

Highland Park Shade Tree Advisory Committee  
Borough Hall, 221 S Fifth, Highland Park, NJ 08904



## **ANNUAL ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT 2005 COMMUNITY FORESTRY MANAGEMENT PLAN HIGHLAND PARK, NJ**

### **Community Forestry Program Administration**

In January 2005, The Highland Park Borough Council passed a resolution reauthorizing the formation of the Shade Tree Advisory Committee (STAC) for the calendar year of 2005. The current list of members is attached. The STAC continues to advise the Borough administration on tree planting and pruning and to pursue grant applications.

### **Training and Professional Development**

Highland Park has two Department of Public Works employees who have received core training. One of them – Mike Wiczorkiewicz - attended the Shade Tree Federation conference in Cherry Hill, where he earned eight Continuing Education Unit (CEU) credits. Our new Co-chair, Carol Avelsgaard, also attended the conference and completed the core-training program and CEUs.

### **Public Education/Awareness/Outreach**

- *Highland Park Environmental Web Site* ([www.leoraw.com/hpenv/](http://www.leoraw.com/hpenv/)). This site includes the list of STAC members, a contact number to request a new street tree or to report a damaged tree, a description of what the committee does, copies of annual reports and meeting minutes, extensive photography in our natural areas, and current news dealing with STAC matters.
- *Street Fair*. This annual event continues to be an important venue for distributing information about shade trees and for collecting names of potential volunteers and sites for new street trees. The STAC also gave away pine and oak seedlings and had a selection of native perennial plants for sale.
- *Public Library Information File*. The STAC continues to place pamphlets and other information in the library's Reference Department. This year we made an effort to include information about the Asian long-horned beetle and its effects on New Jersey's urban forests.

### **Statement of Tree Budget**

Highland Park continues to provide a budget for tree maintenance that meets Tree City USA standards. Because more Borough employees have received training in urban forestry, a greater share of the work is being done by the Borough rather than by external contractors. A statement from the Borough financial officer is attached.

### **Community Forestry Management Plan Implementation**

- *Street Tree Plantings*. Committee members surveyed the street trees planted in 2004 to identify trees that needed replacement under the vendor's warranty. They also cooperated

with the Borough's 2005 Cool Cities planting project, advising on the future use of native species and suggesting alternate sites for trees rejected by the targeted residents. Well over 100 trees were planted under this grant in 2005. STAC will continue to observe new plantings as it has done in the past.

- *CDBG Grant.* The STAC applied for and was awarded a planting grant but has revised this grant into a pruning grant, since there is a backlog of trees that need work and the Cool Cities project added so many new trees this year.
- *Recreational Trail Grant.* The STAC joined the Borough and the Environmental Commission in applying for and being awarded a \$10,000 grant from the United States Department of Transportation National Recreational Trails Program to improve a rustic loop trail around a riverside woodland called The Meadows within the Borough. This trail will connect to two existing universal-access trails, forming a trail complex serving all types of citizens.
- *Native Plant Reserve.* The STAC purchased and planted a number of native flowering plants and shrubs at the Native Plant Reserve. In addition, the committee hosted several work days during which volunteers weeded, watered, and maintained the site.
- *Environmental Center.* The long-awaited Eugene Young Environmental Center at the Native Plant Reserve moved toward construction, with fencing and a construction trailer placed late in 2005 for expected 2006 construction.
- *Volunteers and Community Involvement.* A new source of volunteer groups was obtained by our posting a listing to a web-based volunteer management center. The Americorps program Water Watch deepened its long commitment to Highland Park open space, providing a series of cleanups, invasives control, native plantings, and "adoption" of Valley Place Ravine.
- *Tree Inventory.* The Borough decided not to submit a grant application for revising the tree inventory in 2005, electing instead to attempt to utilize an intern from Rutgers to work with DPW on updating the contents of the inventory. This is still pending.
- *Site Plan Reviews.* The STAC advised residents on several instances of tree plantings and continued to provide plant expertise for the Environmental Commission's review of site plans before the Planning and Zoning boards.
- *Parks and Gardens.* The Borough plans to create an entrance park at the town's west entrance, which is supported by the STAC. Grant money from Green Communities has been obtained for a Sculpture Garden and path at the Environmental Center and the Native Plant Reserve. A "scentennial" sensory garden between Borough Hall and the Senior/Youth Center—in planning since 2004 for Highland Park's 2005 centennial—began construction during 2005, with members of STAC providing a new overall design and planting scheme.
- *Tree City.* A Tree City Application was filed in 2005.

## **Community Stewardship Incentive Program**

The following CSIP grants have been awarded:

- 2000 Street Tree Planting Grant. Planting was completed in Spring 2002 of 101 street trees.
- 2002 Tree Maintenance Grant. Pruning was completed in 2003 of 49 trees under this grant.