



Benefiting Communities of All Sizes

TREE CITY USA[®]
BULLETIN

2019 Annual Report

Editor: Dr. James R. Fazio



***T**he Tree City USA affects the lives of some 155 million residents and untold businesses and visitors. It is an imaginative national program that serves as a catalyst for even more imaginative activities at the local level.*

When Tree City USA began 43 years ago, it was — and still is — intended to stimulate continuous, systematic planting and care of community trees. The idea was to provide a few specific standards that could serve as the framework for new or improved urban forestry.

The funding of the program relied brilliantly on collaboration. The successful partnership included the Arbor Day Foundation, state foresters, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the National League of Cities. Importantly, the program needed to be able to serve an interested community of any size. The four standards that resulted are designed to do just that. Any community can create a tree board and hold an Arbor Day celebration. And thanks to the

The Tree City USA flag flies at the Sargent County courthouse in Forman, North Dakota on Arbor Day. Forman, with a population of 523, has been a Tree City USA for 21 years and is one of 53 Tree Cities in the state.

flexibility of the standards, the required ordinance can be a single page or large document, depending on the needs of the community. Finally, the amount of funds expended locally to prove a commitment to trees is on a per capita basis.

Today, the Tree City USA standards have been met not only in cities, but also at military bases. The success of the program led to its expansion to include two other popular designations (with separate standards) — Tree Campus USA[®] and Tree Line USA[®]. In this annual report, we present examples of how these programs are being carried out regardless of community size. We also hope this will inspire even more communities to be able to fly the Tree City USA flag next year.



Arbor Day Foundation[®]
100 Arbor Avenue • Nebraska City, NE 68410

The Nation's Largest Tree City

The vibrancy of the “city that never sleeps” is evident in the many activities in this community that has been a Tree City USA for 23 years.

For many readers it is hard to imagine living in a community with more than 8.5 million residents. That is New York City, and its leaders are proud to be recognized as a Tree City USA.

New York City can be surprising in many ways, not the least of which is that it contains more than 7,300 acres of forested parkland. We know this because one of the city's many ambitious projects was to use volunteers to survey some 1,997 park properties, inventorying the trees and delineating natural areas such as upland forests, wetlands, and grasslands. Some 250 tree species were found, and a plan was developed to guide the restoration, management, and community engagement for the wooded parklands. The plan, called the Forest Management Framework, includes a conservancy engagement program for each park to ensure a collaborative effort between the New York City Parks Department and other tree-aware organizations. The plan even looks to the future by identifying native species that are resilient under warmer, drier conditions that should be considered as climate change looms.

There are plenty of opportunities for residents in NYC to work with trees, including helping conduct a

street tree inventory that takes place every five years. In a report subtitled “One City | Five Boroughs | 666,134 Trees,” the locations of nearly 250,000 trees were mapped along with data about each tree. The volunteers walked 3,615 miles and donated more than 11,000 hours of their time. And then there is the city's plan to plant 1 million trees in a decade, which was completed two years ahead of schedule!

In its application this year for continuation of the Tree City USA award, it was noted that this community spends about \$54 million on tree planting and initial care, \$8 million on tree maintenance, and another \$6 million on fighting the emerald ash borer, tree removals, and general maintenance. Still, this works out to only \$8 per capita. In addition, the city's seven-person tree board meets monthly to keep abreast of the many activities in the Big Apple.

**TREES ARE THE LIFEBLOOD
OF THE FIVE BOROUGHS.**

— Mayor Bill de Blasio

One reason for the high level of accomplishments is the support trees receive from New York City's top leadership. In his Arbor Day proclamation this year, Mayor Bill de Blasio called trees “the lifeblood of the five boroughs.” He added, “As a proud Tree City, New York will continue to honor the Arbor Day Foundation's mission of planting, nurturing, and

celebrating metropolitan flora ... This year's event in Paerdegat Basin Park is a wonderful opportunity to reaffirm our steadfast commitment to conservation, and I applaud the 70 volunteers and dedicated NYC parks personnel (who made this Arbor Day event possible) and will further our efforts to restore and expand New York City's woodlands and wetlands by planting 1,050 trees and shrubs here today. Together we will forge a brighter, more sustainable future for the five boroughs.”



... and the Smallest



Sibley, North Dakota, has been a Tree City USA for seven years and is a good example of what can be done by a small group of dedicated individuals.

As proof that size is no barrier to be a Tree City USA, Sibley, North Dakota, stands as an enviable example. Sibley is a fishing mecca with one main street sandwiched between Lake Ashtabula on one side and farm fields on the other. The population goes up a little in the warm summer months, but there are 22 people who call Sibley home throughout the year. Three of these good folks constitute the tree board and are creating a legacy through their efforts to plant trees, remove those that are high-risk, and generally make their community more livable.

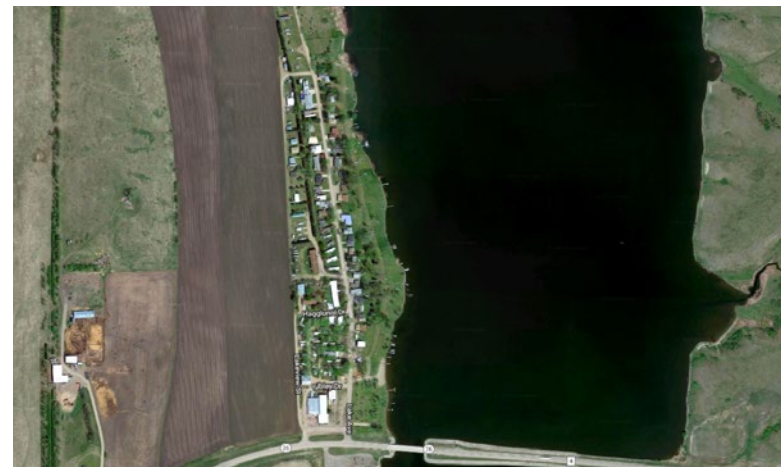
Among the projects undertaken by the tree board was the planting of eight different species in the city park, a major step forward in diversifying the canopy that is dominated by aging willows and cottonwoods. Plans are to keep the plantings moving ahead so there is also age diversity in the park. Another project is to obtain a flagpole so that the Tree City USA flag can be flown there.

This is Sibley's seventh year to be honored as a Tree City USA, and it won't be the last. "It is a lot of hard work for such a small community," says Rhonda Will, tree board chair. "We do the tree work ourselves, and one of the men has some equipment to help." But the work is not without its rewards. "We get a lot of nice comments from visitors," she says.

Rhonda is also proud to have been part of the state's 2017 NDSU Trees Bowl, where the state's 47 Tree City USA communities were honored and treated to a Bison's football game. At half time, the honorees took to the field for recognition along with two Tree Campus USA® schools and a Tree Line USA® utility.



(Above) The Sibley tree board, shown here, is credited with making the city's park an attractive and safe place for residents and visitors. Tootsville, the name of the park, is derived from the nickname of the city's founder. Shown here, from left, are Dave Blaser, Rhonda Will, and Mayor Al Bender.



Tree City USA Growth Awards and Sterling Communities

This award can be earned by any Tree City USA community that exceeds the four standards and earns at least 10 points from a list of activities that benefit the urban forest and community residents. For details, please visit arborday.org/growthawards.

“Sterling” is an excellent name for this category of Tree City USA recognition. It denotes communities that have gone beyond the four standards of Tree City USA to earn the Tree City USA Growth Award — not just once, but for 10 years in a row! This year, 18 communities have made this remarkable achievement. The leaders and citizens of one of them deserve special recognition this year for their exemplary efforts throughout the past 10 years. This is the city of Caguas, Puerto Rico.

Caguas, with a population of 135,000, is the only Tree City USA in the Caribbean region and has been for 11 years. Omarf D. Ortega Milanés, director of the city’s Department of Grounds Maintenance and Tree Management, attributes this involvement to a love of trees. “We love what we do, and we care for our trees,” he says. It was heartbreaking, therefore, when Hurricane Maria destroyed 400 of the 606 trees in the central part of the city in 2017.

Growth Award

This Year's STERLING COMMUNITY AWARD WINNERS:

Aspen, CO	Jamestown, NY
Miami Lakes, FL	Corvallis, OR
Albany, GA	Wilsonville, OR
Atlanta, GA	Caguas, PR
Avondale Estates, GA	Cookeville, TN
Clayton, MO	Morristown, TN
Kirkwood, MO	Fairfax County, VA
Marshfield, MO	Kirkland, WA
Nashua, NH	Newcastle, WY



Cleanup required 14,000 truckloads to clear the streets and other property, but replanting is well underway. Omarf makes a point of holding an Arbor Day celebration in different parts of the city each year and does not plan to stop. He also conducts a vigorous educational program throughout the city and in schools grades 1 through 12. “We teach why trees are good, what to plant, and how to care for the trees,” he says.

To earn this year’s Tree City USA Growth Award, here are some of the activities listed for Caguas:

- Sending city employees to the Urban Hazard Tree Assessment workshop conducted by the USDA Forest Service’s International Institute of Tropical Forestry in cooperation with FEMA and the Department of Interior.
- Participating in cleanup efforts following Hurricane Maria, considered one of the worst natural disasters to ever strike Puerto Rico and nearby islands.
- Developing an emergency management plan.

As to the future, Omarf says simply, “We believe in the Tree City USA program, and we are going to keep doing (our work) and educating our citizens.” And Caguas will continue being an inspiration to communities everywhere.

Tree Campus USA — Reaching Out to Future Leaders

Tree Campus USA is a companion program to the highly successful Tree City USA program. After only 11 years, it is turning out to be highly successful in its own right, with 385 institutions of higher learning now earning the honor.



Colorado State University (CSU) in Fort Collins is a good example of what is possible when the decision is made to become a Tree Campus USA.

In 2019, CSU celebrated eight consecutive years of receiving the Tree Campus USA honor. Already, campus leadership is planning to have it play a key role next year as the university celebrates its 150th anniversary with the planting of 150 more trees.

Fred Haberecht, campus planner, attributes the success of CSU's Tree Campus USA efforts to an enthusiastic collaboration of campus officials, the Colorado Forest Service, the city forester's office and, of course, the students. Here are the five standards that must be met in order to fly the Tree Campus USA flag, and how CSU has met these requirements:

- 1. CAMPUS TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.** The committee meets three to four times a year and now doubles as the advisory group for the campus's certified arboretum. Faculty, facilities management personnel, and long-time city forester Tim Buchanan (now retired) are joined by a succession of interested students, with one of them currently earning a degree in ecosystem science and sustainability.
- 2. CAMPUS TREE CARE PLAN.** A GIS-based inventory of the 7,000 trees on the main campus forms the foundation for a plan to sustainably manage the institution's trees. Moreover, the campus embraces the concepts of plant diversity and pollinator-friendly management practices.
- 3. CAMPUS TREE PROGRAM WITH DEDICATED ANNUAL EXPENDITURES.** CSU maintains a staff of five certified arborists with access to an aerial lift truck. Planting and daily tree care easily help meet and exceed the recommended budget of \$3 per full-time, enrolled student.
- 4. ARBOR DAY OBSERVANCE.** A different theme is used each year and this year; it was "Right Plant for Right Place." Fairmount ginkgos and goldenrain trees were planted, with talks focusing on why these were the right trees for the available planting spaces. The planting event was preceded with a tour of the nearby arboretum and Heritage

Garden. Even the campus bookstore got involved and offered to donate 5 cents toward the tree plantings for every plastic bag a student declined.

- 5. SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT.** One of the several projects included tree planting as part of Professor Jim Klett's classes in horticulture and urban forestry. His students also led tours of the arboretum on Arbor Day, all of this continuing a long tradition of student involvement in service projects. One student, quoted in the campus newspaper, said, "One of the reasons why I love CSU is for its natural beauty with all the trees and different plants, so it feels good to be a part of that."

Fred echoes the sentiment of that student. He believes that Tree Campus USA provides an opportunity to demonstrate the value of trees and to share this with students.

He also believes "it is a legacy thing. It is remarkable to be part of a continuing legacy of stewardship." Jim agrees. "Students need to be involved," he told the campus newspaper reporter. "They can leave their legacy. They can come back 10, 15 years from now and they can find the tree (that they planted)."

Learning about planting the right trees in the right places was the theme of Arbor Day 2019 at Colorado State University. Interested students on this Tree Campus USA participate throughout the year in the planning and management of street and campus trees and those in the nearby arboretum.



More Recognition Programs

It has been a busy year as the Arbor Day Foundation, with the help of its members and partners, works to fulfill its mission to inspire people to plant, nurture, and celebrate trees.



TREE LINE USA CONTINUES TO EXPAND



Many public and private utilities throughout the country now follow the guidelines to earn the Tree Line USA designation. To receive this honor, companies

meet specific requirements such as:

- Using practices that protect the health of community trees, above and below ground, when working on utility lines.
- Providing annual worker training in best tree care practices.
- Planting trees.
- Providing public education.
- Participating in a tree-based energy conservation program.
- Participating in or sponsoring an annual Arbor Day celebration.

This year, 145 utilities claim Tree Line USA honors. To see if the utility that serves your community is recognized for the Tree Line USA honor, please visit arborday.org/treelinedirectory.

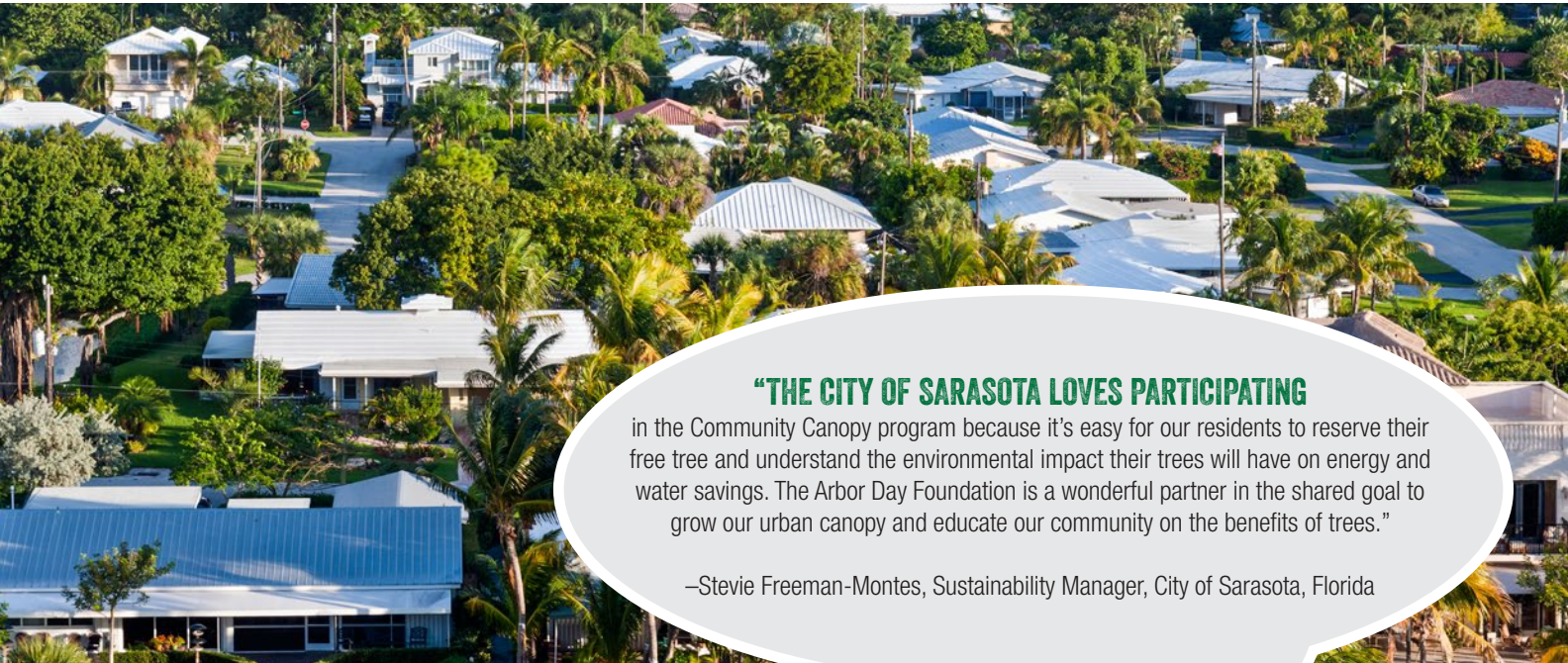


TREE CITY USA®
Arbor Day Foundation

DID YOU KNOW?

Tree City USA was created to encourage communities of all sizes to begin or expand a continuous, systematic program of tree planting and care. Today, nearly half the people in the United States enjoy the benefits provided by a program that meets the four standards of Tree City USA. Here are the numbers at a glance:

Number of Tree City USA communities.....	3,606
Number of new Tree City USA communities	84
Number of Growth Award recipients.....	379
Number of people living in Tree City USA communities.....	155,449,156
Number of Tree Campus USA schools	385
Number of Tree Line USA utilities	145



“THE CITY OF SARASOTA LOVES PARTICIPATING
 in the Community Canopy program because it’s easy for our residents to reserve their free tree and understand the environmental impact their trees will have on energy and water savings. The Arbor Day Foundation is a wonderful partner in the shared goal to grow our urban canopy and educate our community on the benefits of trees.”

—Stevie Freeman-Montes, Sustainability Manager, City of Sarasota, Florida

THE COMMUNITY CANOPY PROGRAM

The Arbor Day Foundation’s Community Canopy program is an expansion of the popular Energy-Saving Trees initiative. Through a unique partnership between the Foundation and cooperating organizations, trees are distributed at no cost or a discounted cost to residents in participating communities through the use of an interactive technology.

The purpose is to grow the private property urban tree canopy while shading homes, reducing energy consumption, and cleaning our air and water. More than

85 partners across the nation have funded a private property tree program over the past eight years; the full list of partners is available at arborday.org/energy. This partners list includes energy companies, city and state governments, nonprofit organizations, and corporate partners that have come on board in the past year to engage homeowners in the important role trees play in our communities. Details about this innovative program that combines private property tree distributions with an educational, data-driven technology can be found at arborday.org/communitycanopy.



COMMUNITY
CANOPY
 An Arbor Day Foundation Program

Thanks to our Community Canopy partners in 2019, we are distributing trees to homeowners within 40 U.S. states.

The Time for Trees® Initiative Launches



What better way to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Arbor Day than to see 100 million trees added to America's communities and forests by the anniversary date, 2022? This is the goal set by the Arbor Day Foundation, and Friends of Tree City USA everywhere are invited to participate. In fact, this ambitious goal will only be met by reaching out to Foundation members, supporters, and partners. Schoolchildren, too, will be an important part of the program and a chance for all of us to contribute to the education of young tree planters and help instill in them a strong conservation ethic. Participation by tree boards will also be essential. Aiding the effort will be the Evergreen Alliance, a group of corporate partners dedicated to planting trees and contributing to a better environment. Together we can do it!

THE TIME IS DEFINITELY NOW

Globally, approximately 18 million acres of trees are lost each year to wildfires, pest infestations, storms, land use changes, and other causes. In our communities, losses to insects and diseases are especially devastating, and many of our city trees are succumbing to old age and deterioration. In many parts of the country, climate change is already affecting the condition of trees, and the forecast is not encouraging.

According to an analysis by the U.S. Forest Service, over their lifespan, the 100 million trees planted through the *Time for Trees* initiative, will:

- ✓ **ABSORB** 8 million tons of carbon, the equivalent of taking 6.2 million cars off the road for a year.
- ✓ **INTERCEPT AND FILTER** 7.1 billion cubic meters of stormwater runoff.
- ✓ **REMOVE** 15,850 tons of airborne particulate matter.
- ✓ **REMOVE** 578,000 tons of chemical air pollution from our atmosphere.
- ✓ **PROVIDE** \$32.9 billion in total environmental benefits.

Not to be overlooked are the aesthetic contributions of trees, improved human health, the pleasures of shade in summer and reduced winds in winter, habitat for birds and other wildlife, renewable supplies of wood, and the ability to make our rural areas and urban communities better places to live and work. Go to timefortrees.org to donate.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF: Mary O'Neill (Page 1), Student Conservation Association (left, Page 2), Andrew Filer (top, Page 3), Sibley Tree Board (right, Page 3), Google Map Data (bottom right, Page 3), Caguas Department of Beautification (Page 4), Colorado State Forest Service (Page 5).

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