In today's complex world, successful collaboration is essential for the management of healthy community forests. Whether in a large city or small community, the planting and care of trees will be at their best when volunteers, city officials and businesses work together with clearly identified roles and responsibilities.

'Synergy' is probably an overworked term, but nothing better describes the importance of partnerships in urban and community forestry. Synergy, according to the American Heritage Dictionary, is "the interaction of two or more agents or forces so that their combined effort is greater than the sum of their individual efforts."

The agents or forces in community forestry have long been local tree boards and dedicated city foresters. But today, more is needed. Nonprofit organizations, benevolent businesses, and utilities are adding their strength to the common cause. Partnerships are bringing new skills, greater funding, and more human resources to the effort. They are also contributing to broader public support – an essential foundation for systematic, continuous tree care programs.

"The Arbor Day Foundation was created through partnerships and owes much of its success to partners at the local, state and federal levels," says Foundation Chief Executive John Rosnow. "We encourage communities everywhere to take the same approach. In this issue we highlight a few of the many efforts that are resulting in greener, healthier communities nationwide. I offer heart felt thanks to the dedicated leadership and membership of colleagues in other nonprofits, and to the generosity of corporate and utility partners. Together we can build a better America for tomorrow."

Few communities can offer the full potential of trees without the help of volunteers. This team is part of a planting project sponsored by TreeUtah and the Alliance for Community Trees in South Salt Lake City, Utah.
Partnerships in community forestry vary considerably. They may include a bicycle club or emergency responders helping to stage a local event, or your legislators when seeking funding for the community forestry coordinator in the state forester’s office. No potential partner should be overlooked, but in the pages that follow are some good examples of organizational approaches that work over the long term.

**Utilities**

Private and public utilities both have a basic interest in trees. Utilities face the challenge of delivering uninterrupted service to customers and keeping residents safely away from energized lines. Trees can interfere with both these important goals. In fact, utilities spend nearly $2 billion a year keeping their lines clear of tree limbs. For these reasons many utilities are partnering with other organizations to:

- create local tree guides that show the best species to plant in order to prevent interference with overhead lines.
- fund the replacement of inappropriate trees with trees that better fit the space and circumstances.
- sponsor Arbor Day celebrations and other events that promote planting the right tree in the right place.

Another challenge is to supply adequate quantities of power. Most utilities are interested in ways to reduce usage at peak times of the year and hold off the day when an expensive new generating facility must be built. Trees to the rescue! Trees have been found to be a low-tech solution to this high-tech problem. As a result, one of the nation’s most successful partnerships was formed in 1990 when the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) began collaborating with the Sacramento Tree Foundation to plant trees. Since then, SMUD has financed the planting of well over 400,000 trees at the homes of 125,000 of their customers. SMUD also offers trees for planting at schools, playgrounds and other public places. The utility markets the program and monitors the plantings to make sure they are done properly. The Sacramento Tree Foundation recruits volunteer planters and provides technical assistance. “We are the bridge,” says Ray Tretheway, executive director of the Foundation. “We bring together SMUD or businesses or city governments with the citizens. The essence of all we do begins with a partner. We figured that out real quickly and it has served well.” SMUD, like utilities elsewhere, make excellent and highly interested partners in community forestry.

*Trees provided by SMUD for cooling the street and houses are being planted by volunteers supervised by the Sacramento Tree Foundation.*
Corporations

Companies large and small are always concerned about their public image. Successful ones also are frequently interested in 'giving back' to the people who have made them successful. This combination of self-interest and altruism has had a significant impact on urban forestry. For example, partnerships between the nonprofit Greening of Detroit and the corporate community have resulted in contributions of nearly $250,000 a year. Donors include Ford Motor Company, LaSalle Bank, and Denso International America, to name a few.

Sometimes a company will establish its own 501(c)(3) charitable organization to disperse funds to worthy causes. The Home Depot Foundation is an example, and is yet another partner that has helped Greening of Detroit. This corporate Foundation has also teamed up with the Arbor Day Foundation to help plant trees in cities throughout the nation. Home Depot’s policy commits its Foundation to “improving the overall health of our communities, which not only includes healthy affordable housing but also the planting and restoration of trees along streets, in parks and in schoolyards; the building and refurbishment of community play spaces; and the revitalization of school facilities.” In the case of the Arbor Day Foundation partnership, this has resulted in springtime plantings of 100 large-caliper trees around schools in ten cities. The cities are selected through an application process and school children help do the planting as part of an accompanying educational campaign.

Greening of Detroit

Dick Wade, President of the Michigan Market for CHASE Bank, a corporate partner of Greening of Detroit, poses with a young friend at the Burton International School. The event was to announce CHASE Bank’s support for planting trees at the school and in Detroit’s Patton Park.

The Home Depot Foundation has been a major corporate partner working with hundreds of other foundations and communities nationwide. Here San Antonio Mayor Phil Hardberger, Arbor Day Foundation Vice-President Dan Lambe & volunteers from Home Depot & Wilshire Elementary teamed up to plant trees in San Antonio.

City-Volunteer Sponsorships

Some successful partnerships are direct arrangements between the city and volunteers. An example is Boise, Idaho’s Tree Stewards. In this case, the city recruits volunteers and provides a substantial notebook full of ‘how-to’ information and two-hour night courses for five weeks on basic tree identification, planting, maintenance, CPR and first aid. After training, small crews work on weekday mornings and some weekends pruning young trees in the city rights-of-way and parks. Hand saws, pole pruners and personal safety gear are provided and a city forestry employee always accompanies the crew. The volunteers also assist with Arbor Day plantings, provide staff for information booths at various events, and generally serve as advocates for good tree care throughout the city.

Brian Jorgenson, Community Forestry Manager for the City of Boise, says, “The Tree Stewards are an amazing asset to Boise Community Forestry. Without their assistance, several hundred trees would go without pruning every year in Boise. The people are friendly, dedicated and their pruning work is top notch. In short, I can’t imagine our team without them. I highly recommend educating volunteers to help care for trees in any city.”
Successful Nonprofits – Some Lessons for Everyone

Nonprofit organizations provide the nucleus for volunteer action in many communities nationwide. There is no single model that fits the circumstances of every community. Rather, the organization must be adapted to local needs and capacities. Regardless of community size, there are great examples of nonprofits that provide inspiration and lessons for others that may not yet have a successful organization to aid urban forestry.

Small and Medium Size Communities

Bettendorf, Iowa

Smaller communities often struggle with funding issues because of the small number of potential donors, lack of local corporations, and a small pool of volunteers. But if there is the will for action and a small cadre of residents that recognize the importance of trees, great things can happen. Bettendorf, Iowa, provides a good example. This community of 31,000 supports a very active organization called Bettendorf Trees Are Us. It was started in 1991 when the local utility offered matching funds to stimulate tree planting. Today, a core group of 15 members spearheads the work, with projects receiving help from Master Gardeners, scout groups, high school classes, and even low-security prisoners at the county jail.

Over the years, 500 volunteers have helped plant and maintain more than 1,600 trees. Grant support from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Mid-American Energy Company and others has been a big help. However, a key to success has been the cooperative attitude of city government. For over 15 years, Parks & Recreation Director Steve Grimes has been part of the committee. Moreover, the city includes a regular budget item to provide a consistent base of financial support.

The result of this teamwork has meant not only more trees and the ecoservices they provide, but community spirit and a high degree of appreciation for trees and the knowledge to plant and care for them properly. Projects conducted by Bettendorf Trees Are Us have included:

- Annual tree planting events at schools, in parks, along a recreation trail, and on street rights-of-way
- Mulching
- Information sheets inserted with sewer billings
- Videos on tree care for the local TV access channel
- Tree care pamphlets
- School programs
- A 'Tree Walk' self-guided tour pamphlet

Bettendorf Department of Parks and Recreation

One of the many projects undertaken by Trees Are Us was the renovation of Crow Creek Park. This former quarry was once an ugly, eroding, unsafe area abused by recreation vehicles. With financial support from the Bettendorf Parks and Recreation Department's Capital Improvement Program and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the quarry was drained, cleaned, and graded. Trees Are Us provided trees and volunteer labor. Today the park is a beautiful area with a fishing dock, observation decks, trails and landscaping.
Statewide Support

Some organizations exist to provide a statewide network for other tree organizations. In this way, rural or small communities can be served with technical advice, conferences or workshop opportunities, and a stronger voice for trees in local and state politics.

TreeUtah

This statewide nonprofit was formed in 1990 “to inspire and empower our communities to become active, knowledgeable stewards of our natural environment.” In addition to providing educational programs for all ages, a main program thrust is MetroGreening.” In this program, partnerships are developed throughout the state with local residents, governments, and the private sector “to help ensure the long-term health of our community forests.” According to Kendy Radasky, Urban & Community Forestry Coordinator, “More and more developers and businesses are coming around to ‘greener’ practices and looking for resources to help them. TreeUtah plans to be one of those resources.” This successful nonprofit has also provided a unified voice for community trees that has been heard by the state legislature, local governments and the mass media.

TreeUtah has been a major stimulus for volunteer action and is the only organization in the country to have been awarded an Alliance for Community Trees/Home Depot Foundation NeighborWoods grant three years in a row. Teamwork has included such other partners as:

- Salt Lake City and County
- Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands
- Salt Lake City Library System
- NeighborWorks SLC
- Adjudicated Youth Services
- Citizens for Sustainability
- Wasatch Community Gardens
- Great Salt Lake Audubon
- Utah Community Forestry Council
- University of Utah
- Utah Clean Air Coalition
- Utah Nursery and Landscape Association
- Corporate volunteers
- Others

Trees Forever

This Iowa nonprofit has an amazing record of success. It all began in 1989 as the idea of two people – Shannon Ramsay and David Krotz of Marion, Iowa. Today, Trees Forever has a staff of 21 and is the catalyst behind thousands of volunteers working throughout the state on behalf of trees in their communities. With funding from utilities and nearly 50 other partners, Trees Forever has significantly increased the cooling canopy cover in hundreds of cities, beautified rural roadways, improved water quality through an aggressive buffer strip planting program, and promoted soil-saving windbreaks and numerous other projects.

Statistics alone can not approach the greater contributions made by this organization’s innovative processes and cutting-edge programs, but the tangible results to date include:

- Assisting community leaders with over 3,900 planting projects
- Involving over 160,000 volunteers
- Logging more than 1.1 million volunteer hours
- Providing partial funding for the planting of over 2.78 million trees and shrubs
- Granting more than $8 million in community assistance
- Coordinating more than $14 million in match of donations and volunteers hours
More Successful Nonprofits

Large Cities
Large cities have greater opportunities for supporting nonprofits and other volunteer organizations than their smaller counterparts, but often, they also face larger challenges in gaining public interest in trees as a resource. Thanks to teamwork, trees are being planted and residents of all ages and backgrounds are coming together in social settings that benefit society in ways that go beyond a healthy community forest.

Trees Atlanta
The commissioner of parks in Atlanta, Georgia, teamed up with two powerful organizations in 1985 to address the problem of too few trees in the city's downtown. This initial coalition included Central Atlanta Progress (the downtown business leaders association) and the Junior League of Atlanta.

Today, the projects of Trees Atlanta are citywide and the teamwork of volunteers is still at the heart of its achievements. Over 2,800 people actively participate in this nonprofit's planting and maintenance programs, including many who contribute professional skills – landscape architects, public relations experts, contractors, photojournalists, printers, graphic artists, computer experts, and lawyers. The results include:

- A shadier and more beautiful city that hosted the 1996 Olympics.

- Over 20,000 large shade trees planted in downtown and midtown Atlanta. Publicity and support is generated via signs that read: ‘Another planting by Trees Atlanta.’

- Over 68,000 young shade trees have been planted or distributed by volunteers in metro-Atlanta.

- By providing advocacy and education, hundreds of mature trees have been saved and stronger tree protection laws have been passed.

- Over 7,500 caring and committed citizens have given time, money and expertise to making Trees Atlanta a success. Leadership for this large nonprofit is provided by Executive Director Marcia Bansley and an energetic, full-time staff of nine individuals as well as a staff of four who help maintain street trees. The following functions enable this organization to enjoy the success it has had over the years:

  Communication/Administration
  Programs
  Membership
  NeighborWoods Coordination (2)
  Development
  Financial

Above all else, it is the synergy resulting from all these people working together that has made the greening movement in Atlanta so successful. Marcia Bansley says, “People love volunteering with Trees Atlanta so much that it has become a ‘life style.’ Folks get the satisfaction of doing something good for the city and at the same time they meet and get to know interesting people. You have to earn a Trees Atlanta T-shirt by volunteering five times. Three couples have met and married through volunteering. It is a great singles draw – and they are all good volunteers. After each Saturday’s volunteer session, the group enjoys pizza together – Dutch treat. If the weather is bad, Trees Atlanta buys the pizza!”

Trees Atlanta volunteers typically plant 6 to 10-foot tall hardwoods during weekend projects throughout the city. Education about the value of trees and advocacy are also part of this nonprofit’s mission – and social relations are an added benefit!

Philadelphia’s Many Nonprofits
Philadelphia has a number of active nonprofits helping to promote tree planting and care. The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHC) serves as a coordinator and partner of most of these volunteer efforts that have resulted in tens of thousands of new trees. According to Alan Jaffe, the Society’s public relations manager, a major thrust of his organization has been reclaiming vacant lots and converting them from urban blight to gardens and mini-parks. “We track down the owners for permission, and then we clean them and green them,” he says.

The goal of PHC is: “Working in partnership with neighborhood residents, community organizations and city agencies, the program uses greening as a community building tool. It educates and empowers people to make the city
a more attractive and livable place through horticulture." One of the many ways of doing this is through PHC's Green City Teachers who receive a basic training course and then help work with Green City Youth. This program introduces children in grades K-12 to trees, gardening and the joys and benefits of nature.

Financial support comes from proceeds from the annual Philadelphia Flower Show as well as businesses, foundations, government agencies, and individual donors.

**Indianapolis Uses GAPS**

GAPS is always on the mind of Lindsey Purcell, Indianapolis' city forester. GAPS stands for Grants, Alliances, Partnerships and Sponsorships. Like other city officials, he is expected to use the GAPS approach to stretch an already thin city budget. Fortunately, thanks to local utilities and nonprofits like Keep Indianapolis Beautiful and Indianapolis Downtown, Inc., Lindsey is able to meet the expectation. Another source of assistance comes from the nonprofit organization, Rupert's Kids. These are at-risk young people between the ages of 16 and 20 who have been taken under the mentoring wing of Rupert Boneham, author and an all-time favorite contestant in TV's Survivor program. Lindsey founded and orchestrates an adopt-a-park project that puts Rupert's youngsters to work planting trees, mulching, pruning and gaining marketable skills and attitudes that can lead to employment in the landscape industry and others.

- Provides continuing education programs
- Offers Leadership Training Seminars
- Enables productive networking and information exchange
- Provides public outreach and education through the mass media
- Administers grants for The Home Depot Foundation's NeighborWoods program

For membership information contact:

Alliance for Community Trees
4603 Calvert Road
College Park, MD 20740
(301)277-0040

**Working With Volunteers**

A companion bulletin is available that provides helpful information about working effectively with all kinds of individuals who volunteer to help with community forestry. It also discusses what roles are appropriate for volunteers and what jobs are best left to professionals. Please visit arboaday.org to order Tree City USA Bulletin No. 36, "How to Work With Volunteers Effectively."

**New Partnership Helps Qualify for Growth Award**

The assistance of your city forester, tree board or municipal officials in helping to create a tree-related nonprofit will qualify for points under Category B of eligible activities leading to a Tree City USA Growth Award.
Arbor Day Foundation – A History of Partnerships

The first Arbor Day in 1872 was the brainchild of J. Sterling Morton, a resident of Nebraska City, Nebraska. Even in those pioneering days it took teamwork to turn a vision into action on the ground. Morton proposed his idea to the State Board of Agriculture. The board liked the idea and worked with agricultural societies in each county, offering $100 to the county that planted the most trees on that initial Arbor Day, and $25 worth of books to the individual who planted the most trees.

The Arbor Day Foundation was born 100 years later when Nebraska was searching for a way to commemorate the centennial of the tree planting holiday. Former Gov. James Exon appointed a 9-member commission to get things started and the legislature provided $10,000 to support the effort. The core group soon became the Arbor Day Centennial Foundation, and then Arbor Day Foundation, Inc., an educational nonprofit organization. This enabled the Foundation to independently raise money and use it to promote not only Arbor Day celebrations, but also the broader cause of natural resource stewardship. The initial efforts were all successful thanks to the team work of state government, the Foundation, local communities, advertising professionals, and natural resource agencies. As they say, the rest is history. The success of the Arbor Day Foundation has been built on partnerships as some examples will demonstrate:

1976 Tree City USA
USDA Forest Service, National Association of State Foresters, local communities, National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors were the partners that made this possible.

1983 Conservation Trees Program
Support from the Nebraska Energy Office, the Union Pacific Foundation and others helped launch this on-going program to promote tree planting, especially on farms and where trees can help stop erosion or provide other practical benefits.

1992 Tree Line USA
In partnership with the Utility Arborists Association and professionals from utilities nationwide, this new program was launched to provide incentives for tree care during line clearance and other utility operations.

1998 Building With Trees
This national awards program was created in partnership with the National Association of Home Builders to recognize builders and developers that save trees during construction and to encourage others to do likewise.

2006 Nature Explore
The Arbor Day Foundation with Dimensions Educational Research Foundation teamed up to launch this major program to reconnect children with nature.

Visit arborday.org/bulletin
For additional helpful information, please visit our Web site. This dynamic site is upgraded regularly, so we suggest that you bookmark it and visit regularly.


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