

**State and Private Forestry
FY 2010 Western Competitive
Resource Allocation
Single-State Project Proposal**

Filename	
NE_SCF	
Administration Information	
Dollar Amount Requested:	\$298,255
Matching Share:	\$298,255

Applicant Information	
1	State Forestry Agency: Nebraska Forest Service
	Contact Person: Dr. Scott J. Josiah
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Project Information				
2	Descriptive Title of Project:	Sustainable Community Forests for the Great Plains		
	Names of Partnering Agencies / Organizations:	Nebraska Forest Service (NFS), Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, Inc. (NSA), University of Nebraska Department of Agronomy & Horticulture (UNLA&H), Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts (NRDs), Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET), Nebraska's public utilities, Nebraska Nursery and Landscape Association (NNLA), and Nebraska Arborists Association (NAA).		
	State(s):	NE	Congressional Districts:	Districts 1-3
	Counties:	All 93 counties eligible. Projects located in 6 different counties.	Forest Service Regions:	Region 2

Total Leverage							
Please specify each 3 rd party contributor (partnering organizations and agencies, including other Federal) and the dollar value of each contribution. Please DO NOT show grant requested funds in this table.							
3	Contributors: (Please specify by name)	NSA, Inc.	Nebraska Utilities	Nebraska Env. Trust	Partner communities	Natural resources districts	TOTAL
	Value of Contributions:	\$107,500	\$60,000	\$150,000	\$250,000	\$50,000	\$0

Project Budget					
	Grant Share (\$ requested)	Applicant	Non-Federal Contributors	TOTAL	
		Cash ¹	In-Kind ²		
4	Personnel / Labor:	\$188,090	\$0	\$0	\$188,090
	Fringe Benefits:	\$52,665	\$0	\$0	\$52,665
	Travel:	\$7,500	\$0	\$0	\$7,500
	Equipment:	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$ 0
	Supplies:	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$50,000
	Contractual:	\$0	\$0	\$187,901	\$187,901
	Construction:	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$ 0
	Other:	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$ 0
	Indirect Costs:	\$0	\$110,354	\$0	\$110,354
	TOTAL:	\$298,255	\$110,354	\$187,901	\$596,510

Project Duration	
5	What is the duration of this project? <input type="checkbox"/> One Year <input type="checkbox"/> Two Years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Three Years

National Relevance	
6	Conserve Working Forest Landscapes <input type="checkbox"/> Protect Forests From Harm <input type="checkbox"/> Enhance Public Benefits From Trees and Forests <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Project Description	
<p style="color: red;">Maximum 5500 Characters Including Spaces – Clearly summarize the proposed project, including goals, objectives, measurable outputs, outcomes, and how grant funds will be used towards successful completion of the project.</p>	
7	<p>OVERVIEW</p> <p>The Sustainable Community Forests initiative (SCF) is a highly innovative, intensive, long-term planting, education and community capacity building effort focused on restoring NE's community forests. The project will use a 3-year phased approach to create 6 model sustainable community forests across NE designed to drive post-project spread to other communities, state- and region-wide, long into the future. The project addresses the S&PF theme of "Enhancing Public Benefits from Trees and Forests," and priorities identified by the Secretary and Chief, including restoring forest ecosystems, mitigating climate change, protecting water quality and stimulating local economies.</p> <p>NE community forests are PRIORITY landscapes that are critical to the daily lives of more than 1.3 million people. This project FOCUSES on 6 communities that will be selected in a competitive process according to the level of social energy that can be effectively tapped, the need for trees and strategic location for maximizing visibility and technology transfer. The OUTCOME will be 6 dramatically improved, more sustainable community forests that will serve as replicable models for the Great Plains and help restore NE's tree planting enthusiasm.</p>

¹ 'Cash' is the value of any qualifying match the applicant pays for such as cash, staff time, supplies, or equipment.

² 'In-Kind' is the value of any qualifying match contributed by a non-federal 3rd party contributor such as donated time, supplies, or equipment.

NEED

NE is often referred to as the “Tree Planter's State” because many of its early settlers (including Arbor Day founder J. Sterling Morton) tirelessly advocated tree planting. These people placed high value on the shade and wind protection that trees provided, and NE’s settlements quickly became forests on an otherwise treeless plain. Unfortunately in our modern, air-conditioned communities, planting has not kept up with the loss of trees from development, disease, old age and severe weather. As a result, NE has lost almost 50% of its community forest canopy over the past few decades.

Further, a perfect storm of emerging threats, such as emerald ash borer (EAB), pine wilt disease (PWD), mountain pine beetle (MPB), 1000 cankers and widening climatic extremes, threaten to decimate our community forests even more. The evidence is clear—NE’s declining community forests are not sustainable unless strong steps are taken now. It's imperative that trees be planted and cared for in earnest to restore canopy cover, reduce energy consumption, better manage stormwater, sequester carbon, improve wildlife habitat, preserve water quality and make our communities more vibrant, attractive places to live.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Rather than spread resources across hundreds of communities with little visible impact, SCF will restore and enhance community forests in 6 regionally selected, replicable model demonstration communities and engage them in a process that identifies and provides the tools necessary to achieve long-term sustainability. In doing so, SCF will work to restore the tree planting enthusiasm of Nebraskans.

SCF includes 3 objectives:

I: Community Planning & Activism: A broad spectrum of citizen advocates, elected leaders, business leaders and government officials will be engaged in a comprehensive planning process to identify and develop action plans, policies, ordinances, financial incentives and management strategies that will lead to better sustainability of the community forest.

II: Planting: SCF will target intensive planting of high-quality shade trees on both public and private properties across the communities. Trees will be strategically located as green infrastructure that aids energy conservation and stormwater management and demonstrates sustainable design principles such as massing, turf separation, maintenance zoning and right-tree/right-place. Planting gaps on public lands will be geospatially identified and planted.

III: Education and Demonstration: SCF will build the long-term capacity to continue the project by educating community participants about the values of trees and their proper planting and care through a variety of means including publications, workshops, online outreach, local media efforts, hands-on demonstration activities, and technical assistance in establishing community nurseries.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

1. Directly enable the planting of up to 3,000 trees and motivate the planting of thousands more.
2. Improve tree diversity so that no one species is more than 10% of a community forest.
3. Reduce model community energy consumption for heating and cooling by 5% within 10 years by planting in locations that maximize energy conservation.
4. Enhance the long-term capacity of communities to plant and care for trees.
5. Create strong collaborative ties with local green industry and utility partners who will provide affordable high-quality trees and/or become conduits for education and best practices information.
6. Citizens who better understand how to select, plant and care for trees and are actively engaged therein.
7. Community governments that are proactive in tree planting and community forest management.
8. Reduced stormwater runoff; reduced hard infrastructure costs; cleaner air; improved wildlife habitat; increased carbon sequestration; increased retail activity; and cleaner, greener, more livable communities.

GRANT: Grant funds will be used to fund 1 FTE project coordinator and .5 FTE technical support. In addition,

funds will pay for a student intern, travel costs, educational expenses and the purchase of up to 500 commercially unavailable, high-quality trees from NSA to help expand diversity.

Program Integration

8 **Maximum 1250 Characters Including Spaces**
 One of the most compelling aspects of SCF is that it will be undertaken by a team of professionals from the traditional S&PF program areas of Urban & Community Forestry, Cooperative Fire and Forest Health, as well as from the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum (NSA), a new program area of NFS. NSA is a nationally unique organization that includes almost 90 affiliated arboretums and botanical gardens across Nebraska. NSA brings valuable community connections and an experienced design staff to this project, which compliment the expertise of UCF and FH staff. These 3 program areas will work together to identify species that are suited for planting in Nebraska, while Forest Health professionals will provide the latest information and recommendations for insect and disease management. Cooperative Fire professionals will lend their expertise to Firewise landscaping and education. Existing NSA, UCF and FH professionals all have proven relationships with Nebraska’s green industry (NAA, NNLA), as well as Tree City USA leaders and community tree boards, which will be integral to SCF's success.

Collaboration

9 **Maximum 1250 Characters Including Spaces**
 SCF will involve multiple governmental, non-profit and industry partners:

- Faculty and students from the UNL Department of Agronomy and Horticulture will be utilized to provide assistance with community outreach, educational activities, landscape management planning and landscape design.
- Natural Resources Districts will be asked to provide financial support and to assist with education and outreach.
- Nebraska’s publicly owned power companies will contribute financial support and will help with publicity and outreach.
- The Nebraska Arborists Association will provide promotional and educational support.
- Nebraska nurseries will provide a broad selection of affordable, high-quality trees as well as significant publicity and outreach.
- The Nebraska Environmental Trust will provide funding to assist in tree purchase and planting.

10 **Leverage**

Maximum 1250 Characters Including Spaces
 SCF leverages substantial support from both the public and private sector. This includes financial support from local units of government, power utilities, businesses and private donations. At least \$150,000 will be contributed by the Nebraska Environmental Trust to purchase trees. These funds will be matched equally by participating communities (indicated in the budget under non-federal contributions). Significant in-kind support is also anticipated, including that provided by local green industry professionals as well as a cadre of volunteers that will assist with tree planting efforts. It is expected that more than 600 hours of volunteer time will be contributed in each community, and that the total value of all non-federal support will be at least \$600,000.

Meaningful Scale

11 **Maximum 1250 Characters Including Spaces**
 Although SCF is intended to benefit nearly all Nebraska communities, the initial scale of the program is intentionally kept manageable by focusing on 6 strategically selected model communities. Substantial technical, financial and media resources will be intensively focused on the target communities to maximize tree planting on public and private lands, where financial, technical and capacity-building inputs are phased in and out of the community. This avoids building dependency and generates highly visible results in a short period of time (3 yrs). Local capacity-building efforts will ensure project activities and benefits continue independently in each community post-project. These models will then be replicated in additional communities across the state in a similar phase-in, phase-out approach.

Sphere of Influence

12 **Maximum 1250 Characters Including Spaces**
 SCF will influence and benefit communities across the central Great Plains where community forestry programs and activities have traditionally been underfunded, but where healthy community forests are of great importance to the quality of life. States that stand to benefit include North Dakota, South Dakota, Kansas, Iowa, Wyoming and Colorado. Through its program areas, NFS has strong relationships and ties to other forest and landscape agencies and organizations in these states. The concepts, outcomes and lessons learned from the initiative will be freely shared with any individual, organization or community that desires them. The unique aspects of intensely focused resources, a phased in & out approach, geographic concentration of resources and effort, and planning from the outset for spontaneous replication to other communities makes both the process, as well as the outcome, highly replicable and likely to spread regionwide.

13 Sustainability of Outcomes

Maximum 1250 Characters Including Spaces

SCF has been specifically designed to be a sustainable initiative both environmentally and socially. In fact pilot communities will develop the capacity and resources to carry forward with additional community forestry activities on their own. SCF will significantly raise the capacity of tree enthusiasts, volunteers and industry professionals across the state to design and carry out community tree planting programs. In addition, it is anticipated that local funding for community forestry activities will increase significantly with greater support from a variety of sources including units of government, utilities and natural resources districts.

Another factor favoring sustainability is the EVALUATION & POST ASSESSMENT aspect of SCF. All model communities will be evaluated yearly and again 5 years post project to determine the effectiveness of the initiative both within the community and surrounding areas. Communities will submit reports outlining the impacts of the project and that gauge changes in community behaviors toward tree planting and care. All trees planted will be inspected to insure high-quality of material and planting and many will be included in a statewide plant performance database.