

# Georgia: The State of the Urban Forest Report 2012



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## Introduction

Georgia’s urban and community forestry program serves the citizens by providing valuable information for communities, homeowners and small landowners to help plant and maintain healthy and safe trees in neighborhoods, along roadsides, in parks and schools and anywhere people live, work and play.

*The State of the Urban Forest Report* includes a summary of the accomplishments of the Georgia Forestry Commission’s Sustainable Community Forestry Program and the activities of members of the Georgia Urban Forest Council since 2006.

*The Five Year Plan for Georgia’s Urban and Community Forest* includes four important goals that the stakeholders will strive to achieve between 2013 and 2017. Success will depend on partnerships to keep our trees health and safe amid issues such as limited funding, urbanization, threats from insects, disease natural disasters and invasive species and feeling a loss of connection to the land for many individuals.

## What is the Urban Forest?

The urban and community forest includes all trees, vegetation, watersheds and wildlife in urban areas, developed areas or communities. State and local highway rights-of-way, open greenspaces, undeveloped forests, parks and private and commercial lands area all part of the community forest.

Community forestry is the management of nature in cities and towns which provides many environmental, economic, social and cultural benefits and is important to human health and well-being.



## Benefits of Trees

Since 77% of Georgia's population lives in urban or urbanizing areas, it is important to plant and maintain trees for their multiple economic, environmental, human health, social and cultural benefits. The management of urban forests in cities and towns allows people to have access to nature, stay healthy and build community pride. With the tendency for children to spend more time indoors and less time playing outside, communities that maintain trees are naturally helping to reduce health care costs and leave a legacy for future generations.

### Economic Benefits

In local communities, trees also enhance economic stability by attracting businesses and tourists and increasing property values. Studies find that people will pay more for treed lots or for lots on the borders of greenspace.



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Trees also increase home value. The presence of trees has a positive effect on occupancy rates and residential home sales. Neighborhood greenspaces or greenways typically increase the value of

properties located nearby and wooded apartment complexes provide preferred aesthetics that can increase occupancy rates.



## Fast Facts on Local Economics

The *Green Cities: Good Health* Web site states,

- “The presence of larger trees in yards and as street trees can add from 3% to 15% to home values throughout neighborhoods.
- Averaging the market effect of street trees on all house values across Portland, Oregon yields a total value of \$1.35 billion, potentially increasing annual property tax revenues \$15.3 million.
- A study found 7% higher rental rates for commercial offices having high quality landscapes.
- Shoppers claim that they will spend 9% to 12% more for goods and services in central business districts having high quality tree canopy.
- Shoppers indicate that they will travel greater distance and a longer time to visit a district having high quality trees, and spend more time there once they arrive.”

For more information on [local economics](#) and the references for these facts, visit the at the University of Washington.

## Ecosystem Services

Forest ecosystems are important providers of services that benefit people and are profitable. The following table categorizes key ecosystem services (nature’s benefits) defined in the *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005*.

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES	
<b>Supporting Services</b>  Nutrient cycling Soil formation Primary production	<b>Provisioning Services</b> Food (crops, livestock, wild foods, etc...) Fiber (timber, cotton/hemp/silk, wood fuel) Genetic resources Biochemicals, natural medicines, pharmaceuticals Fresh water
	<b>Regulating Services</b> Air quality regulation Climate regulation (global, regional, and local) Water regulation Erosion regulation Water purification and waste treatment Disease regulation Pest regulation Pollination Natural hazard regulation
	<b>Cultural Services</b> Aesthetic values Spiritual and religious values Recreation and ecotourism

Nature’s benefits are considered free to public. To quantify their economic value, Rebecca Moore, Ph.D. with the University of Georgia Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources studied the indirect use and non-use value (not direct use value) of Georgia’s forests. Considering climate regulation, water quality and quantity, wildlife habitat services (non-game), pollination services, soil stabilization/erosion control services, aesthetic, cultural, and similar services, Moore stated, “ the estimated **ecosystem service value of Georgia’s private forests totaled \$37,683,720,529**. The average value per acre is \$264 - \$13,442 depending on characteristics” in a study done by the University of Georgia, Warnell School of Forestry & Natural Resources.

Timber value, forest products and recreational use were not considered in this study. Studies show the economic impact of forest industry in GA is approximately \$27 billion/year, and the economic impact of outdoor recreation in GA is approximately \$2 billion/year.

### Cost of Community Services

In cities and towns, trees are capital assets that help decrease infrastructure costs. The presence of trees in a community affects the cost of municipal services such as stormwater control, transportation and air quality. Avoided costs for an average county with tree canopy include stormwater (approximately \$1000/ac), water treatment, air quality (approximately \$240/ac), health costs and energy savings. In Nelson, Kramer, and Dorfman’s study at the University of Georgia, Department of Applied and Agricultural Economics, in 2004, “Estimating the economic benefit of landscape pattern: an hedonic analysis of spatial landscape indices” it was found that home prices rise when within one quarter mile of trees and green space. Mixed forests increase value more than monoculture, hardwoods are better

than pine. Smoother, managed edges are better than rough edges, and effects can be worth \$1,000s on the average home price.

Both business/commercial land and farm/forest land pay more than \$1 in taxes for every \$1 they get back in services. Residential land costs more in some cases in services than it pays in revenues.

### **Environmental Benefits**

One of the most important benefits that trees provide is cleaner, cooler air and water. Trees trap lung-damaging dust, ash, pollen and smoke from the air. In respect to air pollution reduction, trees provide shade which reduces temperatures helps keep pollutants already in the air from becoming even more volatile. Research demonstrates that urban heat islands change weather patterns, altering the amount and duration of local and downwind rainfall patterns. Urban trees lessen the impact of the urban heat island effect and reduce changes in weather patterns. Most importantly, trees produce oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide. Studies show one acre of trees produces enough oxygen for 18 people every day.

Trees also act as natural water filters and help significantly slow the movement of stormwater, which lowers total runoff volume, soil erosion and flooding. From an economic viewpoint, communities that utilize this important function of trees and canopy cover may spend less money developing additional stormwater management infrastructure.



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Infiltration rates for forested areas are 10-15 times greater than for equivalent areas of turf and grass. During a heavy rain, a healthy forest can absorb as much as 20,000 gallons of water in an hour. Many municipalities are now charging businesses and homeowners a stormwater utility fee based on the amount of impervious surface at their location.

- According to American Forests, the forests in Atlanta remove about 19 million pounds of air pollutants each year, worth about \$47 million a year.
- To meet state sewer standards, the City of Atlanta is spending \$240 million to counter effects associated with the loss of tree canopy.

- In Atlanta, the storm water retention capacity of the urban forest is worth about \$2.36 billion, or about \$85.9 million a year.
- Trees absorb and store an annual average of 13 pounds of carbon each year. Community trees across the United States store 6.5 million tons of carbon per year, resulting in a savings of \$22 billion in control costs.

Many residents use trees as one type of landscape tool for visual screening and noise reduction around their homes. Various types of trees can be planted at differing heights, distances and densities to mask noise and visual pollution that interferes with our quality of life. Trees make communities livable for people and soften the outline of masonry, metal and glass.

- Strategically placed trees around a home can reduce summer cooling costs by as much as 30%, while winter heating costs can be reduced by a similar percentage by the use of trees as windbreaks.
- Trees provide wildlife habitat, which includes food, water, shelter and places to raise young for birds and other animals.
- Trees can be planted on roadsides and throughout transportation systems and trails to make walking safer and more pedestrian friendly. Streets with little or no shade need to be repaved twice as often as those with tree cover.

### **Public Health Benefits**

Physical inactivity and obesity are on the rise. The majority of Americans are not active enough and do not meet suggested daily standards of moderate activity to reduce risk factors for chronic diseases such as heart, stroke, cancer and diabetes, creating significant costs to national health services. Trees are one way to encourage outdoor physical activity. Urban forests, parks and greenspaces have become increasingly popular as places to walk, run, bike and hike.

### [Fast Facts on Active Living](#)

The *Green Cities: Good Health* Web site states,



- “According to the Centers for Disease Control, 65% of U.S. adults are overweight and one in three are obese, putting them at increased risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, Type II diabetes, arthritis, cancer, and resulting in billions of dollars in annual medical costs.
- The character of a neighborhood has a significant affect on residents' physical activity. People in communities with abundant greenspace generally enjoy better health.
- People who use parks and open spaces are three times more likely to achieve recommended levels of physical activity than nonusers. People prefer nearby, attractive, and larger parks and open spaces for their activity.
- Childhood obesity has more than tripled in the past 30 years. Active living is one solution to turn back this trend. Tree lawns contribute to perceptions of more walkable streets, which can promote more physical activity in children and youth.
- In one study elderly people that had nearby parks, tree-lined streets, and space for taking walks showed higher longevity over a 5-year study period.”

For more information on **active living and trees** and the references for these facts, visit the *Green Cities: Good Health* Web site at the University of Washington.

Doctors are prescribing a dose of nature to improve wellness in adults and children. Nature is also an antidote to stress. For more Fast Facts on **wellness and physiology**, visit *Green Cities: Good Health*. (1)

Studies have identified a direct correlation between the amount of trees and grass in community common spaces and the use of those common spaces by residents, which leads to more opportunities for informal social interaction and greater relationships between neighbors. Research suggests that

trees afford a place for neighbors to meet and get to know each other which leads to less incidences of crime.

## Social Benefits

### Fast Facts on Crime

The *Green Cities: Good Health* Web site states,

- “According to the Federal Bureau of investigation, there are, on average, about 3,800 crime victims per 100,000 population in the U.S. each year.
- Among minor crimes, there is less graffiti, vandalism, and littering in outdoor spaces with natural landscapes than in comparable plant-less spaces.
- Public housing residents with nearby trees and natural landscapes reported 25% fewer acts of domestic aggression and violence. (Kuo and Sullivan, 2001)
- Public housing buildings with greater amounts of vegetation had 52% fewer total crimes, 48% fewer property crimes, and 56% fewer violent crimes than buildings with low amounts of vegetation.
- Studies of residential neighborhoods found that property crimes were less frequent when there were trees in the right-of-way, and more abundant vegetation around a house.
- In a study of community policing innovations, there was a 20% overall decrease in calls to police from the parts of town that received location-specific treatments. Cleaning up vacant lots was one of the most effective treatment strategies.
- Vegetation can be managed to create a reassuring environment, reduce fear, and increase citizen surveillance and defensible space. Principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) suggest how to achieve safer places.”

For more information on **crime and fear** with respect to trees and the references for these facts, visit the *Green Cities: Good Health* Web site at the University of Washington.





## Fast Fact on Reduced Risks

The *Green Cities: Good Health* Web site states,

- “Urban heat island effect occurs in built up areas. Parks can be up to 2°F cooler than the surrounding urban area in the day. Large numbers of trees and expansive green spaces across a city can reduce local air temperatures by up to 9°F.
- An increase of 343 trees/km<sup>2</sup> was associated with a 29% lower early childhood prevalence of asthma in New York City.
- Appealing and easily accessible green environments may motivate and encourage physical exercise. Activity in outdoor green spaces - at any level, intensity, duration, or type – has been associated with mental and physical benefits.
- Poorer people generally have poorer health. One study found that people who are exposed to green space have lower levels of illness and disease than other people of similar income. Physical environments that promote good health may reduce socioeconomic health inequalities.
- Community gardening may help improve one’s diet. Adults were 3.5 times more likely to consume at least five servings of fruit or vegetables a day if someone in their household had participated in a community gardening project within the last 12 months.”

For the references for these facts on reduced risks, visit the *Green Cities: Good Health* Web site at the University of Washington.

## Fast Facts on Mental Health and Function

The *Green Cities: Good Health* Web site states,

- “The experience of nature helps to restore the mind from the mental fatigue of work or studies, improving productivity and creativity.
- Contact with nature helps children to develop cognitive, emotional, and behavioral connections to nearby social and biophysical environments and is important for encouraging imagination and creativity, cognitive and intellectual development, and social relationships.
- Symptoms of ADD in children can be reduced through activity in green settings, thus “green time” can act as an effective supplement to traditional medicinal and behavioral treatments.

- Outdoor activities can help alleviate symptoms of Alzheimers, dementia, stress, and depression and improve cognitive function in those recently diagnosed with breast cancer.
- Exercise improves cognitive function, learning, and memory.
- Green spaces provide necessary places and opportunities for physical activity.
- Urban nature, when provided as parks and walkways and incorporated into building design, provides calming and inspiring environments and encourages learning, inquisitiveness, and alertness.”

For the references for these facts, visit the *Green Cities: Good Health* Web site at the University of Washington.



## Fast Facts on Work and Learning

The *Green Cities: Good Health* Web site states,

- “Experience of the natural world helps restore the mind from the mental fatigue of work or studies, and can improve productivity and stimulate creativity.
- College students with more natural views from their dorm windows have scored higher on tests of capacity to direct attention and rate themselves as able to function more effectively.
- Office workers report that plants make a more attractive, pleasant, and healthy work environment. Having views of plants from the workstation have been shown to decrease illness incidence, and the amount of self-reported sick leave.
- In studies of lower income households the greenness of a young person’s home or window views positively impacted cognitive functioning, ability to concentrate, and self-discipline.
- High School Campus cafeteria & classroom window views with greater quantities of trees and shrubs were positively associated with standardized test scores, graduation rates, %s of students planning to attend a four-year college and fewer occurrences of criminal behavior. (Matsuoka. 2010.)”

For more information on **reduced risks, mental health and function and work and learning** and the references for these facts, visit the *Green Cities: Good Health* Web site at the University of Washington.(1)

Urban trees in cities, gardens and parks make places more livable offer these opportunities. They create neutral places for people to come together to build relationships and they define community character. Trees can also be associated with specific places such as memories of past events, or a favorite tree climbed as a youth.

## Fast Facts on Community Building



The *Green Cities: Good Health* Web site states,

- “Physical features influence social contact among neighbors, and nature plays an important role in creating vital neighborhood spaces.
- A study in urban public housing found that the presence of well managed vegetation was very important feature in promoting the development of social ties within urban public housing.
- People prefer natural over hardscape settings, and preferences are predictors of the use of environments. A study found that urban residents dislike and fear treeless, empty common spaces. The addition of trees and grass dramatically changed their perceptions of those spaces.
- The presence, number, and location of trees strongly predicted the amount of time that inner-city residents actually spent in outdoor common spaces around urban public housing.
- More social activities were observed in public housing common spaces that had trees compared to treeless spaces of the same size.
- Older adults who have more exposure to green common spaces report a stronger sense of unity among residents within their local neighborhood, and experience a stronger sense of belonging to the neighborhood.
- Strong community relationships may result in individuals being more likely to work together to achieve common goals (e.g., cleaner and safer public spaces), to exchange information, and to maintain informal social controls (e.g., discouraging crime or other undesirable behaviors). These

situations can influence public health. Communities where residents express high mutual trust and reciprocity have been linked with lower homicide rates. Neighborhoods lacking social cohesion and community wellness conversely, have been related to social disorder and anxiety and depression.”

For more information on **community building** with trees and the references for these facts, visit the *Green Cities: Good Health* Web site at the University of Washington.



## Nature Deficit Disorder

Education.com states, ““A lack of routine contact with nature may result in stunted academic and developmental growth. This unwanted side-effect of the electronic age is called Nature Deficit Disorder (NDD). The term was coined by author Richard Louv in his book *Last Child in the Woods* in order to explain how our societal disconnect with nature is affecting today's children. Louv says we have entered a new era of suburban sprawl that restricts outdoor play, in conjunction with a plugged-in culture that draws kids indoors. But, as Louv presents in his book, the agrarian, nature-oriented existence hard-wired into human brains isn't quite ready for the overstimulating environment we've carved out for ourselves. Some children adapt. Those who don't develop the symptoms of NDD, which include attention problems, obesity, anxiety, and depression.”

Nature-deficit disorder is not a medical condition; it is a description of the human costs of alienation from nature. This alienation damages children and shapes adults, families, and communities. There are solutions, though, and they're right in our own backyards.””

The social trend of spending less time indoors can lead to many health problems in children and having a disconnect with nature. Research shows interaction with the natural environment plays an important role in children's development, including encouraging imagination and creativity, cognitive and intellectual development, and social relationships.

Research on attention-deficit disorder at the University of Illinois, shows exposure to nature can decrease ADD symptoms. “Green time” can act as an effective supplement to traditional medicinal and behavioral treatments.

### Other Tree Benefits

New studies linking trees to nature within has some notable findings. Results suggest that the natural environment may affect pregnancy outcomes. Donovan et al., *Health & Place*, 2011, found that a 10% increase in tree canopy cover within 50m of a house reduced the number of small for gestational age births by 1.42 per 1000 births. And, new research is also being done to measure the links between trees and veterans with regard to stress disorders, and disengagement with family and community.

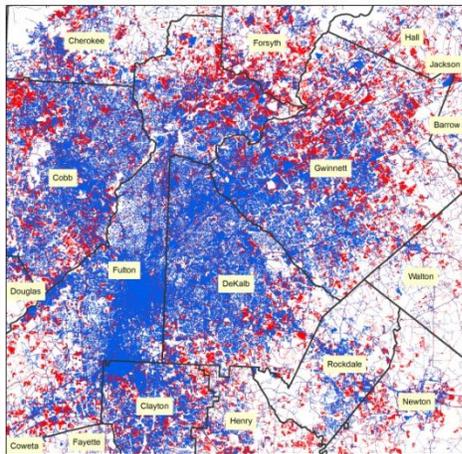
Georgia also helped to create green jobs in the private sector in 2010 and 2011 through tree planting as nursery professionals, tool and equipment sales, landscape architects, certified arborists and planners who were hired or contracted with economic stimulus funds. Jobs created or retained contributed to sustainable operations including reducing the footprint of infrastructure, providing technical assistance to communities and state and local organizations in maintaining forested lands and individual trees in urban and community settings, improving strategic community forestry planning efforts and identifying appropriate tree species and sites for expanding forest cover.

Funding was used to plant and care for trees in watersheds, along streets, city greenspaces, parks and schools to restore ecological health. Urban forest professionals guided the strategic placement of trees for economic and environmental benefits such as water and air quality, climate change, energy savings, greenhouse gas reduction and migration of storm water runoff.

### Tree loss and impervious surface gain, Georgia’s trends (1991-2008)

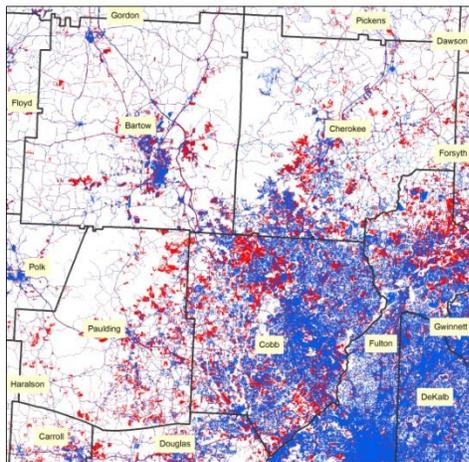
Tree loss in correlation to urban development is a growing concern for leaders in Georgia. A study conducted by the University of Georgia and the Natural Resources Spatial Analysis Laboratory (NARSAL) shows Georgia gaining an average of 106 acres of impervious surface a day from urban sprawl including new construction such as parking lots, buildings, shopping centers and residential development. Metro Atlanta makes up one half of the state’s impervious surface gain.

While the metro Atlanta region is losing large areas of greenspace to development, the rate of greenspace loss is half of what it was in the 1990s. This study provides a birds-eye view of land use change for the state and can be used to help us understand the environmental impacts of land-use decisions.



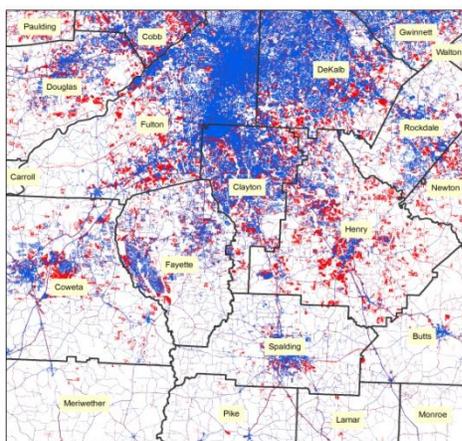
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Gain 1991- 2005**

■ 1991 Urban  
■ 2005 Urban



**Impervious Surface  
Gain 1991- 2005**

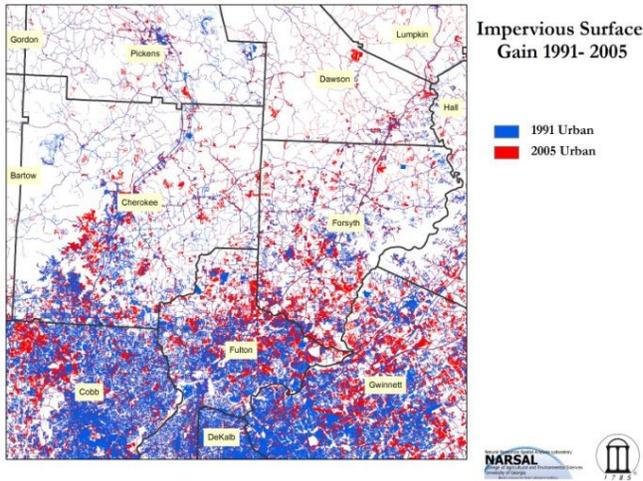
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**Impervious Surface  
Gain 1991- 2005**

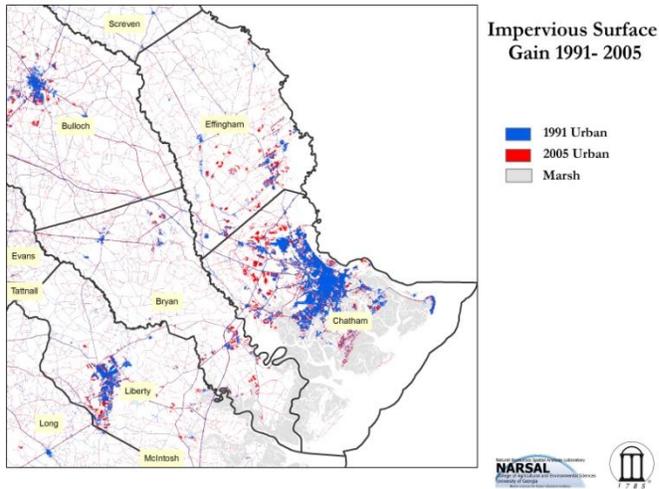
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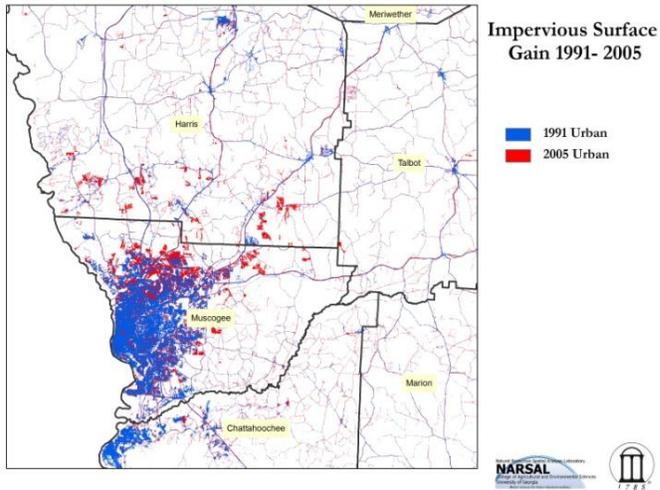


In Metro Atlanta, for every one acre of tree canopy lost, one acre of impervious surface was gained in the 16-county Atlanta metro region between 1991 and 2005. This statistic is up from a 2001 study that illustrated for every two acres of tree canopy lost, only one acre of urban development replaced the forested land.

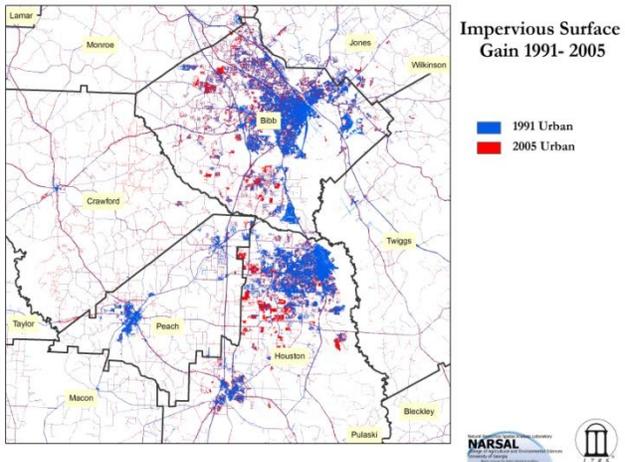
The Savannah area has been experiencing tremendous growth pressures. Tree canopy decreased by 28% in Bryan, Chatham and Effingham Counties between 1991 and 2005, while impervious surface increased by 272%.



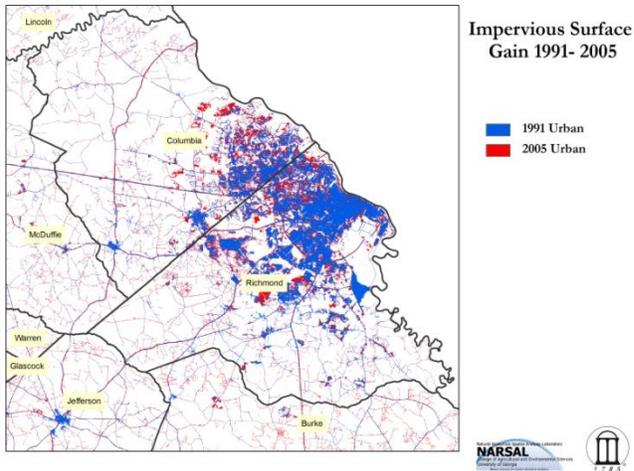
The Columbus area lost 8% of tree cover and gained in impervious surfaces by 71%.



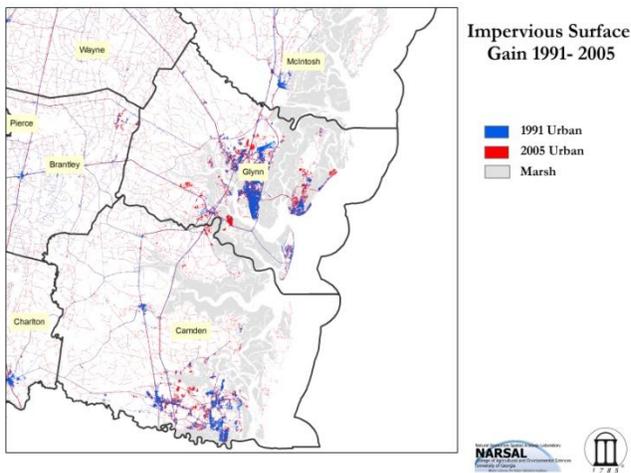
The Macon area lost 10% of tree cover and gained in impervious surfaces by 41%.



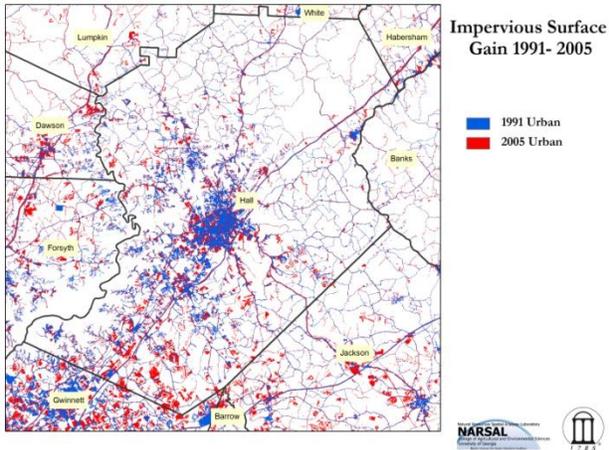
The Augusta area lost 13% of tree cover and gained in impervious surfaces by 49%.



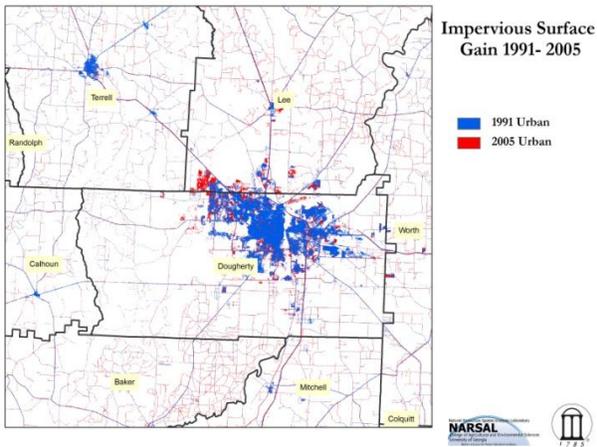
Glynn County lost 8% of tree cover and gained in impervious surfaces by 66% and Camden County which lost 5% of tree cover and gained 71% in impervious surfaces.



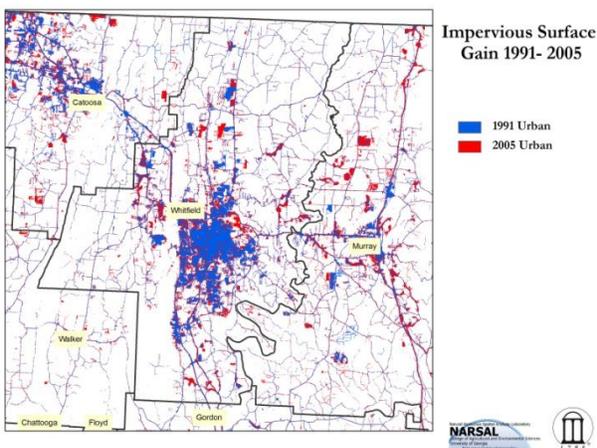
The Gainesville area lost 15% of tree cover and gained in impervious surfaces by 106%.



The Albany area lost 7% of tree cover and gained in impervious surfaces by 52%.



Whitfield County gained 4% in tree cover and also gained in impervious surfaces by 78%.



To view maps and data for Georgia counties, visit <http://narsal.ecology.uga.edu/>.

## The Sustainable Community Forestry Program of the Georgia Forestry Commission

While most traditional forestry programs serve the individual rural landowner, the Georgia Forestry Commission's Sustainable Community Forestry Program (SCFP) delivers important messages about the benefits of forests and their value to Georgia's economy and environment to additional important decision-makers and influencers including residents, corporations, legislators and the media. By assisting in the care of trees backyards and communities, the SCFP helps people be more aware of and better understand broad, landscape-scale issues and how they can be addressed through the protection and management of Georgia's forest resources.

### Professional Expertise

Through the SCFP, professional expertise is available to assist community leaders in developing public policies to reduce the loss of tree canopy cover. On-site consultations regarding tree preservation on building sites and the adoption of conservation easements helps lead to cleaner, healthier, more appealing and higher quality of life places for people to live, work and visit. The SCFP is comprised of a professional, outgoing, dynamic team and serves 77% of Georgia's population that lives in urban or urbanizing areas.

In addition to public policy development assistance, SCFP Foresters help predict and identify high fire risk areas in the wildland-urban interface to protect people and property from the danger of catastrophic wildfires. More than one-half of Georgia's homes are located in the wildland-urban interface where development mixes with forests and other rural land.

SCFP Foresters also provide solutions to reduce the impact of forest fragmentation which imperils water quality and water quantity, increases invasive species and endangers forest health. They work with partnering agencies to provide the most up-to-date GIS maps and data linking public and private land, introducing the concept of green infrastructure for long range, landscape-scale planning, and providing opportunities for recreation, wildlife corridors and better air and water quality.

### Serving Cities and Counties

SCFP Foresters are positioned as thought leaders and experts in communities. Their knowledge is unparalleled by any other Georgia agency or organization. They provide guidance and an unbiased opinion to landscape architects, nursery professionals, tree service operators, Master Gardeners, arborists, builders and members of community tree boards each year on a variety of topics including tree inventories, tree ordinances, tree species selection, soil requirements and needed root space in hardscapes and parking lots, hazard trees, roadside trees, storm damage mitigation and planning, green infrastructure, energy conservation with trees, strategic planning for tree boards, volunteer recruitment and retention, budgets, Arbor Day, utility pruning, certified arborists, drought, flooding and tree care throughout the year. Foresters assist more than 280 cities and counties and provide technical assistance and training of local governments and their constituents in support of U&CF planning, education, program development and increasing communities' capacity to realize the benefits of and self manage its urban forest.



The Sustainable Community Forestry Program (SCFP) of the Georgia Forestry Commission was formed in 2005. Eleven state-funded positions were originally established to assist communities in managing their urban forestry programs, including a program manager, administrative assistant, urban and community forestry coordinator, partnership coordinator, and 7 regional urban foresters. In 2009, due to decreasing budgets, the metropolitan Atlanta and Columbus forester positions were eliminated.

Currently, the GFC has one half-time SCFP program manager, an urban & community forestry coordinator, partnership coordinator, and three regional urban foresters and uses urban & community forestry federal funds received from the U.S. Forest Service to help supplement state funds for salaries. The Regional urban forester in South Georgia works part time on community forestry and part time on forest management.

The loss of positions has resulted in a loss of partnership opportunities between GFC and various nonprofit organizations such as Trees Columbus and the Piedmont Land Trust. Upon the retirement of community forestry staff, more than 120 total years of experience and relationship-building internally within GFC and externally have been lost.

As the number of SCFP foresters decreases, it becomes more challenging to maintain the number of assists, which could lead to a reduction in the amount of performance-based federal dollars received for Urban & Community Forestry by the U.S. Forest Service annually. The following is an example from 2011.

Project	Impact in 2011	\$\$ impact	notes
Tree City USA	137 cities	\$7,452,006	7 <sup>th</sup> most in USA
Storm Damage	10 cities	\$100,000	hazardous trees identified
Georgia ReLeaf	5 cities	\$90,549	private \$\$ to replant tornado areas
Making the Shade	14 schools	\$200,000	plant trees on playgrounds
The Grove	16,000+	\$324,000	social network - tree web site
Etowah	critical area	\$187,000	assess watershed (with GIS)

Arbor Day	182 events	\$18,200	annual celebration - tree planting
Trail of Trees	5,300 students	\$25,000	schools - tree education
GA Urban Forest Council	200 arborists	\$75,000	formal workshops for arborists
ARRA tree planting	1,029 trees	\$600,000	street tree planting to create jobs
SCFP education	1,172 events	\$1,497,870	direct education and volunteers

Several programs created by SCFP remained threatened with decreasing budgets.

### Media Outreach

The SCFP has made significant impacts with media relations in large media markets across the state. Several GFC news items and message points including biomass and the bioenergy corridor, hemlock wooly adelgid, carbon sequestration, tree canopy loss and impervious surface gain and wildfire have been pitched to major media markets and remained in the public eye through the work and financial support of the SCFP in conjunction with the communications department. The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Georgia Trend*, *Atlanta Woman* magazine, 11 Alive, WSB, The Weather Channel, CNN and NPR have reported on GFC in a positive manner. Each of these mentions is worth thousands of dollars in exposure. With new technologies, social media and the speed of these new networks, GFC has remained a thought leader, but is quickly losing ground in maintaining media relationships, a consistent brand and messaging, a dynamic Web site and image.

The chairman of the *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*, Glenn Vaughn was inspired through working with an SCFP Forester to write two articles relating to the value of community trees. During his service as chairman, a series of articles on forest land management and community trees were published.

### 2012 Program Changes

The findings of the Southern Forest Futures Project (Ware and Greis) validate *Georgia's Forest Action Plan 2010* and the GFC Sustainable Community Forestry Program's (SCFP) need to take new approaches to address a landscape-scale approach, urbanization issues and increased population. Due to a variety of changes from Georgia's landscape to overall U&CF program objectives, the SCFP will deliver a change in program focus in Fiscal Year 2012.

These changes will help SCFP staff implement *Georgia's Forest Action Plan 2010* considering decreased federal allocation trends, the increasing need to improve Community Accomplishment Report System (CARS) numbers to be more competitive to increase our U&CF federal allocation, and new objectives for the U&CF/SCFP program on both the federal and state levels. Currently, fewer communities are applying for and receiving assistance through Georgia's U&CF Financial Assistance program. This is due to decreases in grant funding, in the number of U&CF grant applications received and the number SCFP staff available to guide communities through the grant process. With fewer funds available for the U&CF Financial Assistance program it is not as effective as it once was at reaching communities across the state.

The GFC will suspend the U&CF Financial Assistance program (with exception of *Making the Shade*) in FY 2012 and then as long as deemed necessary and utilize sub-grant money received to support salaries of GFC staff and develop circuit rider arborist programs to provide arborist services to communities with definite need as detailed in the CARS report.

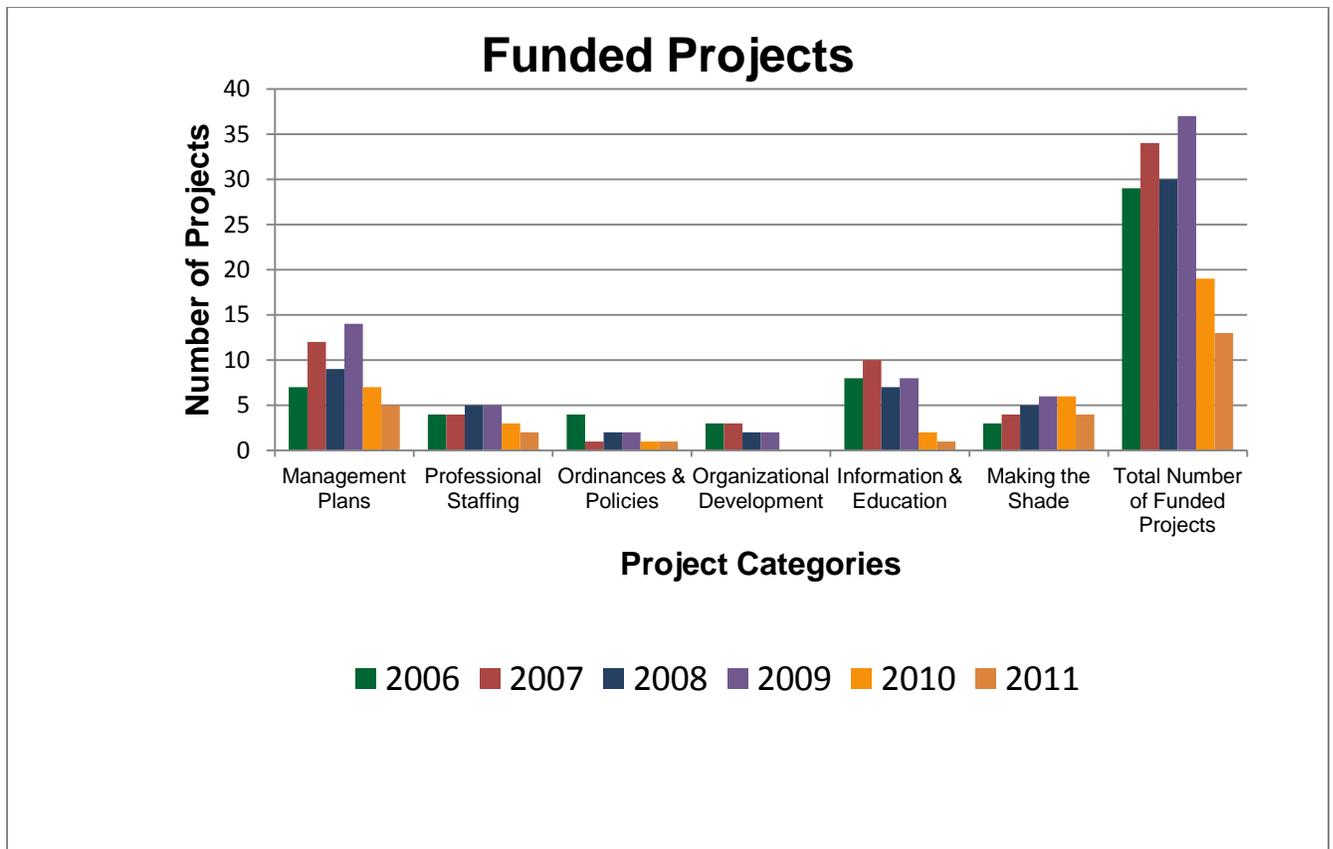
To compensate for a loss in SCFP staff, an *Ask The Arborist* Web portal was also developed to reach customers with information about their individual trees via email. More information about this program is available in this report.

## Urban & Community Forestry Grants

The Sustainable Community Forestry Program (SCFP) is the only program in the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) which targets customers in urban areas and communities. In FY11, GFC funded 13 projects, and allocated \$408,702 with Urban & Community Forestry (U&CF) federal grant funds. In FY10, GFC funded 19 projects and allocated \$512,046 in federal grant money. 3 year urban grant totals – helped over 100 communities (\$3.9 million in impact).

The Urban & Community Forestry Financial Assistance Program has assisted more than 100 communities in the past 10 years. In addition, the GFC has helped establish and fund staff positions for the Savannah Tree Foundation, Tree Columbus, Coastal-Bryan Tree Foundation and the Georgia Arborist Association.

U&CF funds channeled through SCFP have provided numerous benefits to communities, including opportunities for staffing, tree inventories, tree management plans, and educational outreach. In FY 2011, for example, 5 projects were funded for management plans/inventories, 2 projects needing professional staffing, 1 project developing tree ordinances and policies, and 1 project providing educational outreach. Since FY06, the U&CF Grant program has assisted communities with the completion of 54 tree assessments/management plans, staffing 23 arborist/forester positions, creating 23 tree ordinances, developing 10 tree advocacy groups, and conducting 36 education projects.



Since 1999 when U&CF funding was first received, over \$4.5 million dollars in grant funding has been awarded to Georgia communities for urban forestry projects. By matching the grant funds, communities have invested more \$10 million dollars in Georgia’s urban forests over the last 10 years through the assistance of GFC’s Urban and Community Forestry program.

#### Urban and Community Forestry Successes

Barbara Johnson and Mary Dugan of the City of Jefferson’s Heritage Tree Council have recently become involved in urban and community forestry and attend almost every workshop and program to become better educated about urban and community forestry. In 2008, the City received a grant to fund a tree inventory. In 2009, they received 2 grants. Through the first they are hiring a consulting urban forester to coordinate all key elements of a comprehensive and sustainable community forest management program in the City of Jefferson. The second grant with the City of Jefferson is a *Making the Shade* project. The Making the Shade Program, created by the Georgia Forestry Commission in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service, is designed to create healthier, shaded playground areas by strategically planting trees which will help reduce surface temperatures of playground equipment that can cause serious and painful burns to children, reducing ultraviolet radiation which causes skin damage and improving air quality which lessen the risk for children with asthma and other lung related issues. The project with Jefferson will plant shade trees at Hughley Park, a community playground used throughout

the year primarily by families and children living in the housing complex nearby and by youth involved with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Jackson County. This project has been awarded \$2,000.

City of Oxford Tree Board – held a regional tree board roundtable.

The United Government of Athens-Clarke County (ACC) to create a user -friendly website for the ACC Community Tree Program that will provide a wide variety of educational materials including information about the Community Tree Program, the Community Tree Management Ordinance, Arboriculture and Forestry.

The University of Georgia's Physical Plant Division, Grounds Dept. completed Phase II of an ongoing GIS tree inventory for the Campus Arboretum. Development of an accompanying tree care plan and renovation of an existing website for the arboretum walking tour will help to promote stewardship of this significant cultural and natural resource.

The City of Young Harris to create the Children's Interpretive Walk at Corn Creek Preserve which will provide a connection between environment, wildlife, trees, and humanity. This project hopes to help children and adults to become more knowledgeable about the benefits of tree canopies and our forest resources and thereby empower them to protect the future of mountain environments.

In 2007 and 2008, the National Wildlife Federation was awarded funding to integrate Urban Forestry into their Earth Tomorrow program. This education program for high school students in underserved areas exposed teenagers from the inner city to environmental issues. With a focus on Urban Forestry, these grant projects brought teens to the woods to learn how to identify, care for and manage trees and other natural resources. In addition, the teens participated in events such as Legislative Day in which they traveled to the state capitol to meet and discuss UF issues with their local legislators. Creation of media outreach tools and attendance at Forestry Day events by the teens were also significant results of these grant projects.

In addition, the U&CF Financial Assistance Program has also helped fund research in the state of Georgia. The Georgia Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation is involved in research and pollination efforts to bring back chestnuts.

## **2010**

For 2010/2011, the U&CF program awarded \$162,046 to 13 U&CF projects and 6 Making the Shade projects. This grant funding resulted in:

- 10 tree inventories and management plans
- 2 tree ordinances
- 225 shade trees and 300 seedlings planted at 6 schools
- 4 funded positions/contracts for arborist or educational services
- 6 tree care training workshops
- Outline and advisory committee for a Valuation of Conservation Easements guidebook for tax assessors
- 3 Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on tree issues

## **2009**

- \$ 431,558 allocated from Federal funds for U&CF Grant Program

- 48 applications received, 37 funded
- \$1,004,208 total cost of funded projects
- \$ 570,812 in match anticipated (\$223,705 in cash and \$347,107 through in-kind goods and services)
- The project categories were changed from previous years to reflect the USDA Forest Service's CARS reporting process and funding allocation method. New project categories consist of:
  - Management Plan/Inventory (46% of funding awarded)
  - Professional Staffing (18% of funding awarded)
  - Ordinances and Policies (4% of funding awarded)
  - Organizational Development (3% of funding awarded)
  - Information and Education (22% of funding awarded)
  - Making the Shade (7% of funding awarded)
- 31% of funding awarded to Tree/Environmental Groups
- 53% of funding awarded to City/County Governments
- 16% of funding awarded to Educational Institutions
- September 1, 2009 was the start date for the projects and they were completed by August 31, 2010.

## **2008**

- \$ 310,212 allocated from Federal funds for U&CF Grant Program
- 43 applications received, 30 funded
- \$893,685 total cost of funded projects
- \$ 576,403 in match anticipated (\$200,430 in cash and \$375,973 through in-kind goods and services)
- The project categories were changed from previous years to reflect the USDA Forest Service's CARS reporting process and funding allocation method. New project categories consist of:
  - Management Plan/Inventory (27% of funding awarded)
  - Professional Staffing (19% of funding awarded)
  - Ordinances and Policies (4% of funding awarded)
  - Organizational Development (8% of funding awarded)
  - Information and Education (33% of funding awarded)
  - Making the Shade (9% of funding awarded)
- 22% of funding awarded to Tree/Environmental Groups
- 51% of funding awarded to City/County Governments
- 25% of funding awarded to Educational Institutions
- 2% of funding awarded to Keep Georgia Beautiful Affiliates
- September 1, 2008 was the start date for the projects and they were completed by August 31, 2009.

## **2007**

- \$ 423,948 allocated from Federal funds for U&CF Grant Program
- 43 applications received, 34 funded (May 11, 2007 application deadline)
- \$436,398 in funding awarded. Over allocated by \$12,450 in anticipation of turned back funds at end of grant cycle.
- \$1,246,085 total cost of funded projects
- \$ 809,687 in match anticipated (\$466,790 in cash and \$342,897 through in-kind goods and services)
- Project categories consisted of:
  - Management Plan/Inventory (43% of funding awarded)
  - Professional Staffing (16% of funding awarded)

- Ordinances and Policies (1% of funding awarded)
- Organizational Development (7% of funding awarded)
- Information and Education (28% of funding awarded)
- Making the Shade (5% of funding awarded)
- 29% of funding awarded to Tree/Environmental Groups
- 45% of funding awarded to City/County Governments or Government Agencies
- 26% of funding awarded to Educational Institutions
- September 1, 2007 was the start date for the projects/ projects are to be completed by August 31, 2008
- After 2 pilot Making the Shade projects in Athens and Marietta in 2006/2007, 4 schools were awarded funding for Making the Shade projects in 2007/2008.
- In 2007, state representatives, state senators and Congressional representatives were once again invited to participate in the grant signings for the organizations in their home districts. 129 letters were mailed informing the legislators of the grants awarded to their constituents. 27 legislators made contact with GFC requesting additional information about the grants or the grant signings. 5 legislators attended a U&CF grant signing.

## **2006**

- \$ 281,170 allocated from Federal funds for U&CF Grant Program
- 44 applications received, 26 funded (May 12, 2006 application deadline)
- \$1,027,730 total cost of funded projects
- \$ 746,560 in match anticipated (\$526,275 in cash and \$220,285 through in-kind goods and services)
- The project categories were changed from previous years to reflect the USDA Forest Service's Community Accomplishment Report System (CARS) reporting process and funding allocation method. New project categories consist of:
  - Management Plan/Inventory (30% of funding awarded)
  - Professional Staffing (23% of funding awarded)
  - Ordinances and Policies (6% of funding awarded)
  - Organizational Development (7% of funding awarded)
  - Information and Education (35% of funding awarded)
- 18% of funding awarded to Tree/Environmental Groups
- 38% of funding awarded to City/County Governments
- 11% of funding awarded to Educational Institutions
- 12% of funding awarded to Keep Georgia Beautiful Affiliates
- For 2006, state representatives, state senators and Congressional representatives were invited to participate in the grant signings for the organizations in their home districts. 142 letters were mailed informing the legislators of the grants awarded to their constituents. 32 legislators made contact with GFC requesting additional information about the grants or the grant signings. 12 legislators attended a U&CF grant signing.
- 25 of 26 projects were completed resulting in \$476,425 in match and \$751,156 in total project costs.
- 1 grant recipient (City of Hapeville) returned their grant award in full (\$8,000).
- 5 grant recipients returned small amounts of their grant awards (\$2,438).
- In total \$10,438 in awarded grant funding was returned for a return rate of less than 4%.
- All returned grant awards were reallocated to other grant projects including 3 Making the Shade projects.

## Tree City USA – Tree Campus USA – Tree Line USA

The Tree City USA, Tree Campus USA and Tree Line USA programs are sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation, in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters. In 2011, 139 cities, counties or towns, seven colleges or universities and two utilities were certified in Georgia. There are many benefits of participating in these programs, including providing a framework for action, enhancing education, and building a positive public image, and citizen and student pride.

### Tree City USA



Columbus, Georgia became the first official Tree City USA recognized in Georgia in 1978. Four standards must be met to become a Tree City USA: Tree Board of Tree Department; Tree Ordinance; Community Forestry Program with an Annual Budget of at least \$2 Per Capita; and an Arbor Day Observance and Proclamation. In 2011, the town of Buckhead in Morgan County was Georgia's smallest Tree City USA, with a population of 219. Atlanta is the largest with a population of 402,000. 29% of Georgia's population lives in a Tree City USA.

There are many incentives for being a part of these programs. Meeting the four standards provides initial direction for an urban or community forestry program. Like the first rung on a ladder, the standards help get a community started toward annual, systematic management of its tree resources.

Education begins with discussion of the standards and getting organized to apply for status. The desire for Tree City USA recognition leads to contacts with the Georgia Forestry Commission which can set in motion aid from a variety of professionals in the form of technical advice and other assistance.

Being a part of this nationwide program presents the kind of image that most citizens want to have for the place they live or conduct business. Signage at community entrances indicates to visitors and prospective businesses that the community cares about its environment and the quality of life may be better here. It has even been known to be a factor in attracting conferences to the city. This reason alone caused a motel owner to start action for his community to join the network.

Community pride is sometimes a less tangible benefit. Gaining and retaining Tree City USA recognition is an award to the tree workers, managers, volunteers, tree board members and others who work on behalf of better care of a community's trees. Non-involved citizens, too, often share a sense of pride

that theirs is a Tree City USA. This may translate to better care of trees on private property or a willingness to volunteer in the future.

In Georgia, financial bonuses through grant programs such as Georgia ReLeaf are given to Tree City USA communities when allocations of grant money are made for trees or forestry programs. There are invariably more requests than available funds when grants are available through state or federal agencies. If requests are equally worthy, some officials tend to have more confidence in communities that have demonstrated the foresight of becoming a Tree City USA.

The Arbor Day Foundation provides a beautiful walnut-mounted plaque, a large Tree City USA flag, and special highway signs for community entrances to each Tree City USA. Presentation of the Tree City USA award and the celebration of Arbor Day with city officials also offers excellent publicity opportunities and satisfaction for the individuals involved, in addition to providing one more way to reach large numbers of people with information about tree care. "This is advertising that money can't buy - and it is free!"

More than \$20 million is spent by Tree City USA communities in Georgia on urban forest management and the average per capita expenditure for a community forestry program in Georgia is \$7.34.

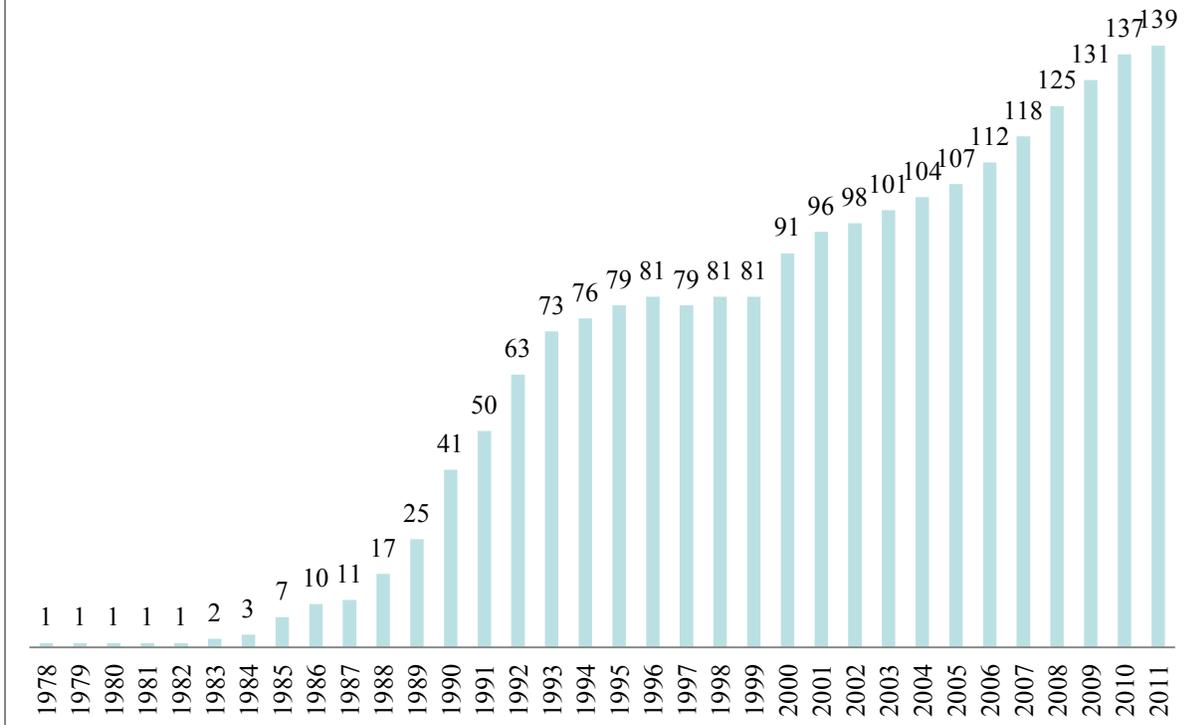
The following cities have been added since 2006:

Grey	2011
Mountain Park	2011
Nashville	2011
Tybee Island	2011
Ball Ground	2010
Culloden	2010
Decatur	2010
Forsyth	2010
Jasper	2010
Jenkinsburg	2010
Vienna	2010
Wrightsville	2010
Chattahoochee Hills	2009
Commerce	2009
Doraville	2009
Fayetteville	2009
Fort Stewart/Hunter	2009
Milton	2009

Pooler	2009
Sandy Springs	2009
Yatesville	2009
Clarkesville	2008
Hazlehurst	2008
Kennesaw	2008
Monroe	2008
Pine Lake	2008
Sharpsburg	2008
Harlem	2007
Lilburn	2007
Mansfield	2007
Roberta	2007
Royston	2007
Elberton	2006
Evans	2006
Fort Valley	2006
St. Mary's	2006
Watkinsville	2006

# Number of GA Tree City USA Communities

■ Number of GA Tree City USA Communities



## Tree City USA Growth Awards

The Tree City USA Growth Award is provided by The Arbor Day Foundation, in cooperation with the National Association of State Foresters and the USDA Forest Service, to recognize environmental improvement and encourage higher levels of tree care throughout America. This award is designed not only to recognize achievement, but also to communicate new ideas and help the leaders of all Tree City USAs plan for improving community tree care. Categories include education and public relations, partnerships, planning and management and tree planting and maintenance.



The City of Decatur, Georgia

## Tree Campus USA

Tree Campus USA was created in the fall of 2008 to encourage and recognize best tree management practices and to engage students in the care of their campus forest.



In Georgia, nine colleges or universities are recognized by The Arbor Day Foundation for their efforts to plant and maintain trees: Georgia Tech, Gwinnett Tech, Albany Tech, Macon State, Emory University, the University of Georgia, The University of West Georgia, Agnes Scott College and Valdosta State. These institutions have met five standards for becoming a Tree Campus USA: tree advisory committee; tree care plan; tree program with dedicated annual expenditures; Arbor Day observance; and a service learning project. These institutions have met five standards for becoming a Tree Campus USA: Campus Tree Advisory Committee; Campus Tree Care Plan; Campus Tree Program with Dedicated Annual Expenditures; Arbor Day Observance; and a Service Learning Project.

In 2011, 95,813 students attend a recognized Tree Campus USA college or university in Georgia. The largest campus was the University of Georgia in Athens, GA (115,452) and the smallest campus was Albany Technical College in Albany, GA (77,434). \$1,548,496.00 was spent by tree campuses in Georgia on campus community forestry and the average per capita expenditure for Tree Campus USA colleges and universities in Georgia was \$2.05.



Georgia Tech



Georgia Tech

## Tree Line USA



The Tree Line USA program promotes the dual goals of safe, reliable electric service and abundant, healthy trees within utility service areas. The program seeks to promote best practices in utility arboriculture and public education through five standards: Quality Tree Care (The utility follows industry standards for pruning, planting, removals, and trenching and tunneling near trees); Annual Worker training in best practices; Tree Planting and Public Education; Tree-Based Energy Conservation Program; and an Arbor Day Celebration. There are two Tree Line USAs in Georgia: Snapping Shoals Electric Membership Corporation and Georgia Power which serve more than 2 million customers combined.

Tree City, Tree Campus and Tree Line USA would not be possible in Georgia without the support of more than 700 volunteers who serve on Tree Boards and Tree Campus Advisory Committees. In addition, local GFC staff members help facilitate annual re-certifications and hundreds of Arbor Day programs. This commitment contributes to Georgia's rank as tied for seventh in the nation for number of Tree City USA communities, tied for third in the nation for number of Tree Campus USAs, and 26th in the nation for Tree Line USA.

## Community Accomplishment Reporting System (CARS)

The U. S. Forest Service has a long-term goal: to improve condition & extent of tree and forest cover in cities, suburbs, & towns nationwide by assisting communities with developing their own local, sustainable urban and community forestry programs and by encouraging communities to adopt and support four key program elements that define *managing* and *developing* communities.

Annually, the Georgia Forestry Commission measures whether or not cities or counties have four key program elements and reports this information to the U.S. Forest Service through CARS. The results from this report help the U.S. Forest Service determine the amount of U&CF federal funding Georgia will receive in its annual allocation.

Four Key Program Elements:

- Arborist on staff - Hired or contracted for professional U&CF staff
- Tree group - Have an active community advocacy or advisory organization
- Management plan - Developed and implemented a forest management plan
- Tree ordinance - Have adopted ordinances or policies that focus on planting, protecting and maintaining their forest

Managing communities have achieved all 4 elements. Developing communities have achieved at least one of these elements.



Greg Levine, Trees Atlanta



Habitat for Humanity Tree Planting

Community leaders can build a sustainable urban forestry program by implementing tree inventories, ordinances and land-use plans and by establishing advocacy groups and networks of certified arborists, planners, and landscape architects. These sustainable programs minimize the loss of trees while maximizing their benefits.

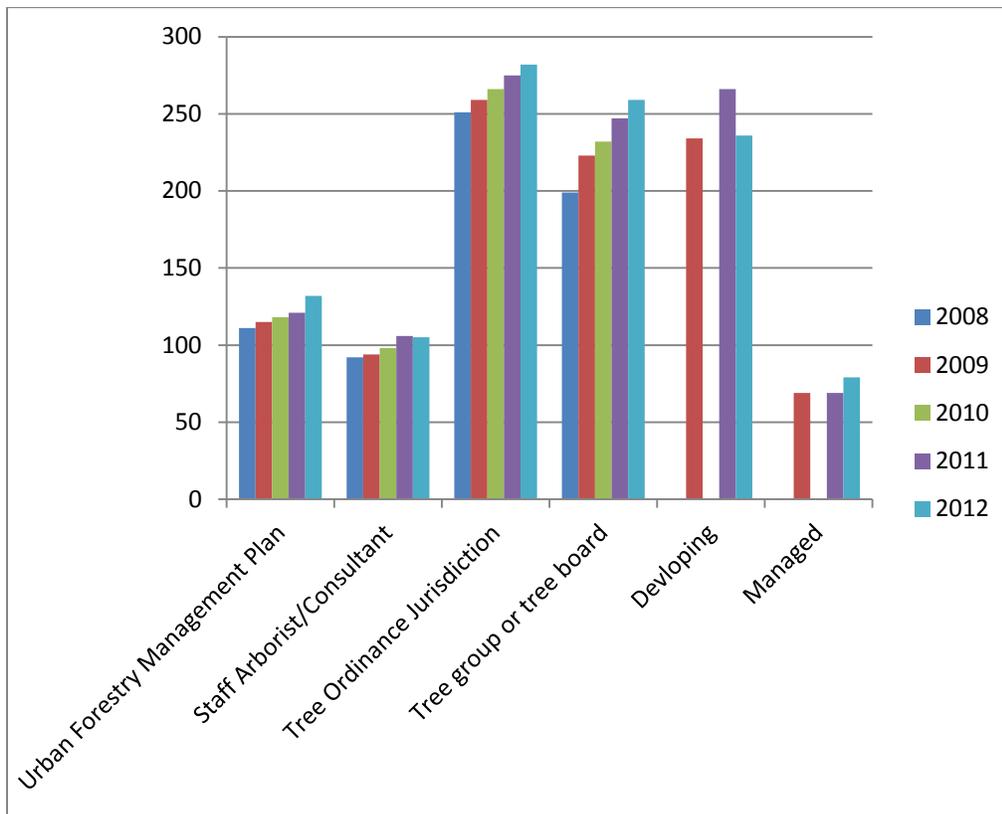
The following is a report from federal fiscal year 12 (October 1, 2011 through September 31, 2012).

**FY 2012 Georgia CARS Report**

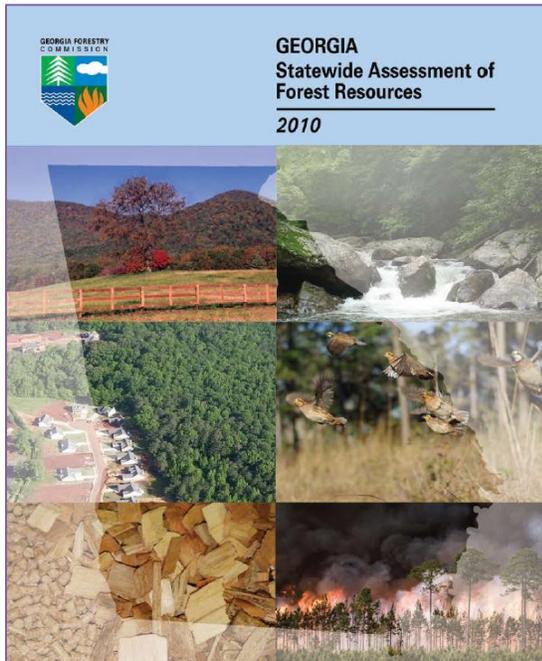
Category	Measure	Result
<b>OUTCOMES</b>		
1.	Percent of population living in communities managing programs to plant, protect and maintain their urban and community trees and forests.	43.16%
2.	Percent of population living in communities developing programs and/or activities to plant, protect and maintain their urban and community trees and forests.	26.06%
<b>OUTPUTS</b>		
1.	Number of people living in communities provided educational, technical	5,970,309

	and/or financial assistance.	
2.	Number of people living in communities that are developing programs/activities for their urban and community trees and forests.	2,247,715
3.	Number of people living in communities managing their urban and community trees and forests	3,722,594
4.	Number of communities with active urban & community tree and forest management plans developed from professionally-based resource assessments/inventories	132
5.	Number of communities that employ or retain through written agreement the services of professional forestry staff who have at least one of these credentials: (1) degree in forestry or related field and (2) ISA certified arborist or equivalent professional certification	105
6.	Number of communities that have adopted and can present documentation of local/statewide ordinances or policies that focus on planting, protecting, and maintaining their urban and community trees and forests	282
7.	Number of communities with local advocacy/ advisory organizations, such as, active tree boards, commissions, or non-profit organizations that are formalized or chartered to advise and/or advocate for the planting, protection, and maintenance of urban and community trees and forests	259
8.	Number of hours of volunteer service logged. (An agency-wide consistent methodology to be developed to track volunteer hours)	65,383
9.	State offered community grant program in current fiscal year	Yes
10.	Number of communities receiving financial assistance awarded during the Federal FY 2012 through a state managed community grant program	5
11.	Amount of Federal (USFS) funding to States	397,742
<b>DEMANDS</b>		
1.	Number of people living in communities that have the potential to develop management programs for their trees and forests with assistance from UCF technical, financial and/or educational program services.	8,624,457
2.	Number of people living in communities not managing, or developing programs to manage, their urban and community trees and forests.	2,654,148
<b>EFFICIENCY</b>		
1.	Federal (USFS) dollar cost or expenditure per capita in community assisted.	\$ 0.07

Yearly CARS data report					
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Urban Forestry Management Plan	111	115	118	121	132
Staff Arborist/Consultant	92	94	98	106	105
Tree Ordinance Jurisdiction	251	259	266	275	282
Tree group or tree board	199	223	232	247	259
Developing	NA	234	NA	266	236
Managed	NA	69	NA	69	79



## Georgia's Forest Action Plan



The 2008 Farm Bill required state forestry agencies to complete a Statewide Forest Resources Assessment and Strategy by June 2010. This Assessment was renamed the **State Forest Action Plan** and provides a comprehensive analysis of forest-related conditions, trends, threats and opportunities in the state and delineate priorities within rural and urban forest landscapes. Additionally, Georgia developed long term strategies for investing federal, state and other resources to manage these identified priority landscapes and issues while meeting national, regional and state themes or guidance.

### **Three national priorities and strategic objectives are:**

1. Conserve working forest landscapes.
  - Identify and conserve high-priority forest ecosystems and landscapes.
  - Actively and sustainably manage forests.
2. Protect forests from harm.
  - Identify, manage and reduce threats to forest and ecosystem health.
3. Enhance public benefits from trees and forests.

### **Georgia's State Forest Action Plan objectives are:**

- Protect and enhance water quality and quantity.
- Improve air quality and conserve energy.
- Assist communities in planning for and reducing wildfire risks.
- Maintain and enhance the economic benefits and values of trees and forests.
- Protect, conserve and enhance wildlife and fish habitat.

- Connect people to trees and forests.
- Manage and restore trees and forests to mitigate and adapt to global climate change.
- Strategies
- Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) will initiate updated tree canopy loss and impervious surface studies and help build local capacity to manage tree canopy.
- The Georgia Urban Forest Council and GFC will utilize grant and corporate funds to plant trees in communities.

Areas of focus include metropolitan Atlanta, north Georgia and the coast. Focus on high-profile projects in these areas. Potential projects include establishment of model stormwater management demonstration sites and ecosystem restoration.

## The Georgia Urban Forest Council



The Georgia Urban Forest Council is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization that sustains Georgia's green legacy by helping communities grow healthy trees. The Council was founded in 1988 by a group of visionary individuals who recognized the need for an organization to address urban forestry issues in Georgia. Today, the Council is an active group offering educational programs and resources and supported by a growing and diverse membership.

### Standards for Excellence

The Georgia Urban Forest Council has recently been re-certified for the Standards for Excellence Institute's Seal of Excellence for successfully completing the Standards for Excellence Certification Program. GUFC was the first nonprofit in Georgia to be certified under the national Standards accreditation program. Its initial certification was in 2008.

### Conferences and Educational Programming

The Georgia Urban Forest Council's (GUFC) education programs around the state, including workshops, quarterly programs, and annual conferences, covered the following topics from 2006 to 2011:



Pruning workshop



- Tree Selection...Right Tree, Right Place, Right Now
- Tree Selection, Stormwater Management, and Porous Pavement
- The Benefits of Trees in Corporate Campus Environments
- Weathering the Storms: Successfully Managing the Challenges of the Urban Forest
- New Trends in Urban Forestry
- Trees and the Law
- Trees and Utilities
- Connect...and Collaborate! Working Together for a Healthy Urban Forest
- Trees, Urban Design, and Stormwater
- LEED: A Luncheon and Learning Experience
- Structural Soils and Other Solutions
- Cisterns, Irrigation, and Sustainable Landscape Practices
- Basic Tree Care Workshops
- i-Tree training
- Trees, Urban Design, and Stormwater Management
- ISA Arborist Training and Certification (partnered with GAA and DeKalb Extension)
- Developing Winning Solutions,” presentations from individuals and groups who work through challenging situations that result in the conservation of trees and natural resources
- Clean Water, Clean Air – Community Trees and a Healthy Ecosystem
- What’s New in Urban Trees” and “Sustainability in the Urban Forest
- Understanding the Health of Your Urban Forest

- Advanced Fundamentals of Tree Appraisal
- Advanced Fundamentals of Tree Conservation on Development Sites
- Homeowner Workshop: Restoring Your Backyard Ecosystem
- The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of Tree Ordinances: The importance of developing a community forest vision, and then using this information in the development or revision of a tree ordinance;
- The Elements of Tree Health
- Trees and Transportation: The Urban Forest’s Role in the Safety, Health, and Quality of Life Along Georgia’s Roadways
- Who Are the LOHAS, and Why Should the Green Industry Care?
- New Tree Planting Systems
- The Basics of Tree Biology and Care
- Trees and Stormwater Management
- Tree Risk Assessment and Management
- Forest Pests in 2010: We’re Not in Kansas Anymore!”
- Trees & Green Infrastructure
- First Annual College Tree Canopy Conference - Tree Campus USA, Tree Inventories, and Trees & Security.
- Smart Retail Development: Money Grows on Trees!
- Show Me the Money! Funding and Other Resources for Urban Forestry Projects.
- Tree Maintenance for Local Governments Workshops (4)
- Trees, Sustainable Landscaping, and Stormwater
- Tree Health in Retail Areas
- Planting Native Trees and Battling Invasives
- Workshop: Certified Arborist Review
- 2nd Annual College Tree Canopy Conference: “Doing More with Less: Managing the Resources of Your Campus Urban Forest.
- Managing the Fear Factor: Trees, Pests, Storms, and the Law



GUFC Conference Bike Ride, Dalton GA.



### College Tree Canopy Conferences

The Georgia Urban Forest Council (GUFC) launched its annual College Tree Canopy Conference to help physical plant managers, landscape directors, grounds crews, administrators and others at Georgia's colleges and universities, both public and private, to grow and maintain a healthy campus urban forest.

GUFC's first annual College Tree Canopy Conference in 2010 at Macon State College presented such sessions as Tree Campus USA, Tree Inventories, and Trees & Security.

GUFC's second annual College Tree Canopy Conference in 2011 at Emory University in Decatur, Georgia was entitled "Doing More With Less: Managing the Resources of Your Campus Urban Forest."

The third College Tree Canopy Conference in 2012 was at Gwinnett Technical College in Lawrenceville, Georgia.

### Tree Legacy Grant program

During the years 2008 and 2009, Georgia Urban Forest Council administered The Tree Legacy Grant program through generous funding from The Home Depot Foundation. The grant program was created to fill a need in providing Georgia communities with financial assistance in urban forestry projects involving tree planting for environmental purposes. The grant was designed to allow communities to take a "big picture" approach to their urban forest, growing the forest in places to help mitigate the environmental impacts of stormwater, air pollution, impervious surfaces and other issues, creating healthier and better-managed urban forests. In 2008, GUFC awarded grants totaling \$50,000 to City of Americus, Trees Columbus, City of Tifton, and City of Pelham. In 2009, GUFC awarded Tree Legacy grant funding totaling \$50,000 to Forsyth County, Fayette County Resource Education Coalition, City of McDonough, and the Decatur Preservation Alliance.

## Georgia ReLeaf



### Georgia ReLeaf tree planting in the City of Ringgold

In 2011, GUFC and GFC launched the Georgia ReLeaf program. This program is spearheaded by the Georgia Urban Forest Council in partnership with the Georgia Forestry Commission to help restore the urban forests in towns and cities across Georgia that have been devastated by storms. \$20,000 in funding was distributed to the cities/towns of Ringgold, Trenton, Newborn, and Madison, which were all struck by tornadoes in early 2011.

### Arbor Jam

GUFC created an annual fundraising event, ArborJam, an evening of music, food, drink, and a silent auction, and held it in 2010 and 2011 at Atlanta's Sweetwater Brewery. Proceeds from ArborJam benefitted the continuing programs of the Georgia Urban Forest Council. In 2012, ArborJam benefitted one specific program, Georgia ReLeaf.

### Annual Awards

As a tribute to pioneer of urban forestry, GUFC created the Mary Helen Ray Legacy Award in 2010. The first award was given to Marcia Bansley, retired Executive Director of Trees Atlanta.

### Tree Advocacy Groups

Tree advocacy groups increase awareness of the benefits of the urban forest, coordinate the planting of thousands of trees, develop educational programs, and provide an essential conduit for volunteer action on the local level. Most of these groups collect membership dues and fundraise. Some of Georgia's tree advocacy groups are Trees Atlanta, Trees Bartow, Baxley Tree Fest, Coastal Bryan Tree Foundation, Cobb

Trees, Trees Columbus, Trees Conyers, Trees Covington, Georgia Urban Forest Council, Trees Macon, Marietta TreeKeepers, ParkPride, Roswell Urban Forest Foundation and Savannah Tree Foundation.



Savannah Tree Foundation receives award



## Arbor Day Events in Georgia



Robert Farris, Ross Tolleson, Lauren bush, Marcia Bansley, Governor Nathan Deal, Susan Granbery, Neil Norton, Mary Lynne Beckley, Cheryl Kortemeier, Gary White, Joe Burgess



Joe Burgess, Michael Barnett, Sandra DeWitt, Robert Farris at the Chattahoochee Nature Center

The Georgia Forestry Commission has been building on a well-established statewide Arbor Day program, initiated in 2003, by providing opportunities that allow key internal and external audiences to learn about GFC through SCFP programs, message points and The Grove by integrating Grassroots efforts. Through this plan, GFC continues to expand awareness with Georgia’s urban legislators, our partners and the LOHAS Consumer Market Segment.

The goal of the 2004 Georgia Arbor Day program was to inaugurate the concept of an integrated statewide program and educate urban and community tree supporters about the opportunities such a program would have on the state as well as each of their efforts. The 2004 Arbor Day theme was, “Plant it! Value It! Root for Healthy Trees!”

The goal of the 2005 program was to further define the program’s mission and build the internal networks and external communications vehicles in order to sustain the program for further growth through the theme, “Healthy Trees, Healthy Cities, Healthy People.” A celebration was held at the Capitol with Governor Sonny Perdue. The trend continued in 2006 relating to the theme, “Trees Make Dollars and Sense” with a celebration at Centennial Olympic Park in Atlanta.

The goals of the 2007 and 2008 programs and the message points were based on the SHADE publication and focused on the following themes, “Weathering the Storms” (Daffin Park, Savannah) and “Connect and Collaborate” (Columbus).

In 2009, the GFC and the Georgia Urban Forest Council (GUFC) focused on messages that resonate with urban audiences based on the results of a (r)evolution partners study which found the public responds to the message, “Create Your Legacy.” An event was held at Macon State College.

In 2010, having introduced the Georgia Grove, the GFC continued to focus on The Grove by having a celebration at the Chattahoochee Nature Center in Roswell which coincided with the Chattahoochee Challenge 10K Race.

In 2011, SCFP participated in Forestry Day at the Capitol on Feb. 9<sup>th</sup> and the release of new findings from UGA indicating the economic value of nature services of Georgia's forests. That same day, Governor Nathan Deal signed Georgia's Arbor Day Proclamation. Since the Arbor Day Foundation discontinued its Poster Contest in 2011, GFC held its own contest. The winning theme was "Trees: The Amazing Renewable Resource." Stasia Kelly, a Dunwoody High School parent won the theme selection contest and 3 maple trees were planted at the school. The school also hosted Tim Womick and the Trail of Trees. Tim blogged about his performances daily on the SCFP Blog. At the end of the tour in Savannah, dogwood trees were planted in memory of Mary Helen Ray.

In 2012, the GFC and GUFC highlighted the community of Jefferson, Georgia, a notable grant recipient and model urban and community forest. The GUFC held its first quarterly meeting in Jefferson focusing on getting "More Kids in the Woods."

## AmericanGrove.org



In 2009 in an effort to educate, engage and encourage Georgians to plant trees and protect Georgia's urban tree canopy, the Georgia Urban Forest Council and the Georgia Forestry Commission joined forces to create a new Web site and online community called The Georgia Grove, GeorgiaGrove.org. The Georgia Grove allows families and friends to share the experience of planting trees and commemorating special life moments. Georgia Grove members can share their memories by uploading pictures and stories of their tree planting experiences for others to see and discuss. Members can also create groups, or "groves," to connect, share and interact with other members within the virtual community.

The site expanded across the southern region in 2010 and became the AmericanGrove.org featuring groves for the 13 southern states.

The American Grove expansion project then crossed regional boundaries in 2011 and established the nation's first social networking platform for urban forestry and trees. The new site allows users to create a profile and share their tree planting experiences. Tree planting and care information, a tree match tool, videos, event postings, a photo gallery, a member map, challenges, quizzes, blogging and other links are also available to help users network and learn about urban forestry programs in their state. Currently the site includes individual state grove groups for all 50 states and territories. Expansion of the American Grove has been made possible through grants from the U.S. Forest Service.

## Create Your Legacy

In 2007, through a study commissioned by Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) and the Georgia Urban Forest Council (GUFC), an Atlanta marketing research firm, (r)evolution partners used focus groups and an online survey to find that the concept “Create Your Legacy” was the most memorable, believable and motivating of any that we typically use in urban forestry. This research is the basis for The Grove and justifies its establishment. We found that Georgians want to enjoy their lives, but also want to leave a positive mark on the world, a legacy, for their children and grandchildren to enjoy. And, residents are willing to take action to create a legacy, thus connecting with the environment and making a difference.

The market research also told us in order to motivate people to take action and plant trees, we needed a target audience that was interested in going green, actively engaged with their family and friends and turning to online, social networks and communities like The Grove, Facebook and others. The consumers more likely to embrace an urban forestry message than any other are called The LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability). Founded in 2000, the LOHAS market segment for consumer products and services is estimated to be a \$209 billion U.S. market segment for goods and services focused on health, the environment, social justice, personal development and sustainable living. One in every five U.S. adults is LOHAS; they are the future of today’s businesses and the future of progressive social, environmental and economic change in the country.



## SHADE Magazine

SHADE magazine showcases the importance of Georgia’s urban green canopy and spotlights the continuing efforts to sustain our state’s green legacy by helping communities grow healthy trees. SHADE is published with a grant from the Georgia Forestry Commission and lands on the desks of critical decision-makers who daily face the challenges of maintaining our urban forest.

SHADE examines these challenges in-depth, focusing on the problems, solutions, goals and achievements of Georgia’s communities, businesses, nonprofits and public health professionals — all who share in promoting our green legacy. It includes a summary of findings from the Georgia Urban Forest Council’s annual conference in a format that is reader-friendly, eye-catching, full of compelling information and facts, professional and resourceful. Through well-researched, professionally-written articles and beautiful photo layouts, SHADE informs, educates and highlights their efforts. SHADE is an ideal way to reach these decision makers.

SHADE was designed to help urban and community foresters, tree groups and citizens convince target audiences to plant, maintain and protect trees, parks and greenspace. SHADE helps reach target audiences with consistent messaging. SHADE is a useful resource when urban forestry partners talk to the media and share a consistent message, giving one voice to urban forestry in Georgia.

The first issue of SHADE, *Healthy Trees, Healthy Cities, Healthy People*, published in 2005, linked urban trees to public health and targeted physicians. SHADE was mailed to physicians offices to be placed on waiting room tables. SHADE was mailed to pediatricians and psychiatrists, asthma clinics, HMOS and others, along with a poster for their wall.

The second issue of SHADE, *Trees Make Dollars and Sense (2006)*, focuses on the economic benefits that trees bring to downtown business districts, developments and the Georgia economy. SHADE was mailed to developers, homebuilders, chambers of commerce and real estate agents.

The third issue of SHADE, *Weathering the Storms (2007)*, focused on managing the challenges of the urban forest including storm damage mitigation, growth and development, politics and fundraising.

The fourth issue of SHADE, *Connect...and Collaborate (2008)*, included tips on working together for a healthy urban forest. Articles focused on tips on talking to legislators, how to recruit and keep volunteers and partnerships, teamwork and connections. Dalton Councilman Charlie Bethel, who became a Georgia Senator, was featured in the article, "Revitalizing City Forests."

The fifth issue of SHADE, *Embracing a New Vision for the Future (2009)*, focused on the big landscape-scale picture and some of the big challenges and where trees fit into the solutions - forest fragmentation, climate change, energy and transportation systems. Taking a look back at the past, GUFCA founders were interviewed about its inception to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the GUFCA.

The sixth issue of SHADE, *Promoting Trees on Georgia's Roadways (2010)*, featured articles about trees and traffic, The Atlanta Beltline, complete streets and why they make sense and working with the DOT.

In its seventh year, SHADE, *Retail Dollars Grow on Trees (2011)*, focused on ways to take it to the bank with trees. Georgia retailers going green were talked about the trees and retail signage, and what brings shoppers to their business. The factors that make conserving trees on construction sites possible were outlined for the pre-development, construction and post-development phases of retail areas.

In its eighth year, SHADE, *Urban Trees Face Nature's Challenges (2011)*, focused on why trees fall down during storms, forest health threats to Georgia's forests, legal disputes involving trees and neighbors and risk management for communities.

SHADE is mailed to local city council members, mayors, state legislators and other elected leaders. SHADE is sent to other state agencies in Georgia, and other state forestry agencies and tree groups across the nation. Trees Columbus planned a series of community leader luncheons and request copies of SHADE for each attendee. Keep Bulloch Beautiful requested copies of SHADE to give to the Bulloch County Commissioners, Council members, and the City Statesboro Chamber of Commerce members. An Arborist from Cobb County quoted SHADE at a County Commissioner's meeting. The landscape architect

who reviews landscape plans for the City of Smyrna made sure key city officials received copies of SHADE. Daffin Park Centennial Committee of Savannah used SHADE to help them recruit sponsors.

## Tree Board University



This unique online training helps tree board members learn more about trees, about people, and about serving in a citizen advisory role in your city, town, or village. There are eight courses to take at their own pace. After completing a course, users have access to the next one, but can return to the previous completed ones to review anything. Each course includes videos, multi-media presentations, reference documents, and online links to additional information. Upon completion of the eight courses, tree board members are able to join a group on The American Grove and can post questions and interact with other like-minded Tree Board members from across the USA. Sign up at [www.treeboardu.org](http://www.treeboardu.org) to be a part of this new learning experience.

## Trail of Trees



Tim Womick has been sharing the messages of the importance of trees with millions of students, administrators and teachers across the country and in Georgia for more than 21 years. As a trained performer he turned his passion for trees and life into an entertaining, inspiring and information-packed performance on the benefits of trees, tree climbing and tree planting and care, *The Trail of Trees*. It all began while visiting the Joyce Kilmer National Forest in the mountains of North Carolina around Earth Day 1990. Tim came across the poem “Trees” written by Kilmer that was etched in brass, deep in a grove of elder trees. The magnificent beauty that surrounded Tim in that forest changed him forever. “I had

just finished making a difference in my own life and decided it was time to run and leave a “Trail of Trees”.

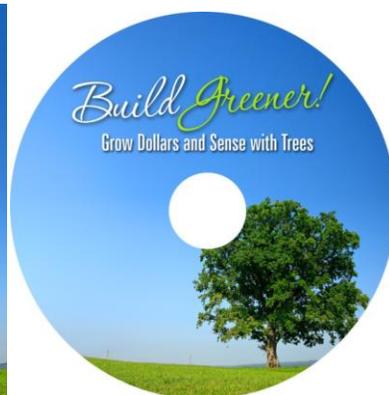
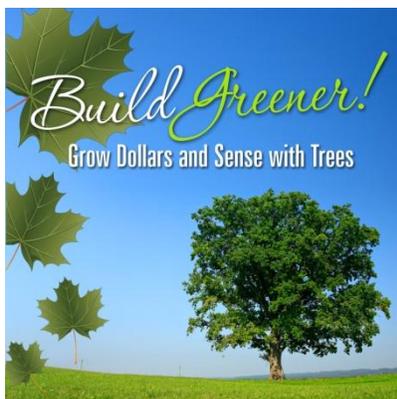
Tim interacts with audiences of all ages to relay the importance of trees in our everyday life and to encourage people to recognize their own roles as stewards of the earth. Using props that range from an African drum to tree seeds, Tim gets his message across in a humorous and insightful manner. During his hour-long performance, the students call out the answer to his question, “What do Trees Give Us?” He brings 10-12 kids on stage to participate with props when they get the right answer: clean air and water, shade, energy, wood products, seeds, food, rayon, chocolate, medicine or habitat, to name a few. The performance leaves a lasting impression on the kids and their teachers as he demands respect from the audience.

In addition to discussing the benefits of trees, Tim stresses the necessity of proper tree care in his performances. With children, he makes a point to encourage them to study the trees on their school campus and write about him in their journals. He hands out American Forests “Moon Tree” seed packets and a tiny silver acorn to the kids that participate, to encourage them to grow a forest of their own.

His final remarks are about jobs in the industry. At a school in Sparta, Georgia, a group of raucous boys were thoroughly engaged by Tim’s tree climbing gear and ISA Guide. They were amazed by tree climbing as a profession and came up to Tim after the performance to talk more about it. This area of central Georgia has very few tree care service companies in existence.

## Trees and Development DVD

GUFC partnered with Trees Columbus and the Georgia Forestry Commission on a **DVD for “Preserving Trees on Development Sites”** completed in 2009. Copies of the DVD are available, and the video is featured on the GUFC website.



## Assisting Communities with Storm Preparedness

Having a management plan for your urban forest is crucial for the safety of your citizens and the protection of valuable urban forest canopy in the event of a natural disaster. In 2012, the Sustainable Community Forestry Program (SCFP) contracted with a consultant to prepare a Community Forest Storm

Mitigation Plan training workshop agenda and corresponding materials and a Community Forest Storm Mitigation Plan template. The training to be held in 2013 will provide specific information on how to develop and use a community forest storm mitigation plan in your community. A workshop geared for smaller communities and tree boards will focus on the plan template and three areas briefly: Pre-disaster planning (Have a management plan in place and/or are familiar with the county plan, if applicable), what to do during the storm and follow-up, tree recovery.

## Working with Small Landowners

Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) is developing an online forest management tool for small landowners to help manage small woodlots. 22% of Georgia's forestland is in parcels less than 10 acres. The program is being designed to approximately 343,000 citizens that are not eligible to receive forest management assistance from other department because of the smaller acreage.

## Urban Forest Strike Teams

The Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC), in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service and the Southern Group of State Foresters, hosted a five-day long training at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center in Forsyth, Georgia in May 2012 to prepare certified arborists to serve on urban forest strike teams. Approximately 50 arborists from several Georgia cities and across the southern region will receive the training.

Following a storm, the strike teams evaluate publicly-owned trees damaged by recent storms in a timely manner for response and recovery. The objective is to reduce the risk to the public from storm-damaged trees and collect data (a measurement of debris volume) to be used in applying for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursement. Having been professionally trained to make urban tree damage assessments following natural disasters, these individuals are beneficial to communities following a storm because they save cities time and money from unnecessary tree removal and help identify trees that are safe and can be pruned versus removed, offering some comfort to individuals that may have lost their entire community landscape to a storm.

At the conclusion of the training, more than twenty Georgians were trained to assist cities across the southern region following a storm. While relatively new, Urban Forest Strike Teams have been mobilized following Hurricane Gustav in Baton Rouge, Louisiana in 2008, ice storms in Oklahoma, Arkansas and Kentucky in 2009 and most recently Hurricane Irene. UFST Trainings have been held in North Carolina, Virginia, Florida, Arkansas, Massachusetts, Oklahoma, Missouri and Delaware. Two Georgia Forestry Commission Community Foresters were members of the UFST response in Baton Rouge. Approximately 180 Certified Arborists have been trained nationwide in this program funded by the U.S. Forest Service.



Forsyth, Georgia, Urban Forest Strike Team



### Public-private partnership success stories

Georgia Forestry Commission and Georgia Power partnered to complete “Making your home more energy efficient – by planting trees” in 2010. The brochure provides information for the homeowner on what types of shade trees to plant and where to plant them to have a significant impact on summer cooling bills.

## Making the Shade



Traditional elementary school campus design often eliminates the health benefits provided by shade trees. *Making the Shade*, a program of the Sustainable Community Forestry Program of the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC), helps school administrators, parents, teachers and students grow a healthy urban forest at their school by providing landscape plans, recommended species and planting assistance. Schools must have strong local partnerships, a commitment to maintenance and a corporate sponsorship or monetary match to participate.

Trees provide many environmental, economic and social benefits. Some of these benefits include cleaner air and water, cooler temperatures in shaded parking lots, energy savings, enhanced learning opportunities, creating a sense of place at school and a calming landscape.

Trees provide significant health benefits to students. On playgrounds, trees reduce:

- Surface temperatures of play equipment and rubberized surfaces which can cause serious and painful burns.
- Sun exposure and ultraviolet radiation which can cause skin damage.
- Susceptibility to ground level ozone on hot, muggy days.
- The symptoms of AD/HD.
- Risk for children with asthma and lung-related illnesses by keeping the air clean.

Since 2005, 28 schools and more than 14,000 students have benefitted from tree-shaded playgrounds through *Making the Shade*. More than \$191,000 has been donated through local contributions of time and supplies to *Making the Shade* schools. Milliken & Company has been a generous supporter. Approximately 1,000 shade trees have been planted and maintained since 2005.

## Marketing plan analysis (U&CF Grants)

The following questions were added to the U&CF grant application in 2004 to help grant recipients reach target audiences. The GFC also provided assistance through marketing and grant writing workshops.

### A. Marketing Objectives

Describe your three most important marketing objectives. Marketing objectives should be different from your project's objectives. Make each marketing objective specific and measurable.

Examples are:

- To increase awareness of the value of trees for Tree County homeowners by inventorying 25% of trees.
- Conduct 3 training/information workshops, with a targeted attendance of 20 tree maintenance staff per training, each quarter for Tree County.

### B. Marketing Measurements

C. Measuring the outcome of your marketing efforts is important for continued progress of your initiatives and serves as an important indicator of program impact and effectiveness.

#### 1. Quantitative Measurement

Describe at least 2 of the following examples of Quantitative Measurements used in your project proposal.

Number of :

- Participants/visitors
- Volunteers
- Volunteer hours
- Media hits or news coverage, Public Service Announcements (PSAs) or radio spots
- Website hits or downloads
- Requests for arborists services
- Trees planted
- Mailings – describe target audience, describe mailed item and marketing goal
- Speaking engagements and requests
- Information requests
- Community meetings
- Developer/builder awards nominations
- Developer/builders recruited as board members or stakeholders
- Other, please describe

#### 2. Qualitative Measurement

Describe at least 2 of the following used in your project proposal.

Indications or outcomes of:

- Physical improvements i.e. Trees preserved or specimen trees saved, trees planted
- Evaluations, surveys, questionnaires, pre-/post testing
- Designation as a Tree City USA
- Money donated/raised
- Changes to conservation easements, tree ordinances/policies
- Developers/builders practicing green-friendly construction

- Replication of the project in community/municipality
- Analysis of automobile vs. pedestrian traffic in target area
- Success in private owners actually planting trees
- Formal review and evaluation of plans by elected officials and other representatives
- Advocacy action: approval of or actions taken by city government, commissions
- Arborists and other tree supporters invited to join municipal commissions and/or have input in important tree-related policy issues
- Analysis to compare participation/recruitment of NEW participants or volunteers
- Other, please describe

D. Target Audiences

List and describe the 2 most important target audiences for your Project.

Research shows that programs that focus on the “general public or general citizens” are NOT effective because it is difficult to effectively market, communicate or influence the interests of mass publics without considerable resources and expertise.

A target audience is a specific group of people with a clearly defined characteristic.

Examples are:

- Voters/taxpayers/residents/homeowners/landowners in \_\_\_\_\_ county/zip code
- Developers/builders/Realtors
- Government officials
  - Elected county and city officials/Policy makers
  - Community leaders
  - City worker/public maintenance workers
  - City planners
  - Tree boards
- Small businesses, corporations, Chambers of Commerce, business associations
- Tree professionals
  - Landscape companies
  - Arborists/foresters
  - Tree care services
  - Contract crews for utility companies
  - Forestry industry associations
- Community partners/collaborators
  - Nonprofit organizations
  - Environmental groups/advocates
  - Homeowner associations
- Tourists
- Schools/Students
- Investors

E. Marketing Tools and Strategies

Select and/or describe any marketing tools or strategies you plan to use to support your program implementation. Examples are:

- Media
- Radio (commercials, PSAs, on-air interviews)
  - Newspapers (articles, columns)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Television/cable (news coverage, talk shows, on-air interviews, PSAs)</li> <li>• Press releases, press kits, photographs</li> <li>• Billboards</li> <li>• Magazines/newsletters</li> <li>• Internet/website and links to other sites</li> <li>• Trade publications for realtors and developers</li> </ul>
<p>Promotions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arbor Day Events</li> <li>• Tree Plantings</li> <li>• Groundbreaking ceremonies/ribbon cuttings</li> <li>• Christmas Tree Recycling</li> <li>• Great American Clean-UP</li> <li>• Tree Inventory Events</li> <li>• Fundraising Events</li> </ul>
<p>Educational</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer training</li> <li>• Seminars, field training/workshops, conferences</li> <li>• Research findings/reports</li> <li>• Data collection</li> <li>• Displays/trade shows</li> <li>• Public meetings/forums and public hearings</li> <li>• Teaching stations</li> <li>• Speaker's bureau</li> </ul>
<p>Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handouts, brochures, pamphlets</li> <li>• Signage/plaques</li> <li>• Materials available online to be downloaded</li> <li>• Video, power point, slide show, multi-media</li> <li>• Letters, direct mail, posters</li> </ul>
<p>Evaluation/Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post event/program follow-up</li> <li>• Critiques/evaluations</li> <li>• Marketing Planning/Goal Setting</li> <li>• Other program reviews</li> </ul>

## Resource Availability/Web Sites

### Sustainable Community Forestry Blog

A blog is maintained by the Sustainable Community Forestry Program of the Georgia Forestry Commission. There categories are included: Arbor Day, ARRA, Awards, Certified Arborists, Community Tree Groups, Conservation, Economic Benefits, Education, Fall Leaf Color Updates, Falling Trees, Funding and Grants, iTree, Job Opportunities, Natural Communities, Personal Health, Pests/Diseases, Public Health, Research, Safe Streets, Seedlings, Storms, The American Grove Social Network, Trail of Trees,

Tree Campus USA, Tree Canopy/Impervious Surface, Tree Care and Maintenance, Tree City USA, Tree inventories, Tree Ordinances, Tree Planting, Urban Forestry Program, Volunteering, and the Wildland Urban Interface. <http://gfccommunityforestry.wordpress.com/>

## Ask The Arborist



The number of requests for nonbiased technical assistance from homeowners has grown and continues to grow. In 2011, the SCFP identified the need to communicate with homeowners via the Internet with a one-stop-shop for their questions. *Ask the Arborist* was created to make it easier for homeowner to get their questions about their tree problems answered quickly.

With this web based portal citizens are able to electronically ask a variety of both general and technical questions about a host of tree related topics through the GFC web site. In response to current events such as storms, or for everyday concerns, homeowners can use *Ask the Arborist* to get their questions answered about pruning, removal, replanting, and insect and disease issues regarding the trees in their yard, leading to less unnecessary removal of healthy community tree canopy.

The SCFP also maintains a digital library of publications that answer many of these questions and discuss opportunities for tree care management. These topics range from insect and disease issues to energy conservation, storm damage assessment to community forest re-establishment and many other subjects. Residents can forward multiple, issue focused, digital images for review by SCFP staff. This allows our forester/certified arborist to help homeowners determine the best course of action for their trees. Additionally, the GFC provides a link to a list of consultant arborists certified by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) who conduct fee-based site visits that can help homeowners carry out their tree care solutions or provide more specific information thorough site inspections. With “Ask the Arborist” in place residents can get timely unbiased information from a GFC certified arborist, browse available technical info sheets and access other urban and community forest related programs, materials, and links to other partner organizations. The site has helped GFC increase capacity without increasing staffing. Currently the site receives approximately 500 questions per year and is valued at \$125,000.

## Tree Ordinance Survey

In 2006, Consulting Forester Connie Head completed “Georgia’s Tree Ordinances: A Survey of Community Tree Regulations,” available in print format, CD, and on the GUFUC website. As follow-up, she presented a day-long workshop on Tree Ordinances for GUFUC. The project was administered by the Georgia Urban Forest Council with funds from the Georgia Forestry Commission’s Urban & Community Forestry Assistance Program.

This comprehensive survey, provided much needed information on the number of communities in the state that have a tree ordinance and how effective it is in conserving the community’s tree canopy. With the publication of the survey’s results, many communities have referenced the various components of the survey to create or revise their own ordinances in effort to make their policies more effective.

## Green Infrastructure in Coastal Georgia

The Okefenokee Swamp and surrounding coastal plain region, consisting of northern Florida, southeast Georgia and southern South Carolina, is a biologically diverse area that includes working forests and farms, pristine estuaries and coastal communities. Rapid growth, development and conversion of these natural areas to other uses threaten this unique region. Through this project, a synergistic system to identify, link and collectively manage these diverse ecosystems will be developed. Recent historic wildfires highlight the need to evaluate methods of resource management, land-use planning, and wildfire protection. An assessment of these natural areas and rural-urban interface communities will enable resource managers and land-use planners to develop a Green Infrastructure (GI) Management System to provide for the social, economic, ecological and cultural needs of present and future generations.

## 2007 – 2011 Accomplishments

### Issue 1. Tree Canopy and Impervious Surface

An adequate amount of tree canopy and greenspace is not being managed and protected in communities. Rapid land development is severely impacting community forest resources that are already weakened by aging, insects, diseases, storms, and humans. By implementing this plan we seek to increase canopy cover while decreasing the gain in impervious surfaces.

**Activity 1.** The GFC GUFUC and Tree Advocacy Groups have continued to promote tree planting throughout the state of Georgia primarily by promoting Arbor Day, the use of best management practices, and providing information on Web sites. Market nursery sales of trees have not been measured.

**Activity 2.** The use of pervious surfaces, such as raingardens and xeriscaping has been promoted at educational workshops, but no specific incentives or partnerships with Southface Energy Institute (or

other green building organizations), developers, the Concrete and Pavement Association or the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) were achieved.

**Activity 3.** The GFC, GUFC and tree advocacy groups have continued to promote tree planting throughout the state of Georgia primarily by promoting Arbor Day, the use of best management practices, and providing information on Web sites. Market nursery sales of trees have not been measured although a decline in nursery sales has forced layoffs of nursery professionals and the closing of several nurseries in 2012.

**Activity 4.** The GFC and GUFC established a regular sharing and information exchange among local tree advocacy groups through the Georgia Grove. A list of advocacy groups in Georgia is included in the *State of the Urban Forest* report and on the Georgia Forestry Commission Web page. GUFC continues to be a member of and promote the Alliance for Community Trees (ACT). The GUFC and GFC also partnered to host several tree board roundtables as a part of Georgia's annual urban forestry conferences in Athens and Augusta. Tree Board members were invited to attend and share their success stories and network with other tree board members. Grants and funding continues to be a topic addressed at GUFC meetings and workshops annually.

**Activity 5.** The GFC has continued to work with NARSAL to measure tree canopy and impervious surfaces through 2008. **A similar report by Dr. David Nowak** was also completed in the last five years. With new technology continually emerging, the GFC will continue to evaluate this measure statewide.

**Activity 6.** The GFC has promoted and funded (with the U&CF financial assistance program) more detailed tree inventories in local areas. The inventories have led to an increase in the number of urban forest management plans statewide as exhibited by the CARS data.

**Activity 7.** The GFC and GUFC held a program in August 2012 that focused on the management of community forestland greenspaces and the value of these forested areas and pocket parks. The meeting was very well attended and many people indicated they would be interested in receiving more information on this topic.

Components of Georgia's Critical Forestland Study have been incorporated into other GFC programs as technology has advanced. GUFC did not convene a group/database of conservation park organizations (GRPA, DCA, RDCs planning staff, RC&Ds, Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Lands, APA, GFC & DNR) as a way to direct private parties who want to protect their land, but has referred individuals to open land trusts and provided U&CF grants to these land trust organizations.

**Activity 8.** The GFC and GUFC did not specifically partner with Southface Energy Institute or other green building organizations to improve site conditions, however several tree-friendly developments were highlighted in SHADE magazine or toured as part of a meeting or conference. Examples include Hammond's Ferry Development in Augusta, Georgia with developer Turner Simkins.

**Activity 9.** To measure public opinion regarding tree canopy and urban forestry messages, the GFC completes the "Create Your Legacy" market research project with (r)evolution partners in 2007.

**Activity 10.** The GUFC has continued to outreach to the planning and development community through various educational programs and in SHADE magazine.

**Activity 11.** The GFC and GUFC have remained on the cutting edge of science and policy related to the impact of climate on tree health and tree value for carbon capture. This theme was a large part of the *Clean Air and Clean Water* conference hosted by the GUFC in October, 2008.

- Track tree city USA communities.
- Growth awards – 139 in 2011.
- Statewide Arbor events – how many people came.

## Issue 2. Understanding the Resource Value of Trees

All residents of Georgia, elected officials and resource managers are not aware the value of the community forest resource and the common, shared environmental, social, economic and health benefits provided by the community forest.

We seek to create public awareness of the value of trees. This is demonstrated by a 5% increase in the number of managed and developed communities per year, an increase in the number of certified arborists by 10% per year, an increase in the number of Tree City USAs by 10% per year, and increased attendance at professional meetings.

**Activity 1** The GFC has developed incentives for cities and college campuses to become involved in U&CF programs, such as Tree City USA and Tree Campus USA. These incentives are difficult to fully honor given economic constraints, however GFC may be able to honor some or partial requests from Tree City USAs on a case-by-case basis.

### Tree City USA Incentives

- First Year - Newly certified mayors or their representatives are invited to Georgia's statewide Arbor Day ceremony to receive a certificate of recognition. New tree boards are encouraged to join the GUFC and attend the annual conference on a registration scholarship when made available.
- Five Years - Receive one training session which will be conducted by a consultant or GFC staff person on one of the following topics: tree ordinances, tree inventories, mulching, pruning, watering, partnerships and resources, board development and visioning, or strategic planning.
- Ten Years - Tree Boards will receive a publication such as: *Evaluation of Hazard Trees in Urban Areas*, Matheny & Clark, *Photographic Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*, Dirr, *Arboriculture and the Law*, Merrullo OR receive one training session.
- Twenty Years - Receive 2 scholarships to a statewide conference (includes registration and travel)
- Thirty Years - A framed copy of a Georgia Urban Forest Council tree print.

2011 Georgia Tree Cities USAs											
Number of Years Certified		1-5 Years		6-9 Years		10-15 Years		16-19 Years		20+ Years	
Grey	1	Elberton	6	Buckhead	10	Americus	16	Clayton	20	Albany	24
Mountain Park	1	Evans	6	Helen	10	Irwinton	16	Covington	20	Augusta	24
Nashville	1	Fort Valley	6	Social Circle	10	Odum	16	Ellaville	20	Hinesville	24
Tybee Island	1	St. Mary's	6	Dahlonega	11	Ashburn	17	Griffin	20	Metter	24
Ball Ground	2	Watkinsville	6	Eatonton	11	Hartwell	17	Hampton	20	Thomaston	24
Culloden	2	Jefferson	7	Hapeville	11	Hiawassee	17	Jackson	20	Gainesville	25
Decatur	2	Luthersville	7	Snellville	11	Lumpkin	17	Roswell	20	Atlanta	26
Forsyth	2	Toccoa	7	Arabi	12	Reynolds	17	Sandersville	20	Macon	26
Jasper	2	Gordon	8	Athens-Clarke County	12	Screven	17	Tifton	20	Valdosta	26
Jenkinsburg	2	Homer	8	Bostwick	12	Young Harris	17	Union Point	20	Savannah	27
Vienna	2	Ivey	8	Dublin	12	Blairsville	18	Waynesboro	20	Trenton	27
Wrightsville	2	Norcross	8	LaGrange	12	Cedartown	18	Eastman	21	Washington	27
Chattahoochee Hills	3	Pelham	8	Millen	12	McIntyre	18	Flovilla	21	Avondale Este	28
Commerce	3	Woodbine	8	Newborn	12	Buena Vista	19	Hagan	21	Marietta	28
Doraville	3	Bowman	9	Woodstock	12	Calhoun	19	Jesup	21	Columbus	34
Fayetteville	3	Cleveland	9	Berkeley Lake	13	Canton	19	Warner Robins	21		
Fort Stewart/Hunter	3	Lavonia	9	Camilla	13	Conyers	19	Alpharetta	22		
Milton	3	Montezuma	9	Moody AFB	13	Cordele	19	Bainbridge	22		
Pooler	3	Pembroke	9	Navy Supply Corps	14	Fort Gordon	19	Cornelia	22		
Sandy Springs	3	Smyrna	9	Oglethorpe	14	Greensboro	19	Dalton	22		
Yatesville	3			Oxford	14	Robins AFB	19	Hahira	22		
Clarksville	4			Brunswick	15	Statesboro	19	Locust Grove	22		
Hazlehurst	4			Glenn County	15	Woodland	19	Madison	22		
Kennesaw	4							Newnan	22		
Monroe	4							Rome	22		
Pine Lake	4							Suwanee	22		
Sharpsburg	4							Thomasville	22		
Harlem	5							Acworth	23		
Lilburn	5							Baxley	23		
Mansfield	5							Douglas	23		
Roberta	5							Duluth	23		
Royston	5							Moultrie	23		

**Activity 2.** GFC partnered with ACCG to implement a green infrastructure project in coastal Georgia. The GFC also periodically submits articles to the Georgia Municipal Association newspaper, *Georgia Cities*. The GUFC and GFC will continue to work on these relationships and explore the possibility of speaking at conferences and offering CEUs related to urban forestry.

**Activity 3.** An educational "tree tag" for seedling nursery stock has been developed and is available on The American Grove. The tree tag is not available through "big box" store nurseries at this time.

**Activity 4.** Tree value message points have been promoted annually through multiple approaches such as Arbor Day, conferences and SHADE magazine.

**Activity 5.** The GUFC helped train nonprofits on fundraising at a nonprofit training/summit held at Wesleyan College in January, 2011.

**Activity 6.** The GFC held annual Tree Board Roundtable discussion as part of the annual urban forestry conferences (Jekyll 2006, Rome 2007, Augusta 2008, Stockbridge 2009 and Athens 2010). GFC does not hold an Georgia Tree Board Academy and instead refers tree board members to the Tree Board University for educational needs.

**Activity 7.** GUFC/GFC PSAs are available on DVDs to other tree groups and have been shown on government TV channels. They have mainly been distributed in Columbus, GA. The PSAs are still current and have no geographic barriers.

**Activity 8.** Success stories of public-private partnerships have been highlighted in SHADE magazine. Examples include Melaver, Hammond's Ferry, Home Depot Foundation and Milliken, among others.

**Activity 9.** The GUFC plans to continue to increase corporate involvement across Georgia through Georgia ReLeaf and the American Grove.

**Activity 10.** The value of trees information is available through GaTrees.org.

**Activity 11.** GUFC has outreached to target audiences (developers, utilities, engineers, homebuilders) to encourage attendance at professional meetings. There was some decrease in attendance reflective of changes in the economy.

**Activity 12.** The GFC has an Ask the Arborist Web portal for homeowners that have questions about the trees in their yard. This tool does not determine the value of the trees however.

**Activity 13.** Since 2006, the Making the Shade program has helped plant trees in playgrounds across the state.

**Activity 14.** Survey to measure amount of money donated to Georgia tree groups was not compiled, however this information may be available through the Georgia Nonprofit Center .

**Activity 15.** The GFC and GUFC have continued to link tree values to air quality and water quality and economics, and stay abreast of current issues such as nature services, carbon sequestration, wood utilization and public health.

### Issue 3. Tree Maintenance Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Health and longevity of the community forest is degraded when community forest managers do not have current research, technology and proper tree care techniques and standards at hand. Best Management Practices (BMPs) for managing community forests have been developed, but most communities have not adopted BMPs, or do not cite proper standards for tree care in tree ordinances.

**Activity 1.** By implementing this plan we seek to improve the health and longevity of the urban forest. This can be measured by the dollar value of growth of the tree care service industry that employs certified arborists. However we have not yet contacted a university to develop a survey to measure the economic impact of the tree service industry.

**Activity 2.** The GUFC did not establish hotlines for tree topping, mulch volcanoes or planting under utility lines. Educational materials and examples from other states do exist. Virginia has an anti tree topping campaign. The GUFC could work with the Georgia Arborist Association to address these issues. Public education and input from a public relations firm may be needed to accomplish this activity.

**Activity 3.** A reference including basic, universal language such as tree planting, tree conservation, pruning, mulching, construction, placement (distance), species and maintenance definitions in English and Spanish was written by the International Society of Arboriculture.

**Activity 4.** GUFC did not develop standard curriculum for best management practices (BMPs), however the information is available and could be housed on a BMP tab in the GUFC Web site.

**Activity 5.** The GFC is assisting communities with tree emergency response plan by preparing a template plan for smaller cities that will be introduced at a corresponding workshop by March 2013.

**Activity 6.** The GUFC has included tree protection in Erosion and Sedimentation courses.

**Activity 7.** A BMPs standards survey of communities was not conducted.

**Activity 8.** Workshops for legal professionals were not conducted, however the U&CF grant program funded the River Basin Center's conservation easement valuation guidebook for tax assessors available at [www.riverbasincenter.uga.edu](http://www.riverbasincenter.uga.edu).

**Activity 9.** The GUFC has been able to stay on cutting edge of research and practices and continue to bring speakers and demonstrations to Georgia annual conferences and offer annual Basic Tree Care Workshops. Some of these speakers include Gary Moll, Kathy Wolf, Dan Staley and Eric Dumbaugh.

#### Issue 4. Local Ordinances and Policies that Regulate Land Development

Current regulations are preventing land development in which community forests are conserved and enhanced. Local authorities must change regulations to allow, modify, and promote development that conserves and enhances community forestry. We seek to encourage local authorities to change these regulations. This is measured by a 5% annual increase in the number of local ordinances that meet a protection goal, enforcement clause, penalty clause and suggested staffing level.

**Activity 1.** The GUFC has been able to provide training and education for local communities and elected officials on the importance of canopy and ordinances through the tree ordinance roundtable and other programs.

**Activity 2.** GUFC has continues to offer training for local code enforcement staff.

**Activity 3.** Although very little funding remains for marketing projects, the GFC was able to market urban forestry and ordinances through a template marketing workbook to target audiences.

**Activity 4.** The GFC has information related to the value of trees, greenhouse gas and carbon capture on the GFC Web pages.

**Activity 5.** SHADE magazine is a marketing tool that communities can use to promote the value of trees and ordinances.

**Activity 6.** GFC and GUFC will be working on developing a self-survey tool in the next five years. A very successful and well attended tree ordinance program was held at the Chattahoochee Nature Center. Experts reviewed ordinances in advance and offered suggestions.

**Activity 7.** A link between urban forestry and smart/quality growth exists and the GUFC and GFC will continue to teach on these and other related topics.



### **Issue 5. Professional Expertise to Promote Sustainable Community Forestry**

Many communities do not utilize professional expertise for managing their community forest resources. Awareness of and access to sources of professional urban forestry and arboricultural expertise must be increased. We seek to increase awareness of and access to professionals by certifying 300 landscape professionals through the Georgia Certified Landscape Professional (GCLP) Program and certifying 250 Certified Arborists through the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA).



**Metric 5A: 371 new GCLP Applicants, 87 new Graduates**

**Activity 1.** As part of urban forestry messaging and a module, a GCLP/Georgia Arborist Association (GAA) Joint Professional Certification poster was designed with the help of Donna Rayfield (GAA Executive Director). One thousand 18x 24 inch color posters were printed and distributed. A “Tree Protection During Construction and Landscaping Activities” Power Point was developed (57 slides) and delivered as a live internet workshop on April 17<sup>th</sup> with one hour of ISA credit. 58 people in 14 Georgia counties participated in the hour-long workshop. 19 of the participants are ISA members and received 1 hour of ISA CEUs. The 22<sup>nd</sup> chapter for the Georgia Certified Landscape Professional manual “Protecting Ornamental Trees During Construction and Landscape Activities” was researched and developed. The chapter contains 12 pages of color photos and text in two column format and includes learning objectives and study questions. 700 full color copies of the chapter have been printed for distribution.

The chapter was condensed into a two page full color fact sheet and 2,618 copies printed for distribution.

**Activity 2** - To develop, promote and provide continuing education to GCLP certified professionals, approximately 75 e-newsletters were written and distributed to over 600 readers with information on workshops, CEU opportunities from UGA, GUFC, and the green industry professional associations.  
<http://ugaurbanag.com/gclpgcpp-update-newsletters>

**Activity 3** – The benefits of GCLP were publicized to design professionals and the general public. On Nov. 20, 2008, there was a Georgia American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) field trip to UGA Griffin Campus to see the GCLP field exam demonstrations. There were 100 participants that participated for 4 hours.

**Activity 4** – Only minor efforts have been made to promote benefits of certified arborists to non certified tree care providers and the public since a critical mass of GCLP graduates has not been reached.

**Activity 5** – The ISA certified arborist exam is now available at various testing locations across the state and can be taken at any time. The GUFC will continue to host training sessions throughout the next five years.

### ISA Certified Arborists in the State of Georgia



From 2006 until 2008, the Georgia Arborist Association (GAA) received progressively smaller amounts of U&CF Grant funding from the GFC. With this funding the GAA was able to hire its first paid staff member. With this part-time Executive Director, GAA was able to increase membership by over 150%; conduct regularly scheduled trainings, workshops and meetings; establish a sustaining partners sponsorship program; and redesign its website. Overall, the GAA has become a much more influential, informative, cohesive and impactful organization in the state.

#### **Number of Certified Arborists in Georgia (From ISA)**

2012	610
2011	633
2010	632
2009	619
2008	587
2007	507
2006	441

In 2006, the GFC awarded \$20,000 in U&CF funding to Keep Albany-Dougherty Beautiful to hire a certified arborist for the City of Albany. Additional funding in progressively smaller amounts followed in 2007 and 2008 which allowed the city enough time to build the position into their budget. The arborist is currently funded entirely by the city and has become an integral component of the city's staff. In addition to her regular duties of tree maintenance, code enforcement, staff training and community outreach, she has undertaken a street tree inventory, creation of a management plan, tree ordinance revision and regular attendance at GUFC workshops and conferences.

After a period of extreme drought in 2007 and several severe storms in which trees fell and there were fatalities, the GFC adopted formal messages promoting certified arborists. This messaging is being used on TV spots more and more often.

## Issue 6: Design with Tree Longevity in Mind

Poor design and increased use of hardscape contributes to the loss of tree growing space and community forest decline because designers are not trained and educated in tree biology. We sought to create a tree design standard module for design professionals; however we did not accomplish this task. We still use the following paradigm when speaking to design professionals.

### Georgia Model Urban Forest Paradigm

#### Existing Development Model

- Trees have low priority
- Trees as ornament
- Individual trees
- Small and ornamental trees
- Lawn and paving
- Tree maintenance
- Aesthetics-based design

#### Urban Forest Model

- Trees have equal priority
- Trees as infrastructure
- Forest
- Large canopy trees
- Vegetative ground cover
- Forest management
- Soil-ecological based design

## Overview of the Five Year Plan

The Purpose of the *Five-Year Plan for Georgia's Urban and Community Forest* is to provide strategic direction for Georgia's urban and community forestry programs and to coordinate statewide efforts to value, conserve, manage and enhance Georgia's community forests. The planning committee has been convened by the Georgia Forestry Commission in partnership with the Georgia Urban Forest Council.

Participants gathered during one two-day planning meeting in September, 2012 held at Trees Atlanta. A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis was done and then the group identified goals and broke down into teams.

## Why do we need a plan? Who are the participants?

### Challenges

- Fragmentation/Development

- Water Quality
- Air Quality
- Economics
- Carbon Sequestration



Gwinnett Tech



Mary Helen Ray and friends



One of The Yarborough Oak trees



Daffin Park, Arbor Day Ceremony