



ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY  
COMMUNITY TREE COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT  
2008

Introduction

**Mission:** *To provide the vehicle for broad-base community representation to interact with local Government, the private sector and citizen groups by advancing community tree and forest information and policy recommendations, and offering educational opportunities promoting responsible stewardship and sustainability of community tree resources.*

The Athens-Clarke County Community Tree Council (CTC) is pleased to present to the Mayor and Commission of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County (ACC) the 2008 Annual Report of the CTC.

**Overall Status:** The year 2008 was a busy year of growth and development for the CTC. Athens-Clarke County was certified by the National Arbor Day Foundation as a Tree City USA for the 8<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, and concurrently received its 7<sup>th</sup> Growth Award. As last year, the Growth Award reflected activities carried out by the ACC Community Tree Program (CTP) that is supported by different but parallel activities of the CTC. Such a complementary approach in bringing coherence to the community's tree resources broadens the scope of coverage while appealing to diverse groups of citizens interested in the management of these vital resources. Under the direction of a full time professional Community Forest Coordinator several activities were pursued that were eligible for Growth Award consideration including:

- Newsletter – the creation and distribution of “Tree Conservation Notes”, a community newsletter filled with information specifically directed to the citizens of Athens-Clarke County.
- A CTP “listserv” database was created in 2008 to electronically disseminate documents to interested citizens via e-mail.
- Public education was advanced through the offering of an eight - week Southern Dendrology class. Twenty-five attendees completed the class where students learned to identify over 100 trees. .
- The five-year inventory of publicly owned street trees started in 2007 was continued in 2008.

- The inventory data were formatted to be iTree compatible. This publicly available computer program has been designed to analyze tree inventory data to determine the contribution that the trees make to the local ecosystem. This application will provide a defined and consistent estimate of change in public tree cover over time.

The growth in the CTP program by the Community Forest Coordinator has been significantly enhanced through the participation of the ACC Arborist who is responsible for the proper implementation of the ACC Tree Management Ordinance. Both these positions have enhanced public awareness. Attaining community forest sustainability is dependent on public involvement and the acceptance of a land ethic that recognizes the physical and vegetative characteristics of the landscape as viable community resources to be considered and properly weighed in the land use planning and decision-making process. This concept of sustainability is consistent with the CTC mission, and positions the CTC to provide an important decision support function to the public and private sectors and other interested Athens-Clarke County residents.

#### **New Projects: Assessment of Planting Opportunities on Public Lands (APOP)**

In the spring of 2007 a project was submitted for funding under the Federal Urban and Community Forest Grant Assistance Program (U&CF). The program (administered by the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC)) approved the proposal for full funding with a beginning date set for September 1, 2007. With the acceptance in 2007 of Trees for Tomorrow (TfT) as a program fully compatible with ACC donor acceptance policy, the question became: “What public properties are available and at what level of desirability?” The APOP project addressed these issues by evaluating public venues (selected county parks and one public school) regarding general viability as a TfT host site. Individual site values within each venue were averaged and added to the general venue value to derive an overall venue score. The venues were then arranged in ascending order to establish a priority with regard to the APOP criteria. Public venues, however are in a constant state of flux, so these results remain dynamic and very likely ephemeral. In addition unforeseen circumstances within the community (i.e. public pressure) may serve to alter the venue priorities.

It will be noted that a single non-park venue has been included in the analysis. The Chase Street Elementary School, just completing a major renovation was beginning the landscaping phase of the project and was very receptive to the Trees for Tomorrow concept. Because of the high institutional interest from both the school staff and the Clarke County Board of Education, the CTC worked with the school staff to develop potential sites and a final TfT site for design and planting implementation early in 2009. A large storm water drain structure in the front of the building was selected as the TfT site. Exhibit 1A at the end of this report shows a map, the planting design plan and a before and after view of the school site. The Chase Street School is a good example of other factors trumping the APOP priorities. The successful inclusion of the Chase Street Elementary School was especially significant because school grounds are under the administrative control of the Clarke County School District. School District property represents a large (perhaps largest) pool of potential planting sites in the county.

Table 1 shows the scores and ranking of ten selected venues as per this study.

Table 1-- Scores on Selected Public venues ranked in ascending order as a % of total

Public Venue	Venue Score	Av. Site Score	Total Combined Score	% Ranking Ascending Order
Southeast Clarke Park	270	331	601	86
Bishop Park	290	290	580	83
Memorial Park	240	298	538	77
Holland Sport Center	210	302	512	73
Chase Street Elementary School	185	293	478	68
Thomas Lay/Lyndon House	245	230	475	68
Satterfield Park	225	252	477	68
Ben Burton Park	180	288	468	67
Dudley Park	180	245	425	61
North Oconee River Park	185	243	428	61

A second design plan was developed for a site based completely on the results of the APOP assessment. Southeast Clarke Park (shown in Exhibit 1B) illustrates another approach to a Tft planting, a linear arborway. Such a design not only fulfills the commemorative requirements of the Tft, but also adds functionality in enhancing this area for wider public use.

Two more Tft sites were planned and designed for planting in February 2009. Both were publicly driven and APOP (while carried out on one site) played little role in the final selection. The first (Planting Prince) was a neighborhood drive to replant missing dogwoods along Prince Ave. With little effort, funds were raised to support the planting of 25 trees. The second site was in the Holland Sports Center where a Tft grove was designed in conjunction with the building of May's Memorial Little League Field. Being a memorial field the notion of including a Tft planting was well received. Like the Planting Prince experience, the Little League was able to underwrite the cost of some 30 trees from interested parents and supporters. From these two examples, it is clear public demand is the principle driver for the Tft locations with APOP offering a consistent default option representing a definable methodology for assessing planting opportunities on a variety of public venues (public campuses, rights-of-way, schools and parks).

# ACTIVITIES



MLK School Yard Shade



Spring Tree Fair



Champion Star Magnolia



Fall Tree Fair



Arbor Day School Art Competition

### Activities:

- January, Martin Luther King (MLK) Day of Service: Once again, the Gaines Elementary School was the focus of the annual Martin Luther King Day of Service. The volunteers pitched in to help complete the School Shade Tree planting initiated in 2007.
- Spring Tree Sale Postponed from November 2007 because of severe draught, the first CTC spring Tree Fair and Sale in February 2009 proved to be very successful. Pre-event sale of trees were brisk and some trees had to be reordered to have enough for the day.
- Arbor Day: Arbor Day “Week” ended the month. During this week (the third week in February) a school program was held at Gaines Elementary School on Wednesday. Individual classes planted trees while receiving instruction on tree planting techniques. For the first time essay and art competition was judged and the winners announced at an all school celebration held at Gaines School, and not at the CTC annual meeting, which had been the custom.
- Annual Meeting: An Annual Meeting and reception were hosted at the Calloway Building on the grounds of the State Botanical Garden. A proclamation officially recognizing Arbor Day was read to commemorate the day. A highlight of the luncheon was the presentation of the Friend of Trees Award. The Friend of Trees Award is awarded to persons or organizations that exemplify good stewardship of trees in Athens-Clarke County. The Community Tree Council was pleased to present the 2007 Friend of Trees Award to Joe Sanders for his passion for trees and ownership of 3 Champion trees on his residential property.
- Home and Garden Show: - Early March in the Georgia piedmont is a real harbinger of spring and as traditional, the CTC and the ACC Landscape Management Division shared a booth at the annual Home and Garden Show sponsored by the Athens Area Homebuilders Association. The booth featured a tabletop display presenting the Trees for Tomorrow concept, and the ever-popular bare root tree give-away in return for a completion of a survey regarding the ACC Tree Management Ordinance. In addition, several documents and brochures were made available concerning tree care and maintenance, with advice made available from the Community Forest Coordinator. Because of costs and other considerations, future participation in the Home and Garden Show by the CTC is uncertain. However, the CTC will continue to celebrate the spring planting season in a significant way at some venue in the future
- Champion Trees - The release of the first Tree Registry early in 2007 brought many favorable comments. During the year, three new champion species were added and five species dethroned by new champions. A highlight was a new Deodar Cedar champion at the Chase Street Elementary School also becoming a Georgia State co-champion for the species. With some effort, this tree was spared during reconstruction
- Community Tree Fair: The fourth Community Tree Fair was in early November, and sponsored by the CTC, Athens-Clarke County, University of Georgia, Georgia Forestry Commission and the ACC Storm Water Utility. Although this was the second tree fair of the year, the turnout and enthusiasm were robust and the pre sale of trees was brisk. More details on the Fair can be found on the CTC website.

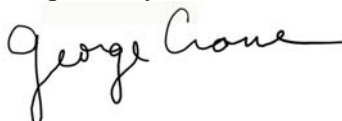
**Membership** – As of this writing the CTC is short two of a full complement of members. Vacancies in Commission District 2 and one Professional position remain unfilled. Public notice has been posted and one promising application received. Every effort will be made to fill out the membership soon, for our work schedule is such to make every member important to our success

**Financial Statement:** Below is a summary of income and expenses for the year 2008.

**2008 Financial Report: Income and Expenses**

<b>Beginning Balance</b>		<b>\$13,421.71</b>
<b>Income</b>		
Donations, General	\$1,091.20	
Donations, Arbor Day	\$493.00	
Donations, Greenfest		
Donations, Trees for Tomorrow	\$425.26	
Tree Sales, General		
Tree Sales, Tree Fair	\$350.00	
Grants, U&CF (GFC)	\$7,999.64	
Grants, Woodruff Memorial		
Bank Credit net.	\$62.45	
<b>Subtotal, Income</b>		<b>\$10,421.55</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Computer	(\$933.23)	
Office Supplies	(\$379.27)	
Tree Purchases	(\$251.19)	
Arbor Day	(\$2,094.71)	
Education and Outreach	(\$233.16)	
Tree Fair		
Grants, School Yard Shade	(\$1,992.31)	
Grants, Trees for Tomorrow	(\$14,516.23)	
Great Grant Expenses	(\$3,846.28)	
<b>Subtotal, Expenses</b>		<b>(\$24,246.38)</b>
Great Grant Surplus		<b>\$3,686.28</b>
<b>Ending Balance</b>		<b>\$3,283.16</b>

Respectfully submitted,



George Crane, President  
Community Tree Council, February 11, 2008