



NEW YORK STATE  
URBAN FORESTRY COUNCIL

# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

[NYSUFC.ORG](https://nysufc.org)





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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 34-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.



## ADAPTING—AND RECKONING

Urban and community forestry efforts in our State continued in earnest in 2020, but with modifications to keep people as safe as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic. Tree planters wore masks and kept social distance, Council Board and Member meetings went online, and the 2020 New York ReLeaf conference was postponed—its program carried forward to a much-anticipated virtual iteration on July 23, 2021, to be followed by regional, small, in-person events.

There's no way to reflect on 2020 without talking about grief and reckoning, both with the pandemic and with the realities of racial injustice in America. The Council looked inward and acknowledged that its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts need formal prioritization and greater funding. In 2020, the Council hired Equity Consultant and Urban Forester Miche Palmer to develop a job description for an Equity & Justice Coordinator to help the Council move forward in the realm of DEI. The Council Board approved funding for the new, part-time contractor position and is seeking to fill it by the middle of 2021.



# Greg Michel and Steve Harris Accept Award on Behalf of Onondaga Earth Corps— City of Syracuse Partnership



Greg Michel and Steve Harris

The Society of Municipal Arborists (SMA) gave its 2020 Legacy Project of the Year Award to two NYSUFC Board Members, Onondaga Earth Corps (OEC) Executive Director Greg Michel and Syracuse City Arborist Stephen Harris, on behalf of their respective organizations.

The award acknowledges the many ways in which OEC and the City of Syracuse partner to increase canopy in the City and in Onondaga County, and the award specifically highlights the role of OEC crew members in the community input phase of the Syracuse Urban Forest Master Plan development.

With the help of OEC crew members, the City held public meetings attended by more than 300 residents and gathered more than 1200 online survey responses. Released in 2020, the Urban Forest Master Plan puts forth three major goals: increase resident education and engagement, increase tree canopy, and improve tree canopy quality and location. The Plan calls for an increase in the City's canopy from 27% to 34% by planting 3,500 trees per year over the next twenty years.

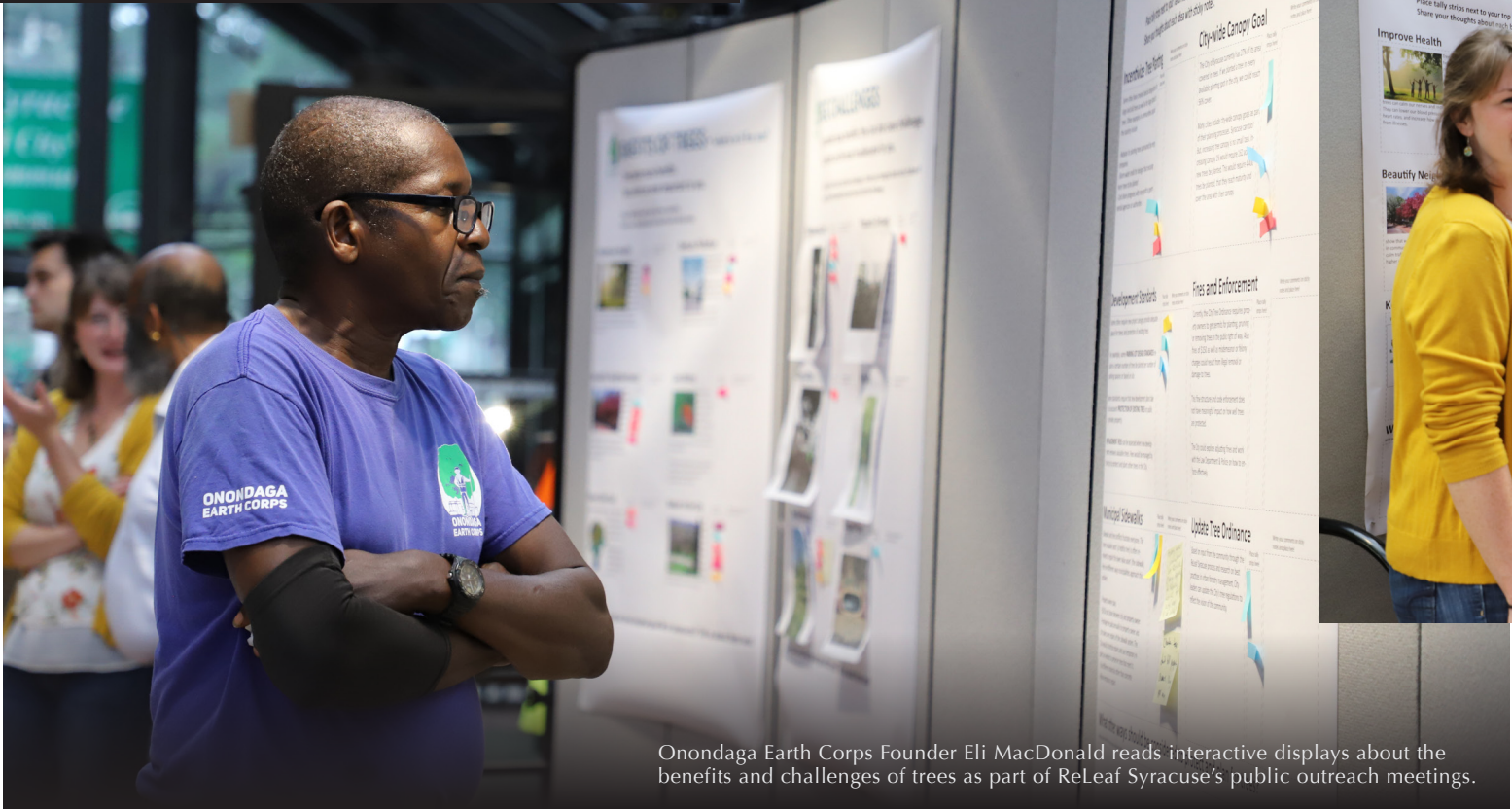
Since its founding in 2005, Onondaga Earth Corps has provided education and employment to over 350 youth and young adults, planted over 13,000 trees, and maintained over 25 green infrastructure sites. OEC will continue to be an instrumental partner in the fulfillment of the goals of the Syracuse Urban Forest Master Plan.



Marquise Brown-Thornton asks Syracuse community members to identify locations where they would like to see more trees and increase canopy coverage at a community meeting hosted at Thornden Park in collaboration with the University Neighborhood Preservation Association.



So'Unique Harrison interviews children at a public outreach meeting at the Northeast Learning Center, a center that serves primarily New Americans, in order to fill out surveys collected as part of the outreach efforts.



Onondaga Earth Corps Founder Eli MacDonald reads interactive displays about the benefits and challenges of trees as part of ReLeaf Syracuse's public outreach meetings.



(From left) Megan Quinn, Tyrell Ivey, Amanda Krakau, So'Unique Harrison, Taveon Stenson, Justin Kwiatkoski, and Nick Garty stand proudly in front of their interactive feedback displays as part of ReLeaf Syracuse's public outreach meetings.





Wilson opened the 2018 Partners in Community Forestry Conference in Irvine, California with her plenary presentation.

## Beatra Wilson Profile Popular Among Blog Readers

One of the Council's most-viewed blog posts of 2020 was a [profile](#) of USDA Forest Service Assistant Director of Cooperative Forestry and National Lead for Urban and Community Forestry Beatra Wilson, who began her career with the USDA Forest Service in 2002 in Atlanta as an urban forestry trainee. Beatra's account of her educational and career trajectory and her vision for Urban and Community Forestry on the national level makes this post a fascinating read.

## A Young Urban Forestry Professional Navigates Career in the Time of COVID



We first connected with SUNY-ESF Forest Management grad Amanda Cruty when she attended the New York ReLeaf Conference in 2019. At the time, she was working as a Forestry Technician with the City of Syracuse. In early 2020, Amanda was offered a position in NYC Parks Central Forestry Division-Tree Planting, but the position was put on hold because of COVID. Last summer, Amanda started working as a Crew Leader for Onondaga Earth Corps. Amanda is studying for the ISA Certified Arborist exam and has an impressive range of interests and skills, from tree climbing and chainsaw operation to flute and ballet. We are pleased she has been sharing her professional journey on the Council's [YouTube channel](#)—and that she was able to start her position with NYC Parks in March, 2021.





In 2020, Jamestown Community College celebrated 11 years as a Tree Campus USA with a ceremonial sugar maple planting.



In 2020, with funds from a Council Tree City USA Reward grant, the Beacon Tree Committee planted red maples for shade and beauty at South Ave Park.

# QUICK START GRANTS

In 2020, 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. These were intended for inaugural Arbor Day celebrations and the formation of shade tree committees within municipalities—activities meant to kick-start a community forestry program. In 2020, twelve communities received awards, and the Council was able to award over \$11,700 in grant requests.

# TREE CITY USA REWARD GRANTS

In 2020, 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.

# COST-SHARE GRANT PROGRAM

The Council supports NYSDEC Urban and Community Forestry Program efforts to promote the Cost-Share Grant Program facilitated by DEC and funded by the NY Environmental Protection Fund. The latest round of the grant program awarded \$1.4 million dollars for tree planting and maintenance, tree inventories, community forest management plans, and for educating those who care for public trees. The 38 projects to receive funding were selected from a total of 154 applications, ranked by cost effectiveness, lasting benefits, use of partnerships, inclusion of outreach and education, and support from local stakeholders.

# FINANCIALS

## Funding for the NYSUFC in 2020 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

## The 2020 U.S. Forest Service Grant monies provided funding for:



**\$7,000**  
2020 ReLeaf Conference



**\$7,000**  
Blog, newsletter, Annual Report preparation and social media promotion



**\$1,000**  
Scholarships



**\$15,500**  
2021 Quick Start Grants and administration



**\$4,000**  
Tree City/Tree Line/Tree Campus USA recognition ceremony and other support of ReLeaf Committee activities



**\$1,000**  
Advocacy

**\$3,000**

Council website management

**\$21,000**

Administration/ Executive Secretary

**\$500**

Board Meeting expenses

**\$1,000**

Office expenses



# STAYING CONNECTED in 2020



37,348

views of the  
NYSUFC Blog



492

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



NEW

The Council launched a  
YouTube channel in 2020!



433

Instagram followers



553

Facebook followers



366

Twitter followers



128

Individuals

## 2020 MEMBERSHIP

In 2020, there were **179** memberships  
representing **371** total members:



12

Students



8

Small Businesses  
(6 members each)

5

Corporate  
(12 members each)



7

Non-Profits  
(4 members each)



19

Government Agencies  
(5 members each)



Village of Hamilton, NY volunteer tree planters looking very rock and roll as they celebrate Arbor Day 2020.



Intergenerational Arbor Day celebration in North Tonawanda, NY.



Tree Watertown and other volunteers powered the City's fall planting of mostly bare root trees.

## 2020 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
Vincent Biondo	Town of Babylon
Lori Brockelbank	Davey Resource Group
Brenda Cagle	Town of Red Hook
Joe Charap	Green-Wood Cemetery
Michael DeMarco	City of Watertown
Larry Ferrandiz	PSE&G
Glenn Gentzke	Tree Services of WNY LLC
Danielle Gift	Davey Resource Group
Jeanne Grace	City of Ithaca
Ross Hassinger	City of Buffalo
Andrew Hillman	Davey Resource Group
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
Glen Roberts	NYSDEC
Sophia Rodbell	Davey Resource Group
Jamie Rogers	North Elba Tree Board
Mike Sawyer	Buffalo Olmsted Park Conservancy
Mike Treglia	The Nature Conservancy
Jean Zimmerman	SavATree

## 2020 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Name	Title	Affiliation
Karen Emmerich	President	Town of Warwick (Tree Commissioner)
Stephen Harris	Vice President	City of Syracuse
Art Traver	Treasurer	Wendel
Brian Liberti	Secretary	City of Rochester
Vincent Drzewucki	At-Large	Cornell Cooperative Extension-Nassau County
Phil Healey	At-Large	Incorporated Village of Lynbrook
James Kaechele	At-Large	NYC Tree Trust / NYC Parks
L.D. Terry Hawkridge	At-Large	Rustic Pines Tree Care

## EX-OFFICIO

Name	Affiliation
Gloria Van Duyne	NYSDEC Urban and Community Forestry Program Coordinator
Eric Greenfield	U.S. Forest Service Forester
Martin Mullarkey	Retired Utility Arborist and Educator
John Parry	U.S. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Coordinator – Northeast States
Rob Messenger	NYSDEC Chief of Bureau of Forest Resource Management
Christina McLaughlin	NYSDEC Urban and Community Forestry Partnership Coordinator

## STAFF

Name	Title
Liana Gooding	Executive Secretary for NYSUFC
Sarah Gugercin	Website Manager and Graphic Designer
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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