

# *The Five-Year Plan for Georgia's Urban & Community Forest 2007 - 2011*

## **Introduction**

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. This Five-Year Plan must be in place and active for Georgia to receive funding from the USDA Forest Service for urban & community forestry grants.

### **The Role of the Conveners**

The planning process was convened by the Sustainable Community Forestry Program (Urban & Community Forestry Coordinator) of the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC), in partnership with the Georgia Urban Forest Council (GUFC), an independent non-profit organization. These two conveners play several key roles in this planning process and also in urban forestry in Georgia:

**Recruiters** – Identifying and recruiting new partners in urban forest efforts

**Network** – Keeping the partners connected to learn and cooperate on joint projects

**Catalyst** – To spark joint efforts and cooperation that would not otherwise happen, and to speed the pace of initiatives

**Educator** – To teach and train on urban forestry issues

**Service Provider** – To help communities recognize the value of their community forest resources in order to maximize associated benefits and minimize relevant risks. (GFC)

And

To sustain Georgia's Green Legacy by helping communities grow healthy trees. (GUFC)

**Grantor** – The conveners grant money for urban forestry projects in Georgia, and seek to make these grants consistent with the Five-Year Plan.

### **The Planning Process**

Participants gathered during three all-day planning meetings throughout 2006, held in Atlanta, Macon & Griffin. The planning was primarily done in three teams, and each team focused on two related issues. One team focused on Tree Canopy/Impervious Surface (Issue 1) and Tree Ordinances (Issue 4). A second team focused on Understanding the Resource Value of Trees (Issue 2) and Tree Maintenance Best Management Practices (Issue 3). A third team focused on Promoting Professional Expertise (Issue 5) and Designing with Tree Longevity in Mind (Issue 6).

### **The Implementation Process**

Participants were very clear that they want to re-visit this plan on at least an annual basis. They were also very clear that meeting in person is the best way to do periodic check-ins, mutual support and mid-course corrections to the implementation schedule. It was decided that building meeting time into the schedule of the annual conference in October-November would assist in this annual update, and that the third quarterly meeting of GUFC would devote significant preparatory time to insure that the reports and meetings during the conference were most organized and informative.

Each issue will be individually led by one team leader. Updates on each issue will be posted quarterly in the TreeTalks newsletter.

As activities are accomplished by the partners, GFC will compile and track accomplishments and will report accomplishments periodically in TreeTalks.

### **“State of the Urban Forest” Report**

Accompanying the Five-Year Plan will be a publication for a more general audience that outlines the key issues in Urban Forestry in Georgia, including the 6 Issues of the Five-Year Plan. This report will also give general educational information about the state of Georgia’s urban forests including tree canopy, impervious surface, communities with tree ordinances, and partner organizations working on urban forestry in Georgia. This publication will have higher production values than the Five-Year Plan and, being intended for more general audiences, will have less detail on implementation and more “big picture” perspective on the challenges and opportunities facing urban forestry in Georgia.

### **The Participants**

This Five-Year Plan represents the ideas of more than 50 highly skilled staff and volunteers from 30 organizations working to improve the Urban and Community Forests of Georgia.

Organizations represented included local, state and federal governments, universities, businesses, non-profits and military installations.

- David Dechant, Arborguard Tree Specialists
- Roger Cauthen, Athens-Clarke County Landscape Division
- Brad Calvert, Atlanta Regional Commission
- Chris Barneycastle, Barneycastle Forestry Services, Georgia Arborists Association
- Martha Reiman, Department of Community Affairs
- Cindy Eidson, Department of Community Affairs, Better hometown Program
- Carmine Fischetti, Department of Community Affairs, Georgia ASLA
- William Wright, Department of Transportation
- Davey Biage, Department of Transportation
- John Wegner, Emory University
- James Parker, Fort Benning
- Beryl Budd, Georgia Forestry Commission
- Joe Burgess, Georgia Forestry Commission
- Sharon Dolliver, Georgia Forestry Commission
- Dale Higdon, Georgia Forestry Commission
- Larry Morris, Georgia Forestry Commission

- Chuck Norvell, Georgia Forestry Commission
- Joan Scales, Georgia Forestry Commission
- Steve Smith, Georgia Forestry Commission
- Daniel Westcot, Georgia Forestry Commission
- Gary White, Georgia Forestry Commission
- Katherine Eddins, Georgia Land Trust
- Jimmy Etheridge, Georgia Power
- Richard Laub, Georgia State Historic Preservation
- Christopher Burke, Greater Atlanta Homebuilders
- Sarah Visser, Keep Georgia Beautiful
- Dan Whitehead, Moons Tree Farm
- Lee Carmon, Northeast Georgia RDC
- Michael Manning, Manning, Selvage & Lee
- Jose Pagan, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Cindy Haygood, Rolling Hills RC&D
- Dale Thorpe, Savannah Tree Foundation
- Diane Houston, Savannah Tree Foundation
- Patty Durand, Sierra Club
- Brendon Barclay, Sustaining Urban Villages
- Cheryl Kortemeier, Trees Atlanta
- Greg Levine, Trees Atlanta
- Gena Taylor, Trees Columbus
- Connie Head, Technical Forestry Services
- Gil Landry, UGA Center for Urban Ag.
- Todd Hurt, UGA Center for Urban Ag.
- Ellen Bauske, UGA Center for Urban Ag.
- Kim Coder, UGA Cooperative Extension
- Sheldon Hammond, UGA Cooperative Extension
- Kris Irwin, UGA Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources
- Alexandra Adams, Upper Chattahoochee RiverKeeper
- Dudley Hartel, USDA Forest Service
- Ed Macie, USDA Forest Service

### **Planning Team**

Sam Collier, Strategic Planner

Mary Lynne Beckley, Georgia Urban Forest Council

Susan Reisch, Georgia Forestry Commission

## **Abbreviations**

ACCG	Association of County Commissioners of Georgia
ACT	Alliance for Community Trees
ASLA	American Society of Landscape Architects
BMP	Best Management Practice
CCDP	UGA Center for Community Design & Preservation
CES	University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service
DCA	Georgia Department of Community Affairs
DOT	Georgia Department of Transportation
GAA	Georgia Arborists Association
GCLP	Georgia Certified Landscape Professional Program
GCUA	Georgia Center for Urban Agriculture
GFC	Georgia Forestry Commission
GGIA	Georgia Green Industry Association
GMA	Georgia Municipal Association
GTA	Georgia Technology Authority
GUFC	Georgia Urban Forest Council
HDF	The Home Depot Foundation
ISA	International Society of Arboriculture
KGB	Keep Georgia Beautiful
MALTA	Metro Atlanta Landscape and Turf Association
RDC	Resource Development Council
SNA	Southern Nursery Association
USDA FS	USDA Forest Service
WSFNR	University of Georgia Warnell School of Forestry & Natural Resources

## **Five-Year Plan Issues**

### **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.

### **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.

### **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.

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 the employs certified arborists.

### **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.

### **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).

### **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 seek to create a tree design standard module for design professionals.

## Issue 1 - Tree Canopy and Impervious Surface

**Metric: Increase Canopy Cover while Decreasing the Gain in Impervious Surfaces**

	Activity	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Comments
1	Promote tree planting	Ongoing	GFC  GUFC Tree Advocacy Groups	Arbor Day, Market Nursery Sales  BMPs, Info
2	Promote the use of pervious surfaces	Ongoing	GUFC  Concrete and Pavement Assn. ASLA   Developers	Provide incentives to promote use. Link to City Arborists.  Work with Southface and other green building organizations.
3	Promote the development of tree advocacy groups & improve networking with related issue groups	Ongoing	GFC  GUFC KGB	Develop tree advocacy network for times when political action is needed
4	Increase opportunities for networking & information sharing between local tree advocacy groups	December, 2006  December, 2006   November, 2007	GUFC  GFC  ACT  GFC, GUFC  GUFC	Establish a regular sharing & information exchange among local tree advocacy groups.  Post online a list of advocacy groups  Promote ACT to advocacy groups Encourage to seek and develop funding  Pre- and post-conference session for GUFC 2007

5	Re-inventory canopy cover baseline & impervious surface area	every 5 years	GFC	This measure also evaluates effectiveness of ordinances, staffing & training in communities
6	Promote and fund more detailed inventories in local areas	yearly	GFC, GUFC, GAA	
7	Aid in Identifying and protecting priority urban forest pockets	within 2 years	RDCs  GUFC	Critical forest land study  Convene group database of conservation  GUFC, park organizations, GRPA, DCA, RDCs planning staff, RC&Ds, Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Lands, APA, GFC & DNR  Way to direct private parties who want to protect their land
8	Work with Southface and other green building organizations to improve site conditions	Ongoing	GUFC, John Wegner	Provide specifications to EarthCraft Communities Certification Program
9	Measure Public Opinion re: Canopy & Urban Forestry message	within 2 years	GFC, USFS, HDF	Expand USFS Gainesville Study
10	Outreach to planning & development community	Ongoing	GUFC	
11	Keep abreast of science & policy related to the impact of climate on tree health and tree value for carbon capture	Ongoing	USFS, GFC, Universities	

## Issue 2 - Understanding the Resource Value of Trees

**Metric 2A:** An increase in the number of *managed* communities by 5% per year.

**Metric 2B:** An increase in the number of *developed* communities will increase by 5% per year.

**Metric 2C:** An increase in the number of certified arborists by 10% per year.

**Metric 2D:** An increase in the number of Tree City USAs by 5% per year.

**Metric 2E:** Attendance at professional meetings -

	Activity	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Comments
1	Develop incentives for cities to become involved in U&CF programs.	Jan-09	GFC	
2	Establish a relationship with ACCG and GMA including speaking engagements and sponsorships.	Jun-07	GFC	
3	Develop an educational "tree tag" for nursery stock		The Home Depot	
4	Promote one tree value message point per year, through multiple approaches such as Arbor Day, Conferences and SHADE magazine.	Ongoing	GFC, GUFC, partners	
5	Train nonprofits on fundraising. Hold nonprofit training/summit.	January 2008 thru January 2009	Nonprofit Tree Groups, ACT, Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia	
6	Continue to hold the Georgia Tree Board Academy	Annual	GFC, GUFC	
7	Promote PSAs (Trees Columbus example) to other tree groups, govt. TV channels	January 2007 - Ongoing	Trees Columbus	
8	Compile success stories of public-private partnerships	Ongoing	GFC	Example: FedEx Kinkos, Melaver

9	Increase corporate involvement across GA	January 2008 - January 2009	GUFC, Tree Groups	Continue current collaborations and partnerships (Home Depot, Forest Product Companies)
10	Create branded PowerPoint slide and one-page publications promoting the value of trees	June 2007 - June 2008	GUFC	Downloadable PDF needed for Web sites.
11	Encourage attendance of target audiences at professional meetings. (developers, utilities, engineers, homebuilders).	Jan-07	GUFC, Partners	Double the number of attendees every year.
12	Develop an online interactive tool to help a homeowner determine a value for the trees in their yard	Jan-08	GUFC, Outdoor Activity Center in Atlanta	See Casey Tree Foundation for an example
13	Expand "Making the Shade" Program	Fall 2007	GFC	Program targets schools.
14	Develop a survey to measure the amount of money donated to Georgia tree groups		Earth Share, GUFC	
15	Link tree values to air quality and water quality and economics. Stay abreast of current issues such as nature services, carbon sequestration, wood utilization and public health.			

## Issue 3 - Tree Maintenance Best Management Practices

**Metric: Dollar value of growth of tree care service industry that employs certified arborists.**

	Activity	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Comments
1	Develop a survey to measure the economic impact of the tree service industry	Oct-08	GUFC, GGIA, SNA	Contract with a University to conduct an economic impact study.
2	Establish hotlines for tree topping, mulch volcano, planting under utility lines	2009	GUFC	
3	Develop a reference for Best Management Practices and standards including basic, universal language. Post on Web sites	2008	GUFC	Including tree planting, tree conservation, pruning, mulching, construction, placement (distance), species, maintenance. Before and after pictures helpful. English and Spanish.
4	Develop standard curriculum for BMPs	2008	GUFC	
5	Assist communities with writing Tree Emergency Response Plans	Jan-07	GUFC	Follow-Up to GUFC 2006 conference
6	Include tree protection in Erosion and Sedimentation courses in a 15 minute module	Jun-06	Soil and Water Conservation Commission, Homebuilders Assn. of GA	Target communities that have tree ordinances in place. Offer basic and advanced courses.
7	Survey communities to determine if they have standards and what they are	Jan 07 - Jan 08	GUFC	
8	Offer workshops for legal professional for CFEs	Jul-05	GUFC, Georgia Land Trust	
9	Stay on cutting edge of research and practices. Bring speakers and demonstrations to GA conference and offer in annual Basic Tree Care Workshops.	Ongoing	GUFC	

## Issue 4 - Local Ordinances

**Metric: A 5% Annual Increase in the Number of Local Ordinances that Meet Sufficiency Conditions Outlined in Activity 6, Below**

	Activity	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Comments
1	Promote Training & education for local communities & elected officials on the importance of canopy and ordinances	Ongoing	GFC, GUFC, Local Tree Advocacy Groups	
2	Promote training for local enforcement staff	Ongoing	GUFC, GFC  Local Tree Advocacy Groups	Promote the idea to train Offer trainings [??]
3	Encourage communities to actively market the urban forest & ordinances. Audience: citizens, developers, local officials	Ongoing	GFC, GUFC, Local Tree Advocacy Groups	Grant marketing workshops
4	Create a database of papers re: the value of urban trees - include greenhouse gas prevention, carbon capture	by Fall, 2007	USDA FS, GFC, GUFC	Post online, and link to <a href="http://www.treelink.org">www.treelink.org</a>
5	Create a marketing package for local communities to use to promote the value of trees & ordinances	by Fall, 2008	GUFC, GFC  Local Tree Advocacy Groups	Create marketing package Review & Distribute
6	Offer evaluation service for local ordinances [a] Protection Goal, [b] Enforcement Clause, [c] Penalty Clause & [d] Suggested Staffing Level	ongoing	USDA FS, GUFC, GFC	With emphasis on staffing and enforcement.
7	Provide information & encourage dialogue about link between urban forestry & smart/quality growth	ongoing	USDA FS, GUFC, GFC, DCA, DOT	

## Issue 5 - Promote Professional Expertise in Sustainable Community Forestry

**Metric 5A: Certify 300 Landscape Professionals through the Georgia Certified Landscape Professional (GCLP) Program**

**Metric 5B: Certify 250 Arborists through the ISA**

	Activity	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Comments
1	Enhance GCLP program to provide Urban Forestry Module for certification	December, 2008 GCLP Task Force, WSF&R	GCUA, GAA, GGIA, GUFC, MALTA, GTA, WSFNR, GFC	
2	Develop, Promote & provide continuing education opportunities for GCLP cert. professionals	Ongoing	GFC, GUFC, ISA, GAA, CES, GGIA, GCUA	
3	Publicize benefits of GLCP to Design Professionals & General Public	December, 2009 GAASLA	GFC, GUFC, MALTA, ASLA, ASLA-Georgia Chapter, GGIA, CES	
4	Publicize benefits of Certified Arborist to general public & non-certified tree care providers	Ongoing	GFC, GUFC, CES, GAA, Southern Chapter of ISA, WSFNR	
5	Develop & provide additional training & test for ISA Arborist Certification	December, 2007	ISA, with Resources from GCUA Training Coordinator, GAA, Grants	Tie in ISA scholarship availability

## Issue 6 - Design with Tree Longevity in Mind

### Metric: Create Tree Design Standard Module for Design Professionals

	Activity	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Comments
1	Collect existing research to determine relevance	September, 2007	GFC, GUFC, ASLA, ASLA-Georgia Chapter, WSNR, ISA, USDA FS, DOT, Consultant, CCDP	This will require new funding. Resource needs: Grant writer/grant source, ad hoc project development team
2	Analyze information from activity 1 & develop strategy for module	April, 2008	Above parties, CES	Include Georgia Model Urban Forest Book and <a href="http://www.modelurbanforest.org">www.modelurbanforest.org</a>
3	Create Standards Draft Module	March, 2009	Consultant	Pending Available Funding
4	Peer Review of Module for Approval	June, 2009	Above parties	Parties serve as Review Committee
5	Publish & disseminate information to design professionals & municipalities	June, 2010	GFC, GUFC Above parties	Publish Disseminate
6	Advocate adoption & implementation	January, 2011	Above parties Municipalities Developers	