

FINAL REPORT

FOREST SERVICE GRANT NO. 01-DG-11046000-041

Period covered by this report: July 16, 2001 through August 1, 2003

Issued to: **TreeUtah**

Address: **68 East Girard Ave., Salt Lake City, UT 84103**

Congressional District Number: 2

Project Name: **TreeLink: An "Expanding Canopy" of Urban and Community Forestry Knowledge**

Contact Person/Principal Investigator:

Name: **Pepper Provenzano**

Mailing Address: Same as above

Phone Number: (801) 359-1933

Fax Number: (801) 359-1933 (call first)

E-Mail Address: pepper@treelink.org

Your Organization's Internet home page address: www.treelink.org

Date of Award: **July 16, 2001**

Grant Modifications: **N/A**

Date of Expiration: **August 1, 2003**

Funding: Federal Share: \$245,870 plus Grantee Share: \$250,000 = Total Project: \$495,870

FS Grant Manager: **Glenn Roloff**

Address: **USDA Forest Service, Federal Building, P.O. Box 7669**

Phone Number: (406) 329-3521

Fax Number: (406) 329-3132 [E-mail: groloff@fs.fed.us](mailto:groloff@fs.fed.us)

Provide

Please provide an abstract on your project and its results. This abstract will be posted on the NUCFAC Internet site. (approximately 200 words or less)

TreeLink's vision is to create an "Expanding Canopy" of knowledge about Urban and Community Forestry by reaching into widespread community roots with potent, accessible communications resources. While TreeLink is the most comprehensive U&CF website, the concept of U&CF is not yet well known. With this two-year project, TreeLink has provided new, interactive resources tailored to four

target audiences – academic institutions, green industry and government land agencies, nonprofit U&CF organizations, and the general public. **We have the knowledge to plan cities that are both environmentally and economically sustainable. Internet technology allows us to share that knowledge with every small town in this country. TreeLink provides that tool for Urban and Community Forestry, with inreach to traditional resources and outreach to the widest possible audience.** All can benefit from networking, research, community building and education outreach to expand name recognition and participation in the movement and discipline of Urban and Community Forestry. In 2003, TreeLink won three national awards: the Global ReLeaf Award for Organizational Achievement; the National Arbor Day Award and the (USDA) Chief's Award for Excellence in Technology Transfer. TreeLink currently reaches more than 70 nations in 12 languages.

Project Objectives:

Objective #1— Provide a comprehensive research database and one-stop shopping for U&CF.

Objective #2 – Resources for nonprofit organizational development. We will produce and link to resources for U&CF nonprofits on organizational management and development, including fund raising; staff development; volunteer and event coordination; how to use "virtual volunteers;" and a national, interactive way to match volunteers and U&CF opportunities.

Objective #3 – Resources for improved networking and communication. We will produce resources for community building and networking among local and national U&CF advocates and would-be advocates.

Objective #4 -- Public education and awareness. We will increase recognition of the U&CF movement among the general public, helping them become more informed about U&CF issues and more inspired to get involved in "hands-on" activities in their community.

Objectives met successfully:

Objective #1 – As a result of this grant, TreeLink contains more than 2,000 resources packaged for easy Web navigation in five languages, reaching four target audiences: academics and researchers; nonprofit organizations; land agencies; green industry and the general public. The TreeLink audience quadrupled with this grant. In every objective we have exceeded the deliverables of this grant. In the process, TreeLink has outgrown TreeUtah to become a separate and distinct nonprofit organization, now reaching more than 70 nations with as many as 3,000 unique visitors a day.

Slowly but surely, TreeLink staff established rapport, dialogue and trust with a host of researchers from government, academia and green industry. This has been our toughest and perhaps our most rewarding challenge. These researchers are traditionally insulated and isolated in their work. As TreeLink's reputation and audience grows, researchers are sharing their materials because they recognize TreeLink as a viable form of outreach and advocacy that can spread their research to a larger audience and, at the same time, direct more readers to their Web sites. As a result, TreeLink has reached an agreement with the USDA FS to provide a central information database for all Urban Forest Research Stations. We are working with Bill Kruidenier and have been instrumental in distribution of the NUCFAC-sponsored TREE Fund survey and contact database. With a Memorandum of Understanding, TreeLink created a research-sharing Web tool for the Center for Urban Forest Research at UC Davis to expand outreach for the center, building a community of more than 650 newsletter subscribers. We are developing the same quid-pro-quo to expand outreach for all USDA regional research stations. TreeLink assisted Gary Watson from the Morton Arboretum by posting the information from the U&CF Research Summit held in Chicago in the autumn of 2002. We have joined and assist the National Technology Transfer Team.

We have expanded the TreeLink web site to offer a more complete, dynamic, and searchable database. We have moved to a new server with greater capacity, allowing us to present more resources. We created a centrally located Resource Center. We have established links and/or partnerships with 70 plus schools and now provide the past issues of the International Society of Arboriculture Journal of Arboriculture. We have presented organized packages of research and resources on wildland-urban interface, fire-wise planning, fire-wise planting, storm damages and recovery; an emergency manual for public officials, and utilizing municipal trees. In 2003, TreeLink introduced Victories, Small and Large, as a regular feature to publish and promote U&CF success stories nationwide. At the request of subscribers nationwide, TreeLink created TreeScapes, a downloadable collection of U&CF photos with easy directions for use with credit in publications anywhere.

We are continually increasing awareness and providing solution-oriented resources, combining the best information and packaging it for easy access at our Resource Center, the Resource Spotlight and the News Desk, then we reach inward and outward to traditional and non-traditional audiences among our listservs' subscribers, or with the WoodNotes quarterly e-zine, or by mass email to state coordinators, government agencies, green industry, academics, nonprofits, and lawmakers. These resources and articles address a host of issues including: ecosystem management; urban heat islands, including satellite photography; riparian ecosystem restoration; plant disease issues; urban-rural interface management; the economic benefits of landscaping in business districts; psycho-social dimensions of roadside planting; skin-cancer and shade; smart growth; sprawl, and green-infrastructure strategies. Anyone can access this information, and TreeLink is promoting resources from around the nation to other U&CF groups, advocates, government agencies and key lawmakers.

Objective #2 – We link to resources for U&CF nonprofits on organizational management. We have written and widely promote an online fund-raising and grant-writing tutorial tailored specifically to U&CF organizations. We provide free on-line advertising with front-page banner ads for national U&CF programs (including NUCFAC), and spotlight local efforts in news articles, WoodNotes e-zine feature articles, and our Resource Spotlight. Our "Volunteer Match" provides a national, interactive tool to match volunteers and U&CF opportunities. We provide free downloadable software tools and downloadable materials for U&CF marketing campaigns with CommunityTrees.org. We brought together the Arbor Day Foundation, American Forests, the ISA, ACT and the National Tree Trust Salt to work together for the first time, for the Salt Lake Olympic's "Plant It Green" program. TreeLink also provides an array of resources on these subjects for nonprofits:

- Organizing and Managing Nonprofits
- Finding and Training Volunteers
- Green Laws & Legal Issues
- Educational Materials
- What's Out There?

Objective #3 – TreeLink facilitates regular online discussions on a variety of issues through our urbNRnet Listserve, our Trees Listserve, the Councils Listserve, the Grassroots Summit Leadership Team Listserve, and the monthly Urban Forestry Coordinators News. We have completely revamped our Forums to provide the most versatile cutting edge technology tools. We have improved and expanded our Calendar of Events and our Jobs listings, both popular nationwide. The interactive and up-to-date nature of the site keeps people coming back for more information and networking. TreeLink is currently developing strategic collaborations with five national organizations. Our Resource Spotlight highlights worthy national resources bimonthly, and links to dozens of related resources inside. We continue to promote national programs and partner-agency resources to wider readership with free banner advertisements for nonprofits, including hyperlinks spanning the world, as our ongoing commitment to U&CF outreach. We have initiated an ongoing "Victories" feature column to highlight success stories and compare programs nationwide, and a downloadable "TreeScapes" gallery of credited photos available to all. Publications and information include:

- The ACT News, archived
- U&CF Coordinators News, archived
- ISA Journals, archived
- The TreeLink Library
- The News Desk
- Ask an Arborist
- National Surveys

Objective #4 – TreeLink is reaching and engaging an enormous new audience with outreach and advocacy for Urban and Community Forestry and the many

people and organizations in this movement nationwide. The site is now entirely translated to five languages, and by February of 2004, the newly designed TreeLink will include all resources in 12 languages. We have expanded our audience to more than 800,000 hits a month and as many as 3,000 unique visitors a day, reaching up to 70 countries. The staff is constantly developing and providing dynamic and fun information that connects people to the organizations and resources they need, including our "Who's Who in Your State" and National Organizations; the Ultimate List of Tree Quotes; the recent Ultimate List of Tree Factoids; the recent "Kids Corner;" Urban Forestry degree programs; online OF courses, scholarship programs, free computer tools and screen savers, free downloadable photos and much more.

The TreeLink Resource Center offers the latest information and links to a spectrum of resources for academics, green industry and U&CF professionals, while our "WoodNotes" quarterly e-zine provides topical articles specifically targeted for the general public. TreeLink staffers write articles and spotlight stories about other OF organizations, in order to promote urban forestry as a basic building block of any smart-growth strategy. We promoted the Grassroots Summit and provided communications networking for all concerned. TreeLink staff corresponds daily to exchange information with nontraditional audiences and advocate for Urban and Community Forestry. We have published a list of key lawmakers and how they vote on environmental issues, and we are informing them on U&CF issues. In addition, we are providing the latest technology in new discussion forums, programs and research, job opportunities and conference calendar, along with a venue for a web site to assist with diversification, all while promoting U&CF projects and programs nationwide.

Objectives not yet met:

None. All objectives met or exceeded.

List the major research or policy findings of your project.

Researchers are traditionally insulated and isolated geographically within the structure of academic and government institutions. TreeLink drives a wider audience to their product, expanding their reach far beyond the institutions while bringing their links together under one roof TreeLink's unique position as a Web-based information clearinghouse is custom created to facilitate outreach and marketing for U&CF research stations by providing links to all research made public by research centers; past issues of the Journal of Arboriculture (archived); breaking newspaper articles, radio stories in downloadable form, and related books. TreeLink also provides a Who's Who in Your State, national organizations and international research contacts.

If not apparent in the above, how did this project increase the knowledge we have about urban forestry? How will the public benefit?

TreeLink is national and international in scope because its medium is the World Wide Web, the most utilized and potent source of information in the world today. By

providing widespread access to information and technical expertise in Urban and Community Forestry as well as networking opportunities, this project increases understanding in our four target populations on the social, economic, and environmental value of U&CF.

Our primary method of achieving the "Expanding Canopy" project is by expanding outreach to four distinct target populations: academic institutions, the general public, nonprofit U&CF organizations, green industry and government land agencies. Our staff publishes research, facilitates networking, and provides technical expertise to add and frequently update content on TreeLink.

Since its inception, TreeLink has provided services and resources consistent with the Council's priorities by offering high-quality information, stewardship-education outreach, low-cost networking opportunities and Web consulting to support urban forestry groups, programs, and activities nationwide.

TreeLink is ideally situated to disseminate technological information, provide education and facilitate communication between people interested in U&CF all over the globe. We are incorporating a multi-lingual aspect into the site such that we can reach diverse populations. The TreeLink site provides a holistic approach to U&CF by helping both experts and novices see the important links between the ecosystems we live in and a sustainable future. By packaging information for easy use, TreeLink helps connect people to on-the-ground activities where they can make a difference in their own neighborhoods. While empowering people to act locally, TreeLink "spreads the word" globally. TreeLink brings the information, networking tools, and contacts of U&CF to traditional as well as non-traditional audiences. By using the power of technology to expand our fun, user-friendly, and informative site, we share the tools needed to plan, create, and maintain green infrastructure with anyone willing to search the World Wide Web, and with anyone in contact with our partners, affiliates and target audiences.

Specific quantifiable results produced:

The "deliverable product" is an improved and expanded TreeLink web site, including:

- Networking tools, including listserves and the next generation of discussion forums to stimulate interactivity, information sharing and technology transfer, and even online conferences.
- A searchable resource database, including articles, bibliographies, and other research sources, such as satellite photos, ISA journals and USDA U&CF Research Center studies.
- Online tutorials and downloadable materials on organizational development. A thorough fund-raising section to highlight the important task of generating revenue for projects and fledgling organizations. Appropriate links established to existing resources.
- Free advertising for U&CF nonprofits. Low-cost advertising for green industry for-profit businesses.

- "VolunteerMatch" and "Virtual Volunteer" tools to help anyone find volunteer opportunities and to offer systematic methods of volunteer recruitment and training.
- A comprehensive list of local and national U&CF organizations, including government, nonprofit, and community organizations, with links to those organizations present on the Web.
- Regular online discussions related to current U&CF issues and concerns.
- An expanded and improved Calendar of Events which will be interactive so that groups can locate activities in their own areas and post events as well.
- A list of key lawmakers to inform and update.
- Marketing tools for use by any of our four target audiences to promote U&CF information and events. Tools and site resources such as "Ask the Arborist", "Kids Corner", "Tree Factoids", "Quotable Tree Quotes", "Article of the Week", "Smart-Growth Bytes"— all examples of educational learning experiences for lay people — all provided in 12 languages.

What recommendations might you make for community foresters or others who might benefit from your project?

The work of community forestry is critical to engineering green infrastructure into urban planning as cities and towns face the inevitable and dramatic expansion of development that is driven by population growth. We have the knowledge to plan cities that are both environmentally and economically sustainable. Internet technology allows us to share that knowledge with every small town in this country. TreeLink provides that tool for Urban and Community Forestry. TreeLink provides inreach to traditional resources and outreach to the widest possible audience. Every community forester should be familiar with TreeLink resources, and listed where appropriate on this Web site.

How were the results disseminated to the public?

National distribution and technology transfer are our "domain" of expertise. Everything on TreeLink is a click away, and can be copied and downloaded. Our strategic approach is to interact with four target audiences through information and tools regarding U&CF — including listserves, electronic newsletters, articles, shared contacts. Contacts in our four target areas serve as the arteries of a circulatory system that expands worldwide through the TreeLink web site. TreeLink is a model of national information distribution and a model for how best to use technology to facilitate outreach, education and on-the-ground impact. The costs per person reached with TreeLink is a fraction of the cost of traditional media.

List the active partners (key individuals or organizations) involved in the project to-date:

The nature and history of TreeLink has involved partnerships with every major U&CF organization, hundreds of smaller groups, researchers, arborists, and foresters. We continue to invite and expand joint efforts.

TreeLink secured new partners for the "Expanding Canopy" project, including the USDA Urban Forestry research stations, the national Technology Transfer Team; the state Urban

and Community Forestry coordinators; the International Society of Arboriculture; the Society of Municipal Arborists; the national Alliance for Community Trees; the Trust for Public Land and California ReLeaf, and the National Tree Trust. We have forged new partnerships with the Society of Municipal Foresters and assisted with the Grassroots Focus Group. We assisted NUCFAC in the 2003 visioning process meeting in Vermont, and took part in the U&CF Research Summit in Chicago. We are also targeting new or expanded partnerships with the National Association of State Foresters, American Forests, the American Nursery and Landscape Association, the Association of Landscape Contractors of America, Davey, Asplundh, Bartlett, the USDA Urban Forestry Research Stations, the Environmental Protection Agency, the American Planning Association and more than 30 universities. TreeLink also created the first international coalition to advocate for Urban and Community Forestry in partnership with the Olympics -- for the 2002 Winter Olympic Games -- bringing together the National Tree Trust, the Arbor Day Foundation, the International Society of Arboriculture, and American Forests to work together for the first time. The coalition also included the White House Millennium Green initiative.

Photo or Illustration: If possible, please provide a photo or illustration for our use that summarizes or represents the project. Indicate how this illustration should be credited. See new TreeLink logo including tag line.



If a no-cost time extension has been requested for this project, why is (was) it needed?

A two-month extension was requested for minor mop up of details to comply with all Federal requirements.

How would you evaluate the grant process? What changes, if any, would you recommend?

The NUCFAC grant process and review process appears to be superbly designed.

Comments considered of importance but not covered above:

**TreeLink won the 2003 Global ReLeaf Award for Organizational Achievement at the National Urban Forests Conference in San Antonio.

**The National Arbor Day Foundation named TreeLink winner of the 2003 National Arbor Day Award in the Media category.

**TreeLink won the Chief's Award for Excellence in Technology Transfer from the USDA in 2003.

The true value of TreeLink in expansion of outreach and resources for Urban and Community Forestry is intangible and beyond estimate. Conservative estimates by far exceed the figures reported for this grant. As always, we are deeply grateful to our many friends, subscribers, supporters and collaborating partners, and especially the NUCFAC board for planting TreeLink and helping it grow.

Over and above this grant, TreeLink has:

- Contracted to build a new web site and networking resources, including a discussion listserve for the Society for Municipal Arborists.
- Digitized and posted the entire NeighborWoods Guidebook of the Sacramento Tree Foundation.
- Provided technology for outreach of the TreeFund national survey.
- Assisted with technology for nationwide review for the National Assessment of U&CF Research and Technology Transfer.
- Redesigned the web site for the Alliance for Community Trees, and created a discussion listserve for ACT.
- Provided free banner advertisements for nonprofit organizations, U&CF research centers, NUCFAC, the Tour de Trees, national surveys, and a long list of conferences and special events.
- Created a one-touch system for the UC Davis Research Center to provide cost-saving outreach and easy web-based subscription for the center newsletter.
- Provide ongoing online updates for the NUCFAC web site.
- Edit, post and archive the State Coordinators News.
- House and archive the Urban Natural Resources Network (urbNRnet).
- Translated the entire site and most links to twelve languages.

This report was prepared by:

Name: Pepper Provenzano

Title: Director, TreeLink

Phone Number: 801-359-1933

Date: 01-03-04