



Michigan Department of Natural Resources Urban and Community Forestry Program

Strategic Plan: 2005-2009

Introduction:

Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) is broadly defined as the comprehensive management of trees, forests, and related natural resources in the areas where people live, work and play. The USDA Forest Service administers a national program of UCF assistance to states through the authority of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978. This program provides financial, technical and educational resources to support a variety of UCF related projects.

Four qualifying requirements have been established by the USDA Forest Service for states to be eligible for assistance through this federal program. These include:

1. Urban and community forestry program coordinator
2. Volunteer/partnership coordination
3. An urban and community forestry council
4. State program strategic plan (five-year plan)

Upon meeting these requirements, each state uses a combination of federal and state resources to deliver a local UCF program throughout the state. State UCF programs provide leadership, direction, networks, as well as financial and technical assistance to communities and community-based organizations. Activities supported through State and Federal UCF programs focus on trees, forests, openspaces, greenbelts and other natural resources and may include tree planting, management and planning activities among others.

Purpose:

In accordance with the USDA Forest Service direction, the Michigan Urban and Community Forestry program is required to maintain, and update, a statewide strategic plan to cover a period of 5 years. This plan is used to advise and guide the administration and delivery of the state's UCF program through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Specifically, this strategic plan defines three critical issues and defines associated goals related to UCF in the state, as determined by the Michigan Urban and Community Forestry Council (MUCFC). Additionally, the plan will assist the USDA Forest Service in evaluating the strategic direction of the state's program relative to qualifying requirements set forth in the National UCF program.

Strategic Planning Methodology:

The goal of the Michigan UCF Strategic Planning process was to capture input from a diverse audience of professionals, agencies, organizations and individuals throughout the state. To achieve this in a timely manner, members of the MUCFC formed a strategic planning committee to direct these efforts. Based on recommendations from this committee, a survey was devised to solicit and identify critical issues related to UCF within the state.

A brief questionnaire was developed sent to members of the MUCFC asking them to identify five critical UCF issues in Michigan. These responses were synthesized into six major theme areas with multiple related sub-issues. This then became the final format of the survey to be used for the wider solicitation. From this list, respondents would be asked to vote for no more than five issues they felt were most important.

Using this questionnaire, a more comprehensive survey was conducted at various statewide association meetings and conferences. Target audiences included city planners, landscape

architects, state/municipal and private forestry professionals, nonprofit groups, nursery, and other green industry professionals. In addition, broad mail and email campaigns were undertaken to obtain further input from across the state. Responses were tallied and ordered to define a final list of priority issues for the program to respond to.

The next step was to present the survey results to MUCFC at a one day intensive strategic planning session. The goal of this session was to review and discuss the survey results, revise current vision and mission statements and assemble new findings into a draft strategic plan. The following information is the final document derived from that meeting and subsequent committee follow-up meetings.

Vision:

Every person in Michigan will assume responsibility to work towards ensuring that the trees and forests, where people live, work and play are healthy, sustainable and diverse.

Mission:

The Michigan Urban and Community Forestry Council (MUCFC) shall promote, recognize and support effective and sustainable urban and community forestry throughout the state.

Strategic Issue 1: Critical Forest Health Issues

Michigan forests continue to sustain damage as a result of exotic and invasive species

Goal 1.1

Identify existing and potentially threatening exotic/invasive species and reduce their number and impact on urban and community ecosystem structure and function.

Goal 1.2

Identify, engage and work with appropriate agencies and organizations to help minimize the impact of exotic and invasive species.

Goal 1.3

Promote/advocate for healthy and diverse ecosystems to decrease susceptibility to invasions by exotic species.

Strategic Issue 2: Urban Forest Planning/Management

Urban and Community Forestry planning and management activities need to be priorities for developing sustainable programs.

Goal 2.1

Give tree resource managers/coordinators the tools they need to advocate for resources dedicated to forest management and maintenance.

Goal 2.2

Promote the benefits and need to include trees as a part of community infrastructure.

Goal 2.3

Promote availability and selection of diverse tree species suitable for MI urban areas.

Goal 2.4

Include more members of the public and municipal authorities (planning, engineering etc.) in MUCFC meetings.

Strategic Issue 3: Education & Outreach

Statewide awareness and involvement in UCF programming is low.

Sub-Issue 1: A limited number of people in Michigan are involved in UCF programs/activities

Goal 3.1.1

Increase people's awareness of UCF resources including both the biophysical resource and technical information

Goal 3.1.2

Increase the geographic scope and number of people participating in UCF

Sub-Issue 2: Michigan residents have limited knowledge of the benefits of trees in their community

Goal 3.2.1

Promote increased awareness of the benefits that trees provide and how these benefits improve the quality of people's lives.

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