

# Five Year Plan for Georgia’s Urban & Community Forest 2018-2022

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## Introduction

### Where have we been and why are we here?

A requirement to have a *Five-Year Plan for Georgia’s Urban and Community Forest* was established in the 1990 Farm Bill. Since that time Georgia has developed 4 five-year plans spanning more than 20 years: 1995 – 1999, 2000 – 2004, 2007 – 2011, and 2013– 2017. In 2010, the Georgia Forestry Commission also developed a *Forest Action Plan* that includes urban and community forestry. This plan now meets the requirements of the Farm Bill. However, Georgia’s Urban and Community Forest community are committed to creating a new five year plan because it:

- Creates shared vision, goals, and strategies for organization, agencies, and individuals throughout the state, which allows for greater impact, scalability, and leverage of resources;
- Allows for “one voice” when talking with agency administrators, legislators, and elected leaders to build capacity and diversify funding for Urban and Community Forestry;
- Aligns partners by setting priorities that allow all organizations to accomplish their missions and achieve organizational measures of success;
- Guides the strategic direction of the Georgia Forestry Commission Sustainable Community Forestry Program and Georgia Urban Forest Council, which impact all communities in GA;
- Organizes accomplishments and narratives for annual report to the USDA Forest Service and the new administration, which improves likelihood for federal funding in following years.

The 2018 – 2022 five-year plan will build on the accomplishments of past plans while working within the context of today. Context, vision, and direction were set by a board, diverse group of organizations with deep and rich experience in urban and community forestry, including local, state, and federal government agencies, non-profits, and commercial businesses. Strategic planning meetings were held in Macon, GA on September 27 and November 28, 2017. Outcomes of the meetings are presented in this plan.

### **Where are we now?**

As the 2013-2017 plan comes to a close, all of the goals and objectives defined in the plan were accomplished through partnership among organizations throughout Georgia. However, since the 2013 – 2017 plan was implemented, the context and environment influencing urban and community forestry has shifted and our vision and goals needed to be redefined. Partners identified cultural shifts that influenced their vision, objectives and strategies for the 2018 – 2022 plan. Shifts include:

#### *Changing Audience*

- Strong and opposing positions/perspectives
- Increasingly diverse population
- Increasingly urban/suburban population
- Shifting Recreation Demands
- Increasingly disconnected with/afraid of nature
- More skeptical mindsets
- More rigid curriculum standards
- Decreasing interest in urban forestry career path

#### *Political Climate*

- More polarized political landscape
- Shifting political focus
- Greater need for local political commitment to urban forestry
- Increased competition for government budget
- Increased need to maximize the tax base

#### *Increasing storms and Intensity*

- Increasing public health concerns with increased flooding
- Increasing storm intensity/need for green infrastructure
- Growing populations more effected by weather

#### *Social Media*

- Changing media attention and perception of urban forestry
- Increasingly diverse social media platforms
- Inability to keep up with the emerging social media platforms to tell our story
- Increasing use of social media as main mode of communication
- Decreasing attention spans because of social media

### *Urbanization/Development*

- Increased transit/transportation pressure
- Increasing pace of development
- Increasing pace of gentrification

### *Access to Data*

- Science has greater impact than personal bias
- Expanded partnerships leading to increased data
- Increasing ability to adapt to changes
- More identifiable metrics to quantify landscape scale impacts
- More influence of data on decision making

### *Demand for Green Infrastructure*

- More fully informed and connected economy
- Increased awareness of green infrastructure
- Increased demand for smaller lots/smaller homes/multi-family units
- More green infrastructure certification programs
- Increased interest in smart growth since the recession
- New rainfall retention requirements for new developments

## **Where do we want to be?**

The vision and values of the five-year plan stem from and build upon the vision, goals, and objectives laid out in the National Ten-Year Urban Forestry Action Plan, Georgia Forest Action Plan, and National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy.

### *Vision*

Empowered with the knowledge of the services provided by urban forests that improve their quality of life, citizens, policy-makers and managers actively and collaboratively participate in creating resilient urban ecosystems for all of Georgia's communities.

### *Values*

- Diversity, equity, and inclusion are critical components of urban and community forestry.
- The most effective and impactful urban and community forest programs create multiple benefits by crossing programmatic areas.

## **Goals and Objectives of the Strategic Plan**

The following charts present the four strategic goals and their corresponding objectives, actions, resources needed, indicators of success, timeframe and responsible parties, as developed by participants in the two-day planning retreats mentioned above.

**STRATEGIC GOAL 1: Improved urban and community forest management, maintenance, and stewardship for health, resiliency and usability.**

	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Resources Needed</b>	<b>Indicators of Success/Evaluation</b>	<b>Time frame</b>	<b>Responsible Persons/Organization</b>
1	Introduce the arboricultural profession to technical colleges through guest lectures or urban forestry classes per 2-year degree program.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify target schools and courses.</li> <li>2. Identify guest lecturers statewide.</li> <li>3. Develop presentation outline.</li> <li>4. Schedule and conduct lectures.</li> </ol>	Tech school curriculum contacts, 12 guest lecturers, tech school schedule	A contact for every appropriate course, list of 12 guest lecturers, template presentation outline, 50% of tech schools have a speaker scheduled in 2018, positive student feedback on evaluation form.	2018	Davis Shostak Rusty Lee Tim Thoms
2	Promote GUFC and GAA workshops and training opportunities (for arborists and land managers) outside of the current status quo	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify and list land managers and arborists</li> <li>2. Assemble schedule, promote and present workshops.</li> <li>3. Invite parallel disciplines (traditional forester, DNR, USFS)</li> </ol>	Identification of interdisciplinary contacts and parallel training opportunities.	Tasks completed and strong attendance numbers by parallel disciplines.	March through Sept., 2019. Workshops in fall/winter 2020.	GUFC GAA All other
3	Develop a course for entry level workers on general tree care and forestry as a	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify lead entity.</li> <li>2. Develop oversight committee to structure curriculum</li> </ol>	Course proposal, university commitment, existing program examples,	University commitment to host the course highly developed prototype curriculum	Identify lead by June 2022.	GAA GFC UGA ABAC Tech Schools TCSG SAF

	trade and profession. Hold one 6-week long course by 2022.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Advertise and recruit students.</li> <li>4. Conduct course.</li> </ol>	financial requirements, educational consultant, channels to reach students, strong advertisement, facilities, funding, staff, teaching materials			Urban Ag TCIA ISA GGIA UGA
4	Speak at Georgia Municipal Association and Association of County Commissioners of Georgia conferences annually.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determine speaker from GUFC/GFC.</li> <li>2. Register to attend/exhibit.</li> </ol>	Volunteer, staff commitment, exhibit materials	Early 2018.	GUFC/GFC	Michael Browning Tim Thoms
5	Develop a dangerous tree removal fund of \$20 million by 2018 for people who cannot afford it.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Study program in Charlotte, NC</li> <li>2. Form committee</li> <li>3. Plan</li> <li>4. Seek funding</li> </ol>	Staff, better understanding of liability, fundraising		2018 - 2019	GAA GUFC GFC

**STRATEGIC GOAL 2: Partnerships built across diverse sectors to leverage community resources.**

	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Resources Needed</b>	<b>Indicators of Success/Evaluation</b>	<b>Time frame</b>	<b>Responsible Persons/Organization</b>
1	Establish regional tree board meetings on an annual basis within Georgia's twelve Regional Commission areas.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Start in conjunction with GUFC quarterly programs and annual conference.</li> <li>2. Offer free membership in GUFC for attendance.</li> <li>3. Speak at Georgia Regional Commission meetings and conferences.</li> <li>4. Work with ARC Green Communities Program on Community Forestry Friend program.</li> </ol>	 <p>Meeting dates, locations, free meeting space, sponsor/host, local contacts.</p>	Attendance at local events, evaluation forms	20 18 - 20 22	Georgia Association of Regional Commissions, Tim Thoms, Mike Browning GUFC
2	Recruit 10 corporations / companies outside of the arboricultural profession to join GUFC in the next 5 years.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Invite engineering and landscape architecture firms to join GUFC.</li> <li>2. Develop partnership with Georgia Forestry Foundation.</li> <li>3. Network with organizations such as H2OTECH, Georgia Conservancy, Green Chamber</li> </ol>	<p>Corporate volunteer council partnership, corporate environmental sustainability, corporate responsibility networking events.</p> <p>Leadership, fundraising and board training.</p> <p>Social media training.</p>	10 new members by 2019	2018 - 2019	GFC GUFC

		<p>of the South, Southface, LOHAS.</p> <p>4. Develop a children's community forestry curriculum/display (video-kiosk) for nature centers.</p> <p>5. Communications and media pitching - Pursue NPR and Radio Disney segments.</p>	<p>Public Relations partnerships and funding.</p> <p>More millennial members of GUFC.</p>			
3	Create standards for a "tree corporation campus" by Dec. 2019.	<p>1. Review current Tree Campus USA standards and other green development/developer recognition programs.</p> <p>2. Form a tree corporation campus development committee.</p>	Green corporate campus development success stories, networks with developers.	Ties to GFC Community Forestry Friend Program through advertisement in Atlanta Daybook Network.	2018 - 2019	GFC GUFC
4	Recruit 2 corporate sustainability officers and one elected official with an interest in trees to join the GUFC board by 2020.	<p>1. Organize GUFC quarterly program on corporate sustainability and green building to be held on a green corporate campus with speaker from Sustainable SITES Initiative and other emerging technology.</p> <p>2. Place community</p>	<p>Partnerships/connections with corporations.</p> <p>Leadership, fundraising and board training.</p> <p>Funding to bring in speakers on breakthrough technologies and innovations in community forestry.</p>	Number of new members.	20 20	Seth Hawkins to invite Spencer Fry as guest speaker.

		<p>forestry articles in corporate newsletters, Delta Sky magazine, etc.</p> <p>3. Attend/hold Sustainable Atlanta Roundtable with Southface.</p> <p>4. Continue "Mayors' Symposiums on Trees" and find a mayoral champion.</p> <p>5. Hold trainings on how to reach legislators, social media, communication, fundraising and leadership.</p>				
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**STRATEGIC GOAL 3: An involved public empowered through education about the value of community forests and the necessity for individual awareness and personal responsibility.**

	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Resources Needed</b>	<b>Indicators of Success/Evaluation</b>	<b>Time frame</b>	<b>Responsible Persons/Organization</b>
1	Develop a homeowners' clearinghouse of tree information website branded in 3 years by 2021.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Project outline</li> <li>2. Gather content</li> <li>3. Page development</li> </ol>	Existing personnel and GFC intern, website design professional	Number of hits to site.	May 2018	GFC GUFC GAA
2	Develop a framework for Georgia Tree City USAs to do local community forest educational programs that are informal and hands-on throughout the year.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assemble a kit of citizen involvement programs (samples, suggestions like skip 'n' stroll), social media postings, etc.</li> <li>2. Share with Tree Boards</li> </ol>	Tree board success stories.	More tree board programs beyond Arbor Day. 10% participation annually over 5 years.	June through November, 2018. Projects in 2020.	Keep Georgia Beautiful GFC GUFC Tree board members
3	Create and publish an online directory of existing citizen-led tree advocacy groups to serve as a resource for new advocates by Dec. 2020.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Put out a call for names and contact information.</li> <li>2. Create online platform. Link to Georgia Grove.</li> </ol>	Links to newsletter and websites.	Update annually.	2018	GUFC – Mary Lynne Beckley

4	Link GUFC to 5 municipal and civic organization websites annually.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a list of organizations to approach, contact and link.</li> </ol>	Existing personnel	Maintain and update annually.	July through September, 2018.	GUFC – Mary Lynne Beckley
5	Offer tree publications and fact sheets in English and Spanish on GFC/GUFC/GAA webpages by 2021.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify documents (existing) to convert.</li> <li>2. Find translator through UGA Language Dept.</li> <li>3. Develop/prioritize order of publications.</li> <li>4. Post to websites.</li> </ol>	Existing personnel	Number of downloads and shares. Promoted in partnership with Hispanic nonprofit, or promoted through universities and new community forestry coursework for tech schools.		

**STRATEGIC GOAL 4: Healthy forest ecosystems throughout communities through an emphasis on the green infrastructure approach toward planning, development and policy.**

	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Resources Needed</b>	<b>Indicators of Success/Evaluation</b>	<b>Time frame</b>	<b>Responsible Persons/Organization</b>
1	Develop case studies of communities that incorporate financial incentives for developers by 2022.	1. Research and develop a list of ten communities, a minimum of 3 in Georgia, with balance being southeast communities.	Paid consultant, committee, both.	Identified cities with verified programs that have documented positive results.	End of 2020 into 2022	Tim Thoms, Mike Browning, Dr. Kim Coder, Warnell student, GUFC committee/board Sandy Springs
2	In partnership with other organizations, hold a conference for developers by end of 2020.	1. Team with a larger statewide environmental conference or meeting such as the Georgia Environmental Conference or Georgia Homebuilders Association Annual Conference.	Research statewide conferences (dates, exec. Director contact info, typical items on agenda)	List of conferences with whom we have connected and have given feedback that a tree/environmental presentation would be compatible.	Summer 2018.	GUFC GFC UGA Warnell School Georgia Tech DNR EPD Regional Commissions
3	Develop and give a GI and stormwater presentation to Georgia Municipal Association and Association	1. Develop presentation, identify speaker. 2. Contact GMA and ACCG (draft for review). 3. Revise Final.	Contact information	Annual speaking slots	2019	GFC GUFC

	County Commissioners of Georgia annual conference in 2019 and annually thereafter.					
4	In cooperation with all stakeholders, develop standards and specifications to incorporate vegetation into green infrastructure in Georgia by 2022. Provide website with detail sheets and planning tools.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop or source detail sheets for distribution to builders, designers, planners and developers, legislators.</li> <li>2. Organize, label, brand standards/tools.</li> <li>3. Seek industry feedback from stakeholders.</li> <li>4. Source information on environmental and stormwater benefits of trees and vegetation as addendum to detail/tools lists.</li> <li>5. Develop website with the information.</li> </ol>	Review committee, existing examples of standards to modify/amend (i.e. coastal supplement to green book), CAD draftsman. List of stakeholders interested, in the initiative, web designer, domain name, webmaster	Committee approval, Participation and input from stakeholders, approval of final draft by committee.	Start in 2020 and complete in 2022.	David Shostak Tim Thoms Mike Browning

Establish a tree ordinance advisory committee of GUFC members to provide feedback and input on proposed/revi sed ordinances by 2019.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define parameters of group action.</li> <li>2. Seek volunteers.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol>	GUFC members	Group listed on websites and numbers of contacts made to the group. Number of ordinances reviewed.	January July, December 2018 into January 2019.	GUFC with Joe Burgess
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## Participants

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>City</b>
Kelly Balcarczyk	US Forest Service	Atlanta
Art Morris	Georgia Urban Forest Council	Athens
Bill Haws	Savannah Area	Savannah
Billy Paugh	City of Athens	Athens
Chris Hughes	Agnes Scott College	Decatur
Christine McKay	EPA Green Infrastructure/Water Protection	Atlanta
David Shostak	City of Alpharetta	Alpharetta
Emily Davenport	City Engineering Department	Valdosta
Joan Scales	Georgia Forestry Commission	Athens
Joe Burgess	Georgia Forestry Commission	Marietta
Mario Cambardella	Mayor's Office of Resiliency	Atlanta
Mark McClellan	Georgia Forestry Commission	Darien
Mary Hardin Thornton	Keep Rome -Floyd Beautiful	Rome
Mary Lynne Beckley	Georgia Urban Forest Council	Stone Mountain
Michael Browning	City of Atlanta	Atlanta
Michele Mcintosh-Ross	City of Milton	Milton
Paula Randler	Urban Forestry Regional Specialist	Atlanta
Randell Hunt	City of Macon	Macon
Rusty Lee	Georgia Arborist Association	Atlanta
Seth Hawkins	Georgia Forestry Commission	Athens
Stasia Kelly	Georgia Forestry Commission	Dunwoody
Susan Granbery	Georgia Forestry Commission	Stone Mountain
Tim Thoms	Thoms Trees and Plants	Fayetteville