Urban Resources Initiative:
A University Model for Clinical Urban Community Forestry Training

Caroline (Caro) Scanlan | Urban Resources Initiative | February 18, 2021
Getting Started

Land Acknowledgement
We acknowledge that the Quinnipiac and other Algonquian speaking peoples, have stewarded through generations the lands and waterways of what is now the City of New Haven. We honor and respect the enduring relationship that exists between these peoples and nations and this land.

Mutual Pathways of Learning
- Questions & Feedback at end of presentation
- Get in touch:
  - URI Email: uri@yale.edu
  - Website: uri.yale.edu
Urban Resources Initiative

*Our Mission:* To foster community-based land stewardship, promote environmental education, advance the practice of urban forestry, and provide Yale students with clinical learning opportunities.
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Our History:

- Founded by Dr. Bill Burch (1989)
- Inspired by community forestry models in rural communities overseas
- Putting CBF to work in US cities
- Focus on the human dimensions of urban forestry

Photo Credit: Burch & Grove, 1993
5 Principles of Successful Community Forestry
Outlined by David Gantz (RECOFTC)

• Addressing Community Needs
• Availability of Natural Resources
• Effective Governance & Participation
• Rights and Institutional Setting
• Adaptive Management & Learning
Our vision of community-based stewardship promotes:

- Engaging people in their priorities
- Participation in decision-making
- Mutual pathways of learning
- Capacity-building
- Local employment
- Social cohesion (people & institutions)
- Equitable access to nature
- Healthy urban ecosystems
New Haven is the context for URI’s work

Overall, relatively high UTC…

…however, it is uneven distributed
URI’s Urban & Community Forestry Programs
Engaging residents in the stewardship of their neighborhood greenspaces
Community Greenspace
Volunteer-led Greening & Stewardship Projects (since 1995)

• **Drivers:** Projects led by self-organizing groups of neighborhood volunteers
• **Where:** Streetscapes, public parks, vacant lots, other publicly oriented spaces
• **Role of URI:** Provide technical & material assistance
• **Role of the Resident:** owners, stewards, & the primary beneficiaries of the work
• **Duration of Project:** ongoing support for project at request of residents, for as long as residents are engaged
Community Greenspace
Volunteer-led Greening & Stewardship Projects (since 1995)

Truman Street Community Garden

Fountain Street Traffic Circle
Community Greenspace
Volunteer-led Greening & Stewardship Projects (since 1995)

Cherry Ann Park
GreenSkills
Street Tree Planting & Green Jobs (since 2007)

• **Drivers:** Contract with City of New Haven, request-based model for planting
• **Where:** Public right of way, public parks, public schools, front yards
• **Role of URI:**
  • Outreach to residents & businesses
  • Actively engage with resident to choose location & tree species
  • Supervise paid planting crews
• **Role of the Resident:** request & adopt young tree water tree for 3 years
• **Duration of Project:** monitor young trees, regular communication with adopters, prune at 5 years
GreenSkills
Street Tree Planting & Green Jobs (since 2007)

Printers Lane

Birth Program
Trees not just a resource, but a vehicle
Connection, Investment, Green Jobs, Trust-building, Healing, Celebration
Clinical Training
Preparing the next generation of urban & community foresters

• Scanlan C, Doroski D, Murphy-Dunning C, Ashton M. 2021. Urban Resources Initiative: A University Model for Clinical Urban Forestry Education

• Research conducted in 2017-2018

• Assessing URI intern experience with a focus on skills and competencies
Role of the Intern

Responsibility & training differ across our programs

**Community Greenspace**
- Coordinator of community-led projects
- Portfolio of 6-8 groups per summer
- Provides technical expertise, materials, and tools
- Full-time for summer

**GreenSkills**
- Member of tree planting team
- Technical and logistical support
- Work is high-volume and fast-paced
- One shift per week during fall & spring seasons
- Some supervise youth crews
- Other responsibilities may include: inventory, outreach, communication with requesters, winter tree pruning
Key finding: The primary skill that interns gain is how to engage with local communities.

"I learned] the importance of walking the street, and being on the ground in the community, learning who local leaders are, and meeting with them."

- Greenspace Intern (2006)
Key finding ②: Interns gained professional skills that have proved valuable in a wide range of careers

The professional skills (time management, communication, stress management, adaptability, etc.) I learned/enhanced through URI have stuck with me ever since and has given me an upper hand at work today.

- Greenspace / GreenSkills Intern (2014)
Key finding: URI’s relationships with neighborhood residents & community stakeholders is a key element of the program’s success

URI also taught me the value of incremental change aggregated over time.

- Greenspace Intern (2006)
Key finding 4: Additional anti-racism and social justice training would improve URI’s programs

“We dealt with [racism in marginalized communities] on our own and learned as we were in the field, but a more direct and considered approach to dealing with issues of [Environmental Justice] would have been very helpful!

- Greenspace Intern (2008)
Urban Community Forestry Clinical Training - Implications for Policy and Practice

1. Embrace a focus on social dimensions
   – putting the *community* in “Urban and Community Forestry”

2. Different internships offer **unique learning outcomes**
   – design your program based on the building of skills over time

3. Develop strong, long-lasting **stakeholder relationships**
   – it takes time, but it’s worth it
Thank you!

Questions?

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