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USDA FOREST SERVICE NORTHEAST CENTER FOR URBAN & COMMUNITY FORESTRY

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# FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 1999-2003

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United States  
Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

**Northeastern  
Area**



## *FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 1999 - 2003*

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### **BACKGROUND AND MISSION**

The Northeast Center for Urban and Community Forestry was established in October 1996, and represents a cooperative partnership among the USDA Forest Service's Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry, the University of Massachusetts/Amherst, and the seven states of New England and New York. Two other regional centers are located in Chicago, IL and Philadelphia, PA.

*The Northeast Center for Urban and Community Forestry responds to urban and community forestry information needs, facilitates and supports new and existing research, and coordinates the exchange of information among the states, that contributes to healthy sustainable communities.*

This mission provides the "opportunity to integrate the vision of an improved quality of life with the pervasive transition toward ecologically based management" <sup>viii</sup> and works toward the development of partnerships between Federal, State, and local agencies, community based organizations, policy makers, and civic leaders.

### **OVERVIEW**

This document outlines the program direction of the Northeast Center for Urban and Community Forestry for the period 1999 - 2003. It is based upon the established vision and direction of the Forest Service and the cooperating states, as described in the appropriate strategic plans of each participating agency.

As outlined in the Forest Service's most recent Strategic Plan, a regional approach to the addressing the "issues, concerns and opportunities" <sup>i</sup> facing individual states can be most effectively addressed by encouraging the development of "complimentary programs" <sup>ii</sup> wherever possible. The Northeast Center for Urban and Community Forestry, as outlined in its Mission, will provide an opportunity for a regional strategy that will "respond to urban and community forestry information needs, facilitate and support new and existing research, and coordinate the exchange of information among the states," <sup>iii</sup> contributing to healthy sustainable communities.

The activities and programs outlined in this Strategic Plan will provide the opportunity for the Center to carry out its Mission, leading to regionally complimentary programs, aimed at achieving "community and ecological sustainability and enhance the quality of life through stewardship of urban and community forests and related natural resources." <sup>iv</sup> It is anticipated that the Center can assist the states urban and community forestry programs "to deal with the range of eco

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## THE NORTHEAST CENTER FOR URBAN & COMMUNITY FORESTRY

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logical, social and economic issues that comprise a holistic approach to natural resource management in urban environments”<sup>v</sup> and to help “promote the concept of stewardship of the environment”<sup>vi</sup> in the Northeastern Region.

The Northeast Center will work cooperatively with the other two regional centers to establish a network that can position itself to “address the broader range of urban environmental issues that are expected to proliferate during the next century.”<sup>vii</sup>

### OPERATING PRINCIPLES

The operating principles of the Northeast Center for Urban and Community Forestry reflect the regional vision of the Center and fulfill the directives established by the cooperating states and agencies. These operating principles include the following:

*Compliment rather than duplicate state programs.*

*Use State Urban Forestry Coordinators as the primary point of contact for activities within each state.*

*Use existing resources in New England/New York where feasible to enhance program delivery.*

*Develop train-the-trainer programs for effective transfer of information, technology and programming.*

*Maintaining a close working relationship with the other regional Centers in Chicago and Philadelphia.*

*Replicate programs and products around the New England/New York region.*

*Produce products, generic in nature, requiring little modification or customizing, that can be used throughout the New England/New York area.*

*Develop Center programs through of the Advisory Board and key partners.*

*Credit USDA Forest Service and other contributing organizations on all products.*

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A review of the goals and objectives of the Forest Service’s Northeastern Area , along with those of the cooperating states and the Center, were considered in the development of a Strategic Plan for the Northeast Center for Urban & Community Forestry. The established goals and objectives, common to each of these cooperators provides the foundation for a comprehensive Strategic Plan for the Northeast Center that addresses the needs of the majority of the contributing partners and provides direction and vision for the activities that will be undertaken over the next five years.



The goals and objectives of the Forest Service, the partner states and Northeast Center for Urban and Community Forestry are outlined here:

***THE USDA FOREST SERVICE, NORTHEASTERN AREA - GOALS AND OBJECTIVES***

The following outlines the goals and objectives of the USDA Forest Service's Northeastern Area's Urban Forestry program:

1. *Awareness including understating of stewardship, and the social, economic, and environmental value of trees, forests, and related natural resources in cities and communities;*
2. *Outreach and Environmental Equity including participation by involving minorities, people of color, American Indian Nations, people with disabilities, and under-served populations in all aspects of urban and community forestry;*
3. *Partnerships that encourage working relationships and integrate diverse activities among public and private agencies and organizations at federal, state and local levels;*
4. *Comprehensive Natural Resource Management*

***THE STATE PLANS - GOALS AND OBJECTIVES***

A review of the Five-Year Plans from each of the cooperating states was completed to determine the goals and objectives among each of the states. The following goals and objectives were common to the plans of the states served by the Northeast Center:

1. *Public Awareness ;*
2. *Partnerships ;*
3. *Technical/financial Assistance to communities ;*
4. *Management of the resource ;*
5. *Development and support of community capacity - tree wardens, boards, ordinance, etc..*

***THE NORTHEAST CENTER - GOALS AND OBJECTIVES***

The Goals and Objectives of the Northeast Center for Urban and Community have been developed by the Center's Advisory Board, and are detailed below. Each of the Center's goals and objectives were linked to those of the Forest Service and the states of New England and New York in order to ensure that the initiatives undertaken by the Northeast Center compliment the intent of the federal and state programs. The following outlines the goals and objectives of the Northeast Center for Urban and Community Forestry:

1. *Assist state Urban and Community Forestry programs by focusing on common information needs, services and research.*
2. *Provide a point of access for research, information and technology relating to urban and rural communities.*
3. *Foster community participation and volunteerism in the stewardship of healthy sustainable communities.*
4. *Support partnerships among Federal, State and local officials, green industry and utility professionals and volunteer groups.*



### **LINKING THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES - A STRATEGIC PLAN**

A strategic approach to the lining of the goals and objectives of the Center those of the state's and the Forest Service's provided the basis for the development of a strategic plan that addresses the needs of the individual states and responds to the urban and community forestry needs of the region.

The Mission of the Center provides for the opportunity to respond, facilitate, conduct research and exchange information that ultimately can provide improved public awareness of the urban forest, the development of partnerships, outreach, and the development of more comprehensive natural resource management that is based on research, technical assistance, and model programming at the state and local level. The Center can provide assistance in helping the partners realize their goals and objectives by providing opportunities for partnerships, research, community participation, and serving as a point of access for current information needs and technical assistance.

The Strategic Plan for the Northeast Center for Urban & Community Forestry provides an outline for the activities and programming of the Center for the next five years. It expands upon the urban and community forestry initiatives that have been carried out in the region since the urban forestry program was introduced in 1990, builds upon the inaugural work of the Center, and provides an emphasis on emerging issues and needs within each of the states in the region. The development of "pilot projects that apply ecological concepts under a wide variety of ecological, social and economic conditions" will be tested and evaluated. Technology transfer and technical assistance will emphasize the development of best management practice, address emerging issues, and provide state-of-the-art support for professionals, natural resource managers, and policy makers.

Partnerships, at all levels, will be explored in order to ensure that sustainable pro-

gramming be developed. Working to compliment the efforts of each state's Community Involvement Coordinator, the Center will encourage community involvement and volunteerism that can serve as the basis of regional programming and stewardship. Cooperation with the Northeastern Area Association of State Foresters, green industry associations, and municipal tree wardens and foresters will enable the Center to fulfill its mission, while ensuring it is working toward the common vision of the region's natural resource managers.

### **STRIVING TOWARD EXCELLENCE - A STRATEGIC APPROACH**

Specific tasks, programming, and initiatives associated with the goals and objectives of the Center have been established in order to provide a strategy for obtaining "excellence"; the original intent for establishment of the Center. The operational strategy of the Center will seek to fulfill the established mission, achieve the outlined goals and objectives, and provide support for existing programs and initiatives.

The following outlines formulates the Strategic Plan that enables the Center to continue "Striving Toward Excellence" as we enter a new century of opportunities.

#### **FY 1999**

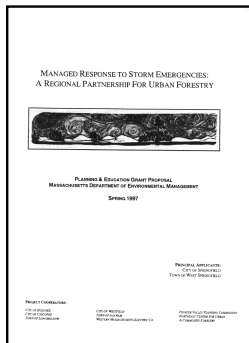
- Revise and format hazard tree "train the trainer" manual for distribution on CD-ROM and internet.
- Development and distribution of a workbook for communities to initiate standardized storm damage assessment protocols.
- Complete and distribute "train the trainer" volunteer inventory manual in workbook and CD-ROM formats.
- Host a regional "storms over the urban forest" conference.
- Establish partnerships with existing urban forestry initiatives in the region, focusing on state councils, educational institutions, and professional organizations.
- Coordination of a street tree inventory in the Greenpoint/Williamsburg neighborhoods of New York City.
- Develop a compendium of existing and proposed model ordinances relating to urban and community forestry.
- Establish a regional "grants program" for funding of a model project, program or initiative that provides regional benefits or serves as a model for the New England/New York area.
- *Slide series on construction damage targeting audience of home builders and trade associations.*

### FY 1999 (Cont'd)

- *Volunteer inventory training*
- *Management Planning and Policy Manual*
- *Provide technical assistance and technology transfer for storm recovery and reforestation initiatives.*
- Establishment of a cooperative agreement for research activities in two municipalities in the New England/New York area.
- Explore potential partnerships with commercial forestry firms to conduct research activities related to urban forest planning, planting, management and maintenance.
- *Urban Forest Health Monitoring Pilot Project*

### FY 2000

- Host a regional workshop on state-of-the-art urban forest inventory systems, including sampling and management plans.
- Development and distribution of a workbook for communities to initiate a protocol for a regional response to storm emergencies related to urban forests.
- Host a regional symposium on new technologies related to improved urban forest management.
- Work with the Chicago and Philadelphia Centers to establish a “grants program” to provide funding for a project, initiative, or program that provides regional benefits or serves as a model for the Northeastern area.
- Development of computerized database and resume data, for electronic distribution via web or disk, of urban and community forestry speakers, consultants and educators in the New England/New York area.
- Host a wood waste utilization and marketing workshop for urban foresters and greenspace managers.
- Conduct a region-wide needs assessment and survey of tree wardens, urban foresters, and municipal greenspace managers.
- *With states, develop volunteer training manual on all aspects of Urban and Community Forestry*
- Work with a regional utility distributor to develop model programs for tree planting and maintenance.
- *Provide technical assistance and technology transfer for storm recovery and reforestation initiatives.*



**FY 2001**

- Co-host a regional conference focusing on public policy and communications relating to urban and community forestry.
- Co-host a regional workshop on watershed protection and education.
- Produce a compendium, or workbook, detailing model watershed protection initiatives.
- Develop a workbook on protection and enhancement of urban wildlands.
- Host a regional community forestry networking forum, and conference, focusing on delivery of program to underserved populations.
- Host a workshop for municipal information managers, utility distributors, public works administrators, planners and public safety officials, focusing on state-of-the-art methods for the effective use of GIS/GPS/satellite/remote sensing technologies.

**FY 2002**

- Development of a CD-ROM containing photographic images related to urban and community forestry for use in publications, newsletters, training manuals, books, or electronic media.
- Co-host a funding workshop for city planners and greenspace managers, with representatives from federal and state agencies which impact urban landscapes, including EPA, Health & Human Services, USDA, HUD, etc. in attendance.
- Host a workshop on the value and threat of fire in urban forestry, focusing on urban wildlands and the urban/rural interface.
- Develop a model program for establishment of urban arboretums in two inner city neighborhoods.
- Creation of a “mentor program” for underserved youth, focusing on developing partnerships with green industry employers and municipal greenspace managers.
- *Images for CD-ROM should be available on Web as they are captured*

**FY 2003**

- *Hazard Tree Protocol for Urban Areas established and workbook developed.*
- *Establish distance learning workshops for professional urban forest resource managers, arborists and professional tree care personnel.*
- *Additional Projects to be determined.*

**ENDNOTES**

- i. **USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Area. "Urban Forestry Five-Year Plan, 1995-1999. page 2, in "Overview".**
- ii. **USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Area "Urban Forestry Five-Year Plan, 1995-1999. page 2, in "Overview".**
- iii. **Northeast Center for Urban & Community Forestry at UMass/Amherst. Mission Statement, 1996.**
- iv. **USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Area "Urban Forestry Five-Year Plan, 1995-1999. page 2, in "Desired Future Condition".**
- v. **USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Area "Urban Forestry Five-Year Plan, 1995-1999. page 3, in "Where we need to be in 1999".**
- vi. **USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Area "Urban Forestry Five-Year Plan, 1995-1999. page 3, in "Where we need to be in 1999".**
- vii. **USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Area "Urban Forestry Five-Year Plan, 1995-1999. page 3, in "Where we need to be in 1999".**
- viii. **USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Area. "Urban Forestry Five-Year Plan, 1995-1999. page 1, in "Letter from Michael T. Rains".**