravaged community of Sinai, SD.

#### **Robbinsdale Park Tree Planting**

This project will incorporate natural vegetation and Ponderosa pine trees along a walking path in Robbinsdale Park, Rapid City, SD.

#### **City of Baltic Northeast Park**

The city of Baltic is in the process of establishing a new city park.

### **South Dakota Community Forest Inventory Project**

The South Dakota State Forestry division has developed a system for providing an Internet community forest inventory system capable of providing a standardized, user-friendly community forest inventory.

The Resource Conservation and Forestry Division is inventorying nine communities. The results of these inventories will help identify the condition of urban forests throughout South Dakota.

### **South Dakota Mini-Arboretum Project**

When this arboretum project is completed, the arboretums will give the public a look at which tree species grow in various parts of South Dakota, what size they can attain, and what they look like.

Mini-Arboretum projects have been started in Kadoka, SD, and at the Journey Museum in Rapid City, SD. The mini-arboretum in Pierre, SD, will be installing new signage, and the Aberdeen arboretum will add more species of trees.

### **Statistical Highlights**

Number of communities assisted: 66  
Percentage of all communities: 21  
Number of technical assists to communities: 105  
Number of days of volunteer assistance: 1,737  
Number of Tree City USA communities: 30

### **Contact**

Mike Daluz  
Director, State and Private Forestry  
Rocky Mountain Region  
Golden, CO 80401  
303-275-5736 (phone)

# Wyoming

## Program Overview

The Wyoming State Forestry Division's U&CF Program is a multifaceted program composed of tree-planting and educational grants, the Tree City USA program, conservation education, technical assistance through workshops and onsite visits, arborist certification, and community Arbor Day celebrations. The program focuses on the State's 98 incorporated communities. More than 70 percent of Wyoming residents live in these communities. A quarterly newsletter with a circulation of 1,300 is distributed to community elected offices, tree boards, and the general public. This 12-page newsletter has been an effective tool for disseminating timely community forestry management and technical information.

## Wyoming Community Forestry Council

The Wyoming Community Forestry Council (WCFC) advises the State forester on program direction for the U&CF Program in Wyoming. The State forester appoints the 12-member committee, which represents a broad segment of urban forestry interests from community officials to representatives of conservation and business organizations. The WCFC reviews tree-planting and community forestry education grant applications and awards approximately \$50,000 in cost-share grants annually to more than 25 communities. A representative of the council serves on the State Forest Advisory Committee and council members assist with the annual State Capital Arbor Day Celebration.

## Volunteer Program

The Wyoming Tree City USA Certification Program serves as a basis for volunteer efforts in developing or improving long-term, successful urban forestry programs. During FY 2002, 32 cities and towns were certified as Tree City USA communities, which represents approximately one-third of the State's incorporated municipalities. Their total expenditures on managing

their community forests was more than \$1.7 million. The average per capita expenditure on urban forestry programs in these communities is \$6.10. More than 150 volunteers serve on local tree boards in these communities. The State Forestry Division and WCFC provide direction and training for the citizen volunteers. In FY 2002, several tree board members attended local and regional community forestry conferences as well as the National Tree City USA Conference. A statewide tree board conference has been well attended in the past and will once again take place in FY 2003.

The Community Forestry Grant Program requires the involvement of volunteers in all funded projects. Since the beginning of the grant program in 1991, 7,264 volunteers have contributed 30,310 hours of their time, resulting in the planting of 18,790 trees on public property. The Education and Program Development grants have provided outreach to thousands of citizens through tree-care workshops, local brochures on tree selection and care, interpretive signage for arboretums, and tree inventories and management plans.

## Statistical Highlights

Number of participating communities: 62  
Number of communities receiving technical assistance: 49  
Number of hours of training provided: 1,025  
Number of days of volunteer assistance generated: 802  
Number of trees planted (with grants): 876

## Contacts

Mark Hughes  
Urban and Community Forestry Coordinator  
State Forestry Division  
1100 W 22nd St.  
Cheyenne, WY 82002  
307-777-7586 (phone)  
307-777-5986 (fax)  
e-mail: mhughe@state.wy.us