

Urban Forestry FY23

Status: NIFA REVIEW

Project Director

Richard Harper

Organization Project Number

Organization

University of Massachusetts

Accession Number

7002050

Start & End Date

10/01/2020

To Project / Program

"Urban Forestry"

Primary Critical Issue

Environmental Stewardship

Fiscal Year

2023

In 2-3 sentences, briefly describe the issue or problem that your project addresses.

Massachusetts is one of the most densely populated states in the union and urban forest health (i.e., street trees, parks, green spaces) directly impacts 93% of the Commonwealth's residents. Though urban environments are notoriously inhospitable relative to tree growth and development, the UMass Urban Forestry Extension program continues its multi-year effort to generate and disseminate actionable knowledge and understanding regarding the management of trees and urban greenspaces to stakeholders (professional urban foresters/arbors) and members of the general public.

Briefly describe in non-technical terms how your major activities helped you achieve, or make significant progress toward, the goals and objectives described in your non-technical summary.

The ongoing, primary focus of the UMass Extension Urban Forestry Program has been to initiate and expand integrated research and extension activities in support of the management of municipal forests and urban landscapes.

Key activities for the past year focused on increasing knowledge and encouraging behavior change through sustained web-based programming (i.e., 'Urban Forestry Today' monthly webcasts), invited lectures, and through media outlets (i.e., newspaper & television interviews), aimed at informing large audiences of stakeholders and the general public about issues of importance.

A foundation for sustained collaboration has been through ongoing leadership and service to professional associations (i.e. the New England Chapter of the Int'l Society of Arboriculture; the Massachusetts Tree Wardens and Foresters Association), agencies (i.e. USDA Forest Service, MA Dep't of Conservation & Recreation) and community-based NGO's (i.e. ReGreen Springfield). Increasingly, targeted efforts were also focused on collaborating directly with key individuals in various communities throughout Massachusetts through professional association outreach activities.

Briefly describe how your target audience benefited from your project's activities.

A program of applied research featuring four (4) integrated research-extension initiatives serves as the foundation for many of urban forestry-related outreach activities, which is conducted in a manner that advances scholarship in the field of urban forestry, while also generating knowledge and results with immediate application by local stakeholders in support of urban tree health:

- i) Human Ecology & Urban Forestry
- ii) Community Woodbanks & Urban Wood Utilization
- iii) American Elm Restoration
- iv) Oak trees and their Response to Urban Conditions

Significant progress was made towards the fundamental goals of the project, which includes working with stakeholders to disseminate information regarding the importance of urban and community forests and their associated benefits. Professional audiences (practicing arborists, professional urban foresters) benefit from up-to-date information as it enables professional accreditation for arborists/urban foresters that attend specific programs.

Briefly describe how the broader public benefited from your project's activities.

Significant progress was also made towards increasing public understanding regarding the communication of up-to-date urban forestry-related information that promotes public education and fosters discourse regarding the care of urban trees.

Comments (optional)

- Articles for Publication (e.g. Extension, Research) (11) 75,000
- Leadership, consultation and instrumental support to key Urban Forestry collaborators. This may include board leadership/ service, conference lecture, or other technical advisement to professional Associations, Agencies and/or NGO's as representative of the Univ of Mass/UMass Extension. (20) 200,000
- Sustained and Select Web-based Outreach Initiatives(s) for Urban Forestry Professionals. (10) 32,200