



## Manage Woodlands and Urban Forests

### Action Updates

This action has been revised for the **current certification cycle**. Edits are highlighted in yellow. (Last updated 2023)

### Objective

Plan for and implement projects to increase tree cover and enhance tree, forest, and woodland health. Ensure equitable distribution of tree cover and access to woodlands.

### What to Do

1. Establish a Forestry Advisory Committee (FAC) or similar group that meets regularly to manage woodlands and urban forests in your municipality. This may be structured as a formal Committee or as a group that may include a municipal tree warden, public works, municipal staff, nonprofit organizations, council of governments, a state Certified Forester, or local volunteers and organizations. You may also leverage an existing group, such as your Sustainability Team, to fulfill this purpose. The group can be regional and comprised of multiple municipalities or represent one single municipality. Ensure your FAC or similar group is reflective of diverse perspectives and experiences from your municipality. This should include age, race, gender identity, religion, family status, immigration status, language, etc. **(5 points)**

**Submit:** A list of names and titles/sectors of current members of the FAC OR equivalent group, the date of the most recent meeting, and at least one additional piece of documentation related to the meetings, such as a promotional flyer, an agenda, minutes, presentations, or photographs.

**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. Inventory and plan for sustainable and equitable woodlands and urban forests.

#### **The more you do, the more points you earn. (up to 30 points)**

- a. Through land cover assessments, evaluate tree cover in your municipality and ground-truth assessments with site visits. 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, municipally owned forests/woodlands, etc. You 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). Placing tree cover into various categories makes it easier to determine specific areas of focus. See [Appendix A](#) for data and information on assessing tree cover. **(10 points)**

**Note:** This subaction is not to complete a formal tree inventory. For a formal tree inventory, please see subaction 3.9.2 c below.

**Submit:** A completed [worksheet 1](#).

**Timeframe for Credit:** Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Websites, Maps, Inventories, Checklists, Assessments, Plans, Ordinances, Policies, Regulations and Resolutions" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

- b. Complete a review of your municipal policy, priorities, and practices on woodlands and urban

forests. **(10 points)**

- Identify municipal priorities relating to tree planting programs.
- Review existing municipal policies and practices regarding trees and forests within the municipality and where additional policies or practices need to be implemented based on identified priorities.
- 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.
- Establish a set of specific goals for your community to achieve regarding its trees and forests. This plan should reference needed resources and funding.

See [Appendix B](#) for a list of guiding questions on priorities for a community tree program and [Appendix C](#) for a list of guiding questions on tree assessments, and complete the questions in worksheet 2.

**Submit:** A completed [worksheet 2](#).

**Timeframe for Credit:** Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Websites, Maps, Inventories, Checklists, Assessments, Plans, Ordinances, Policies, Regulations and Resolutions" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

- c. Complete a tree inventory. This inventory should include, at a minimum, the location, with GPS unit and coordinates; species scientific name; and diameter at breast height (DBH). **(10 points)**

**Submit:** A completed tree inventory for your municipality.

**Timeframe for Credit:** Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Websites, Maps, Inventories, Checklists, Assessments, Plans, Ordinances, Policies, Regulations and Resolutions" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

- d. Complete a Forest Management Plan, which may be related to a specific parcel or your entire municipality. Some examples of goals include sustainable timber harvest, management of native healthy trees, equitable public access. See [Appendix D](#) for a list of guiding questions. **(10 points)**

**Submit:** A completed Forest Management Plan.

**Timeframe for Credit:** Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Websites, Maps, Inventories, Checklists, Assessments, Plans, Ordinances, Policies, Regulations and Resolutions" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

3. Implement at least two best practices and programs to manage and create equitable and sustainable woodlands and urban forests. Examples of programs eligible for points under this Action are listed below. **(15 points)**

- Implement one of the ordinance recommendations identified in your review of municipal policy (action 3.9.3.b above).
- Perform an assessment of the tree health and condition, as a supplemental element to your tree inventory (action 3.9.3.a above).
- Provide proactive maintenance to existing trees within your municipality, such as a pruning program for existing trees.
- Complete a tree planting and maintenance program in your municipality that addresses extreme or urban heat, stormwater management, or another climate change issue.
- Complete a tree planting program in your municipality that increases tree equity and/or access to green space.
- Complete a management project in municipal woodlands; this could include invasive species removal, stewardship, or care. This may include tree planting, but planting projects should be

- focused on promoting health of existing trees and natural regeneration.
- Sponsor or host education or workforce development program related to best practices in tree planting and management of urban woodlands and forests (such as tree planting programs, visioning programs on local needs, engaging historically excluded groups in conversations shaping municipal tree planting priorities).

**Note:** Activities that are used to earn points toward this Action may not be used to earn points toward any other Sustainable CT event or training action (i.e., no “double-counting”).

**Submit:** Documentation that shows completion of an activity that supports your community's woodlands and forests; if implementing one of the examples above, please include all elements listed for that bullet.

**Timeframe for Credit:** Eligible for new action credit. This action falls under the action type “Implementation Projects” (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. 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, local land trust(s), and residents could help implement this action.

### 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).

For a complete list of funding opportunities, implementation resources, and success stories specific to this action, please visit the full Action write-up on the [Sustainable CT Actions webpage](#).