**Ten-Year Urban Forestry Action Plan**

**FINAL REPORT**

**Issued by:** University of Virginia – Institute for Environmental Negotiation (IEN), with project consultants.

**Period covered by this report**: 05/01/2013 to 09/30/2015

(**Please note: This report is the final report for the project)**

1. *What did you accomplish during this reporting period and how did these accomplishments help you reach your stated project goal(s) and objective(s)?*

* **Sixteen Project Team planning meetings and conference calls** were held during the course of project.
* **Seven Strategic Advisory Team conference calls** were held during the course of the project.
* **Five NUCFAC sub-team conference calls** were held during the course of the project.
* **Three NUCFAC meetings and conference calls** were held during the course of the project.
* All the meetings with the different groups were extremely valuable as they provided guidance and knowledge that enabled us to move forward in a focused manner.
* The agendas and summaries of all meetings are available if needed – contact Christine Gyovai at: [christineg@virginia.edu](mailto:christineg@virginia.edu) for a copy of a call summary.
* The project website: [www.urbanforestplan.org](http://www.urbanforestplan.org)was developed and is up to date. It has information about the community engagements, the Ten-Year Action Plan, the planning team and the urban forestry community. **Please note: This website will remain active until May 2016, but it will not be updated again.**
* More than 1000 participants contributed to the Action Plan through various face-to-face and on-line community outreach efforts, which included:
  + 89 Federal/State Urban Forestry Coordinators – consultation via emails from USFS- (Summer-Fall 2015)
  + Personal Interviews – 26 in-depth thought leader interviews (Summer 2014)
  + 12 Scientist Interviews (Spring 2015)
  + 550 participants through the MindMixer online engagement who prioritized 14 key issues (to begin identification of priority Action Plan goals); prioritized numerous strategies; and suggested ideas for actions to implement the strategies (November-December 2014).
  + About 400 participants through Conferences: 1) 2014 November, Partners in Community Forestry and ACTrees National Meeting; 2) January 2015, Washington D.C., the Sustainable Urban Forest Coalition; 3) January 2015, Mobile, Alabama, the Southern Group of State Foresters.
  + 17 Focus Group participants – to develop discuss and develop the “Targets” for implementing each Action Plan goal (April 2015)
  + 10 Strategic Advisory Team members
  + 6 Project Team members
  + 13 NUCFAC Board members
* The Final Ten-Year Action Plan is completed. More than ten iterations of the Draft Action Plan were developed in response to feedback from the Project Team, Advisory Team, and NUCFAC, and were shared with them. Finally, different versions of the Action Plan were developed for the web and to print (see section 4 for detailed deliverables). The Action Plan includes:

A. Executive Summary

* Vision, Mission, Principles and Ten-Year Goals

B. Introduction to the Action Plan

* Overarching Principles
* Action Plan Goals
* Action Plan Research Needs Overview
* Action Plan Funding Needs Overview
* Who is NUCFAC
* Legislative Mandate
* What are Urban Forests
* Benefits of Urban Forests
* Progress Overview

C. The Ten-Year Action Plan: Goals, Strategies and Targets

* Goal 1: Planning
* Goal 2: Human Health
* Goal 3: Diversity, Equity and Leadership
* Goal 4: Environmental Health
* Goal 5: Management
* Goal 6: Funding
* Goal 7: Education and Awareness

D. Action Plan Research Needs [Also Stand Alone]

E. Action Plan Funding Needs [Also Stand Alone]

F. Action Plan Implementation

* Who Will Implement the Plan
* Next Steps for Implementation
* NUCFAC Implementation Process
* Federal Network: Agencies and Programs That Influence Urban and Community Forestry

G. Bibliography and Definitions

H. Appendices [Also Stand Alone]

* 1. Assessment of Programs, Activities, Tools, and Resources
* 2. How the Ten-Year Action Plan was Created
* 3. Action Agenda Toolkit
* 4. Key Issues Report
* 5. How the Urban Forestry Community was Engaged

1. *What, if any, challenges did you face during this reporting period and what actions did you take to address these challenges? Please note in your response changes, if any, to your project goal(s), objective(s), or activities that were made as a result of challenges faced.*

* The process was too compressed; the team felt routinely too rushed in the turn around times, and not enough time to give feedback, so the net result was that everyone felt pushed by the timeframe. This rush did not affect the quality of the deliverables but it was challenging to deliver quality results. The team felt it needed to be a full two-year project.
* Because there were many moving pieces to this project, it was hard to make them all line up in the timeframe desired. For example, we were willing to send a First Final Draft of the Action Plan to the Advisory Team and the Project Team by a certain date; however, both the research agenda and the economic costing piece were not ready. We had to push back the date to be able to include the research agenda. Unfortunately, further delays continued to affect the timeframe, as the USFS challenged and asked for changes regarding the economic costing technical approach. This is just one example of similar unanticipated delays and challenges at various points in the process
* The addition of NUCFAC as third advisory group to our scope (our proposal called for NUCFAC representation on the Advisory Team), and the subsequent addition of a NUCFAC sub-team with several additional calls, were largely responsible for both unanticipated delays and compression of review timelines, as well as far more hours invested in the project than planned.
* Although the digital engagement reached more that 550 people, it was a big challenge to find the appropriate tool and to make it user friendly. In the next ten-year plan, the planning process shouldn’t use a “too new” technology; it should be well tested and should be the right tool for the type of engagement desired. Additionally there should be a back-up for those who don’t have access to the digital technology.
* Several of the Project and Advisory team participants suggested having more face-to-face meetings instead of conference calls. However, there were time and budget constraints that prevented the teams to meet face-to-face more often.
* It was a challenge to work with NUCFAC as the project leader, because the Council members sometimes have opposing views and some members sought to influence the plan by individually approaching the facilitation team. If the Council experiences conflicted goals and perspectives about what should happen – a common phenomenon for boards composed of people who do not have the opportunity to build relationships or work together frequently – it may be helpful to have its ten-year planning meetings formally facilitated using consensus-building techniques.
* A challenge faced was how to reach more underserved communities during the outreach process. We reached different non-profits that work with those communities, however we were disappointed by the inability to have greater underserved community participation and would have liked to find ways to enable higher overall participation from them.
* Because of the add-ons to our scope and unanticipated complexities of the project, the hours required for the project are higher than anticipated and our “burn rate” was faster than planned. We were able to relocate some budget items in order to partially address that issue.
* At the very end of the project the USFS asked for the Final Action Plan in PDF to be Section 508 Compliant. Since it was not included in the project’s scope, the USFS provided more funds and time in order to make the document compliant.

1. *How have the activities conducted during this project period helped you to achieve the measurable outcomes identified in your project proposal?*

* The Project Team, Advisory Team and NUCFAC sub-team support was a key component for accomplishing the project’s collaborative approach.

* The different community outreach methods played a significant role in the planning process, making this Action Plan a collective document by the urban forestry community instead of one created by a few select people.
* A final evaluation survey was accomplished through Survey Monkey, which helped the team gather feedback from the different participants that contributed to the different stages of the process.
* The guidance from Nancy Stremple and Jan Davis was invaluable; their timely advice helped us move forward in complex situations.

1. *What was produced during the reporting period and how have these products been disseminated? Products may include articles, issue briefs, fact sheets, newsletters, survey instruments, sponsored conferences and workshops, websites, audiovisuals, and other informational resources.*

* The following products are being delivered as the final products of the Ten-Year Action Plan, they can be found at:
  + Ten-Year Urban Forestry Action Plan Summary <http://www.urbanforestplan.org/engage/>
  + Ten-Year Urban Forestry Action Plan: 2016 – 2017 (complete document with appendices) <http://www.urbanforestplan.org/engage/>
  + Ten-Year Urban Forestry Action Plan: 2016 – 2017 (core Action Plan) <http://www.urbanforestplan.org/engage/>
  + Action Plan Research Needs – Standalone document <http://www.urbanforestplan.org/engage/>
  + Action Plan Funding Needs – Standalone document <http://www.urbanforestplan.org/engage/>
  + Appendices – Standalone document <http://www.urbanforestplan.org/engage/>
  + Power Point Presentation with an overview of the plan at the Partners in Community Forestry Conference 2016: both in PPT and PDF
  + Executive Summary (2-page summary): 500 Brochures for the Partners in Community Forestry Conference 2016
  + Website – [www.urbanforestplan.org](http://www.urbanforestplan.org) will remain active, but not updated, until May 2016.
  + Individual pages of the Action Plan to be used as posters: PDFs.
  + All weblinks will be to the USFS website.
  + A news release for use/ editing/ distribution by the USFS and all project partners.
* Dissemination will be achieved through a final email blast announcing the Ten Year Action Plan, with links to the USFS website, to the following groups and listserves:
  + Federal state/ urban forestry coordinators
  + All MindMixer participants
  + Urban Forests Councils
  + Vibrant Cities Report Taskforce