3.9 Manage Woodlands and Urban Forests

5 Points | 10 Points | 15 Points

Action Updates

This action has been revised for the **current certification cycle**. A version of this action from the prior program year is available for comparison. Edits are highlighted in yellow. (Last updated 2020)

Objective

Plan and implement projects to increase tree cover and enhance tree, forest, and woodland health.

What to Do

1. Establish a Forestry Advisory Committee (FAC). The Committee will report to municipal leadership, but does not require formal appointing. Members could include the municipal tree warden, local volunteers, nonprofit organizations, councils of governments, and local organizations. The FAC might also engage a state Certified Forester. An existing forestry commission or similar entity may serve as the FAC, but should consider broadening representation to include the stated list. **(5 points)**

   Submit: A list of members of the Forestry Advisory Committee and the date of the most recent meeting.

   Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Committee/Task Force/Position Creation" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

2. The Forestry Advisory Committee must complete one or more activities from the following list, or one of great importance to the municipality (if not listed). **(10 points)**

   - Assess the tree cover within the municipality. See Appendix A for recommendations regarding the assessment of tree cover.
   - Establish general categories to describe trees in sites where your governing body and tree warden have direct responsibility, such as 'street trees', 'parks', 'open space' and other classifications of 'forests/woodlands on municipally owned land'. Placing tree cover into various categories makes it easier to determine specific areas of focus. Your FAC can also assess the extent of tree cover on private properties and on non-municipally owned public property (e.g., state highway land, state park land). Prepare a map to illustrate this tree cover. See Appendix B for a list of guiding questions.
   - Assemble and review existing municipal policies regarding trees and forests within the municipality. Determine whether your community needs to develop additional policies and implementation plans related to planting plans, tree diversity, property development, tree maintenance, the use of forested and wooded areas for recreation and other purposes, and other priority areas relating to the management of public trees. Develop those policies as needed, as recommendations to your municipality. See Appendix C for a list of guiding questions.
   - Based on the FAC's assessment of the municipal tree cover and the policies developed, establish a set of specific goals for your community to achieve regarding its trees and forests. Assemble these goals into a Municipal Forest and Woodlands Management Plan. This plan should reference needed resources and funding. See Appendix D for a list of guiding questions.
   - Establish a tree planting program based on the specific goals the FAC either stated or outlined in its Municipal Forest and Woodlands Management Plan. Include an approved species list of native plantings, a

location map of planned plantings, and a maintenance plan for these trees. See Appendix E for a list of guiding questions.

- Provide updates on findings and recommendations from the FAC to your local administration or governing body. Respond to requests of the local administration or governing body regarding forestry/woodlands needs.
- Sponsor or host a forestry and woodlands education campaign (can be run by a third party partner). Provide educational materials to private forest owner (for example, share information on PA 490 "An Act Concerning the Taxation and Preservation of Farm, Forest, or Open Space Land."

Submit: Documentation of the activities performed by the Forestry Advisory Committee, including all elements outlined in at least one item listed above.

Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Committee/Task Force/Position Creation" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

Timeframe for Credit

Actions can either be "New" or considered for "Rolling Credit."

New Action Credit. Any action completed within the past three years (from January 1 of the year seeking certification) is eligible for potential certification points. If you are applying for recertification in your year of expiration, you may not claim New Action Credit for items that previously received credit.

Rolling Credit. For any action older than three years (from January 1 of the year seeking certification), you must demonstrate ongoing, currently relevant, and meaningful impact in your community to be considered for certification points. If you are applying for recertification in your year of expiration, you must apply for Rolling Credit for any item that previously received credit, even if it was completed within the past three years.

View the "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for detailed submission requirements.

Engaging Partners

Sustainable CT encourages regional collaboration and other forms of partnership. For every action, please complete the "Partners" box in your submission, indicating the name(s) of any municipalities and/or organizations you partnered with (if any) and a brief description of your municipality's role. If you collaborate with other municipalities, each community will receive points. For additional information, please see the "Partners Guidance Document".

Potential Municipal and Community Collaborators

Staff from the planning and zoning and public works departments could be helpful in implementing this action.

In addition, the tree warden, planning and zoning commission, conservation commission, local organizations, council of governments, and local land trust(s) could help implement this action.

Funding

If available, below are potential funding sources specific to this Action. For a complete listing of potential funding opportunities to assist with implementing Sustainable CT Actions, please visit the Sustainable CT Grants Portal, which is searchable by Action. Please also visit the Support for Your Town page for opportunities for technical assistance and other supports.

- Urban Act Grant Program
- Municipal Grant Program (MGP)
- 2021 Sustainable CT Community Match Fund

Resources

Toolkits, Calculators, Guidance Documents, General Information

- University of Connecticut, Center for Land Use Education and Research
- CT Environmental Conditions Online
- iTree Canopy
- iTree Landscape
- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, "Connecticut Tree Wardens"
- UConn Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR), "Connecticut Tree Wardens"
- Burden, Dan (Summer, 2006), "Urban Street Trees 22 Benefits Specific Applications,"
- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, "State of Connecticut Directory of Certified Forest Practitioners June 2017 Edition"
- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, "The Classification of Land as Forest Land (PA 490)
- Connecticut Department of Agriculture, "Public Act 490, The Basics"
- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, "Trees and Urban Forests: Learn More"
- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, "Urban Forestry for Municipalities, Plans, Goals, Policies and Ordinances"
- Tyrrell, Mary, March, 2015. "Understanding Connecticut Woodland Owners A Report on the Attitudes, Values and Challenges of Connecticut's Family Woodland Owners"
- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, "Agriculture, Forestry and Connecticut's Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act"
- Hochholzer, Helene. "Connecticut's Forest Action Plan 2010 (Revised 2015)

Organizations and Relevant Programs

- Tree Wardens Association of Connecticut
- Connecticut Urban Forest Council
- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Urban Forestry Program
- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Connecticut's Tree Cities USA
- Arbor Day Foundation, Tree City USA
- Yale School or Forestry and Environmental Studies, Urban Resources Initiative
- Eastern Connecticut Forest Landowners Association/Wolf Den Land Trust
- Connecticut Conservation Districts

Benefits

Forests and street trees bring many values to a community, including:

- Improving air quality by absorbing carbon dioxide and other pollutants,
- Shading (which reduces urban heat island effect),
- Providing habitat for animals and birds,
- Beautification,
- Creating a sense of place, and
- Enhancing safety (for example, the presence of street trees reduces urban traffic speeds).

CT Success Stories

- Fairfield - Oct 2018 Certification
- Greenwich - Oct 2018 Certification
- Hartford - Oct 2018 Certification
- Old Saybrook - Oct 2018 Certification
- Old Saybrook - Oct 2020 Certification