



ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY
COMMUNITY TREE COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT
2007
Introduction

Mission: *To provide the vehicle for broad-base community representation to interact with local Government, the private sector and citizen groups by advancing community tree and forest information and policy recommendations, and offering educational opportunities promoting responsible stewardship and sustainability of community tree resources*

The Athens-Clarke County Community Tree Council (CTC) is pleased to present to the Mayor and Commission of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County (ACC) the 2007 Annual Report of the CTC.

Overall Status: The year 2007 was a busy year of transition and growth for the CTC. Athens-Clarke County was certified by the National Arbor Day Foundation as a Tree City USA for the 8th consecutive year, and concurrently received its 7th Growth Award. This year the growth award carried a different emphasis with the Community Tree Program (CTP) front and center.

This ACC program, in place since early 2000, has always had the support of the CTC as a major outreach vehicle. As an initiative of the ACC Landscape Management Division (a primary CTC partner), the CTP program components are reflected in many of the CTC activities including: Tree City USA and Arbor Day recognition, Champion Trees), and Trees for Tomorrow Programs (our new donor program). Full implementation of the Community Tree Program however was waiting for adequate staffing. The establishment of Andrew Saunders as Community Forest Coordinator in 2007 was just the catalyst needed, and in summer 2007, the University of Georgia and the ACC Leisure Services Department initiated the first Project Learning Tree (PLT) program in Athens-Clarke County. This was conducted with over 50 children – ages 6-14. In addition, a tree-care workshop was held in cooperation with the Master Gardeners Program in Athens-Clarke County, and a modification of the Adopt Athens program to include tree adoptions was enacted, drawing in Bartlett Tree experts as a sponsor of a local heritage tree (Tree That Owns Itself). Finally, a street tree inventory was initiated with focus on the contributions trees make to the local ecosystem. The inventory is a five-year effort that will provide the

data for a time series analysis in comparison to the last full inventory in 1998. The growth in the CTP program by the Community Forest Coordinator represents a significant step toward community forest sustainability because of its significant public participation. Forest sustainability is dependent on public involvement and is consistent with the CTC mission. Additional CTC contributions to these accomplishments are reflected throughout the rest of this report, and illustrates that CTC growth continues.

CTC highlights for 2007 include two State-supported grant awards: the Georgia Forestry Commission's Making the Shade Program (*School Yard Shade at Gaines Elementary School - Phase II*), and the *Trees for Tomorrow (TfT) Program*. The Making the Shade Program was initiated in June with plans drawn for trees to complement two outdoor learning environments in barren courtyards at Gaines Elementary School. The watering ban has held the project back, although many of the larger tree specimens were planted with school and community wide volunteers during the Martin Luther King Day of Service on January 21, 2008. Eastside Ornamentals, a local wholesale nursery, will supply any supplemental water that these trees will need during the watering ban. The ACC School District will be installing pavement throughout the courtyards this spring, and when complete, the additional specimen trees, shrubs and groundcovers will be installed to complete the grant.

The first project for the Trees for Tomorrow Program (funded through an Urban and Community Forest Grant Assistance (U&CF) award) was initiated in the Fall of 2006 and installation completed August 31, 2007. The implementation of TfT on public lands was consistent with the Athens-Clarke County donor acceptance policy, and was approved at the October 2007 Commission meeting. The Marketing of the TfT Program then proceeded. A marketing plan has been designed and is ongoing. So confident was the CTC on administrative approval, a follow-up U&CF grant was submitted in May 2007 and approved for full funding in July 2007. This grant "Assessment of Planting Opportunities on Public Lands" (APOP) addresses the question: "With permission granted to plant on available public lands in Clarke County, where do we begin?" This project evaluates public properties, such as parks for commemorative grove suitability. A secondary benefit accruing from this activity is the potential of expanding the tree canopy cover on public lands. APOP represents the sixth fully funded U&CF grant given to the CTC since 2000.

Membership - After a time of position vacancies, the CTC emerged from 2006 with a full complement of both full time and ex-officio members, but expiration dates for many members fell during the 2007 calendar year and 5 vacancies again opened. This plus one resignation represents over one-third of the membership. The loss is significant and has once again highlighted the urgency of filling these vacancies if the Council is to maintain its full load of activities and growth initiatives. An announcement has been made in the media and on the CTC website (athenstrees.com). To date, two very qualified candidates have responded and been recommended for acceptance by the CTC and several applications have been received.

Program Activities:

- January, Martin Luther King (MLK) Day of Service – Over 90 community volunteers braved a very cold morning to install two learning plazas with 9 large trees, dozens of tree seedlings, hundreds of bulbs, and a huge pile of mulch as a component of the School Yard Shade Program. Gaines Elementary School.
- February, the Earth Fare Grocery Store - CTC was selected as the non-profit of the month and received over \$900 in donations from the public and the store for the used grocery bags we provided.
- Arbor Day: Arbor Day “Week” ended the month. During this week (the third week in February) a school program was held at Gaines Elementary School on Wednesday. In addition to the traditional planting of a sapling of the “Tree that Owns Itself”, individual classes planted trees while receiving instruction on tree planting techniques and learning the heritage of the Tree that Owns Itself. The customary essay and art competition was held and the winners announced.

Annual Meeting: On Friday (the actual Arbor Day) the annual Arbor Day luncheon was hosted by the CTC and the school’s art and essays submittals were displayed and winners recognized. A highlight of the luncheon was the presentation of the Friend of Trees Award. Beginning in 1997, the Urban Tree Advisory Committee, followed by the Community Tree Council, has presented the Friend of Trees Award to persons or organizations that exemplify good stewardship of trees in Athens-Clarke County. Selection of recipients is based on the use and/or preservation of trees in unique ways that enhance property aesthetics and/or demonstrate protection and concern for the environment. Since 1997 34 awards have been presented. The Community Tree Council was pleased to present the 2006 Friend of Trees Award to Rex Gonnson for his many years as a strong advocate of optimal tree use in the landscape, and to David Kidd, outgoing President of the CTC for his many years of dedicated service. Dr. Rhett Jackson from the University of Georgia Warnell School of Forest and Natural Resources addressed the attendees regarding forest hydrology and the efficient utilization and conservation of this important resource in an urban/community environment. The talk could not have been timelier given the imminent extreme drought declared for the area. Highlights from this day can be seen on the CTC website athenstrees.com

- Champion Trees - The release of the first Tree Registry early in 2007 brought many favorable comments. During the year, three new species were added (Nuttall and black oak, shagbark hickory), five champions were dethroned (sweetbay magnolia, deodar cedar –now state co-champion, northern red oak, American beech and red maple) and one co-champion (white pine) nominated.
- March, Athens-Clarke County Homebuilders Association – Participated in the Home and Garden show at the Classic Center sharing a table with the ACC Landscape

Management Division. The Trees for Tomorrow – Airport was featured in a tabletop display, with a first and preliminary brochure distributed. Over 400 saplings of native trees were distributed free to visitors.

June, the School Yard Shade Program - The School Yard Shade Program officially terminated. The well-designed project was completed, with the larger trees professionally installed and the many smaller trees planted by volunteers of all ages. Local Girl and Boy Scout organizations were very active in this activity as were many local citizens and corporate partners. Remarkably, of the over 200 trees planted during the year, almost all survived the intense drought of the 2007 summer. The final plantings to complete the project were completed on MLK Day of Service, January 2008. The SYS was a very successful project that we hope will serve as a model for other school sites within the county and state.

- August, Trees for Tomorrow (TfT) - The program concept and authorization were successfully completed, and a final report submitted. Almost immediately (September 1) a follow-on grant project was launched. The project (Assessment of Planting Opportunities on Public Lands – (APOP) had as its stated purpose to “Locate and define potential tree planting opportunities on public lands to serve as receiver sites for trees provided by the “Trees for Tomorrow” (TfT) program. Each site will be mapped, evaluated and prioritized regarding its contribution to the social, physical, and landscape aspects of the site. A specific priority-driven site design and implementation plan will be developed and used as a model for other sites.” A map showing the public areas to be considered is shown in Exhibit 1 at the end of this report.
- October, “Planting Prince”:- Toward the end of the year, Tony Eubanks of the Boulevard Historic Neighborhood Association approached the CTC with the “Planting Prince” initiative. The program, designed to restore street trees along Prince Avenue, will be implemented as part of the Trees for Tomorrow program. The program will allow local citizens to donate money in honor of people, places or events to fund the replacing of Prince Ave. historic dogwoods. Funds have already been raised to plant 24 trees, with a scheduled planting date of February 23, 2008. Planting Prince represents a significant boost to the TfT program by doubling our pre-planted commemorative sites (2). Unlike the airport and many other sites, Prince Avenue illustrates a linear rather than polygonal tree grove concept, and the trees selected are ideal for roadside plantings.

Athens Tree Fair: The CTC with their ACC partners (Landscape Management Division, Athens Clean and Beautiful and the Sandy Creek Nature Center) were to host the third Athens Tree Fair in early November. The extreme and persistent drought of 2007 and the resulting outdoor watering restrictions prompted the judicious postponement of this popular event until late winter. The Fair has been rescheduled with renewed enthusiasm for Saturday, February 9, 2008 at the Sandy Creek Nature Center. Emphasis will be on water conservation and drought management. For the first time, pre-ordering of the 12 native species for sale was offered as an option, and with great success. The original

order almost sold out (over \$600.00 in pre-sales) and had to be reordered for on-site sales at the Fair. More details on the Fair can be found on the CTC website: athenstrees.com.

Financial Statement: Below is a summary of income and expenses for the year 2006.

Athens-Clarke County Community Tree Council
2008 Financial Report: Income and Expenses

Beginning Balance		\$13,421.71
Income		
Donations, General	\$1,091.20	
Donations, Arbor Day	\$493.00	
Donations, Greenfest		
Donations, Trees for Tomorrow	\$425.26	
Tree Sales, General		
Tree Sales, Tree Fair	\$350.00	
Grants, U&CF (GFC)	\$7,999.64	
Grants, Woodruff Memorial		
Bank Credit net.	\$62.45	
Subtotal, Income		\$10,421.55
Expenses		
Computer	(\$933.23)	
Office Supplies	(\$379.27)	
Tree Purchases	(\$251.19)	
Arbor Day	(\$2,094.71)	
Education and Outreach	(\$233.16)	
Tree Fair		
Grants, School Yard Shade	(\$1,992.31)	
Grants, Trees for Tomorrow	(\$14,516.23)	
Great Grant Expenses	(\$3,846.28)	
Subtotal, Expenses		(\$24,246.38)
Great Grant Surplus		\$3,686.28
Ending Balance		\$3,283.16

Respectfully submitted,

George Crane, President
 Community Tree Council, February 11, 2008