

# The Faces of Urban Forestry



**Leslie Stevens**  
Retired social worker



**Portsmouth,  
New Hampshire**

## Education Leads to Safer Community Trees

Ask Leslie Stevens to describe the issues facing Portsmouth's urban forest and you'll get a straight answer. "About 100 years ago, everybody thought the silver maple was the perfect tree," says Leslie. "We had mile-long streets of silver maples that were slowly dying and making a mess."

The city had also undertaken a massive renovation of its infrastructure that was taking a costly toll on the street trees. Not only were trees removed that were healthy, but "there were other trees in the community that needed to be taken down but weren't."

Leslie's interest turned into action as she signed up for the University of New Hampshire's Natural Resource Stewards (NRS) course. Funded by the U.S. Forest Service, the NRS program works to equip citizen volunteers with the know-how to improve their community trees. "I can say without hesitation that the NRS course was the best educational experience of my life, bar none," says Leslie. "I learned things I wanted to learn and could share with my community."

And share she has. Under Leslie's leadership, Portsmouth has worked with contractors to remove and replace street trees in a reasoned and systematic manner. Citizens are better informed and involved with the process. The results can be seen not only in reduced storm damage, but in public support and community involvement in the care of the new trees.

“We have fewer issues with trees down during storms than in other communities because we are so proactive.”

— Leslie Stevens



### The Faces of Urban Forestry

A joint project of U.S. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry, the National Association of State Foresters, and the Arbor Day Foundation. For more information visit [arborday.org/faces](http://arborday.org/faces)