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Community **FORESTRY PROGRAM**



DEPARTMENT
OF
FORESTRY

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA
LINCOLN, NE 68583

Neal E. Jennings
Extension Forester (Community Forestry)
and Assistant State Forester

Community Forestry is a planned and supervised program for the long-range management of street, park, and other public trees.

Look at the trees in your community. They have a definite life span. Every tree eventually dies, must be removed, and should be replaced. Effective management of your community tree resource takes planning and action.

Common Community Tree Problems

These tree problems are common in Nebraska communities. Action needs to be taken to eliminate these problems and to minimize future problems.

- Tall trees planted under utility lines.
- Spreading trees planted next to roadways.
- Trees planted too close to sidewalks.
- Areas completely devoid of trees.
- Trees planted too close together.
- Tree species that break up easily in snow, wind, or ice storms.
- Poor tree species composition or lack of variety.
- No programmed removal of dead or dying trees.
- No long-range, organized tree planting program.

- No master vegetative plan for parks or courthouse areas.
- No good means of disposing of wood wastes.
- No trees in the downtown area.
- No tree maintenance program.

Program Idea

About half of all trees in Nebraska communities are on public property – streets, parks, and other public areas. A community forestry program, by concentrating on public owned trees, can have a major impact.

The Department of Forestry's goal is to help a local group develop and administer a comprehensive tree program. The local group (Community Tree Board) should be legally constituted and charged with the responsibility for developing and implementing the total program.

Tree Board Activities

The Tree Board normally has two primary responsibilities:

1. Develop a long-range master plan for managing the community tree resource.
2. Develop and implement annual work plans based on the master plan.

Long-range Plan

The master plan should contain these major sections:

1. Purpose and title page.

2. A brief description of past tree or tree related activities.

3. Assessment of current situation. Only by knowing the current tree situation can a master plan be developed. Foresters can help with an inventory rating trees by size, species, and vigor, and will prepare a written report.

4. Tree planting. This section should include how orders, payment, purchase, distribution, planting, location, and care of trees will be handled.

5. Tree maintenance. This section should cover pruning, watering, fertilization, tree wrapping, and insect and disease control.

6. Tree removal and disposal. Tree removal on public and private property and manner of disposal should be covered.

7. Inventory of community resources. There are many individuals, groups, businesses, organizations, or agencies in your community who would support a program with manpower, money, equipment, or information. This section should be a working reference list of possible community resources.

8. Ordinances. Basic ordinances regulating tree planting, maintenance, and removal are needed for a successful program.

9. Landscape plans. A master vegetative plan for specific public areas should be prepared.

Annual Work Plans

Unless implemented, the master plan is useless. The Tree Board must develop an annual work plan based on community tree needs.

Commitments

Basic commitments are necessary for a successful Community Forestry Program.

Department of Forestry

The Department of Forestry will supply as much expertise and information as possible to communities willing to manage their community tree resource.

We will help communities on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Department of Forestry will:

- Visit the community, make a presentation on community forestry, and answer questions.
- Help with a detailed tree inventory and present a written report to the Tree Board.
- Present a detailed guide to Community Forestry Planning to the Tree Board.
- Meet with the Tree Board in an advisory capacity as needed and requested.
- Print free-of-charge the community forestry master plan and provide copies to the Tree Board.
- Supply information to help the community manage trees and respond to specific requests or problems.
- Train personnel in proper tree planting and maintenance techniques.

Community

Communities must take a long-range, comprehensive approach to tree management.

The community should:

- Agree to the need and concept of Community Forestry.

- Establish a legal board, commission or committee (commonly called a Community Tree Board) charged by ordinance with responsibility for development and administration of a comprehensive tree program.

- Supply at least one person to help the forester with the tree inventory.

- Amend or implement needed ordinances to properly regulate tree planting, maintenance, and removal.

- Prepare a Community Forestry master plan.

- Develop and implement annual plans of work.

Conclusion

Community Forestry does not require a lot of money, but it does require a realization of problems and a commitment to solving them.

Community Forestry is a pilot project. If your community is interested in the program, contact your County Extension Office or write to:

Department of Forestry
201 Miller Hall, East Campus
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Lincoln, Nebraska 68583