

## Greenscape Commission Meeting

July 19, 2010, 6:00pm

Fort Harrison State Park

Members present: Brian Clayton, Dave Miller, Lynn Huff, Beth Berg, and Tim Latimer

The Commission met with Pam Louks, Community and Urban Forestry Coordinator, for a presentation of data from Beech Grove's Sample Urban Statewide Inventory (SUSI). The presentation was very interesting and informative. Street trees provide substantial and measurable benefits to Indiana's communities. Of the environmental benefits, mitigating stormwater runoff encompasses 31% of the total benefit; energy conservation contributes 12% of the total benefit; 4% of the benefit is from air quality improvements; and 1% of the benefit is from carbon dioxide sequestration. The less tangible, yet equally significant, benefits providing increased property values, aesthetics, quality of life, and community pride contribute 52% of the total annual benefits. One surprising bit of information is that Silver Maples are currently one of our most beneficial trees, due to their size and number. They should be saved whenever possible.

In 2008, 62 street segments were sampled for existing street trees and with that information an estimate for the total number of public trees, their species, and age was calculated. The estimated total was higher than the actual total by about 500 trees. This is likely due to the tree population in segments sampled and because a significant number of streets in the city do not have planting strips large enough to support even small trees.

Briefly, the Beech Grove SUSI data found that:

- The age structure is unevenly balanced with more young trees and less large/established trees. This means there are not many large maturing species to provide needed benefits now, but there will be in the future as the younger large maturing species mature.
- Of the trees inventoried, 232 need removed; 1,122 need their crowns cleaned and/or raised; 342 need staking and training; 159 are incompatible species with utility line conflicts; and 12 need no apparent work. Due to the costs of required maintenance, the city currently has a negative benefit for every dollar invested for street tree management. This is a problem many communities are facing and that will change as work is completed and more beneficial trees are planted.
- The community has 6.75% canopy cover over streets and sidewalks. This canopy cover generates the benefit the trees provide.
- Estimated replacement value of this urban forest is: \$1,526,005.78, annual ecosystem service benefit is \$84,606, and the city reported spending for tree management of \$647,220.00.

Recommendations for Beech Grove are:

- For the next few years, Make a concentrated effort not to plant *Acer* (Sugar, Black, Norway, and Silver Maple). These are the predominate species in our urban forest and it is important to plant trees in the large category as these are, but to vary genus and species.
- A large part of the city tree budget is for maintenance. It may be time to begin moving some of those dollars to planting large maturing species where space along streets permit. Take care of the needs of the existing trees for optimum health and benefits.
- The sample found that Callery Pear and Crabapple have been planted in spaces that may have been able to accommodate large maturing species. It is important to plant as many large growing trees as space permits in order to increase tree canopy to generate the ecological services trees provide.

The next meeting of the commission will be Monday, August 16, 6:00pm at the Hornet Park Community

Center.

Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Berg, Greenscape Commission Secretary