

Northern Virginia Urban Forestry
Quarterly Roundtable
Opportunities for Urban Forestry with Homeowners Associations
Thursday, September 18, 2008
Reston Association Main Conference Room
1930 Isaac Newton Square, Reston

1. Welcome

- Milton Matthews, Chief Executive Officer, Reston Association
- Barbara White, Virginia Department of Forestry
 - o Urban Forestry Program in Baton Rouge includes hazard tree removal and historical tree identification
- In Attendance: Prince William County, Loudon County, Arlington County, Fairfax County, Private Sector, Nonprofit Volunteers

2. Emerald Ash Borer

(Jim McGlone, Virginia Department of Forestry)

- History of introduction to US
- Most recent detection: Bailey's Crossroad at a church site in Falls Church, VA
- Borer life cycle and spread
- Identification of EAB infestation in a tree vs. other borers
- Other methods of detection, Quarantines, What's at Risk, What to Do Now
- How to identify Ash trees, look-a-likes

3. Reston Association: One of the Largest HOAs in the US

(Patricia Greenberg, Environmental Resource Manager, Reston Association)

- History, Amenities, History in the Making
- What is an HOA, member structure
- Reston's Natural Areas and the Environmental Resources Department

4. Banning Invasive Exotic Plants in Reston

(Claudia Thompson-Deahl, Environmental Resource Manager, Reston Association)

- "Not all plants are created equal"
- Only 1% of introduced plants exhibit invasive characteristics but why even plant exotics? What's wrong with our plants, our natives?
- Reston is applying for a permit to introduce Mile-a-minute weevil as a research site
- Weed Warriors meet the 4th Saturday of every month to do invasive removal
- RA Use and Maintenance Standard for Vegetation: Resolution prohibits the installation of eight common invasive exotic plants. This applies to all private and cluster property subject to the Reston deed.
- Guidelines for the Care and Use of RA Natural Areas: Prohibits the planting of any invasive exotic plant in Reston's natural areas. Reston is currently in the process of removing invasive exotic plants previously planted by Reston from all natural areas *and* recreational areas.
- RA is now working on educational outreach and enforcement

- Interesting facts:
 - o Tent caterpillars in a cherry tree will eat all the cherry leaves and avoid the honeysuckle. They will crawl over the honeysuckle to get to another cherry tree. The food preference is for the cherry tree and not the invasive exotic.
 - o Bird nest failure is increasing because invasive exotic shrubs do not provide adequate cover in comparison to native shrubs. Predators have easier access to the nests.
 - o A monoculture of Garlic mustard eliminates native plants for butterflies to lay eggs. The leaves of the Garlic mustard are toxic to the eggs laid on this plant. So the garlic mustard is credited with the decline of the West Virginia white butterfly (*Pieris virginiensis*).
 - o Our wildlife are not adapting to the invasive exotic plants. Phragmites which supports over 300 species in its native habitat, now only supports 5 species where it occurs in North America even after 300+ years.
- There are other community programs that have banned invasive exotic plants

5. Memorial Service for Sally Ormsby

- A memorial service for Sally has been scheduled for Saturday, October 18, 2008 at 11:00 a.m. at the Providence Presbyterian Church, 9019 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax, VA 22031.
- Please send donations to the Soil and Water Conservation District in her name instead of flowers.
- More info at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/NVSWCD/>

6. Looking for folks to work on legislation to ban invasive exotic plants elsewhere.

- More information to come.
- Contact Mike Knapp <Michael.Knapp@fairfaxcounty.gov> or Elisabeth Lardner <eblardner@aol.com> if interested.

7. Urban Tree Coverage (UTC) in Leesburg, the HOA Connection

(Jay Banks, Urban Forester, Town of Leesburg)

- Assessment of the canopy in Leesburg using GIS
- Land Use Analysis
 - o existing UTC, possible vegetative (ie: grass & shrub areas), possible impervious (ie: parking lots), not suitable (ie: buildings, roads)
 - o broken down into residential, commercial, industrial, airport, institutional (notice that a lot of this is under HOA influence)
- Multi-scale Analysis
 - o Zoning, subdivisions, parcels
- Decision Support
 - o Compare what exists with what is possible
 - o Compare with other cities/counties/communities
 - o Leesburg's Urban Forest benefits total over 2 million dollars/year

- Held a Home Owners Association Tree Care Summit

8. Panel Discussion: Opportunities of Urban Forestry with HOAs

- Moderator: Jim McGlone
 - Bill Marr – Attorney in Fairfax, Rep. of State Association of HOAs
 - Clint Webb – Chair for Environmental Component of Federation of Citizens Association
 - Tom Loftis, Common Grounds Committee Chair of Glen Cannon HOA in Vienna
- Over 9,000 HOAs in VA and growing
- When a municipal sets a tree canopy goal, they have to turn to HOAs for cooperation because municipalities often only own 10% of the land that falls within that tree canopy goal.
- Tree Canopy Goals
 - Fairfax County: 45%
 - Leesburg: 40%
- Most HOAs have covenants that only cover general aesthetic of private land if any regulation exists at all for plants.
- Many HOAs have landscape contractors who give them a slew of services and there isn't anyone knowledgeable to understand those services and whether they are appropriate or enough. They need education and help in understand them, as well as a proactive board.
- The ability of an HOA to amend and enforce stricter covenants depends on what is already laid out in the covenant for the process of getting amendments passed. 100% agreement and participation is not required.
- Traditionally, the management of common areas is pretty ad hoc.
- The size of an HOA will influence how many people they can get involved, let alone interested in taking on such a task.
- Big note: HOAs need educational outreach – How do we connect the people with the knowledge to the people with the questions?
 - Need to find out who's out there
 - HOAs will be more receptive if it looks like its coming in the form of help
 - Consider approaching HOAs by channeling the message through something they're already interested in (ie: reducing energy use through smart landscaping, improved air quality with tree planting, riparian buffer protection, adding value to your property)
 - Need to make it clear that there has to be a maintenance plan following plantings to insure plant survival.
 - HOAs typically only try to find a contact for information when they get curious about a random issue that doesn't seem quite right.

NoVa Urban Forestry Roundtable - Business

Elisabeth Lardner - Chairperson

1. Next Meeting: November 14th in Gainesville. Details forthcoming.
2. Other areas of Virginia are implementing Urban Forestry Roundtables modeled after NoVa UrbFor. SouthEast Virginia has had at their first function and was very well represented by industry as well as the usual suspects.
3. National Bill call “Energy conservation through trees act” was mentioned for individual action if so interested. For more details:
www.sactree.com/news.aspx?8
4. Those interested in pursuing legislative action related to invasive plants, contact Contact Mike Knapp <Michael.Knapp@fairfaxcounty.gov> or Elisabeth Lardner <eblardner@aol.com>
5. Discussion related to the need to educate the NoVa municipalities of the potential application to their municipality with the new state enabling legislation. Maybe explored during next roundtable.
6. Other business?