

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

NYSUFC.ORG



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 17-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.

32nd Annual New York ReLeaf Conference: A Resounding Success

The 2025 New York ReLeaf Conference was all about sharing knowledge and insights with experts, friends and colleagues — and having a blast. Hosted by New York State Urban Forestry Council and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, this year's Conference took place in the City of Oswego, on the shore of Lake Ontario.



Oswego is a place where visitors can immerse themselves in compelling history as well as a dynamic urban forest. From July 22-24, it offered attendees both some amazing glimpses of our nation's past and some terrific trees.

This year's Conference theme — “A Century of Urban Forestry: Then, Now, and Into the Future!” — proved relevant and thought provoking. Attendees learned about how urban forestry has evolved over time, and heard of future projects that will move us toward our shared goal of greening our communities for the benefit of all. Networking opportunities at the Conference hotel were ample as well!

Conference-goers received a warm welcome from Gloria Van Duyne, Director of the Urban and Community Forestry Program at DEC, and from Dr. Scott Furlong, Provost of SUNY Oswego. State Senator Rachel May spoke of sponsoring a bill promoting shade in urban areas “to keep people safe in those environments.”

Lori Brockelbank, incoming President of NYSUFC, said, “We're family. What are we thankful for?” She enumerated Conference sponsors (including National Grid, Davey Resource Group, Rare Earth Nursery, PlanIt Geo, Greenwell, Schichtel's Nursery and Chestnut Ridge Nursery) and added, “I'm thankful for all of you.”

Doug Still delivered the keynote to a rapt audience in the ballroom of the Lake Ontario Event and Conference Center. In “Look Back to Move Forward: Storytelling in Urban Forestry,” the host and producer of This Old Tree podcast offered insights based on his experiences as street tree planting coordinator in NYC, long-time Providence, Rhode Island City Forester and more.



He learned recently, he said, that “people are yearning for stories about trees.” He related three elements of a successful narrative: a protagonist in need; a crisis; a story arc that leads to change. Trees, he emphasized, “are living links to the past.” Example: an endangered, huge black oak in Dobbs Ferry that was saved when a local group gave it a name, “The Guardian of the Knoll,” whereupon the developer stepped away. He emphasized the essential role of joy in telling about a tree's importance. “Research a story,” he said, “write it, make time to do it for yourself and as a service to others who love trees.”



He concluded by playing a brief podcast episode about an epic red oak in Oswego, a tree that bore witness to some of the earliest chapters in the municipality's story. On private property close to Montcalm Park, it shades the house of resident James Maddison. The red oak is a witness tree, the oldest tree anywhere around. “It shows endurance and resiliency,” said Maddison. “It's seen some brutal winters, storms that have come through. And it's seen history, the Battle of Oswego and more.”



Historic trees prosper in Oswego. Mature sugar maples predominate in landscapes around the town. One prospers on a property that once was an underground railroad stop.

Conference attendees noticed sugars everywhere, including at Fort Ontario State Historic Site, where a bluff overlooking the Harbor to offers magnificent harbor views.



Visitors could also go to Rice Creek Field Station and Nature Preserve, maintained by the SUNY Oswego Biology Department out of the conviction that natural history and humankind's place in this universe have important roots in the biological sciences.

Still's talk was followed by break-out sessions. Andrew Newhouse, Director of the American Chestnut Research and Restoration Project, talked about the urgency of restoring the venerable species. Attendees could also choose to dip in to "Regional Approaches to Urban and Community Forestry" with Mike Boccuzzi of Central NY Regional Planning and Development Board.



A panel discussion on the topic of "Cemeteries as Green Spaces" proved engrossing. Moderated by Joseph Charap, VP of Horticulture at Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery, it included Andrew Place representing Rochester's Mount Hope Cemetery, Christine O'Malley of Friends of Ithaca Cemetery, and Dr. Kevin McGowan of the Cayuga Bird Club. Place listed some of the challenges for tree maintenance, including varied topography, storm management and interference with headstones. Friends of the Ithaca Cemetery—a Level 1 Accredited Arboretum—a volunteer group, clean tombstones, prune and trim trees and install interpretive signage.

"We bird people like cemeteries," said McGowan. He talked about American crows, which the group has banded over time. "Crows sit on tombstones and roost in the big trees," he said. "I've known some as an egg and later as a 19-year-old."



Varied tour options were available in the afternoon. Kate Spector, Sustainability Manager at SUNY Oswego, led a three-mile bike tour of the green campus for the more intrepid conference goers. Everywhere in Oz—as inhabitants call it—the past is potent and trees thrive. Participants viewed notable trees and a restored campus arboretum, as well as permaculture and pollinator gardens.

A tour of Oswego's Port Authority by Superintendent Patrick McMahon offered insights into the PA's efforts to prevent the introduction of invasive species that arrive on



cargo ships. Tourgoers viewed outdoor storage of aluminum ingots and potash from Canada. The grain elevator holds corn and soybeans, which are then distributed by rail to US locations. It can store up to 780,000 bushels of grain!

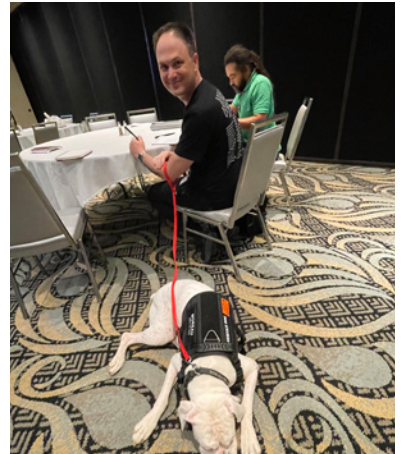
Another walking tour took participants along the city's West Side Linear Park. Andy Hillman, former Supervisor of Tree Care for the City of Oswego, now on City of Oswego Tree Advisory Board, led strollers along the Oswego River and through some compelling history. Trees there were planted with a Small Business Administration Urban Forestry Grant decades ago and are still flourishing, alongside a bank of wildflowers. "Being able to walk someplace like on this tour rather than taking a bus or a car lessens emissions and reduces our carbon footprint," said Hillman.



A superb social evening followed at Hall Brewery. Old pals reunited, new bonds were forged. And a lot of beer was drunk, with many types of brew on tap along with some delicious fare, while a local band rocked out. The Urban & Community Forestry Society hosted an informal meetup of members and friends. A good time was had by all.

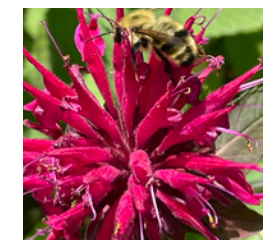


On the second day, participants enjoyed further lively presentations. Attendees could choose to hear GreenUtica board member Michael Mahanna's evocative discussion of the "Journey of a Tree Canopy." He recalled how inspired he was by the legendary Alex Shigo: "I was blessed to hear him speak," he said. The program overcame neighborhood residents' qualms about having a city tree in from of their homes, planting 100 bare-root specimens, and "we haven't lost one tree."



Rebecca Hargrave of SUNY Morrisville spoke about how municipal characteristics, resources and services influence NYSDEC urban forest grant obtainment and execution based on a case study. Highlighting community success and barriers when executing projects. David Skeval described CCE Onondaga County's CommuniTree Steward Program, going strong after 23 years. The program was launched in the aftermath of the city's devastating 1998 Labor Day Storm, and has in the years since by adapted by other counties.

Ontario Orchards kindly provided speaker gifts, which also included treats like local maple syrup. And Oswego tea, harvested from Monarda didyma, scarlet beebalm. Custom 2025 ReLeaf tee shirts were a hit.



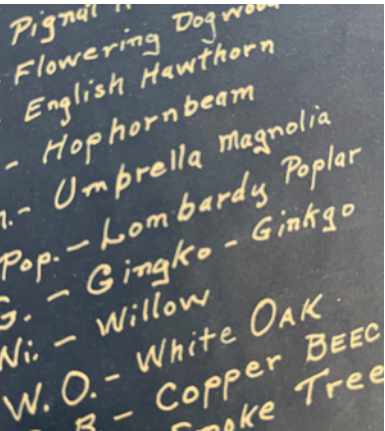
Another hit at ReLeaf 2025: socializing on the hotel balcony at dusk.



In another session, Professor Emeritus Nina Bassuk of Cornell University described the panoply of new hybrid oaks available for city landscapes. Syracuse City Arborist Steve Harris detailed the process of modernizing the municipality’s tree ordinance. The 10-person team Harris oversees plants 1,400 trees annually, prunes over 4,000, removes 500, manages over 10 acres of natural areas and protects trees along 40 linear miles of road during construction.

The final session of the morning featured engineer Betsy Parmley, who described the transformative, ongoing I-81 Viaduct Project from a NYSDOT perspective. I-81, she said, “is past its useful life,” cutting through once thriving Syracuse neighborhoods that now contain the highest rates of lead poisoning in the state, among other health problems. At \$2.25 billion, it is the largest infrastructure project in DOT history. “When you know better, you do better,” she said. Fully 8,500 trees will be planted as part of the project, creating a planned 76.5 acres of canopy.

Oswego Tree Board’s Andy Hillman relayed the colorful history of tree inventories in the city. He posed the question, “Urban forestry a century ago — was it really going on?” He found an answer among some dusty volumes in Oswego town hall. They included evidence that in 1931, the City hired Davey Tree to do a comprehensive tree inventory, quite possibly the company’s first. Recorded by hand, the survey reveals acute attention to the city’s urban forest that was unusual at that time. Visitors can still pay homage to a majestic ginkgo enumerated on the inventory, towering above a path in Washington Square Park. “A time traveler,” said Hillman.



Josh Behounek, a Business Development Manager at Davey Resource Group, spoke to the future of the industry. “This technical revolution,” he asserted, “is now perhaps greater than the industrial revolution.” He advised the audience to resist critiquing AI and instead to “turn into the skid.” Already, LiDAR is being used to create digital urban forests, detailing species, number of stems, DBH, height and other features. Behounek added that “a really promising opportunity for information about our trees to be updated with real time info” exists with Sensor Capturing, now being actively researched. And in the future we will see Augmented Reality, using trees as sensors to share real-time climate data.



The session represented a perfect wrap-up as NYS ReLeaf 2025 concluded, looking to urban forestry’s past as well as its future.

Conference goers could choose to delay their return to the real world with an optional adventure: a scrumptious box lunch followed by an afternoon of hiking and swimming at Sterling Nature Center. Located on a property at the edge of Lake Ontario, the Center offers 1,400 acres of idyllic forested trails and pebble beaches, with wildflowers and good luck cairns.

The perfect ending for a soul-restorative annual tree symposium.



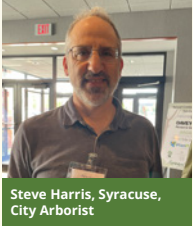
TREE TALK Goes to New York ReLeaf 2025!

We went to the 32nd Annual ReLeaf Conference in Oswego and spoke with attendees.

The question posed:

What do you like most about your tree work?

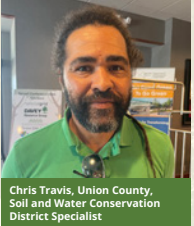
Here are some of the responses.



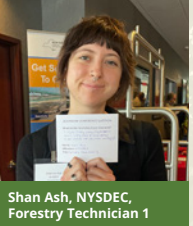
The stories! I've had people scream and threaten to sue and go f—myself. I've had people sob, and chain themselves to trees. People love, people hate trees. They're personal.



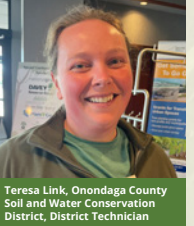
Learning about the trees and what they like... where they like to live, who they like to live with, and who they help.



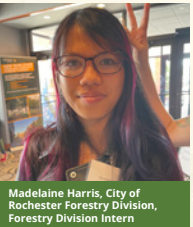
I appreciate the diversity of my trees, the aesthetic aspect they bring to any space and the emotional weight and presence they evoke.



I enjoy finding every unique detail about every tree I come across in the woods and the urban environment!



Seeing the outcomes of my work years after. Revisiting projects, maintaining projects until establishment, and just watching growth over the years.

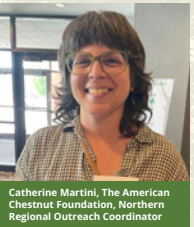


Serving my community and supporting the environment.

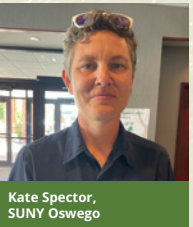


Doing outreach events and sharing my passion for trees.

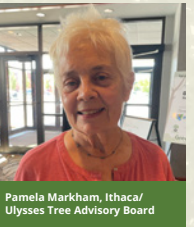
Talking to residents and assigning new trees to be planted. There is something wonderful about seeing trees you planted thrive!



Connecting our ancestors/elders to the next generation.



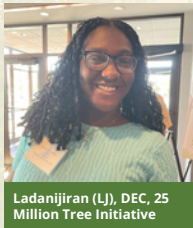
Working in the future.



Pruning. Connecting with people who are passionate about trees.



Talking to people about trees.



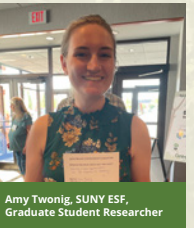
I like that I'm working with people who are very knowledgeable about the field and who care. It keeps me on my toes and heavily involved!



Staying engaged on multiple topics.



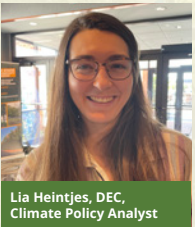
Collaborating with volunteers.



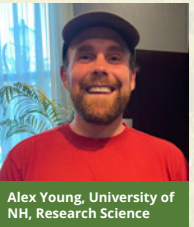
Gaining a new appreciation for all aspects of forestry!



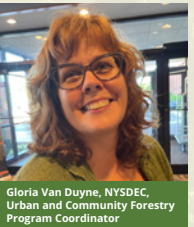
The ability to help turn streets into neighborhoods and create places of shade, fresh air, and comfort.



That our actions/choices have a legacy that lives through time, and can give back.



I like sharing the value of trees in urban areas!



Connecting and collaborating with people. When 1 plus 1 equals 3.

FINANCIALS

Funding for the NYSUFC in 2025 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 U.S. Forest Service Grant monies provided funding for:

\$50,400		Administration/Executive Secretary	\$10,000
\$12,000	\$2,000	Council website management Office expenses	
\$8,500		2025 ReLeaf Conference	\$14,000
\$4,000		Scholarships	
\$5,000		Tree City USA Reward Grants	\$8,000

2025 Quick Start Grants and administration

Taking Root blog and newsletter, Annual Report preparation and social media promotion

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

OUR GRANTS

COUNCIL QUICK START GRANTS

In 2025, through U.S. Forest Service funding, NYSUFC was able to offer its tenth 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 2025, six communities received awards.

COUNCIL TREE CITY USA REWARD GRANTS

For the fifth year, NYSUFC issued Tree City USA Reward grants to communities that had been a Tree City USA for at least five years. Awards of up to \$1000 each were awarded to four municipalities to plant large specimen trees or a grove of trees in a prominent location within the community. The intent of this grant is 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.

NYSUFC-DEC PARTNERSHIP

The Council is an integral partner with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's Urban and Community Forestry Program.

The Council-DEC UCF partnership enables New York's ReLeaf Program to hold regional workshops and other educational events and offer its Annual Conference. Regional ReLeaf committees held five workshops in 2025 for 222 attendees.

Some highlights included: Electrical Hazard Awareness Training; Preparing for Planting; Successful Tree Installation; The Aspects of Tree Inventory; Tree Planting.

State urban forestry programs include Arbor Day Foundation programs at the state and local level, featuring Tree City USA and Tree Campus USA. The Council administers multiple grants that encourage participation in these programs. New York State has 192 Tree City USA communities; 21 Tree Campus USA-Higher Education Campuses; 2 Tree Campus USA-Healthcare facilities; 3 Tree Cities of the World; and 4 Tree Line USA utilities.

The Council supports and promotes all DEC UCF activities, including grants. DEC's Urban and Community Forestry Program awarded \$15 million in the first round of Community Reforestation (CoRe) Grants. The 16 funded projects will establish, restore and expand resilient forests in and near New York's urban communities, contributing to the 2024 State of the State "25 Million Trees Initiative" launched by Governor Hochul to recognize the importance of trees and forests for climate resiliency and community health.

Regional ReLeaf Initiatives Rocked in 2025!

Each region is different, yet our goals are the same: preserving the urban forest in all its forms so that everyone can enjoy the trees around us. Here are two outstanding examples of events our ReLeaf chapters hosted this past year.

Three Great Hudson Valley ReLeaf CoRe Tours

Guest Contributor: Amy Mackenzie, NYSDEC Urban Forester, R3 Hudson Valley Releaf Co-Chair

This fall, Hudson Valley ReLeaf sponsored three tours with gracious land managers whose vision to establish and expand resilient urban forests represents a practical way to restore the services lost by our region’s fragmented forests. The projects highlighted here are funded by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation’s (DEC’s) Urban and Community Forestry program’s Community Reforestation grant (CoRe grant). Summarizing the practices and goals of the projects we visited is somewhat straightforward, as they all share degradation from deer overbrowsing and invasive plant infestation. The most interesting part was learning about the managers’ and fellow attendees’ backgrounds, as well as the history and attributes of the different sites. We also found how community engagement will be fostered with each one.

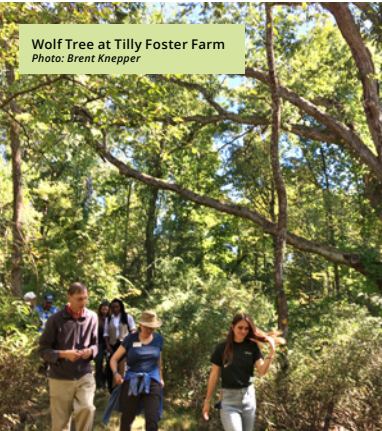
The first place we visited was the most centrally located in DEC’s seven-county Region 3. Putnam County’s Tilly Foster Farm in the Town of Brewster is a popular educational and recreational facility with an array of experiences offered to the public and operated through public and private partnerships. Putnam County Cornell Extension Educator Jen Lerner welcomed our group of ten to tour an old field woodland where the native overstory is generally under fifty years old and the understory is as degraded as it could be, with invasive plant species dominating the site. The deer population is so large that Jen often cautioned us not to step in what the deer had left behind on the trail!

There were treats for us too, though. It was a pleasure to behold a few of the site’s centuries-old wolf trees, which undoubtedly provided respite from summer heat for weary livestock when the entire site was a dairy farm. Attendees were also treated to a breathing exercise led by a fellow tourgoer, Ruby Olisemeka, that enriched our time in the forest.

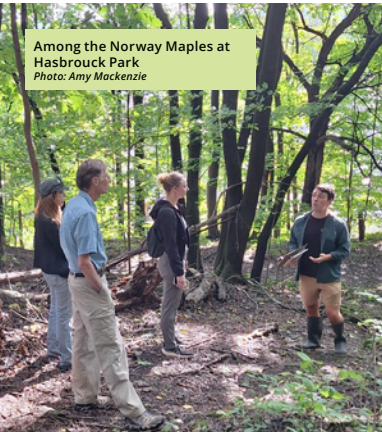
There was also an opportunity to harvest shiitake mushrooms from logs inoculated months ago as part of an educational program. Jen reported that the goal of the CoRe-funded project is to increase awareness of what our woodlands should be by offering citizen science opportunities. It has enlisted the help of the Soldiers2Scientists organization to collect needed data throughout the project’s timeline, in addition to Extension programming. The goal: to promote ecological literacy and time spent engaging with Tilly Foster Farm’s woodlands.

In Ulster County, the City of Kingston’s Urban Forester and Hudson Valley ReLeaf Co-Chair Brent Knepper welcomed us to the city’s underutilized Hasbrouck Park. Hasbrouck Park holds one of five forested sites in the city that will be improved with funding from the CoRe grant. The park’s history is fascinating. Once a lime mine with an associated cave system and other geological features across its forty-five acres, it offers wonderful vistas over the Hudson River. The land, donated to the city by the mine’s owners, has operated as a neighborhood park since 1920.

The park is situated in a neighborhood adjacent to an elementary school, and is part of the Kingston Greenline



of the park, which is about three acres and is dominated by a Norway maple overstory. Norway maples are a timber species in Europe, and as we walked through the stand it was easy to see why. The 100-year-old trees are as tall and straight as any native timber species we have in New York.



very susceptible to heat stress and likely won’t last much longer than another twenty years, given how summer temperatures are trending. The park’s upland forest has a generally mature native overstory. Issues to be managed include deer overbrowse and understory domination by invasive species, landscape escapees and illegal all-terrain vehicle (ATV) use. Brent is rapidly building a group of “tree people” to help guide community engagement with Kingston’s green spaces, with an “if you build it, they will come” philosophy and a series of community events focused on trees.

Our last CoRe Tour took pace at The Irvington Woods, in the Village of Irvington in Westchester County. The Irvington Woods is a distinctive 400-acre preserve that has been recognized as essential by village leadership and residents. In 2024, Irvington Woods was recognized by the national Old-Growth Forest Network. The preserve’s programming connects Irvington’s students and residents with nature. Director CJ Reilly presented at the O’Hara Nature Center and led a tour for our group.

network of urban trails and green spaces. Brent has been Kingston’s Urban Forester for a little over a year now, and it didn’t take him long to recognize the ecological potential of this forested space that has gone unmanaged until now.

Brent first guided us through the lower part

We discussed the idea that cutting them down and replacing them with native trees will have relatively long-term effects on stormwater capture and heat island mitigation. Still, it all made sense when Brent pointed out that Norways are

We ventured out to find an area with recent Norway maple removals, where their logs are being put to good use for growing culinary mushrooms. We also visited a wetland where two-inch-caliper trees were recently planted. There, an intrepid volunteer has begun controlling a phragmites infestation by cutting the stems below the waterline with a spade shovel to drown them! During our walk we heard about the site’s deer culling program, now entering its third year and already showing a positive influence on native understory regeneration.

We walked through the old-growth forest to admire the stalwart oaks doing the job they were preserved to do. When we got to the former municipal reservoir area, it became clear where the CoRe funding would really be put to work: restoring an area where a conifer plantation had been clear-cut and invasive species have taken over. A tour highlight came when CJ took us to the very organized equipment storage area of the O’Hara Nature Center, which is set up to welcome volunteers to work the land.

Each Hudson Valley CoRe Tour was an opportunity to connect with like-minded friends, old and new. Talking with folks who are facing similar challenges serves many purposes. New ideas were exchanged. Perhaps more importantly, attendees served as sounding boards for one another. There’s a lot of value in getting confirmation from hearing firsthand, based on the experience of others, that your management practices and engagement strategies will work. Participants received encouragement to wholeheartedly press on, and also to tweak programs to work more effectively. There is no doubt that the land managers who hosted our CoRe Tours are inspiring a culture in which more will follow suit!



The Many Faces of Tree Inventory

Guest Contributor: Andrew Newman, NYSUFC Board Member, Senior Correspondence Liaison for Brooklyn at NYC Parks

All photos courtesy Andrew Newman.

Regional ReLeaf workshops are a fantastic opportunity to learn about the latest trends in tree management, to get updates on the work being accomplished by localities, and to connect with urban forestry advocates. The May 7, 2025 NYC ReLeaf Region 2 Workshop, “Aspects of Tree Inventory,” hosted at a LEED-certified building at scenic Bushwick Inlet Park in Brooklyn, was no exception!



This year’s free workshop focused on big-picture topics like New York City’s first ever Urban Forest Plan and use of technology to assess tree canopy, as well as hyperlocal topics such as designing and installing low-cost tree guards. For me, fresh from my hiatus from ReLeaf while completing my graduate degree,

it was a chance to reconnect with friends and colleagues dedicated to tree stewardship.

The workshop kicked off with a welcome from Brooklyn Parks Commissioner Martin Maher, seeded with plenty of tree puns and recognition for the great work accomplished by professionals and volunteers. Paul Lozito from the NYC Mayor’s Office of Climate and Environmental Justice and Emily Maxwell from the City Parks Foundation presented on the new NYC Urban Forest Plan, which aims to increase NYC’s tree canopy cover to 30% of total land area. I asked Emily how this plan was different from the many city and state tree planting and care strategies that preceded it, and she noted three key distinctions: the new plan is highly collaborative and was developed by the 70-member NYC Urban Forest Taskforce with the goal of having all stakeholder voices heard, it is comprehensive in that it includes private property and other land types, and it is mandated by law. The New York City Council passed local law 148 in 2023, requiring a regularly updated urban forest plan and codifying the 30% canopy goal.

Next, Jessica Einhorn and Uma Bhandaram from NYC Parks presented on the upcoming 2025 NYC Tree Census. This exciting effort builds on the success of previous inventory campaigns in 1995, 2005, 2015, and 2017, which leveraged both staff and volunteer participation to gather key data about NYC’s urban forest. Having been heavily

involved in the 2015-2016 Street Tree Census, where the previous analog paper-and-clipboard methodology for data collection was upgraded to a digital web application, I was looking forward to learning about how new technology would inform the effort. This time around, Parks will use LiDAR technology (Light Detection and Ranging) and artificial intelligence machine learning combined with previous census data to assess street tree conditions and canopy. LiDAR technology has improved greatly since it was employed two decades ago to provide an overall assessment of New York City’s tree canopy, in partnership with the USDA Forest Service. Instead of collecting data on street trees, Parks will engage volunteers in collecting data on trees within parks.



Uma, co-hosting with Mike Treglia from The Nature Conservancy, then presented on LiDAR-assessed canopy changes from surveys conducted in 2010, 2017, and 2021. Data at the borough, neighborhood, and census tract levels reveals significant changes reflected in the devastation caused by storm events and deforestation on private property but also increases in canopy on city streets and parks thanks to programs like MillionTreesNYC.

Clara Pregitzer and Crystal Crown from the Natural Areas Conservancy presented on their ecological assessment of natural areas managed by NYC Parks. The Conservancy’s findings show that while NYC’s forest overstory is composed of mostly native tree species, with Quercus rubra (red oak), Liquidambar styraciflua (sweetgum), and Acer rubrum (red maple) making up 50% of the inventory, there was a significant decline in native groundcover and an increase in invasive vines from 2014–2024. Invasive vines were found in 91% of the plots assessed and tree mortality, 2.38% by tree stem count, was largely driven by declines in Fraxinus (ash) and Ailanthus (Tree of Heaven) — victims of the invasive Emerald Ash Borer and Spotted Lanternfly. As with street and landscaped park tree inventories, regular assessments help to inform management of natural areas.

Anneliese Zausner-Mannes and Gil Lopez from BIG Reuse presented on their partnership with NYC Council Member Lincoln Restler to develop a design for low-cost wooden tree guards available for residents to procure and install. The guards are built from “affordable, sturdy materials” which BIG Reuse cuts to the specific measurements of street tree beds and offers at a fraction of the price of wrought iron tree guards traditionally installed by NYC

Parks. BIG Reuse has worked with Parks to expedite the permitting process for tree guard installation.

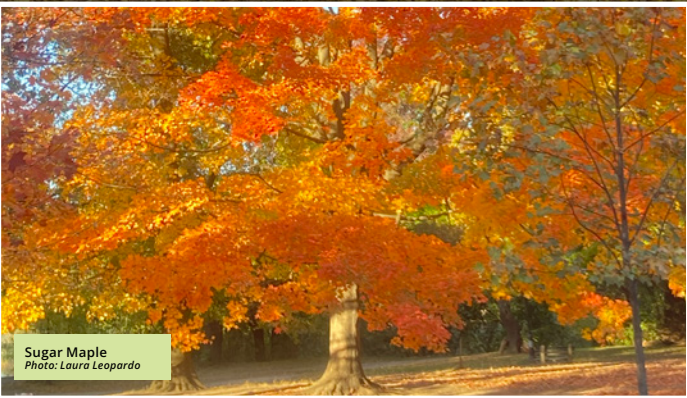
Finally, Sam Bishop from Trees New York presented on their partnership with the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) to conduct an inventory of trees at many of their residential properties. NYCHA provides affordable public housing, and their landscaped properties account for 2.2% of New York City’s tree canopy over 2,200 acres of land. Starting in 2019, NYCHA worked with TreesNY, The USDA Forest Service, and The Nature Conservancy to provide support and training for conducting the inventory. The survey conducted at 131 NYCHA sites yielded a total of 31,806 trees, an average canopy cover of 45% per site as assessed by LiDAR analysis. The team collected the data using the Healthy Trees, Healthy Cities web application and performed an i-Tree analysis to determine the benefits provided by NYCHA tree canopy. With funding provided from the New York State Attorney General’s Office, TreesNY has been able to plant new trees at NYCHA sites that have suffered deforestation due to storm events and construction work.



The workshop was further evidence that partnerships between public, private and nonprofit organizations are essential to designing and implementing programs to assess and manage our urban forest. Inventories of trees on sidewalks, within parks and natural areas, on NYCHA campuses and

on private properties will all contribute to the NYC Urban Forest Plan and New York State’s commitment to planting 25 million trees by 2033. Set against the background of the Manhattan skyline, the event was a great chance reconnect with so many familiar faces in the world of local urban forestry.

Trees, Please!



STAYING CONNECTED IN 2025



2025 MEMBERSHIP

In 2025, there were 169 memberships serving 405 total members:



2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Name	Affiliation
Dr. Nina Bassuk	Cornell Urban Horticulture Institute
Mark Beamish	Orange and Rockland Utilities
Karen Emmerich	Town of Warwick
Rachel Grumm	NYS Parks — Queens Borough
Andrew Hillman	Town of Ulysses Tree Advisory Council
Jay Lavigne	City of Albany
Greg Michel	Onondaga Earth Corps
Judy Pangman	City of Oneonta
Paul Paradine	NYSEG
Noreen Riordan	Birdsong Landscape Design, ISA Arborist
Michael Sawyer	Buffalo Olmsted Park Conservancy
Georgia Silvera Seamans	Local Nature Lab
Kate Spector	SUNY Oswego
Jeff Speich	Baumwerks Consulting
Dan Zerbe	Tree Board Chair, Village of Perry
Jean Zimmerman	Consulting Arborist

2025 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Name	Title	Affiliation
Lori Brockelbank	President	National Grid
Joe Charap	Vice President	The Green-Wood Cemetary
Leanna Wohl-Nugent	Treasurer	CCE Onondaga
Mike Treglia	Secretary	The Nature Conservancy
Ross Hassinger	At-Large	City of Buffalo
Andrew Newman	At-Large	NYC Parks
Jeanne Grace	At-Large	City of Ithaca
Andrew Ullman	At-Large	Davey Resource Group

EX-OFFICIO

Name	Affiliation
Jill Johnson	USDA Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry Program Coordinator
Gloria Van Duyne	NYSDEC Urban & Community Forestry Program Manager
Dan Gaidasz	NYSDEC Urban & Community Forestry Program Manager

STAFF

Name	Title
Donna Stelling Gurnett	Executive Secretary for NYSUFC
Chris Neuber	Deputy Secretary for NYSUFC
Jean Zimmerman	Editor/Writer, <i>Taking Root</i>



KEY PARTNERS

USDA Forest Service

NYSDEC Urban and Community
Forestry Program

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

MADE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotope, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

New USDA Non-Discrimination Statement:

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Front Cover Photo: Brent Knepper and Amy Mackenzie