



## **America the Beautiful Grant Program**

I am pleased to provide you with information concerning the America the Beautiful (ATB) Grant Program, which provides funding for urban forestry projects. The ATB Grants are made possible through the USDA Forest Service's State and Private Forestry Program. The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Division of Forestry (DEEP Forestry) is responsible for the administration of the ATB program and for the distribution of these funds to municipalities and non-profit organizations. This year \$50,090 in funding will be available through ATB Grants.

Please review the information package and grant application materials that follow. This is a competitive grant, and so we encourage applicants to submit carefully considered and complete applications. The deadline for submitting an ATB Grant application is August 10, 2012. Approved projects must be completed by December 15, 2013.

ATB Grants can be applied to a wide range of urban forestry projects. Projects must be reflective of the needs of the community and should demonstrate the community's commitment to urban forestry. It is our intention through the attached materials to direct focus regarding the types of projects that are most appropriate for funding through the ATB program.

DEEP Forestry has defined five categories of ATB grants. When submitting an application, an applicant is required to identify one of these five categories as reflective of the proposal. Further details on these categories are contained within this document. The five categories are:

- Inner City Urban Forestry
- Municipal Urban Forestry Planning and Maintenance
- Management of Urban Forest Woodlands
- Planting or Maintenance of Legacy Trees
- Other, General Urban Forestry Projects

This past year was a difficult one for the trees in Connecticut's urban forest. In establishing this year's ATB grant program, we decided not to make major changes in the requirements or categories associated with the program. We feel that continuing our longstanding emphasis on the health and condition of the urban forest and on outreach and education of the people who benefit from the urban forest are the best means for moving forward, including with regards to the recovery of the urban forest from the two storms of the past year. We anticipate that there will be projects proposed that relate directly to storm recovery and also to preparation for future storms. Such proposals are encouraged and will be considered on an equal footing with all other grant applications.

DEEP is committed to reducing the spread of non-native, invasive plants. As such, the ATB Grant Program will not provide funding for the planting of tree or shrub species that have been determined to be non-native and invasive. A list of such species has been included on page 6 of the application package.

Please mail completed application to: America the Beautiful Attn: Chris Donnelly  
DEEP Division of Forestry  
79 Elm Street  
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

We look forward to your active participation in improving Connecticut's urban and community forests.

Sincerely,

Christopher Martin  
State Forester  
Division of Forestry  
(860) 424-3630  
June 27, 2012

## Overview of the 2012 America the Beautiful Grants

For this year, DEEP Forestry has \$50,090 available in grant funding for urban forestry projects. These projects must be completed by the end of 2013. Funding for this grant program is made available from the USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry program. The Forest Service has sub-granted this funding to the DEEP Division of Forestry in support of Connecticut's urban forestry efforts.

Incorporated non-profit organizations, municipalities and other units of local government are eligible for these grants, providing they possess a valid Federal Employment Identification Number (FEIN).

Grant requests under the America the Beautiful (ATB) grant program may be for any amount up to \$8,000. The primary goal of the America the Beautiful Grant Program is to advance urban forestry within the State of Connecticut. Applicants must clearly identify how project proposals will work towards achieving this goal. Grant applicants are encouraged to become familiar with Connecticut's 2010 Forest Action Plan, including the vision for urban forestry as described on page 165 of that plan. The Forest Action Plan can be viewed on the DEEP Forestry web site: [www.ct.gov/deep/forestry](http://www.ct.gov/deep/forestry). (See the listing at the top right corner.)

Grants that are larger in size will not be favored over smaller grants, or vice versa. Applicants are encouraged to keep this in mind when submitting their applications. Please see the Review Criteria listed on page 7.

In most cases, the ATB grants are reimbursement grants. In other words, payment for the granted activity will occur after the grant project has been completed and only for expenditures made by the grant recipient in accordance with the grant agreement. Proof that payments have been made must be submitted before reimbursement will occur. Infrequently, and only when requested as a part of the application process, allowances may be made for the disbursement of a portion of the grant funding prior to the completion of the project. Such allowances will be held to a minimum. Applicants seeking partial payment in advance of completion of the grant must make that request as part of the application process.

Once the grant applications to be funded have been selected, DEEP Forestry will begin the process of establishing a written contract between DEEP and the grant recipient. Under no circumstances may there be reimbursement for funds expended prior to the completion of the paperwork that establishes the grant. When this paperwork has been completed and the grant contract is fully executed, grant recipients will be notified.

It is a requirement for reimbursement that all expenditures are to be matched 50:50. This match may be a financial match, done through the expenditure of additional funds, or it may be achieved by in-kind contributions of goods or services donated by grant partners. It may also be a combination of the two. Grant recipients will not be allowed to use funding from other federal sources as a match for this grant.

To be considered, a copy of the grant application must be received by **4:00 p.m. on Friday August 10, 2012**. Grant applications may be submitted by mail, electronically or by fax. Grant applications may not be more than five pages in length. In addition, the application must include the Application Form that is at the end of this document. Successful applicants will be notified by September 14, 2012. Projects must be concluded by December 15, 2013.

Address for the submission of applications:

ATB Grant Program  
DEEP Division of Forestry  
79 Elm Street  
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

FAX: 860-424-4070

Email: [chris.donnelly@ct.gov](mailto:chris.donnelly@ct.gov)

## Application Procedure

All applicants must submit the attached “Application Form”. In addition, all applicants must provide a short summary of their project. This summary, no more than 5 pages in length, must include the following:

- Legal name of applicant
- Federal Employment Identification Number (FEIN)
- Contact name, address, phone number, fax number and e-mail address (as applicable)
- Project Title
- Project Cost
- Requested Grant Amount
- Project Duration
- Purpose and objectives of the project
- A detailed narrative of how the project will be accomplished, not to exceed one page. This narrative should include a description of:
  - ✓ activities proposed
  - ✓ participants in the project
  - ✓ equipment needed (including publications to be used)
  - ✓ project administration
  - ✓ timetables
  - ✓ anticipated end result

Please be clear as to who will have responsibility for what result, and, if a larger project, what specific parts of the whole project are to be considered as part of the grant.

- A detailed summary of the project’s budget. In addition to anticipated expenditures, this budget should indicate how the amount requested in the grant will be matched, and whether this match will occur through additional funds and/or through in-kind services.<sup>1</sup> (Please see sample budget sheet on page 8).
- A description of the benefits that will accrue from this project. These may be benefits to the grant applicant, other local entities, or the community as a whole. Benefits to the local urban forestry program will be of particular interest.

If the project involves tree planting, the following should also be included:

- A site plan. This plan should not exceed 11 X 17 inches in size.
- A list of species to be planted. Species considered to be invasive may not be planted as a part of this grant. Ash trees, which are susceptible to the emerald ash borer, are also not allowed for planting. (Please see the “DEEP Invasive Species Policy” and “Emerald Ash Borer and Asian Longhorned Beetle Policy” on page 6.)
- A description of the specifications to be used in the tree planting. It is recommended that these specifications come from publications such as the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension Publication “Tree Planting” or the USDA Forest Service pamphlet “Planting Trees in Designed and Built Community Landscapes”. These publications are available on-line or upon request. (Please visit: [www.cturbanforestcouncil.org/planting.html](http://www.cturbanforestcouncil.org/planting.html)).
- A detailed 5-year maintenance plan for the trees to be planted, including reference to the individual, group or department responsible for this maintenance. Maintenance plans should include

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<sup>1</sup> The grantee’s match of cost share funds must be with non-federal funds and/or non-federal in-kind contributions. Also, matching funds or in-kind contributions for these grants cannot also be used as a match for any other federal cost-share project.

descriptions of who will water these trees and who will be responsible for such activities as pruning the trees following establishment.

- A resolution of endorsement from the local government if tree plantings are proposed on municipally owned land by a group other than the town or city owning the land.
- A letter of approval from the Connecticut Department of Transportation if planting is to be done within state highway right-of-ways.

In order to be given consideration, an application must be received by 4:00 p.m. on August 10, 2012.

In determining whether specific activities or costs are allowable for reimbursement or to be considered as match under a grant, DEEP Forestry will follow USDA Forest Service guidelines. Generally, unless integral to the project, hardscape (benches, fences, etc.) and similar improvements to a site other than those directly associated with trees are not allowed. If there are questions on this issue, please contact DEEP Forestry.

### **Review Process**

DEEP Forestry will be responsible for the review each application, and will be responsible for selecting those projects that best meet the goals and criteria of the program. If the total requests for funds exceed available funding, applications will be ranked competitively, with these rankings to be used as the basis of recommendations for funding. These recommendations will be presented to the State Forester for final approval.

### **Payment Process**

Final payment for funds awarded under a grant will be made when each of the following has been met:

- the project has been completed,
- a final report has been received and approved by DEEP, and
- the grant expenditures have been matched, through additional expenditure, in-kind services or some combination of both.

In the case of a tree-planting project, a representative of DEEP Forestry must also inspect the planting before the project will be considered complete.

The final report is expected to include a brief summary of the project, a table of project expenditures and donated in-kind services, and copies of all invoices and checks associated with the project. Any additional descriptive materials will also be welcome.

If a project is completed prior to December 15, 2013, requests for reimbursement may be submitted early.

In cases where there is need, arrangements for partial payment of the grant prior to completion of the project may be made. In most cases, this will require proof of the expenditures that have occurred. It will also require demonstrations of the contributions that match the expenditures. Arrangements for such partial reimbursements must be made prior to initiation of the grant.

No reimbursements will be made for any expenditures incurred prior to the grant having been fully executed and the paperwork for the grant being finalized.

### **Details Regarding the America the Beautiful Grants**

In 2010, Connecticut adopted its Forest Action Plan as a guidance document for all forest conservation partners in the state, including the DEEP Division of Forestry. Urban forestry is one of the disciplines discussed within this Forest Action Plan. The plan itself is entitled “Connecticut’s Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy” and can be viewed on the DEEP Forestry web site: [www.ct.gov/deep/forestry](http://www.ct.gov/deep/forestry). (The link is in the top right corner). Potential grant applicants are specifically directed to page 165, which includes the “vision statement” for urban forestry, and pages 182-185, on which the Division of Forestry’s

priorities for urban forestry are outlined. Applicants are encouraged to consider this vision and these priorities in developing their application.

In addition, DEEP has established the following five categories of ATB grants:

- Inner City Urban Forestry Grant
- Municipal Urban Forestry Planning and Maintenance
- The Management of Urban Forest Woodlands
- The Planting or Maintenance of Legacy Trees
- Other, General Urban Forestry Projects

### **Descriptions of the Individual Categories**

***Inner City Urban Forestry Grant:*** The purpose of this category of the ATB Grant Program is to strengthen urban forestry in Connecticut's inner city communities. The specific targets for these grants are the older neighborhoods in Connecticut's cities. Grants may be used for tree planting, tree maintenance, urban forestry planning, educational programs that advance urban forestry or other, similar purposes. Favorable consideration will be given to applications that seek to enhance local involvement in urban forestry. At the conclusion of the Inner City Grant, there must be a definable accomplishment that has resulted from grant activities.

***Municipal Urban Forestry Planning and Maintenance:*** The purpose of this grant category is to encourage municipalities to better plan the management and maintenance of their urban forests, so that maintenance of public trees in these municipalities will be increased. Projects such as inventories and assessments, the initiation or development of specific maintenance programs such as street tree pruning, the development of a comprehensive municipal forest plan or other, similar projects will be considered under this category. Projects that promote the use of trees as green infrastructure, such as in reducing storm water runoff, air pollution reduction or the mitigation of the urban island effect, will also be considered in this category, as will those that make use of the US Forest Service i-Tree tools (please see [www.itreetools.org](http://www.itreetools.org)) or that assess the state of the urban tree canopy cover (UTC). Non-profit organizations may apply through this category, but they must demonstrate that they have the cooperation of the municipality involved and that the project will directly benefit the municipality's tree management program.

***The Management of Urban Forest Woodlands:*** Many urban woodlands, such as those found in public parks, suffer from extensive neglect and abuse. The purpose of this grant category is to assist municipalities and others in addressing the problems found all-too-commonly in these woodlands. In this category, projects such as urban woodland cleanup and restoration, control of invasive plants, and the protection of woodlands from abuses such as littering or vandalism will be considered. Projects that encourage the use of these lands in a manner compatible with their remaining as woodlands are welcome provided there is an urban forestry benefit in this use (e.g., forestry education). Funds may be used for the development of a plan that will establish a maintenance and management program on these woodlands. However, grants cannot be used to fund revenue-producing activities, such as forest harvesting. If an established management plan already exists or a planning component is included in the proposed project, this will be viewed favorably in the review of a grant application.

***The Planting or Maintenance of Legacy Trees:*** The purpose of this category is to encourage the planting of new and the maintenance of existing large shade trees in our cities and towns. Applications will only be considered for projects involving trees on public property or for which a clear plan is included that creates responsibility for the establishment and early care of these trees. Tree species to be planted must have the potential to grow into large shade trees. A description of how these trees will be maintained and managed over the long-term must be included in the grant application.

Maintenance work on existing young trees may be included in this category. Over the past several years, communities have done an excellent job in planting those trees that will be the canopy trees of the future urban forest. Proper pruning of these trees while young is one of the most effective steps an urban forest manager can do to help ensure that these trees are well formed and structural strong as they become large. Proposals to maintain young trees so that they become stronger and healthier mature trees are encouraged.

***Other, General Urban Forestry Projects:*** Connecticut communities have a long tradition of making use of the America the Beautiful Grant Program for some very creative and highly beneficial local projects. Through this category, it is hoped that this tradition will continue. Projects under this category may include the planting of trees for public benefit; workforce development through training efforts; education of the public with regards to exotic pests or diseases that affect trees; the production of booklets, pamphlets or flyers; increases in municipality capacity through the purchase of inventory software or GIS and computer hardware; the hiring of professionals for urban forestry planning; and so on. Projects must comply with the general guidelines of the America the Beautiful program.

When applying for an ATB grant, it is important that the applicant identify into which of these five categories the grant application falls.

### **Final Notes**

In making their final decisions, reviewers will consider the benefits and feasibility of a potential project. They will also give additional consideration as to whether a project is innovative and the extent to which it engages or educates others in the community.

If the project results in a publication or a press release, this publication or press release shall reference the role that USDA Forest Service funding and DEEP Forestry assistance has played in this project. Similarly, the USDA Forest Service and DEEP Forestry shall be mentioned on any markers put in place in association with a project.

The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer, providing programs and services in a fair and impartial manner. In conformance with the Americans with Disability Act, DEEP makes every effort to provide equally effective services for persons with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities needing auxiliary aids or services or who wish more information by voice or TTY/TDD may call (860) 424-3000.

Projects that discriminate with regards to race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex or disability will not be funded through the Urban Forestry Grants program.

The staff of DEEP Forestry is committed to assisting communities and groups throughout Connecticut with regards to their efforts in urban forestry, whether or not those groups or communities apply for or receive an ATB grant. Please feel free to contact the DEEP urban forestry staff if you have any questions or comments.

### **Contact Information**

To learn more the ATB grants or the urban forestry program in the State of Connecticut, please contact:

Chris Donnelly  
Urban Forestry Coordinator  
DEEP Forestry  
79 Elm Street  
Hartford, CT 06106  
(860) 424-3178  
[chris.donnelly@ct.gov](mailto:chris.donnelly@ct.gov)

Please also visit the DEEP Forestry web site at: [www.ct.gov/deep/forestry](http://www.ct.gov/deep/forestry).

## DEEP Invasive Species Policy

It is now the policy of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to discourage the planting of species that are non-native and invasive, so that the spread of these aggressive plants can be better controlled. Consistent with this policy, the Division of Forestry is not able to provide funding for the planting of those tree and shrub species which the Department has determined to be non-native, invasive plants. Included on the list of non-native, invasive tree species compiled by DEEP are the following:

<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>
<i>Acer ginnala</i>	amur maple
<i>Acer platanoides</i>	Norway maple (including varieties)
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	sycamore maple
<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>	tree-of-heaven
<i>Frangula alnus</i>	European buckthorn
<i>Paulownia tomentosa</i>	princess tree / empress tree
<i>Populus alba</i>	white poplar
<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>	buckthorn
<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	black locust

In addition, there are several commonly planted shrubs on the invasive species list. Among the shrubs listed are Japanese barberry and several of the honeysuckles. A complete copy of this list and of DEEP's policy concerning non-native, invasive exotics is available from the Department.

## Emerald Ash Borer and Asian Longhorned Beetle Policy

DEEP Forestry also recognizes that the state's trees are under threat of attack by invasive exotic insects and diseases. Past examples of such attacks include the gypsy moth (epidemic through most of the state in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century), the chestnut blight and the hemlock woolly adelgid.

Two of the known, potentially invasive, exotic insects of great concern to Connecticut are the emerald ash borer and the Asian longhorned beetle. At the time of the release of this Request for Proposals, neither insect has been found in Connecticut. However, the emerald ash borer is in outbreak status some 25 miles west of the state's northwest border, while the Asian longhorned beetle is causing widespread damage some 30 miles north of the northeast border of Connecticut. Either insect could easily travel or be carried into the state, potentially leading to their becoming established here.

Through its various programs, DEEP Forestry is actively engaged in efforts to identify the presence of these two insects early on, if they are in the state, and reduce their impact should they be here. To that end, **funds from this urban forestry grant program may not be used for the planting of ash trees.** On the other hand, programs geared towards the maintenance of ash trees or of tree species susceptible to the Asian longhorned beetle are acceptable and may be funded.

**At the present time, DEEP Forestry will allow funding to be used for the planting of tree species susceptible to the Asian longhorned beetle.** This may change if this insect is found in the state. That decision will depend upon such factors as where the insect has been found and how it is likely to spread. Should this beetle be found here, approved tree planting projects in the vicinity of an Asian longhorned beetle infestation may need to be modified as to the choice of species to be planted.

## **ATB Grant Application Review Criteria**

1. Is the applicant an incorporated non-profit organization, a municipality and other unit of local government? Is it qualified to receive an ATB grant?
2. Will the proposed project produce urban forestry results that are in accordance with those outlined in this document and also with respect to Connecticut's [Forest Action Plan](#)?
3. Is the project practical within the time period specified, finances requested and other resources available?
4. Within the application, is the description of the project clear – particular with regards to project activity, participants, sources of additional assistance, and budget? Is it clear who has responsibility, and what will be accomplished? Is the budget clearly outlined?
5. Are there aspects of the proposed project that warrant additional consideration? For example:
  - a. Is the project innovative or does it in some way expand the concept of what can be done within urban forestry?
  - b. Does it engage a new or particularly valuable group of people?
  - c. Does it leverage substantial outside resources?
  - d. Will it serve as a model for other groups or communities?
  - e. Will it serve as the basis for important future work in urban forestry?
  - f. Does it have any other, similar features that warrant the attention of the reviewers? (These features must be specified by the reviewer at the time of review.)
6. Does this community or group have a good or a poor track record with respect to previous America the Beautiful grants? An example of a good track record might be the timely completion of a previous grant. An example of a bad track record might include a grant that was not completed, or that was completed but the work was poorly done.
7. Is the group or community applying one that has not previously received an America the Beautiful grant? Additional credit may be given to new applicants to encourage their involvement in urban forestry.
8. Is this grant application inclusive? Are members of the community, governmental authorities, individuals and groups who might gain educational benefits from the project, and others as appropriate, considered in the scope of this grant application?
9. If the applicant is a municipality, does the municipality have an urban forestry plan or is it in the process of developing an urban forestry plan? Does the proposed project support this urban forestry plan?

This listing of review criteria is intended to be descriptive of the review process. It is included to assist grant applicants in the submission of complete and well thought-out grant applications. Please feel free to contact DEEP's Urban Forestry Coordinator with any questions, including requests for assistance. Contact information is listed on page 5.

Recommended Budget Sheet Format

**Tree Planting Grants**

*please replace text and fill in boxes as appropriate*

<b>Expenditures: Tree Planting Costs (include actual expenditures only)</b>			<b>Is this a Direct Expense against the Grant or a Match for the Direct Expenses?</b>	
Species 1	Number of Trees	Cost per Tree	Direct Expense or Match	Total cost (cost per tree x number of trees)
Species 2	Number of Trees	Cost per Tree	Direct Expense or Match	Total cost (cost per tree x number of trees)
Species 3	Number of Trees	Cost per Tree	Direct Expense or Match	Total cost (cost per tree x number of trees)
Species 4	Number of Trees	Cost per Tree	Direct Expense or Match	Total cost (cost per tree x number of trees)
<b>Additional Tree Planting Costs</b>				
Labor Costs Described			Direct Expense or Match	Total Labor Cost
Equipment Costs Described			Direct Expense or Match	Total Equipment Cost
Supplies Needed Described			Direct Expense or Match	Total Supplies
Other Costs Described			Direct Expense or Match	Total Other Costs
<b>Total Tree Planting Costs</b>				<b>Total of Above</b>

<b>Non-Cash Match to the Direct Costs</b>				
Volunteer Hours	Number of Hours	Rate per Hour		Total Match Donated (volunteer time)
Equipment Use Donated (describe)	Number of Hours	Rate per Hour		Total Match Donated (equipment time)
Supplies Donated (describe)				Value of Donation
Other (describe)				Value of Donation
<b>Total of Match</b>				<b>Total of Above</b>

**Total Amount Requested through the Grant:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Value of Match (include expenditures and non-cash match):** \_\_\_\_\_

*This budget sheet is intended as a guideline. Please feel free to modify this budget sheet for projects that either do not include tree planting or include components beyond tree planting.*



Connecticut Department of  
**ENERGY &  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION**

## APPLICATION FORM

### DEEP Urban Forestry Grant Program

This form is to be returned with a written proposal of no more than 5 pages.  
Under which Project Category does this proposal fall? (see listing on page 4)

Does your community have an urban forestry plan?  
Can this project be considered as part of that plan?

Project Title:

Project Location (Municipality):

Name of Applicant:

Federal ID #:

Applicant's Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Contact Person:

Phone # and FAX #:

Contact Person's Title:

e-mail:

Brief Description of Project:

Total Amount of the Project:  
(Include Grant Request plus Match)

Grant Funds Requested:

Local Cash Match to Be Provided:

Value of In-Kind Match To Be Provided:

Project Start Date:

Project Ending Date:

Please give the names of additional groups (if any) to be involved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name and Title of Authorized Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Upon approval of the grant application, grantees must sign a Personal Services Agreement.  
Return completed applications to: DEEP Division of Forestry, 79 Elm St., Hartford, CT 06106-5127.

FAX: 860-424-4070

email: [chris.donnely@ct.gov](mailto:chris.donnely@ct.gov)

**Completed applications must be received by 4:00 pm on Friday, August 10, 2012.**