

## DEC Accepting Applications for Urban Forestry Projects

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Applications are now being accepted by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) for approximately \$900,000 to support urban forestry projects across the state, Commissioner Pete Grannis announced today. DEC is seeking proposals for Urban and Community Forestry projects that will enhance New York's urban landscapes with healthy trees and provide environmental, health, and economic benefits.

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"Communities benefit greatly from new tree plantings and other healthy forest initiatives," Commissioner Grannis said. "The new round of DEC grants is another opportunity to take part in this success and help further improve the environment and quality of life in urban centers."

Trees, parks, and other green spaces offer numerous benefits in cities and other populated areas, such as creating wildlife habitat, aiding in brownfield restoration, increasing property values, and improving the quality of life residents and visitors. Trees also help address a number of negative impacts in urban areas including water and air pollution, higher local temperatures caused by the "heat island effect", energy use, stormwater run-off, and noise.

Grants will be available to municipalities, public benefit corporations, public authorities, school districts and not-for-profit organizations that have a public ownership interest in the property or are acting on behalf of a public property owner. Grants will range from \$2,500 to \$75,000, depending on municipal population, with a 50/50 match requirement. Eligible projects include tree inventories and management plans, tree and shrub planting and maintenance, and green infrastructure projects including green roofs and rain gardens. Additionally, \$1,000 Quick Start Arbor Day grants - with no match requirement - will be available to help communities generate support for a tree program with an Arbor Day celebration. Funds are made available from the state's Environmental Protection Fund and will be managed and allocated by DEC.

The grant program complements DEC's ongoing initiatives to address the issues of climate change, environmental degradation, environmental justice, and urban sprawl.

Grant proposals should discuss the scope of work to be done, and how the project will provide environmental, economic, and/or social benefits in the community. In selecting sites, appropriate consideration should be given to under-served neighborhoods, as well as targeting local environmental issues. Applicants are encouraged to form regional partnerships and submit proposals that help to implement watershed protection and Smart Growth initiatives with green solutions.

DEC foresters are available to provide applicants with technical assistance (see contact information below). DEC staff will review the completed grant applications and choose recipients based on established rating criteria. Proposals will be evaluated on their cost effectiveness, projected benefits, use of recommended standards in implementation, community outreach, education, and support, and regional impact.

The grant application deadline is the close of business on June 4, 2008. Applications may be obtained on the DEC website: [www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5285.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5285.html) or by mail to Urban Forestry, Division of Lands and Forests, NYSDEC, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4253, or by phone at (518) 402-9425.

