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STATE GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY FORESTRY: A SURVEY

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Abstract. State government involvement in community forestry varies from state to state. A survey sent to each state's Chief Forester provides information on community forestry assistance programs. Many programs are limited in scope, yet nearly all provide insect and disease control assistance, Arbor Day information and promotion, technical tree care assistance, and public information and education. Most programs are technical rather than financial in nature; however, sixteen states administer Federal Cooperative Forestry Assistance grants to communities, and five states provide financial assistance from state monies. Most programs are financed through combined state and federal funding, although eleven states rely on federal funding exclusively. Thirty-two state programs are administered by Urban Foresters or similar specialists. Budget and staffing limitations are cited by twenty states as major program obstacles. Despite limitations, expansion of services is predicted by twenty-seven states.

Résumé. L'implication des gouvernements des états américains en foresterie urbaine varie d'un état à l'autre. Une enquête réalisée auprès de tous les forestiers en chef de

chaque état présente des informations sur les programmes d'assistance en foresterie urbaine. Plusieurs programmes sont peu développés, pourtant presque tous les états donnent de l'assistance sur le contrôle des insectes et maladies, font de la promotion pour la journée de l'arbre, offrent de l'assistance technique en arboriculture, et dispensent de l'information et des programmes éducationnels auprès du public. La plupart des programmes consistent en de l'assistance technique plutôt que financière. Cependant, 16 états administrent un programme de subventions du service forestier fédéral à l'intention des municipalités et 5 états offrent une assistance financière basée sur des fonds de l'états. La plupart des programmes sont financés conjointement par le fédéral et l'état, bien que 11 états comptent seulement sur les argents de source fédérale. Trente-deux programmes des états américains sont administrés par des forestiers urbains ou d'autres spécialistes dans ce domaine. Des contraintes budgétaires et en personnel qualifié sont citées comme le principal obstacle. En dépit de ces contraintes, une augmentation des services offerts est prévue dans 27 états.

Widespread acceptance of the aesthetic, environmental, and economic benefits of urban trees, along with heightened awareness of "quality of life," has resulted in conscious, planned efforts to develop and maintain urban tree populations in communities across the nation. Congress acknowledged the importance of urban forests when it enacted the "Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978." In addition to providing assistance with forest management, insect and disease control, and forest fire prevention and control, this legislation authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to assist states in planning and conducting urban forestry programs by providing financial, technical, and related aid to State Foresters or other state officials (1). Despite the federal government's initial support, annual budget appropriations for urban forestry reflect waning commitment (Table 1). Although continuation of federal support remains uncertain, many individual states are strongly committed to providing urban forestry assistance to communities. In order to assess the role of various state governments in community forestry, an "Urban Forestry Survey" was mailed to each state's Chief Forester in January, 1987. The fourteen-question survey focused on program background and outlook, funding, staffing, and specific types and extent of assistance. A summary of the forty-nine survey responses provides an overview of state-administered community forestry assistance programs (Table 2).

Program background. Nearly all community forestry assistance programs are administered by state forestry agencies, often with additional assistance provided by the State Agriculture Department, Cooperative Extension Service, or various other agencies. In one state (Idaho), the Cooperative Extension Service has primary responsibility for providing urban forestry assistance. Only three states are without any organized assistance program. Two of these, Michigan and Kentucky, at one time had programs which have since been terminated. Indiana has never had, and does not in the near future foresee having, any such program. Community forestry assistance programs in the remaining forty-six states have been in existence anywhere from one year (Tennessee) to twenty-five years (Iowa),

although the majority were initiated in the late 1970's, corresponding with enactment of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act. While most states interpret authority for their programs within the context of other, broader legislation, fifteen have enabling legislation specifically authorizing community forestry assistance.

Types and extent of assistance. Assistance programs generally are technical rather than financial in nature; however, five states do provide financial assistance to communities from state monies (Colorado, Delaware, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts), and sixteen states sub-grant federal Cooperative Forestry Assistance (CFA) funds to communities. The range and extent of technical assistance is limited in many states, but nearly all provide, as a minimum, insect and disease evaluation and control, Arbor Day information and promotion, technical tree care assistance, and public information and education. Most state assistance programs are extensive and include a variety of services. Types of urban forestry aid commonly provided by state agencies are presented in Figure 1.

The number of communities receiving financial and/or technical assistance from state government agencies varies from state to state. In 1986, the number of communities receiving urban forestry assistance ranged from 0 (Delaware) to 300 (Minnesota). The mean number of communities within each state receiving community forestry assistance from state government agencies in 1986 was 69.

Funding. Federal Cooperative Forestry Assistance funds are sub-granted to individual

Table 1. Federal urban forestry appropriations, 1978-1987. (2).

<i>Appropriation</i>	<i>Fiscal year</i>
\$3,500,000	1978
3,600,000	1979
3,600,000	1980
1,800,000	1981
1,800,000	1982
1,700,000	1983
1,500,000	1984
2,000,000	1985
2,000,000	1986
2,000,000	1987

communities in sixteen states, while thirty states use these funds for special projects and/or administration of the assistance program. In states where federal CFA funds are sub-granted to communities, the reported dollar amount sub-granted in 1986 totalled \$272,000, with a mean of \$17,000 per state and a range of \$0 (Hawaii, North Dakota, and Oklahoma, which normally sub-grant CFA funds, awarded no grants in 1986) to

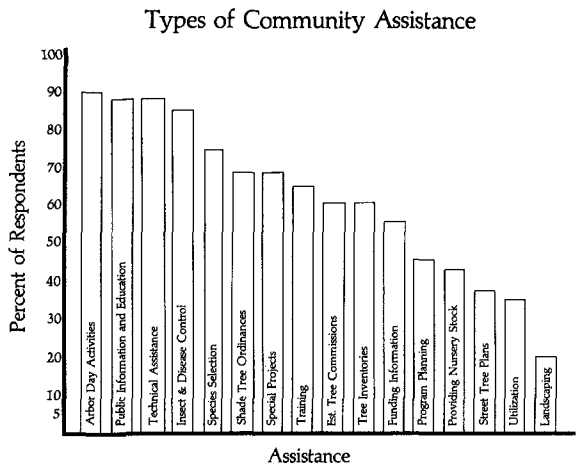
Table 2. Urban forestry survey: synopsis of 49 survey responses.

1. Does your agency have a program of community forestry assistance? *yes 46 no 3*
2. Do you administer federal Cooperative Forestry Assistance grants to communities? *yes 16 no 33*

THE REMAINING SUMMARY IS BASED ON RESPONSES FROM THE 46 STATES WHICH HAVE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

3. How long has your program been in existence?
range 0-25 years average 11 years
4. Does your state have enabling legislation specifically authorizing urban forestry assistance?
yes 15 no 313
5. What types of assistance does your program include? (see Figure 1.)
6. Approximately how many work hours are spent by your agency on community forestry assistance each year?
range 80-35,000 average 4600
7. How many communities did you assist in 1986?
range 0-300 average 69
8. Does your agency employ an Urban Forester or similar specialist?
yes 33(18 have additional urban forestry field personnel) no 13
9. Do you provide financial assistance to communities from state monies? *yes 5 no 41*
10. How is your program funded?
*combined state and federal funding 32
federal funding only 11
state funding only 2*
11. Is the community forestry assistance program given adequate attention by your agency? *yes 17 no 26*
12. What, if anything, is limiting your program?
*budget/staffing limitations 20
lack of administrative support 9
lack of technical expertise 4
administrative/logistical problems 3
other 8*
13. What do you think is the long-term future of your program?
*expansion 27
reduction 1
elimination 1
status quo 2
uncertain 15*
14. If federal funding were eliminated, would your program be likely to continue? *yes 32 no 10*

\$100,000 (Rhode Island, specifically for gypsy moth control). In states where federal funds are used to administer the program, reported expenditure of CFA funds in 1986 totalled \$689,000, with a mean of \$21,500 per state, and a range of \$1000 (Wyoming) to \$55,000 (Texas). According to survey results, total CFA expenditures for community forestry in 1986 were \$961,000. A disparity between the reported federal dollar expenditure and appropriation for 1986 is noted (Table 1). The discrepancy is due, in part, to incomplete information regarding expenditures since one state did not respond to the survey and four states failed to answer the particular question. Other contributing factors may include inaccurate reporting by states, question misinterpretation, or incomplete expenditure of funds. State funding for urban forestry assistance in 1986 totalled \$3,055,000, with a mean of \$105,000 per state, a median of \$44,000, and a range of \$1000 (Wyoming) to \$461,000 (Florida). Community forestry assistance programs in thirty-two states are financed through a combination of state and federal funding, although two states (Oregon, Wisconsin) specify that state funding for community forestry assistance is not separated from general forestry program funding. Eleven urban forestry assistance programs are supported exclusively by federal funds. Assistance programs in two states (Maryland, Tennessee) are supported exclusively by state funds. In two states (Colorado, Florida), local governments receiving urban forestry assistance are assessed user fees to



supplement state and federal funding. In one state (New Hampshire), a private trust fund supplements federal funding.

Staffing. A State Urban Forester (or similar specialist) administers the assistance program in thirty-two states. In eighteen of these states, additional urban foresters are employed at regional or field levels. In states without specialized staff, community forestry assistance is provided by various forestry personnel whose primary job responsibilities include traditional forest management, forest fire prevention and control, and/or forest pest management.

The amount of time each state allocates for urban forestry assistance ranges from an estimated low of 80 hours per year (Alaska) to an estimated high of 35,000 hours per year (Florida). The mean number of work hours spent on community forestry assistance by states having programs is 4600 per year.

Program outlook. Twenty-five states indicate that more agency support for their assistance program is needed, with the remainder stating that adequate attention is being given their program. Obstacles hindering program development and efficacy include: budget and staffing limitations, cited by 43% of the states with programs; lack of administrative commitment (20%); lack of technical expertise (9%); administrative problems such as role clarification and lack of direction (7%); and miscellaneous or unspecified (17%). Two states indicate no major limitations to their assistance programs. Despite obstacles, 27 states predict expansion of services. Areas of anticipated growth, in descending order of response frequency, include; staffing, number of communities served, information and education, municipal forest land management, and technical assistance. Not all states are optimistic about the long-term future of their assistance program.

Many indicate that continuation of services is contingent upon federal funding, with fifteen states describing their program's future as uncertain.

Summary

Despite individual differences, the various community forestry assistance programs can be broadly categorized as one of two types. In approximately 30% of the states with programs, assistance is provided on an informal basis through nonspecialized forestry personnel. Typically such programs receive limited or no state funding, and assistance may consist of little more than the administering of federal CFA grants. In contrast, 70% of the state programs are administered formally by specialized staff, receive line-item budgeting, and include a broad range of services. The extent to which an individual state is involved in community forestry is not related significantly to geographic location or degree of urbanization; rather, involvement appears to depend on the interest and commitment of the individual state agency and legislature.

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