

Key Issue #11: Enhancing Stewardship of Both Trees and Their Urban and Community Forests

Stewardship of urban forests is seen as more than just a maintenance task for community staff. Most thought leaders suggested that stewardship in future decades will not be possible without community engagement and support. Thought leaders suggested that more focused funding and programming for stewardship and volunteer engagement is most needed at the local level. Programs such as Tree Pittsburgh's Tree Tenders training program was cited as a model example for volunteer urban forest care and stewardship. Training was cited as a strong need for professional arborists, municipalities, and community groups.

IDEAS FOR ACTION - Gaps, Needs, Opportunities

- Use the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) tool to approach communities around increasing UCF programs.
- Focus on UCF planning and maintenance models that can be replicated in other communities to create efficiencies and cross-jurisdictional learning.
 - Develop programs for training and education around proper care for urban trees in private yards and properties.
- Utilize the successful Tree Tenders Program from Tree Pittsburgh as a model to teach volunteers how to work with trees (<http://treepittsburgh.org/become-tree-tender>).
- Develop incentives for homeowners to plant larger trees in backyards; to do so, focus on benefits for private landowners and homeowners to plant urban trees. One example is the Virginia Cooperative Extension program to plant native fruit trees in riparian buffers.¹ Several thought leaders suggested fruit tree planting and giveaway programs as a means to engage community members in urban tree planting and then possibly as a means to also plant larger shade trees.
- Incorporate into a national public awareness campaign ways to increase public involvement in valuing, actively participating in, expanding and caring for UCF. Twenty-six percent of States report in the *National States Assessment* that a lack of community involvement or capacity is a serious challenge.
- Develop multiple means for UCF stewardship including trained volunteers and municipal engagement for sustained UCF care. For example, in Portland, Oregon all municipal trees are maintained by citizen volunteer groups, whereas in Milwaukee trees are cared for as part of the Public Works department urban forestry maintenance program.
- Connect civic stewardship examples with UCF educational opportunities: people will care for something they understand. For example, when people learn that a chickadee needs 6,000 to 9,000 caterpillars for one clutch of chickadees to grow, they

¹ See this link for more information: <http://www.jswnonline.org/content/69/2/140.refs>

may place an increased value on urban trees and their ability to support urban wildlife.