

## **2007-2008 COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM WORK TEAM ANNUAL REPORT**

1. Full name of your Program Work Team (PWT):  
Community Forestry

2. Names, affiliations and e-mail addresses of the PWT Co-Chairs (with an asterisk [\*], please indicate the co-chair responsible for finalizing this report):

\*Nina Bassuk, Department of Horticulture, Cornell Campus. [NLB2@cornell.edu](mailto:NLB2@cornell.edu)

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3. PWT members: See separate attachment

4. Community Forestry PWT accomplishments

The urban forest is an integral part of communities. Whether found along streets, in parks, or in less structured open spaces, urban trees contribute greatly to the quality of community life. Recent research has shown that urban trees offer many benefits including improved air quality, reduced storm water runoff, reduced psychological stress, and increased residential property values. The urban forest is therefore an important natural resource that communities have an interest in protecting and preserving.

Much like any natural resource, the urban forest needs to be conserved and managed. A street tree inventory is an important tool in managing and planning urban tree populations. By providing complete and up-to-date information about the diversity, condition, and age of its trees, a street tree inventory enables a community to care for the contemporary urban forest as well as to plan intelligently for the urban forest of the future. Undertaking a street tree inventory, therefore, signifies a community's investment in and commitment to the current and future well being not just of its trees, but that of the community itself.

In 2007-2008 we have conducted 8 community tree inventories in central New York with the Student Weekend Arborist Team (SWAT) and with the Specialized Weekday Arborist Team (SWAT) in the Hudson Valley. The Central NY SWAT worked with 20 Cornell students trained to identify trees and evaluate their health, while the Hudson Valley SWAT worked with 14 Master Gardeners trained in the same areas.

Both teams conducted inventories collected data that have been used to create urban forest master plans for these communities.

Data was collected in a walking survey utilizing Pharos PDAs equipped with the USDA Forest Service's i-Tree MCTI/STRATUM PDA utility. Data collected includes the following: Location (address and GPS), species or planting site, size (as in diameter at breast height), condition, management recommendation, and sidewalk damage or overhead wire conflicts. All data was summarized and analyzed by the US Forest Service's STRATUM program (Street Tree Resource Analysis Tool for Urban Forest

Managers) to quantify environmental and economic benefits derived from the street tree population.

Subsequent to each inventory, educators met with the tree boards or Department of Public Works official in each municipality and presented the summarized findings as well as a hard copy of the inventory on CD. Discussion was then initiated to determine next steps and management goals for that community.

#### Project Deliverables

##### Written Documents:

Village of Cazenovia inventory report, Village of Cooperstown inventory report, Village of Elbridge inventory report. Village of Rhinebeck inventory report, Village of New Hartford inventory report, Village of Sherburne inventory report. Village of Fishkill inventory report, Village of Orangetown inventory report.

##### Web site:

Community Forestry PWT website in process of renovation.

<http://www.hort.cornell.edu/commfor/>

##### Workshops:

2007; Village of Sherburne presentation, Village of New Hartford presentation, Village of Rhinebeck presentation.

2008: Village of Elbridge presentation, Village of Cooperstown presentation, Village of Cazenovia presentation, and Village of Fishkill presentation

##### Conference presentation:

July 2008, New York State Urban and Community Forestry Conference "The SWAT inventory program and data from New York State." Fred Cowett presenter.