

KANSAS

Kansas Forest Service

The Kansas Forest Service Community Forestry Program partners with the Heartland Tree Alliance, in the Kansas City Metro Area, on tree planting and maintenance projects that focus on underserved areas and populations.

The Unified Government of Wyandotte County includes over 82,000 acres stretching from the Missouri state line west. This area includes the City of Kansas City, Kansas, and major highways, farmland, and urban space. Utilizing i-Tree data, the overall tree canopy coverage for the entire county is 21%. This area has seen a significant loss of canopy by way of emerald ash borer in the past ten years, and it is only getting started. Heartland Tree Alliance (HTA) focuses its work in areas of low tree canopy coverage, which often coincides with low-resourced neighborhoods.

With the guidance of the Kansas Forest Service and partnership of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County, HTA identified three neighborhoods where additional trees would provide multiple benefits. Neighborhoods were selected either because of low canopy coverage or high loss of ash trees. In one of the neighborhoods, the Rosedale area, the median age is 32.7 years old, median income \$45,024, people of color represent close to 40% of the residential population, and 19% of families are below the poverty level. With the help of 19 trained volunteers from Rivus Energy and Youthbuild KCK, new species were planted along city streets to diversify the streetscape and replace canopy cover.

A recently funded State Urban Forest Resilience grant project to reforest community landscapes devastated

by emerald ash borer continues the work of the Kansas Forest Service and its community partners. The cities of Bonner Springs and Overland Park will plant and establish 500 diverse and adaptable trees over the next three years in areas where canopy cover is lacking or was lost due to emerald ash borer. The project will establish canopy cover in parks and neighborhoods to benefit multiple demographics within their communities. This effort places new trees where people can benefit from the numerous health and economic benefits of canopy cover along city streets and in community parks.



(Left) Volunteers plant trees in Kansas City, KS. Photo: Lynn Lougary

(Above) Volunteers learn from HTA and KFS staff about proper planting techniques. Photo: Amanda Gehin

