

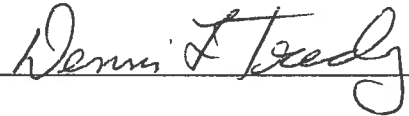


Township of Ocean
County of Ocean, NJ

2013-2018 Community Forestry
Management Plan

Community Forestry Management Plan

Municipal/County Information Form

Municipality	Township of Ocean
County	Ocean
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Organization Name	Township of Ocean
Mayor/County Freeholder's Signature	
Date of Management Plan Submission	December 2012
Time Period Covered in Management Plan	2008-2013
Community Stewardship Incentive Program (CSIP) Practices Identified in Management Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CSIP #1 Training <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CSIP #2 Community Forestry Ordinance Establishment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CSIP #3 Public Education and Awareness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CSIP #4 Arbor Day <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CSIP #5 Tree Inventory <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CSIP #6 Hazard Tree Assessment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CSIP #7 Storm Damage Assessment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CSIP #8 Tree Maintenance and Removals <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CSIP #9 Insect and Disease Management <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CSIP #10 Wildfire Protection <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CSIP #11 Tree Planting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CSIP #12 Tree Recycling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CSIP #13 Sidewalk Maintenance Program <input type="checkbox"/> CSIP #14 Storm Water Management <input type="checkbox"/> CSIP #15 Other

**Official Use Only
Certification**

The above named municipality/county has made formal application to the New Jersey Forest Service. I am pleased to advise you that after our review, the NJ Forest Service has concluded that this plan meets the standards set forth by the State and the NJ Community Forestry Council and is approved for the period covered.

Signed _____

State Forester

Approved date _____

Prepared for:

Township of Ocean Mayor & Council

This plan was prepared in accordance with the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act, P.L. 1996, Chapter 135.

First Plan: 2002-2007

Second Plan: 2008-2012

Third Plan: 2013-2018

Plan Updated by:



Planning
Landscape Architecture
Streetscape Design
Park Planning & Design
Planning Board Consultation
Economic Redevelopment

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November 2012

Table of Contents

Introduction..... 1

 MISSION STATEMENT 1

 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES 1

 LIABILITY STATEMENT..... 2

Community Overview 3

 5-YEARS OF PROGRESS..... 3

 BENEFIT STATEMENT: 4

 MASTER PLAN LINK: 4

Community Forestry Program Administration..... 5

Community Map..... 5

Training Plan 5

 REQUIRED TRAINING: 5

Public Education, Awareness and Outreach..... 6

 TREE CITY, USA:..... 6

 ARBOR DAY: 6

 PROJECT LEARNING TREE (PLT):..... 6

 SHADE TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (STAC):..... 7

 PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM: 7

 BIG TREES:..... 7

 FOREST STEWARDSHIP ON PUBLIC OWNED LANDS:..... 7

Statement of Tree Budget..... 7

Statement of Plan Implementation 8

 TREE INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT:..... 8

 TREE HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT: 8

 TREE MAINTENANCE AND CARE: 8

 TREE PLANTING:..... 9

 ANNUAL SCHEDULE OF WORK – 2013 THROUGH 2018: 9

Community Stewardship Incentive Program (CSIP)..... 9

Introduction

This is Ocean Township's 3rd Community Forestry Management Plan for the years 2013-2018 (5-years), which serves as an update of the prior plans. This plan was prepared per "Guidelines for a Subsequent Community Forestry Management Plan" as required under the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act, P.L. 1996, Chapter 135. The emphasis for this Township remains the basic elements of tree planting, tree maintenance and the safety of the community forest along streets, parks, municipal complexes and school property.

Approval of this plan by the State Forester, upon favorable recommendation from the Community Forestry Council, will provide continued liability protection to the Township under the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Act and will render the Township eligible to apply for grants from the New Jersey Forest Service to help implement the plan.

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement remains unchanged: To insure the health, safety, and sustain ability of Ocean Township's forest and shade trees for the economic, aesthetic, and environmental benefits provided to residents and visitors.

Goals and Objectives

The goals of the plan remain unchanged. The objectives of each goal have been evaluated to determine continued validity, amendment, emphasis, exclusion or completion prior to inclusion in this plan. The following format includes the original goal statement, on-going or incomplete objectives from the prior plans.

Goal #1:

To increase the administrative capacity, awareness, knowledge, appreciation and support for community trees and forests.

Ongoing Objectives:

- To re-apply for recognition as a Tree City, USA annually. (Ocean Township was previously awarded Tree City, USA status during the first plan period.)
- To support an annual Arbor Day program involving the local school.
- To continue Project Learning Tree (PLT) curriculum with the local school administration and teachers.
- To continue visiting the current shade tree ordinances and current site plan requirements for possible amendment.
- To implement forest management on Township lands as an example for local forestland owners.
- To supply pamphlets at the municipal building on new tree care for homeowners including such topics as mulching, watering, pruning, insect and disease identification and backyard composting.
- To hold scheduled meetings of the Shade Tree Advisory Committee (STAC) and take minutes.
- To participate in Founder's Day celebrations by distributing Crape myrtle seedlings – the Township "tree" -- and to distribute fliers on tree-related advice.

- To maintain the appointment of a "Tree Conservation Officer" to be responsible for proper application of the Township tree code and site plan requirements.

Goal #2:

To continue to plant trees to replace those lost and to increase species diversity and success of new plantings.

Ongoing objectives:

- Install trees per the No Net Loss Planting Plan as funds become available.

Goal #3:

To increase public safety and aesthetics by scheduling maintenance and the reduction of hazardous trees.

Ongoing:

- To continue the existing hazard tree identification procedure by the local police, parks department, and public works employees.
- To conduct an inventory and assessment of trees needing corrective pruning or removal.
- To develop a comprehensive hazard tree removal and maintenance plan based on priorities supported by the inventory data.
- To assess trees for insect and disease problems.

Goal #4:

To train and educate elected officials, volunteer members of the Shade Tree Advisory Committee, Department of Public Works and Parks Department employees in community forestry technical and administrative topics.

Ongoing Objectives:

- To attend the New Jersey Shade Tree Federation Conference on an annual basis.
- To maintain sufficient continuing education units (minimum 8 CEU's per year).
- To maintain membership in the New Jersey Shade Tree Federation.
- To focus on training for identifying hazardous tree conditions and remedial actions.
- To provide information to the public regarding care of trees such as watering, mulching, stake removal and elevation.

Liability Statement

Trees in the Township of Ocean are dominant in the landscape and create a pleasing environment for living, work, and play. Although street trees are an asset to the community, it is inevitable that they mature and require care, maintenance and eventually replacement. Care and maintenance, in addition to planting "the right tree in the right place," can help ensure community trees not only contribute to the environmental and economic vitality of the area, but also reduce the potential hazards to public safety. The Township of Ocean must work within a reasonable budget that may not be able to meet each and every need of the community forest immediately. Therefore, it is the intent of this plan to focus available resources on the greatest need and

outline a step by step action plan to achieve a healthy forest with commensurate reduced risks to public safety.

The Township of Ocean believes, by taking the logical steps outlined in the plan, it will garner public support for plan implementation and demonstrate long-term benefits to the environment and public safety. The Township also wants to become more pro-active in the management and care of its trees. Through inventory and hazard assessment, the Township will initiate corrective action by the public works department, contracted professionals, the parks department, or the county prior to structural tree failure and other hazardous tree-related conditions. It is acknowledged that not all hazardous conditions will be predicted, however, good maintenance and care will reduce the probability of tree failures. The Township also wants to increase homeowner and school children's awareness, appreciation, and knowledge of trees to enable them to contribute well-informed and meaningful efforts towards the health and sustainability of the Township of Ocean's trees. The Township will continue its efforts to have "the right tree planted in the right place" in established and new developments to insure against long-term problems. Following this Community Forestry Management Plan will demonstrate that the Township of Ocean is devoting reasonable levels of resources in a planned manner to reduce the number of tree related accidents, and thereby, reduce its exposure to liabilities and increase public safety.

Community Overview

5-Years of Progress

Achievements during the 2007-2012 plan period included:

1. Attended N.J. Shade Tree Federation conferences.
2. Obtained CEU's of continuing education.
3. Celebrated Annual Arbor Day at schools.
4. Continued assessment of trees in parks resulting in some removals and pruning.
5. Oversaw planting of ~800 trees in the Greenbriar US Homes development.
6. Continued tree planting in parks.
7. Prepared a No Net Loss Planting Plan.

Problems encountered and new issues discovered as a result of following the previous 5-year plan, and how they were or will be dealt with.

Since the time of the last plan, the State has not funded the Township's No Net Loss Planting Plan. We understand that the funding has been re-instated, however is only \$23,647 whereas \$250,000 was initially promised. The planting plan will either have to be revised or phased.

One lingering challenge is administering this plan, which has been housed in the Department of Public Works. The Director is CORE trained, however lacks time for obtaining CEU's on an annual basis. Continuing education and preparation of the Annual Report should be delegated to a reliable staff member in the department, so knowledge is retained in the Township. Additional volunteers on STAC should continue to be encouraged to receive education.

Until the minimum number of CEU's are obtained and Annual Accomplishment Reports submitted to the Community Forestry Program, the Township will not regain Approved Status.

Four Annual Requirements for Approved Status:

1. A current approved Community Forestry Management Plan is required for Approved Status. A Community Forestry Management Plan covers a five-year period.
2. It is required under the Act that each municipality or county has at least two CORE Trained individuals currently participating in the program, one municipal employee and one community volunteer. An elected official will qualify as either a municipal employee or a community volunteer.
3. Together, at least two individuals representing your municipality or county must accrue a total of eight Continuing Education Units (CEUs) annually. Any individual can attain CEUs on behalf of your municipality/county; they do not have to be CORE trained. CORE Training does not count toward CEU credits.
4. An Annual Accomplishment Report records Community Forestry Management Plan implementation. A complete Annual Accomplishment Report detailing the previous year's accomplishments under the plan, with signed Cover Sheet, must be submitted at the end of each calendar year by February 15th.

The Township lost its Tree City USA certification. Certification requires establishment of a Shade Tree Committee (done), observation of Arbor Day (done) and establishment of a comprehensive tree management budget for annual expenditures at a minimum of \$2 per capita (not done). At 8,332 persons (2010 U.S. Census), this equals \$16,664.

Also, the means to complete an inventory and assessment of the Township's trees has not been available.

Benefit Statement:

The overall benefits to Ocean Township realized by following the Community Forestry Management Plan included:

1. Establishing a strong partnership with the New Jersey Forest Service Community Forestry Program.
2. Participating in training and informational opportunities at the New Jersey Shade Tree Federation conferences.
3. Increased liability protection under the Act.
4. Eligibility to apply for grant funds.
5. Having a pro-active plan to help guide the Township's shade tree program.

Master Plan Link:

The Master Plan and other applicable documents have not been substantially revised since the time of the last plan. The most recent Amended Land Use Plan Element, Circulation Plan Element and Master Plan Reexamination Report for the Township of Ocean prepared by T&M Associates, dated November 21, 2005 states, "In addition to the ERI, Ocean has several planning documents that consider natural resources such as the Municipal Master Plan (1999/2001) and the 2002 Community Forestry Plan 2002-2007, as well as its Open Space and Recreation Plan." Linkages between planning elements is facilitated by persons serving on several committees with associated and sometimes over-lapping interests. All of the planning documents hint at the value of trees by addressing environmentally sensitive land, providing adequate open space and creating a hometown atmosphere. However, as with many master plans, the true value of trees and the requisite care needed to sustain the community forest is yet to be realized.

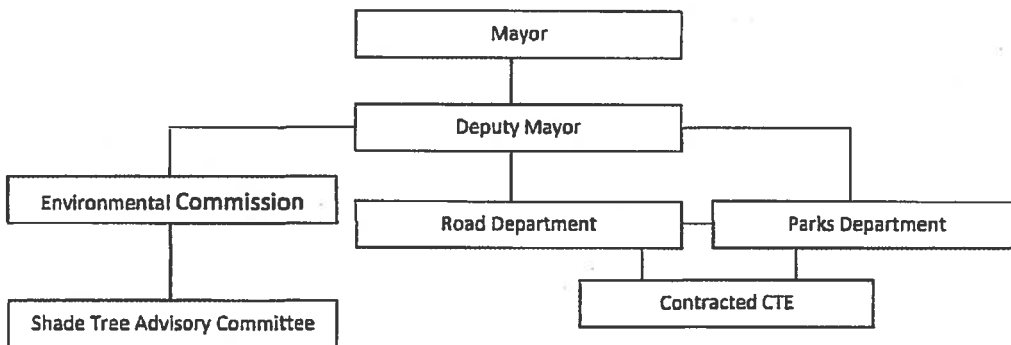
Community Forestry Program Administration

The governing body of Ocean Township is responsible for overseeing the management of the Township's trees. Administration of the plan is housed with the Department of Public Works, under the CORE-trained Director of Public Works. The Director communicates with the Shade Tree Advisory Committee, and CEU's are obtained by STAC volunteers, Public Works and other Township employees.

Currently any resident inquiries or requests regarding trees are channeled through the Township's administrative chain-of-command; eventually assigned to either the Public Works Department or Parks Department for action. The Public Works Department effectively handles downed limbs, leaves and other debris.

The Parks Department is responsible for maintenance, fertilizer and pest control involving trees within Ocean Township. A local tree service is contracted for removals and emergency work beyond the capabilities of the Public Works Department. The Ocean County Road Department cares for trees along county roads and is responsive to Township requests.

Organizational Chart



Community Map

The street map previously submitted is unchanged and up to date.

Training Plan

Some training is required by the State to retain "approved" status for the Township under the Act. Training is usually limited by available time, interest, funding and/or opportunities. Whatever the cost in time or money, the knowledge gained through training will improve program success.

Required Training:

CORE training is required by the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Act for municipalities seeking approved status. The purpose of CORE training is to familiarize persons with the background of community forestry and the shade tree commission, the legal aspects of managing trees, recognition of hazardous tree conditions and state planning and implementation assistance. To gain and retain approved status, a

municipality must have at least two persons CORE trained; one volunteer and one municipal employee (ideally someone from public works responsible for trees).

Ocean Township has 4 CORE-trained persons:

1. Matthew Ambrosio, Director of the Department of Public Works, Ocean Township (2005)
2. James Mitchell, Employee, Ocean Township (2005)
3. Geoffrey Geary, Volunteer (2002)
4. Michael Villanova, Volunteer (2002)

In addition to CORE training, there is a Community Forestry Program continuing education requirement of 8 Continuing Education Units (CEU's) per year. Any individual can obtain these credits for the municipality and credits are not limited solely to those persons whom are CORE trained. These credits can be most easily obtained by attending the Shade Tree Federation Conference each year, usually in the Fall. Rutgers University also offers courses at its New Brunswick campus throughout the year.

Public Education, Awareness and Outreach

Several of the elements of this section were addressed during the prior plan periods with success. Tree City, USA status was achieved, Arbor Day programs were held at the schools, site plan ordinances were revised and the public information program was started. These initiatives have proven the worth of involving and informing the public regarding the Township's tree programs. The following elements represent on-going and renewed emphasis public education, awareness and outreach topics:

Tree City, USA:

The Township of Ocean achieved Tree City, USA status in the past, and may apply again in the future if funds become available. A Community Forestry Budget with at least \$2 per capita devoted to trees is required. At 8,332 persons (2010 U.S. Census), this equals \$16,664.

Arbor Day:

The Arbor Day celebration and program take place on the Township of Ocean's school grounds. A tree is donated to the school for the purpose of planting. A sixth grade teacher organizes the activities for the day's event. A member of the Township Committee, Shade Tree Advisory Committee and Environmental Commission along with the public and sixth grade class participates in the tree planting and presentation. The mayor reads the Arbor Day Proclamation and the other Committee members assist in planting the tree. The students read poems they have written for the celebration and a large cake with a picture of a tree is enjoyed.

The seedlings, which the Township receives from the State nursery, are distributed to the school children with planting and maintenance instructions. A few are kept for the Township to plant throughout the town and in the Township Recreation area where the children can watch them grow.

Project Learning Tree (PLT):

The Township of Ocean acknowledges the importance of helping young students learn more about trees and the environment. One program helping to expand and influence young minds is Project Learning Tree. The PLT program is an international environmental education program that is crafted to meet state and national

education standards. The Township school is encouraged to take students to the New Jersey Forest Resource Education Center in Jackson, New Jersey to learn about trees and to be introduced to the PLT program. Contact the NJFS Forest Resource Education Center at (732)-728-0029.

Shade Tree Advisory Committee (STAC):

The STAC functions as a sub-committee of the Environmental Commission. While the formation of the sub-committee is a good first step, some thought should be given to separating the two entities and working towards a dedicated Shade Tree Commission.

Public Information Program:

The Township plans to utilize its web site, newsletter and take home messages via school children to convey tree related information to residents. Additional information will be distributed at Founder's Day. Information of primary importance is:

- Species selection for trees planted near the bay, native plant landscaping tips and seashore plants.
- Proper care of newly planted and young trees - watering, mulching, staking, pruning for central stem and elevation.

This work could be supported by a CSIP grant to purchase existing brochures available from the NJ Shade Tree Federation, NJ Forest Service, US Forest Service and/or Rutgers Cooperative Extension.

Big Trees:

One way to raise the awareness of youth about trees is to involve them in some way. The STAC will seek out a partnership with the public school to search for and produce a listing of Ocean Township's largest trees. Results of the search will be announced at annual Arbor Day events.

Forest Stewardship on Publicly-Owned Lands:

The Township owns significant acreage of forest lands. Owning land carries stewardship responsibilities which in turn require some planning and informed action over time. Generally, most entities owning land want to know the existing condition and composition of the trees and wildlife present. Then, acknowledging risks and threats, a vision for the desired future condition is prepared. After these steps are taken, a list of action items designed to achieve the desired future condition is made. These long-range plans, Forest Stewardship Plans, recommend such things as fire protection, wildlife habitat improvement, forest improvement thinning, access creation and improvement and insect and disease management. The wooded properties including the Greenbriar US Homes reserved tract and the woodland adjacent to the Waretown Lake tract are good first candidates for stewardship planning. Implementation of Stewardship Plans not only provides a framework for Township lands but serves as an example for private landowners.

Statement of Tree Budget

There is currently no specific budget for tree maintenance, the installation of new trees, required education, and membership in the NJ Shade Tree Federation. Such expenditures come from the Department of Public Works' general budget which is typically \$45,000 per year.

Labor is provided through the Department of Public Works and Parks Departments, and sometimes contracted out to arborists. Volunteers provide the in-kind hours as well by attending STAC meetings, receiving training and participating in events such as Arbor Day at the schools.

Trees are purchased on an as-needed basis for the municipal parks and facilities. Many trees were planted in the last few years in the parks by the Department of Public Works, so they do not anticipate the need for a significant number of new trees in the near future. New trees also could possibly be funded by the No Net Loss Program as it is re-funded by the State.

Statement of Plan Implementation

During the 2013-2018 time period the Township will continue its training, outreach, education and awareness activities as described in earlier sections of this plan. Implementation steps associated with public education and outreach require some action each year.

Tree Inventory and Assessment:

The Township of Ocean does not have a tree inventory. Some initial work has been undertaken to assess dangerous tree conditions in the parks. The following was included in the 1st plan and remains valid:

1. Design of a tree assessment and inventory must take into account the apparent needs of the community forest and be undertaken in a prudent manner.
2. A comprehensive inventory of all roadside trees in the Township is neither needed nor practical. The assessment and inventory should focus on the parks, schools, municipal complexes, and built-up sections of Waretown. Detailed inventory should be undertaken in the areas with sidewalks and where trees have been planted.
3. Areas where residential dwellings have been built in forested areas need only visual inspection for hazardous trees and trees in need of maintenance. Most rural roads need only visual inspection for hazardous trees and maintenance needs.

A CSIP grant application may be submitted to accomplish this work through the use of a consultant working in concert with the Shade Tree Committee, the Superintendent of Parks and the Director of the Department of Public Works.

Tree Hazard Identification and Management:

Tree hazards should be identified through a purposeful and systematic process. Reliance on relatively casual observation by Township employees, police and residents during their every day travels are valuable, but should not be the sole method of identifying tree hazards. Forming a trained "Tree Assessment Unit" of either the Parks and/or Public Works Departments that can be more pro-active is being considered.

Tree Maintenance and Care:

Most of the comments and recommendations in the Tree Maintenance and Care section from the 1st plan remain valid today. The most apparent need for tree maintenance and care in Ocean Township is on smaller trees planted during the past 15+/- years and several larger specimen trees in the parks. Trees in the heavily wooded residential areas grow under forested conditions and need some dead wood removals. Tree maintenance and care needs will be identified in the tree assessment and inventory phase of this plan.

Maintenance and removal priorities will be established and incorporated into the Tree Removal and Maintenance Plan formed from the results of the assessment and inventory.

Formation and training of the new Tree Assessment Unit will facilitate data collection for the Tree Removal and Maintenance Plan and implementation of needed tree maintenance and care.

Tree Planting:

Throughout the past 5-year period trees have been planted in the parks, around the schools and as part of Arbor Day celebrations as outlined earlier in this plan. Trees have also been planted in the Greenbriar development.

The No Net Loss Planting Plan will be implemented as funding is received from the State.

Annual Schedule of Work – 2013 through 2018:

1. Maintain 2 CORE trained persons and accumulate at least 8 continuing education units annually.
2. File Annual Accomplishment Report with State Community Forestry Program at year's end, in order to achieve Approved Status.
3. Maintain membership in N.J. Shade Tree Federation.
4. Schedule and hold agenda-driven STAC meetings. Take minutes.
5. Submit Tree City, USA application annually in December-January if qualifying criteria is met.
6. Systematically assess, record and take action on hazardous tree conditions.
7. Distribute recommended tree planting list.
8. Hold Arbor Day Program with school each year. Arbor Day is 4th Friday in April. Remember to prepare the proclamation early in March each year.
9. Apply for grants as they are announced.
10. Follow-up with PLT curriculum with school.
11. Continue to re-visit tree ordinances and site plan requirements to suggest changes and improvements based upon changing situations.
12. Maintain efforts to complete forest stewardship plans for Township properties.
13. Promote the Township Tree and participate in Founder's Day.

Community Stewardship Incentive Program (CSIP)

The following is a list of possible CSIP grant requests for the Township of Ocean.

CSIP #1, Training: Funds are needed to increase the number of individuals trained as described in the training section. However, training as described and needed occurs throughout the year on a continuing basis. Support for training via CSIP may be impractical. The recommendation is to use Township funds for training purposes.

CSIP #2, Ordinance Establishment: The Township could use funds to create a Shade Tree Commission and adopt an ordinance creating Shade Tree Commission powers. The Township has already created a Shade Tree Advisory Committee and a tree protection ordinance.

CSIP #3, Public Education, Awareness, and Outreach: Funds are needed to support the initiatives listed in the public education, awareness, and outreach section of this plan. The Township of Ocean is especially interested in creating brochures for distribution at the municipal building on homeowner education on tree care. The Township will also be requesting funds in support of their Forest Stewardship Planning initiatives on publicly owned woodlands.

CSIP #4, Arbor Day Activities: No funds will be requested in support of Arbor Day activities.

CSIP #5: Tree Inventory: This is a high priority carry-over task from the prior plans.

CSIP #6: Hazard Tree Assessment: No additional funds will be needed specific to hazard trees. Hazardous trees will be identified by municipal employees during their daily activities. Hazardous trees will also be identified in the assessment and inventory of the Township under CSIP #5.

CSIP #7: Storm Damage Assessment: Currently, trees are addressed in the Emergency Management Plan for the Township. Standing contracts for emergency work are in place with certified tree experts. No additional funds will be requested for this practice during this 5-year planning period.

CSIP #8: Tree Maintenance and Removal: Trees planted during the past 15+/- years are in need of corrective pruning and maintenance. Some larger specimen trees in the parks are also in need of pruning and dead wood removal. Good results here will raise awareness and garner support for the Township's Community Forestry Program. Funds will be needed every year beginning the year after the inventory and assessment is completed. The optimum future condition is a pruning cycle of 7-10 years for every municipal tree.

CSIP #9; Insect and Disease Management: Municipal trees in the Township are relatively free from insects and disease, except for outbreaks of gypsy moth. No funds will be requested for this purpose during this plan period.

CSIP #10; Wildfire Protection: Wildfire protection plans, firewise communities, species selection and fuel reduction programs, fire protection and related outreach.

CSIP #11; Tree Planting: Given the minimal funding for the No Net Loss program, funds may be sought for this item.

CSIP #12; Tree Recycling: Funds will not be sought for this at this time.

CSIP #13; Sidewalk Maintenance Program: Funds will not be sought for this at this time.

CSIP #14; Stormwater Management: Funds will not be sought for this at this time.

SIP #15; Other: Funds will be needed to implement the Forest Stewardship Planning initiative on public lands owned by the Township of Ocean.