

Introduction

This report summarizes the goals, planning, background, and accomplishments of the 1999 Northeast Pennsylvania Urban Forestry Program. The foundation belief of this program is that the health of a community's forest and ecological systems is interdependent with the community's social and economic health and well-being. Our goal was to demonstrate how the management of urban areas as ecological systems supports citizen participation in activities that provide ecological, social, and economic benefits.

The 1999 Northeast Pennsylvania Urban Forestry Program provided grant funds (NA-99-0446) to communities interested in pursuing the management of their natural resources. It was an initiative funded by the USDA Forest Service, State & Private Forestry, Northeastern Area, under Michael Rains, Area Director. The Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania directed the program, providing administrative and technical assistance. The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA DCNR), Bureau of Forestry supported the Program by providing technical assistance, forest health assessment, and education.

In the late 1980's and early 1990's key organizations in Northeastern Pennsylvania had developed significant planning documents in preparation for the economic and social revitalization of the region. We were pleased to partner with these organizations and contribute to the implementation of their well-conceived plans for improved regional health by integrating natural resources improvements with existing cultural and economic planning.

Four hundred and fifty-four diverse partnerships were formed to complete the forty-one urban forestry-based projects funded. The variety of groups represented ensured the projects addressed ecological concerns, business interests and social issues important to the region.

The diverse and sometimes nontraditional partnerships resulted in well-rounded projects with increased support and value to the community.

Partners supporting the Northeast Pennsylvania Urban Forestry Program contributed financial support, technical and professional expertise, labor, volunteers, and educational activities. These partnerships strengthened working relationships among public, private, federal, state, and local agencies.

The planting and management of strip mine areas and parks, highway beautification, river corridor restoration, riparian buffer plantings, and management of noxious vegetation, were some of the projects undertaken by the grantees. These projects have triggered economic renewal efforts and social opportunities for local citizens. Sustainable natural resources management has proven to be a vital step towards economic renewal and the involved cooperation of the community.

This report includes a brief regional history to help readers understand the framework behind the natural resource issues addressed by the Program. The Project Profile section provides brief summaries of accomplishments, budget documentation, and program partners for each project. The last section of the report, Program Summaries, provides tables that illustrate tangible Program accomplishments.

We trust this will inspire and assist other programs and promote the building of partnerships to ensure the wise use of natural resources in all communities.