



NEW YORK STATE
URBAN FORESTRY COUNCIL

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

NYSUFC.ORG



NEW YORK STATE
URBAN FORESTRY COUNCIL

VISION

... that every New York State community recognize the value of trees and maximize their use to improve quality of life.

MISSION

... to engage in public, private, and volunteer partnerships doing planting, management, and education leading to robust urban and community forests throughout New York State.

WHO WE ARE

The New York State Urban Forestry Council (NYSUFC) is the largest urban forestry advocacy group in the State. It was formed to advise, support, and collaborate with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Urban and Community Forestry program. The NYSUFC came together informally in 1992, became formally organized in 1999, and received its 501(c)3 non-profit designation in early 2000.

The Council has a 23-member statewide board of directors and an 8-member executive committee. Council members include natural resource professionals, city foresters, nonprofit staff, elected officials, municipal and corporate employees, students, and dedicated community volunteers.

COUNCIL WELCOMES CHRISTINA B. SMITH AS EQUITY, JUSTICE, AND INCLUSION CONSULTANT

In 2021, the Council hired Christina B. Smith as its Equity, Justice, and Inclusion Consultant. She is superbly qualified for her first task, which is to advise the Board on matters of inclusion as it updates the Council's Strategic Plan.

Christina grew up in Bridgeport, Connecticut and moved back there in 2013 because she wanted to be part of her hometown's revitalization. In 2016 she became Executive Director of [Groundwork Bridgeport](#), whose mission is to beautify and revitalize Bridgeport while providing opportunities for local youth to learn and engage with their communities.

Christina has a B.A. in Economics from Princeton, an M.A. in Historical and Sustainable Architecture from New York University, and an M.Sc. in Urban Regeneration from University College London, Bartlett School of Planning, where she

focused on housing. Christina is also a 2019 Municipal Forestry Institute (MFI) graduate.

She brings wide-ranging work experience to the Council, from her decade working in finance, to serving on Bridgeport City Council and numerous nonprofit boards, to doing equity coaching for municipalities through [Sustainable CT](#).

Christina's broad array of interests outside of work include learning new languages, studying nutrition and human anatomy and physiology, traveling, creating art, and dancing.

Christina says, "My approach to equity coaching is to work with others to connect to our common humanity—to focus on common ground, empathy, and compassion. I look forward to being able to make a difference for not just a local initiative but one that stretches across the state."



"My approach is to work with others to connect to our common humanity—to focus on common ground, empathy, and compassion."

TREE WATERTOWN AT 26 YEARS: URBAN FORESTRY EXCELLENCE IN THE NORTH COUNTRY

The City of Watertown (population ~ 25,000, in Jefferson County) is an esteemed municipal member of the New York State Urban Forestry Council. Watertown is also a Tree City USA of 22 years' standing. [Tree Watertown](#) was the name coined in 1996 for a group of community-tree-minded residents that began meeting in 1995. Two devastating events had accelerated concern for the City's tree assets that led to the formalization of Tree Watertown in 1996: the ice storm of March, 1991 and the microburst of July, 1995.

"Former Mayor and then-Interim City Manager Tom Walker convened a meeting of people who were concerned about the canopy losses from these two events," says Watertown Planning and Community Development Director Mike Lumbis, who has been with the City since 1993. "The feeling was: enough's enough. We can't only take down trees and clean up messes. We need a plan here to recover our tree canopy."

Tree Watertown's accomplishments since that time are truly impressive and include diversification of the canopy; early adoption of fall planting and bare root planting techniques; extensive educational outreach to the public; a tree inventory in 1999 and another in 2018 (along with a tree management plan); establishment of the Watertown Downtown Arboretum; success in obtaining grants from a variety of sources; partnering with the school district, Rotary Club, and other community entities; and creating an ongoing seasonal position for a technician who waters and mulches young trees to ensure the City's investment in tree planting pays off.

Tree Watertown's program was helped along by the addition in 2016 of Watertown City Planner and Urban Forestry Coordinator (and Council Board Member) Mike DeMarco. "As he does with so many aspects of our urban forestry program, Mike DeMarco is taking tree diversity considerations to the next level," Lumbis says.

DeMarco says that retired DEC Forester Glen Roberts and other educators helped train the arborists on Watertown's DPW tree crew, led by Buildings and Grounds Crew Chief Travis Hartman. While Tree Watertown volunteers (50 to 60, faithfully) plant 50 bare root trees in the fall, Hartman's crew typically plants 80 to 100 bare root trees in the spring. Time is of the essence when it comes to getting bare root trees in the ground. "The crew has it *nailed down*," DeMarco says. "Within one week in the spring the crew gets those trees in, first prepping the site with an excavator and topsoil, and quickly following the planting with watering, staking, and mulching. They also prepare the planting sites for the Tree Watertown volunteers."

Hartman and his crew also handle all young tree maintenance and tree pruning. The structural pruning, routine young tree (less than 9 inches DBH) pruning, and clearance pruning get done in late January to early April. Each year, one third of the City's young trees get pruned (the city is divided into North, West, and East sections, so the crew hits each section every three years.) "Last year the crew pruned more than 1500 trees," DeMarco says.

Looking forward, Lumbis anticipates expanding the partnerships that make Tree Watertown's efforts so successful. He says, "I want to acknowledge the school district, the local Catholic high school, school kids, environmental clubs, Girl Scouts, the Rotary Club, the Community Foundation, National Grid, the U.S. Forest Service, and NYSDEC ... even our Superintendent of Public Works will come out and help plant. Our Mayor and City Council along with our City Manager are also key partners in this effort."

See the [full Tree Watertown feature](#) on the Council Blog.



Volunteers can participate in tree planting more readily when it's done with lightweight bare root trees. Photo by Emily Fell



Multigenerational Tree Watertown volunteers gather every fall for bare root tree planting.



Tree Watertown volunteers plant a bare root dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) in Cosgrove-Sherman St. Park.



A young Cornelian cherry dogwood (*Cornus mas*) accompanied by interpretive signage in the Watertown Downtown Arboretum.



Spectacular mature ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*) in the Watertown Downtown Arboretum. Photo by Mike Lumbis

STAYING CONNECTED in 2021



41,000

views of the NYSUFC Blog



450

average monthly readers for our e-newsletter *Taking Root*



661

YouTube channel video views



639

Instagram followers



599

Facebook followers



390

Twitter followers



For Arbor Day 2021, Students from the Brooklyn Academy of Science and the Environment (BASE) planted trees on the grounds of Prospect Heights High School in Brooklyn. Their school was one of eighteen public schools and one public college that planted 144 trees from the John Bowne High School Grow-out Nursery in Flushing, Queens. Read more about the event, and BASE's collaboration with Brooklyn Botanic Garden, [here](#).

COUNCIL RECOGNIZES NANCY WOLF WITH HEARTWOOD AWARD



You may recognize this year's Heartwood Award winner as the author of the meticulously researched and lively document, "How it Happened: New York ReLeaf—A Brief History of Urban Forestry in the United States and the Creation of the New York State Program, Part 1." [Part 1 is available on the Council's website](#), and its author is busy writing Part 2. The History is engrossing, answering such questions as:

- How does NYS urban forestry have its roots in the Adirondacks?
- What was the role of the first Earth Day (1970) in the genesis of urban forestry as a recognized field of study, volunteer focus, and profession?
- How did New York gain the distinction of having the oldest state forestry agency in the United States?
- Who were the first NYSDEC Regional Foresters for urban forestry, including the first two women?
- How did three Texans help NYS get a huge jump in funding for its urban forestry program?!

The author of this seminal document is, of course, Nancy A. Wolf.

Nancy is a longtime Environmental Education Consultant for JLN WOLF, Inc. She was the Executive Director of the NYC-based Environmental Action

Coalition from 1978-1994; the NYS ReLeaf Volunteer Coordinator from 1992-1995; and she has served the NYSUFC in various ways since its founding in 1999.

In addition to the History she's been writing, Nancy contributes blog posts to the Council website about events that come out of her work with NYC youth. For more than 25 years, she has been the environmental education consultant and the facilitator of the NYC Arbor Day project that provides trees for schools to plant. For just as long, Nancy has also organized Green Horizons, an annual careers day event for middle school students, where 50 green industry professionals donate their time to lead career activities for more than 200 students and teachers or guidance counselors.

In a [Council blog profile of Nancy](#) from 2014, she said, "My favorite thing is working directly with kids, no matter what the project, and I feel extremely fortunate to work closely with so many wonderful colleagues."

New York City and New York State urban and community forestry efforts owe a great deal to Nancy's steadfast commitment to the field. The Council gratefully builds on the work Nancy did as its first president. Congrats to Nancy Wolf, recipient of the 2021 NYSUFC Heartwood Award.

FINANCIALS

Funding for the NYSUFC in 2021 came from:

A direct grant from the USDA Forest Service at the request of the NYSDEC Urban and Community Forestry program

Membership dues

Unrestricted donations from Council members and supporters

Proceeds from the annual conference and regional workshops

Sponsorships

QUICK START GRANTS

In 2021, through U.S. Forest Service funding, the NYSUFC was able to offer its sixth year of Quick Start grants of up to \$1,000 each to small communities or nonprofits who want to pursue Tree City USA status, starting with an inaugural Arbor Day tree planting celebration in spring or fall. In 2021, twelve communities received awards, and the Council was able to award over \$11,884 in grant requests. Search the Council Blog (nysufc.org) for "Quick Start grants" to see pictorials of these celebrations.

TREE CITY USA REWARD GRANTS

In 2021, the NYSUFC issued new, competitive Tree City USA Reward grants to communities that had been a Tree City USA for at least the past five years. Twenty awards of up to \$1000 each were to be used to plant large specimen trees or a grove of trees in a prominent location within the community. The intent of this grant was to encourage municipalities to sustain their community forestry program and maintain their status as a Tree City USA community through a celebratory tree planting. The grants were made possible by a combination of USDA Forest Service grant funds and unrestricted NYSUFC funds. Search the Council Blog (nysufc.org) for "Tree City USA Reward grants" to see planting/event pictorials.

NYSDEC UCF GRANT PROGRAM

The Council supports the NYSDEC Urban and Community Forestry program's efforts to promote the UCF grant program, which is funded by the NY Environmental Protection Fund. The latest round of the grant program (Round 15) awarded \$2.6 million dollars for tree planting and maintenance, tree inventories, community forest management plans, and for educating those who care for public trees. The 64 projects to receive funding were selected from a total of 152 applications, ranked by cost effectiveness, lasting benefits, use of partnerships, inclusion of outreach and education, and support from local stakeholders.

The 2021 U.S. Forest Service Grant monies provided funding for:



\$7,000

2022 ReLeaf Conference

\$10,000

Equality, Justice, and Inclusion Consultant



\$5,000

Tree City USA Reward Grants

\$3,000

Council website management



\$1,500

Scholarships



TREE CITY USA®

\$6,500

Tree City/Tree Line/Tree Campus USA recognition ceremony and other support of ReLeaf Committee activities



\$7,800

Blog, newsletter, Annual Report preparation and social media promotion

\$21,840

Administration/ Executive Secretary



\$10,500

2021 Quick Start Grants and administration

\$20,000

Day of Training



\$500

Advocacy

\$1,000

Office expenses



To kick off the 2021 Collaborative Tree Planting Initiative in Schenectady, a Princeton elm (*Ulmus americana* 'Princeton') was planted at Martin Luther King Elementary School in honor of Earth Day. Attendees included Schenectady youth and representatives from the City of Schenectady, Schenectady County, Schenectady Job Training Agency, National Grid, Community Fathers, LandArt Studio, ReTree Schenectady, and Martin Luther King Elementary School.

RETREE SCHENECTADY: THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS TO ADDRESS ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICES IN THE TREE CANOPY

By Becky Schwartz, Senior Urban Forestry Manager, American Forests

ReTree Schenectady is an esteemed NYSUFC Nonprofit Member; Schenectady has been a Tree City USA for 20 years.

Rectifying an unequally distributed city tree canopy takes collaboration, planning, respect, and funding between communities and local partners. During the summer of 2021, Schenectady City, County, and nonprofit partners came together to address those inequalities.

[ReTree Schenectady](#) (ReTree), led by Betsy Henry since 1997, has worked with community, city, and institutional partners to plant over 4,000 trees in the last 25 years. Over the years, Henry noted that most street tree planting requests came from neighborhoods that already had relatively healthy tree canopies. In following this request pattern, ReTree's street tree planting program inadvertently continued planting in areas of the city with higher tree canopy.

To address this issue, ReTree had tried reaching out to neighborhood associations and partner organizations in lower canopy areas. Several successful plantings were done in collaboration with Better Neighborhoods Incorporated; however, with the majority of properties being rental rather than owner-occupied, ReTree encountered challenges with getting permission to plant, even if renters were interested.

In the spring of 2021, [National Grid](#) awarded grants to the City and County of Schenectady to support tree planting in response to a rare [derecho](#) thunderstorm event in October 2020 that damaged many trees. Nick Klemczak of the Schenectady County Soil and Water Conservation District served as administrator of the National Grid grant to the County; he reached out to Henry for support on planting trees in the City. Henry turned to ReTree volunteer Mary Moore Wallinger and they brainstormed how to encourage more tree

planting in areas with lower canopy. Wallinger, a landscape architect at LandArt Studio, had been impressed with the work of Kenneth Brooks and his company, Ground Up Landscaping, on prior projects.

Brooks had established community, education, and employment program credentials through [Community Fathers](#), a local nonprofit that since 2009 has been providing job training, support groups, and other programs that encourage fathers to take an active role in their children's lives. At Community Fathers, Brooks developed Ground Up Landscaping as part of the OIOI program, which stands for Occupations Instead of Incarceration.

Within a month, a collaborative team convened and laid the groundwork for planting 50 trees in Hamilton Hill and Mont Pleasant, two neighborhoods in Schenectady with lower tree canopy coverage. The collaboration included people from the City of Schenectady (Department of Development and Office of General Services), the Schenectady County Job Training Agency (SJTA), the Schenectady Soil and Water Conservation District (SCWCD), ReTree Schenectady, Community Fathers, and LandArt Studio. Fundamental to the program was the idea that Community Fathers would lead the program, neighborhood youth would do the outreach and planting, and both leaders and youth would be paid a fair wage.

ReTree provided in-kind support including workshops on tree planting, maintenance, and soil ecology; selection of trees; and coordination of tree deliveries from a local nursery. SCWCD provided in-kind support including a soil ecology workshop and delivery of several trees. Tree costs were primarily funded through the National Grid grants to the City and County of Schenectady, with a few funded by ReTree. ReTree also paid for several months of watering the newly planted trees after the planting program was over in August.

One of the reasons these partnerships worked well was each partner had an area of expertise they specialized in. Partners respected each other's strengths, communicated with each other, and did not try to step in if there was a task they were unfamiliar with. Rather than the collaborative needing to establish their own separate program, partnership and financial support enabled the already existing Community Fathers and OIOI to make an impact quickly.

All of these partners enthusiastically plan to continue this summer youth employment program in summer 2022 to support young professionals and neighbors in building new tree canopy together.



Newly planted tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) in Schenectady's Wallingford Park.



**Community Fathers
OIOI TREE PLANTING INITIATIVE**

<https://nysufc.org/schenectady-2021-tree-planting-collaborative-initiative/2021/09/15/>

Trees planted through the 2021 Schenectady collaboration come with this tag so interested folks can get more information.



Schenectady teens gear up to prune young trees in the City's Central Park.



With the help of a Council Tree City USA Reward grant, Town of Colonie (Albany County) Conservation Advisory Council volunteers planted trees in fall of 2021 at a new playground for children with disabilities in The Crossings of Colonie, a 130-acre public park. NYSUFC Grants Committee member Mary Beck (far right) participated in the event. Read more [here](#).

2021 MEMBERSHIP

In 2021, there were **138** memberships representing **359** total members:



91

Individuals



10

Non-Profits
(4 members each)



8

Small Businesses
(6 members each)



5

Corporate
(12 members each)



24

Government Agencies
(5 members each)

MATT VIGLUCCI JOINS NYSDEC URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM TEAM

Matthew Viglucci started as NYSDEC Environmental Education Assistant last year. Matt grew up in Delmar, New York; his parents frequently took him and his brother to Five Rivers Environmental Education Center and Thacher State Park to spend time outdoors. “I grew to accept the accessibility of these joyful outdoor experiences as universal, something everyone was and should be close with,” Matt says.

Matt studied English and Environmental Studies at SUNY Geneseo and studied abroad in India, which was formative. “Living among unfamiliar ecological and cultural circumstances in India, I was forced to admit my inability to compartmentalize and define all the phenomena around me,” Matt says. “I had no choice but to accept and celebrate the inexplicable complexities of the world, and I now understand that not everyone has had the opportunity to grow up alongside a healthy community of other species like I did.”

One of Matt’s primary goals is to invite social and emotional motives into ecological work. “There is a sense of compassion, empathy, and interconnectedness that one learns from spending time with our fellow earthlings, especially in forests, which is sometimes underutilized in our highly political and scientific field,” he says. “Accessing this (and not shying away from the neighboring feelings of grief and loss) is, in my opinion, imperative to our response to ecological crisis in the coming decades, in order for our movement to work on behalf of everyone.”

At DEC as the Environmental Education Assistant, Matt is excited to be working with folks all around the state who are planning for the future via sustainable urban forests. “Through coordinating the Tree City, Tree Campus Higher Ed, and Tree Line programs, I get a close look at how differing communities approach the care of their urban forests. It’s also a joy to connect with teachers around the state who help us implement our 4th and 5th grade poster contest! Fostering ecological knowledge and compassion in youth is so important, fun, and fulfilling.”

In his free time, Matt loves cooking and being cooked for, board games, music, podcasts, sewing, reading sci-fi and nonfiction, and playing ultimate Frisbee.

“Fostering ecological knowledge and compassion in youth is so important, fun, and fulfilling.”





In fall of 2021, the Town of Woodstock (Ulster County) planted one red oak (*Quercus rubra*) and two Kindred Spirit oaks, funded in part by a Council Tree City USA Reward grant. Kindred Spirit is a hybrid of swamp white oak (*Q. bicolor*) and the columnar English oak (*Q. robur* 'Fastigiata'). Photo by Carol March



A swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*) tree was planted by WWII and Korean War veterans on Memorial Day, 2021 in St. Johnsville's Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Park, concluding the Village's first annual Arbor Day celebration, which was funded in part by a Council Quick Start grant. Read more about St. Johnsville's event [here](#).



Cold and rain did not delay the Arbor Day tree planting of a crabapple tree (*Malus* 'Show Time') in St. Johnsville, New York—nor did it impede guitarist Connor Dunckel from serenading the group for the three-hour event.



2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Name	Affiliation
Christopher Anderson	Association of Towns of the State of New York
Dr. Nina Bassuk	Cornell Urban Horticulture Institute
Mark Beamish	Orange and Rockland Utilities
Mary Beck	Urban Forest Advocate
Brenda Cagle	Village of Red Hook
Joe Charap	Green-Wood Cemetery
Michael DeMarco	City of Watertown
Vincent Drzewucki	CCE Nassau County
Karen Emmerich	Town of Warwick, Tree Commissioner
Larry Ferrandiz	PSE&G
Danielle Gift	Davey Resource Group
Jeanne Grace	City of Ithaca
Ross Hassinger	City of Buffalo
Andrew Hillman	Urban Forest Advocate
Greg Michel	Onondaga Earth Corps
Andrew Newman	NYC Parks
Judy Pangman	City of Oneonta
Paul Paradine	NYSEG
Alicia Ragusa	Alicia J. Ragusa, Esq. Holistic Law Practice
Sophia Rodbell	Bartlett Tree Experts
Jamie Rogers	North Elba Tree Board
Michael Sawyer	Buffalo Olmsted Park Conservancy
Jean Zimmerman	Arborist and Author

2021 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Name	Title	Affiliation
Stephen Harris	President	City of Syracuse
James Kaechele	Vice President	NYC Tree Trust / NYC Parks
Glenn Gentzke	Treasurer	Tree Services of WNY LLC
Mike Treglia	Secretary	The Nature Conservancy
Terry Hawkridge	At-Large	Rustic Pines Tree Care
Phil Healey	At-Large	Incorporated Village of Lynbrook
Lori Brockelbank	At-Large	Davey Resource Group
Glen Roberts	At-Large	Urban Forest Advocate

EX-OFFICIO

Name	Affiliation
Eric Greenfield	Forester, USDA Forest Service, Northern Research Station Forest Inventory and Analysis
Christina McLaughlin	NYSDEC Urban & Community Forestry Partnership Coordinator
Rob Messenger	NYSDEC Chief of Bureau of Forest Resource Management
Martin Mullarkey	Retired Utility Arborist and Educator
Gloria Van Duyne	NYSDEC Urban and Community Forestry Program Coordinator

STAFF

Name	Title
Liana Gooding	Executive Secretary for NYSUFC
Sarah Gugercin	Website Manager and Graphic Designer
Christina B. Smith	Equity, Justice, and Inclusion Consultant
Michelle Sutton	Editor and Social Media Coordinator



KEY PARTNERS

USDA Forest Service
NYSDEC Urban and Community Forestry Program
and
Arbor Day Foundation
American Society of Consulting Arborists
Cornell Urban Horticulture Institute
International Society of Arboriculture
National Grid
New York State Arborists
New York State Nursery and Landscape Association
Onondaga Earth Corps
Society of American Foresters
Society of Municipal Arborists
Sustainable Urban Forests Coalition
Tree Care Industry Association

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Environmental
Conservation

