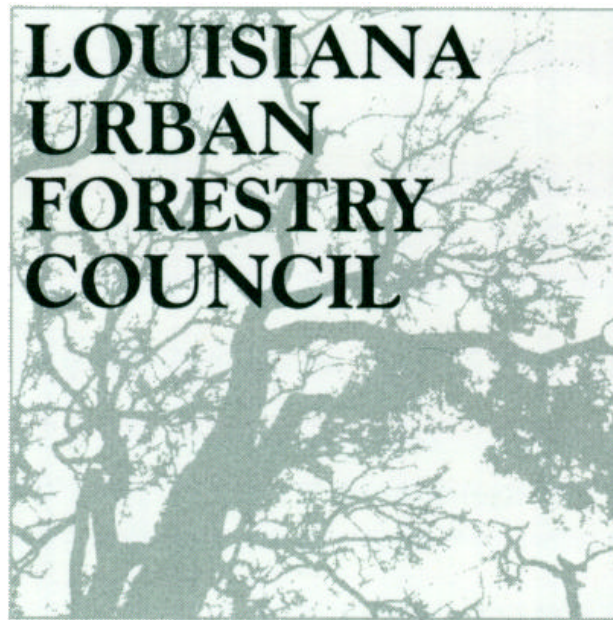


# THE LOUISIANA URBAN FORESTRY COUNCIL



# STRATEGIC PLAN

*This Strategic Plan was approved at the 2002 Louisiana Urban Forestry Council's Annual Conference, held in Lafayette, Louisiana on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2002.*

## **Issues Important to the State of Louisiana**

Louisiana is known all over the world for its lush greenery. Louisiana trees are among the most beautiful in the world. However, Louisiana's urban forests face many challenges. For instance, there is an unfortunate lack of knowledge as to the value and benefit of urban forests and in fact there is little understanding as to the meaning of an urban forest or the awareness of their existence. A great need for the education of the citizens and elected officials exists. Outreach efforts are needed to inform the public as to the existence, beauty and value of our urban forests and professional urban forestry management.

Urban sprawl has affected all areas of the state and there are few growth management initiatives in place among the communities. The urban sprawl is causing a loss of our forest ecosystems. Additionally, few communities have strong landscape and tree preservation ordinances if any at all. Tree preservation landscape ordinances and evaluation of urban forestry programs would be beneficial to the state.

Louisiana's unique topography often impedes tree preservation. Many of its communities are surrounded by water bodies and often have a low water table. Additionally, the elevation level of the southern part of our state is very low – below sea level in many places. Often lots and development sites must be filled 1 foot to 5 feet. This amount of fill does not cater to tree preservation. Learning to build with trees and meet the codes for flooding proves to be quite challenging.

On the positive side many groups are developing that have these remediation challenges as objectives. For instance, the Trust for Public Lands assists emerging groups that deal with the re-greening of urban area. A flagship organization is needed to reach out to these groups and help coordinate efforts among them.

## **Issues important to Council**

From the many urban forestry related issues important to the State of Louisiana, the Louisiana Urban Forestry Council (LUFC) has specifically identified urban sprawl and growth management, outreach, professionalism, and outreach to new partners as issues important to the state and to the council. The LUFC will concentrate its efforts on these concerns.

Additionally, the LUFC places a high value on implementing the objectives of Tree City U.S.A. and working with the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) in aiding the execution of its strategic plan. The Council also aims to promote the National Strategic Plan entitled, *The Forest Where We Live*, from the USDA Forest Service National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council's Strategic Plan and the objectives of Tree City USA.

## **Council Mission**

The Louisiana Urban Forestry Council was established in 1991, its mission is to recognize, promote and improve the value and benefits of our urban forest resources through management, education, research, training and conservation.

## **Goals and Objectives**

- Goal I: Sustain the Council by creating financial stability.
- Goal II: Continue to develop and implement a comprehensive public relations plan.
- Goal III: Continue to develop educational programs.
- Goal IV: Assist the LDAF and federal government in improvement and delivery of the Urban and Community Forest Grant Program.
- Goal V: Promote the elements of Tree City USA.

**Goal I: Sustain the Council by creating financial stability**

**Strategy A:** Seek and designate council members to research and apply for grants or foundations.

**Action 1:** Identify grantwriting and foundation opportunities through public and private sources such as the U.S. Forest Service National Fire Plan, grants awarded to programs concentrated on low income or disadvantaged communities, or grants from the Small Business Administration.

**Strategy B:** Seek additional private, municipal, and corporate memberships and sponsorships.

**Action 1:** Directly solicit municipalities targeting Tree City USA communities and grant recipients.

**Action 2:** Develop a presentation package to present to cities when seeking contributions. Presentation package should include a professional overview of the LUFC including its purpose, membership composition, and previously funded projects. The package should also include other sponsors, former grant recipients, amount of money given annually, and how LUFC can benefit their organization.

**Strategy C:** Secure funding for executive director position.

**Strategy D:** Continue to pursue state funding for Council

**Action 1:** Research possibility of securing legislative funding (i.e., percentage of license plate sales, federal grant program match)

**Action 2:** Develop a list of other states that have matched the federal grant program.

**Strategy E:** Improve fundraising capacity.

- Action 1:** Survey other state's urban forestry council fundraising strategies.
- Action 2:** Identify alternate fundraising opportunities such as industry donations or sponsorships.
- Action 3:** Sales of t-shirts, etc.
- Action 4:** Find 4 newsletter sponsors for *the Canopy*.
- Action 5:** Sell advertising space in the newsletter.
- Action 6:** Consider charging fee for seminars or education programs.

**Strategy F:** Increase funding through membership.

- Action 1:** Consider raising dues or accepting contributions for levels of support.
- Action 2:** Seek more members.
- Action 3:** Each council board member is to commit to pursuing 10 new memberships.
- Action 4:** Consider ways to increase membership benefits.
- Action 5:** Consider contracting with one who has had successful experience with a growth plan. (i.e., non-profits, Main St. manager, private consultant)

**Strategy G:** Conference

- Action 1:** Seek sponsorship for conference.
- Action 2:** Consider splitting profit with sponsoring group as has been done in the past with Baton Rouge Green and the Hammond Tree Foundation.
- Action 3:** Increase attendance at conference and encourage participation.
- Action 4:** Obtain more exhibitors.
- Action 5:** Raise money throughout the year for the annual conference.

**Strategy H:** Continue and improve the annual campaign for financial support.

- Action 1:** Set an annual campaign funding goal.
- Action 2:** Increase the number of supporters and amount of financial support

**Goal II: Continue to develop and implement a comprehensive public relations plan.**

**Strategy A:** Continue to print and improve *the Canopy* (quarterly newsletter).

- Action 1:** Commit to publish 4 issues of *the Canopy* per year.
- Action 2:** Improve statewide participation for the “Green Bits” section of the newsletter.
- Action 3:** Include reports on council workshops, annual conference, council awards, and U & CF grants in newsletters.
- Action 4:** Highlight selected grant project results each year.

**Strategy B:** Web Page

- Action 1:** Complete unfinished information within current web page structure.
- Action 2:** Explore creation of message board on website for broader, more immediate communication among members and general public.

**Strategy C:** Expand and update mailing list.

- Action 1:** Engage database expert (i.e., Access expert) for assistance.
- Action 2:** Review and evaluate mailing list to add the key individual or contact person for municipalities (i.e. legislative aide) and to remove unnecessary names.
- Action 3:** Update list to reach new audiences.
- Action 4:** Increase reviewed and evaluated mailing list by 25%.
- Action 5:** Explore ways to reach public and new audiences.

**Strategy D:** Issue media advisories.

- Action 1:** Write advisory announcing Arbor Day.
- Action 2:** Locate information on media fax numbers and build media contact fax list.
- Action 4:** Issue media advisories for Arbor Day, LUFC Conference, LUFC awards, election of LUFC officers, and U & UCF grants.

**Strategy E:** Revise the Annual Campaign.

- Action 1:** Increase the number of supporters
- Action 2:** Conduct annual campaign for financial support.
- Action 3:** Develop, outline, and define new approach for annual campaign.
- Action 4:** Develop support and structure materials for campaign.

**Strategy F:** Increase number of members.

- Action 1:** Review and enhance member benefits.
- Action 2:** Evaluate member demographics & their expectations of LUFC.
- Action 3:** Explore ways to reach public and new audiences.

**Strategy G:** Develop closer relationship with local governing bodies.

- Action 1:** In conjunction with the educational goal, continue to participate in the Louisiana Municipal Association Annual Convention.
- Action 2:** Explore partnership possibilities with municipal governing bodies.

**Strategy H:** Explore ways to reach public and new audiences.

- Action 1:** Encourage participation from schools
- Action 2:** Reach out to civic or neighborhood groups.
- Action 3:** Develop strategic partnerships with other statewide or regional groups & agencies.
- Action 4:** Explore partnerships with other organizations (American Public Works Association, National Parks & Recreation Association, LA Federation of Garden Clubs, etc.).

**Goal III: Continue to develop educational programs.**

**Strategy A:** Increase citizen and target group awareness of available urban forestry issues, trends, services, and resources.

- Action 1:** Provide a variety of successful non-profit green group models from around the state outlining their missions, structure and funding sources.
- Action 2:** Provide tools and resources for the community to fully understand environmental problems encountered with the growth of the community.
- Action 3:** Increase awareness of available resources and services from governmental and non-profit agencies.
- Action 4:** Deliver informational urban forestry presentations to municipal organizations such as LA Municipal Association, American Planning Association, and Main St. Managers.
- Action 5:** Develop presentation for target audiences.
- Action 6:** Promote and educate as to the importance of the urban forestry profession and encourage the hiring of urban foresters.

**Strategy B:** Continue to host annual conference.

- Action 1:** Select conference themes that have continuity through the years.
- Action 2:** Select conference sites for future years.
- Action 3:** Maintain year round committee to review conference needs.
- Action 4:** Develop procedures and guidelines for setting up future conferences to enable each new annual conference chairperson the simplicity in implementing the conference.



**Strategy C:** Commit to at least 2 “Building Green Cities” workshops per year.

**Action 2:** Address urban sprawl, community forestry, and non-profit green group development.

**Action 3:** Target municipalities in the state that have developing urban forestry programs and/or non-profit community green groups in their communities.

**Action 4:** Develop list of speakers.

**Action 5:** Coordinate seminar and workshop dates with community leaders.

**Strategy D:** Develop publications and seminars that produce income.

**Action 1:** Considering co-sponsoring or seeking formal partnerships with LDAF; Louisiana universities, LA Extension Services, and other non-profit groups to serve as review panel.

**Action 2:** Determine tasks and needs through partnerships or based on LUFC educational goals.

**Strategy E:** Help support website and newsletter.

**Action 1:** Study website and make recommendations on its development.

**Action 2:** Provide educational materials for website.

**Action 3:** Help to contribute timely articles for the newsletter.

**Action 4:** Develop a constant supply of educational articles for the newsletter.

**Action 5:** Focus on making website interactive and a key component of outreach programs.

**Goal IV: Assist the LDAF and federal government with the improvement and delivery of the Urban and Community Forest Grant Program.**

**Strategy A:** Develop priority for funding Louisiana UC&F Grant program

**Strategy B:** Develop and record performance indicators of grant recipient projects.

**Strategy C:** Promote professionalism and the hiring of urban foresters.

**Strategy D:** Increase participation and awareness of the LDAF grant program and promote the program at council events.

**Goal V: Promote the elements of Tree City USA.**

**Strategy A:** Feature the Louisiana cities that have been designated as Tree City USA in *the Canopy*.

**Action 1:** Emphasize 1 city per issue.

**Strategy B:** Continue to present Tree City USA award at annual conference.

**Strategy C:** Promote Arbor Day at a statewide level.

**Action 1:** Conduct the statewide Arbor Day poster contest for 5<sup>th</sup> grade students.

**Action 2:** Host and Arbor Day Tree Planting Ceremony in a community that is just initiating urban forestry efforts.

**Action 3:** Co-sponsor a state Arbor Day ceremony with LDAF to build on the Millennium Grove started at the State Forest in Woodworth, LA.

**Action 4:** Proclaim Arbor Day in the host city of the Annual Conference and plant a tree during the conference.

**Strategy D: Encourage ordinance development**

**Action 1:** Determine which communities do not have landscaping or tree preservation ordinances.

**Action 2:** Pursue funding for ecosystem study.

**Action 3:** Assist communities in preparing a landscape or tree preservation ordinance.

**Strategy E: Increase number of urban foresters in the state and encourage professionalism.**

## **Annual Work Plan**

An estimated annual work plan for the next five years has been developed. However, the LUFC will reassess the plan annually, drawing from the strategic plan and any unanticipated needs that may arise.

### **2002 Annual Work Plan**

The work plan for 2002 will focus on the already established staples of the LUFC – grants, awards, conference, traveling workshop, the annual campaign, and the newsletter. LUFC will continue to present the Tree City U.S.A. award at the annual conference. Some new goals and strategies will be an additional focus for 2002 and are drawn from the financial plan, the educational goals, and the goal to assist the LDAF and the federal government in the improvement and delivery the Urban and Community Forests Grant Program. More specifically, the LUFC plans to concentrate on seeking additional private, municipal, and corporate memberships and sponsorships, and to increase the number of general members as part of the financial plan. A second mission arising from both the financial plan and educational goal is to develop publications and seminars that produce income. Thirdly, prioritized criteria to determine grant recipients from the LA UC&F Grant Program will be developed. A new section will appear in each issue of the newsletter, in which a Louisiana city that has been designated as Tree City U.S.A. will be featured.

### **Specific Action Items for 2002**

- 1) Develop presentation package for municipal support -----(*Goal 1, Strategy B*)
- 2) Develop Sponsorship Opportunities for corporate support -----(*Goal 1, Strategy B*)
- 3) Develop a brochure for individual membership/financial support (*Goal 1, Strategy F*)
- 4) Host a booth at the LMA Conference -----(*Goal 2, Strategy G*)
- 5) Make a presentation to LMA on Building Green Cities-----(*Goal 3, Strategy C*)
- 6) Host one to two Building Green Cities Workshop after LMA ----(*Goal 3, Strategy C*)
- 7) Produce at least one additional Canopy newsletter this year -----(*Goal 2, Strategy A*)
- 8) Introduce a “Green Bits” circular twice this year -----(*Goal 2, Strategy A*)
- 9) Complete unfinished information within the web site-----(*Goal 2, Strategy B*)
- 10) Develop a priority for UCF Grants -----(*Goal 4, Strategy A*)

## **2003 Annual Work Plan**

In the year 2003, the LUFC will continue its already established programs and build upon the goals and strategies of 2002. New goals and strategies for the year will be drawn from all of the five goals of the LUFC Strategic Plan. One financial strategy includes seeking and designating council members to research and apply for grants and foundations. Improving and revising the Annual Campaign is both a financial and public relations strategy. Action items associated with this strategy include setting a funding goal, increasing in number of supporters and amount of financial support outlining and defining a new approach for the campaign and developing support and structure materials for the campaign. Expanding and updating the mailing list is a strategy conceived to further develop the public relations goal and includes several action items. An enhanced focus on the website and newsletter is a strategy of the public relations and education goal. An increased effort to increase participation and awareness of the LDAF grant program and promotion of the program at council events will be made. Promoting Arbor Day at a statewide level will be another focus.

### **Specific Action Items for 2003**

- 1) Host the Annual Conference -----(Goal 3, Strategy B)
- 2) Solicit financial support from Corporate industry -----(Goal 1, Strategy B)
- 3) Produce a Profitable Annual Conference -----(Goal 1, Strategy G)
- 4) Host a booth at the LMA Conference -----(Goal 2, Strategy G)
- 5) Make a presentation to LMA on Building Green Cities----- (Goal 3, Strategy C)
- 6) Produce at least two Canopy newsletters this year----- (Goal 2, Strategy A)
- 7) Continue the "Green Bits" circular four times this year----- (Goal 2, Strategy A)
- 8) Maintain the web site with current information ----- (Goal 2, Strategy B)
- 9) Host at least two Building Green Cities Workshops----- (Goal 3, Strategy C)

## **2004 Annual Work Plan**

Efforts to expand on several strategies begun in 2003 will also be the focus in 2004. These include increasing the number of members, supporting the website and newsletter, and promoting Arbor Day at a statewide level. New initiatives will be made to improve fundraising capacity. Some very important education actions will be taken such as providing a variety of successful non-profit green group models from around the state and outlining their missions, structure and funding sources. Providing tools and resources for the community to fully understand environmental problems encountered with the growth of the community are other actions that will be pursued to implement our education goals. Working to promote professionalism and the hiring of urban foresters is a strategy conducive to the goal of promoting the elements of Tree City U.S.A.

### **2005 Annual Work Plan**

Expanding on all of the programs and progress instituted in previous years, 2005 will also bring several new strategies into focus. Concentrating on the encouragement of ordinance development is a strategy from Goal V; promote the elements of Tree City U.S.A. To implement this strategy, LUFC plans to determine which communities do not have landscaping or tree preservation ordinances and assist those communities in preparing an ordinance as well as pursue funding for an ecosystem study. As part of Goal IV, *Promote the LDAF and federal government in improvement and delivery of the Urban and Community Forest Grant Program*, LUFC plans to develop and record performance indicator of grant recipient projects. Also, as part of this goal and the LUFC plans to continue to promote and educate as to the importance of the urban forestry profession and encourage the hiring of urban foresters. To continue in the implementation of the education goal, the LUFC plans to add two new action items: increase the awareness of available resources and services from governmental and non-profit agencies and to develop presentation for target audiences. LUFC plans to pursue state funding as a strategy to implement the financial plan. In an effort to achieve more effective public relations, the Council will explore ways to reach public and new audiences.

### **2006 Annual Work Plan**

In 2006, the Council would like to focus on securing funding for executive director position. The Council also plans to concentrate on delivering more informational urban forestry presentations to municipal organizations such as LA Municipal Association, American Planning Association, and Main Street Managers as part of its educational mission. LUFC will continue many of last years strategies and actions items such as exploring ways to reach public and new audiences, encouraging ordinance development, and working to increase number of urban foresters in the state and encouraging professionalism.

### **Grant Selection Criteria**

The Council role in the grant selection process is two-fold. One charge is to establish a set of priorities of which grant selection will be based. The second is to provide members to review and make recommendations for grant selections. Many of the criteria used to determine the grant selections are those suggested by required by the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program Standards.

## **Role of Council Members**

A Board of Directors that consists of 15 to 25 members who represent the urban areas of the state governs the LUFC. Six members of the Board of Directors are elected to make up the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee consists of a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Education Committee Chair, and a LDAF liaison. The Council may also maintain an Advisory Board appointed by the Executive Committee and established to assist and advise the Council.

The Council should be made up of a broad-based group such as government representatives, industry, non-governmental organizations, and volunteers. The Council's Representatives are to advise the state as to urban forestry needs and progress in the state. The Council should also provide feedback to the State Forester and Forest Service on the effectiveness of statewide and local urban forestry implementation efforts. The Council should also assist in building partnerships among all groups interested in the LUFC program. The Council should also facilitate urban forestry networking and technology transfer and foster LUFC environmental education opportunities.

Various committees are formed from the Advisory Board and the Board of Directors. These committees are formed to carry out the action items and strategies created to achieve our goals and projects. Currently, the LUFC has a nominating, grant review, awards, public relations, financial, and education committee. These committees are formed on an as needed basis.

## **Funding**

Funding sources for the Council are from the LDAF, the federally sponsored Farm Bill, nominal charges for the traveling workshops and memberships including individual, family, municipal, and corporate. The LDAF provides negotiated funding and office space and this funding covers most of the council's operating costs. The funding provided through the annual Farm Bill provides most of the Council's funding.

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