

Alabama's Urban Forestry Partnership



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Strengthening Our Roots

Everyone knows that in order for trees to grow and thrive, they need strong roots, because roots provide anchorage and stability. They also store vital energy. And roots absorb life-giving water and essential elements. Simply put, strong roots equal a solid foundation. And a promising future.

The same basic principles can be applied to a budding organization. In order to prosper, it must have the vital energy and the necessary resources to sustain healthy growth. In essence, before it can be effective and relevant to its surroundings, it must have the chance to establish strong roots.

During 2002, the Alabama Urban Forestry Partnership (AUFPP) has worked hard to strengthen its roots. We've reaffirmed our mission, continued to build strong relationships, and clearly defined goals that will help ensure our long-term growth and success.

We've taken the time to do this because we understand how important our success is to all Alabamians. You see, our urban forests are an incredible resource and improve the quality of life for everyone in our state. But they need our care, our stewardship, and our commitment to dig deeper, grow stronger, and work together to ensure we have healthy, thriving urban forests for years to come.

Printed on behalf of the
ALABAMA URBAN FORESTRY PARTNERSHIP

What We Accomplished

Planning for a Promising Future

Part of strengthening our roots and solidifying our foundation included answering some questions. In order to move forward and grow, we needed to clearly understand where we've been, where we are now, and where we want to go. When we were first chartered in 1999, we developed a mission that clearly defined why we exist. We had a fairly good picture of what we had already accomplished. But we needed a plan to tell us where we wanted to go.

During the past year, we did just that. We completed our five-year strategic plan. It was an exhaustive process, and it required input from many sources, but the landmark document that was produced clearly outlines the future of Alabama's urban forestry program.

It's a bright future that includes ambitious—yet very attainable—goals, including:

- Increasing the number of urban forester positions by 20 percent
- Developing and implementing activities to attain 150 Tree City USA certifications, 25 Tree City Growth Awards, and five Tree Line USA communities
- Developing a rapid-response technical assistance team to assist communities with local urban forestry needs
- Completing a statewide assessment of public attitudes about trees in cities
- Developing educational programs that target homebuilders, developers, and planners

Coordinated Educational Efforts

All members of the AUFPP understand the importance of education. Over the years, we've all dedicated significant energy and resources to providing educational programs that can help us further our goals.

Recently, however, we realized that we could accomplish more if we worked together—if we coordinated our educational efforts. This, we believed, would eliminate redundancy, improve efficiency, and, ultimately, help us reach more people. And that is exactly what we did over the past 12 months. Some examples include:

- Formatting the Alabama Urban Forestry Association's annual meeting as the AUFPP's flagship educational event
- Qualifying a number of our events as in-service training for Alabama Cooperative Extension Services (ACES) personnel
- Ensuring that several of our workshops provide continuing education units for members of the Alabama Forestry Commission, Extension System personnel, and arborists

Focused Funding

The USDA Forest Service's Urban & Community Forestry Financial Assistance Program is Alabama's major source of funds for urban forestry programs. And using these funds effectively is vital to the success of our urban forestry program. We believe this can be best accomplished when we share ideas and work collectively.

So, over the past 12 months, members of the AUFPP worked closely together to evaluate and prioritize proposals and made recommendations to Auburn University about how best to distribute these funds. As a result, these funds were used to support numerous worthy projects throughout the state including:

- Helping 46 tree care professionals earn their ISA Certified Arborists recognition
- Sponsoring three national-level urban forestry seminars
- Helping several Alabama cities complete urban forestry and tree-planting plans

Additional Accomplishments

Worked With Our Friends

- Alabama Association of County Commissioners
- Alabama League of Municipalities
- Alabama Power Foundation
- Alabama Regional Planning Commission
- International Society of Arboriculture
- National Arbor Day Foundation
- National Tree Trust
- USDA Forest Service

Made Headlines

- Circulated news stories throughout the state through ACES Communications media network and each UFP member's individual publications
- Became nationally recognized as a model for other states
- Raised the profile of the Alabama's urban forest and its value to people

Made a Difference

- AUFPP helped two cities hire first-time municipal forestry related positions.
- AUFPP helped nine Extension agents and natural resource specialists attain International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist recognition.
- AUFPP conducted, through the Alabama Urban Forestry Association (AUFA), an ISA exam and held the Annual Tree Board Academy at the annual AUFA conference.
- The AFC appointed an urban forestry specialist to work with UFP.
- The Auburn University School of Forestry & Wildlife Sciences (SFWS) promoted employment of urban forestry students at several meetings and conferences.
- The ACES produced a satellite broadcast and produced a companion publication on "Making Our Urban Forests Safer," targeting persons on local emergency management planning teams.
- The AFC continued support of Urban-Wildland Interface Councils in key metropolitan areas of the state.
- The SFWS continued efforts to promote urban forestry in communities with small, ethnically diverse populations.

History of the Partnership

In early 1999, the Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) voluntarily transferred its leadership role of the state's urban forestry program to Auburn University through the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. The transfer was completed when the AFC, AUFA (Alabama Urban Forestry Association), and the SFWS (School of Forestry and Wildlife Services) signed an historic agreement to coordinate their urban forestry efforts, activities, and services to further enhance the benefits of the state's urban forests. This agreement was the foundation—the roots—for Alabama's Urban Forestry Partnership.

Did You Know?

Don't really know how important Alabama's urban forests are? Take a quick look at some of these urban forest facts:

- There are 205,847,000 urban trees in Alabama, or 69 trees for each urban resident.
- Alabama's urban forest is worth an estimated \$130,208,000,000 in compensatory value.
- Alabama's urban forest canopy covers 48.2 percent of the state's towns, cities, and communities.
- Alabama's urban forest comprises 6.3 percent of the state.
- Twenty-one Alabama cities and towns have at least one city forester or city horticulturist on staff.
- Eighty-nine Alabama towns and cities are certified as a Tree City USA.
- Eleven Alabama towns and cities are Tree City USA Growth Award-certified.
- Two Alabama utility service providers are Tree Line USA-certified.
- Alabama has 131 International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) members.
- One hundred twelve Alabamians are ISA-certified arborists.

For more information about the Alabama Urban Forestry Partnership, its members, or to receive a copy of its strategic plan, please contact any agency member.

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For more information, call your county Extension office. Look in your telephone directory under your county's name to find the number.

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