

Landscape Scale Restoration Project Report



Project Name: City of Edmond, OK: Green Infrastructure Initiative

Funding Year: 2009

Stakeholders

Forest Service Region: USDA Forest Service - R8

Sponsoring Organization: Oklahoma Division of Forestry Services

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Participating Organizations:

Grantee: Oklahoma Division of Forestry Services

Project Funding

Agreement(s): 08-DG-11083140-002, 09-DG-11083140-002

Funding Sources

Project Design

Project Purpose

Project Description:

Much of the Interstate 35 corridor lies within the oak and hickory forests known as the Cross Timbers, a large expanse of trees interspersed with savannah-like grasslands that run from central Texas, through Oklahoma and into Kansas. Although the Cross Timbers and associated habitats are rarely used for commercial timber purposes, their value as a provider of ecosystem services for a highly urbanized society is now being recognized.

Many communities in the area rely on water supplies protected by Cross Timbers forested watersheds.

These forests provide diverse habitat for a variety of wildlife species and offer recreational

Landscape Scale Restoration Project Report



opportunities.

According to models run by the University of Arkansas' Tree Ring Laboratory, there are remnant stands of old growth oak and red cedar still scattered throughout the region. These stands provide the best, and perhaps the only, record of tree ring climate data in the area for the past several hundred years, and are worthy of serious study.

Cross-Timbers sites are also attractive to property owners hoping to acquire a few acres in the country for a home site. The pace of this type of development continues to increase, resulting in forest fragmentation, loss of habitats and displacement of wildlife, introduction of invasive species, increased soil erosion and sedimentation impacts in streams, and construction without regard to wildfire risk. In addition, as cities and towns expand outward from their core, new residential, business and industrial developments often intrude into forested habitats that are generally viewed as developable lands with trees standing in the way of progress.

Edmond is a rapidly growing suburban city in Oklahoma County, in the central part of the state. It is the sixth largest city in the State of Oklahoma and is part of the Greater Oklahoma City metropolitan area. A considerable amount of new development is currently in the planning stages for areas east of Interstate 35, which has experienced limited growth to date. The City has recently revised the primary code that governs new development, and has established a point system intended to encourage retention of native forestland and increased landscaping. This progressive community is well positioned for the latest in environmentally responsible development planning, such as the Green Infrastructure approach.

City of Edmond Urban Forestry, with two grants received from U.S. Forest Service/Oklahoma Forestry

Services (OFS), utilized geospatial methods to identify potential "remnant" Cross Timbers forest stands within the city limits. More than seventy square miles of the community and its forests were mapped. The identified trees and groves are now viewed as community assets and given weighted value for landscaping requirements.

OFS forestry personnel, in cooperation with City of Edmond Urban Foresters, will work with the Edmond

Land Conservancy (ELC) to develop a Green Infrastructure plan for the community. This will utilize the previously determined remnant forest information and engage the general public to provide guidelines for organizations such as ELC to promote and establish conservation of critical Cross Timbers forestlands.

Project Location
Edmond, Oklahoma

Landscape Scale Restoration Project Report



National Themes & Outcomes

Conserving and Managing Working Forest Landscapes

- High priority forest ecosystems and landscapes are identified and conserved.

Protect Forests from Threats

- Threats to forest and ecosystem health are identified, managed and reduced.

Enhance Public Benefits from Private Forests

- Water quality and quantity is protected and enhanced.
- Air quality is improved and energy is conserved.
- Wildlife and fish habitat is protected, conserved, and enhanced.
- People are connected to trees and forests and are engaged in environmental stewardship activities.

Strategic Issues

Cities and towns are beginning to look beyond traditional boundaries when it comes to addressing environmental concerns while dealing with local quality of living issues. Green infrastructure is one way some are beginning to connect the broader landscape health needs with the needs and desires of the local residents.

Collaboration & Partners

City of Edmond – They are providing all the technical support including meeting facilities and GIS mapping and related support for the project. They also have representatives of the city actively serving on the working and advisory partners groups.

Edmond Land Conservancy - They are playing a leadership roll in the organization and direction for the project. They are actively serving on the working and advisory boards for the project.

City of Oklahoma City – They are participating as a partner on the process because they are pursuing a green infrastructure initiative of their own and they border the City of Edmond.

Oklahoma Forestry Services – We are providing oversight and playing an active roll in the working and advisory boards for the project.

There is a larger group called the "Stakeholders" group in includes organizations like local neighborhood associations, bike riding club and other outdoor groups. This group helps weigh in on the direction and provides guidance and direction for the smaller working partners group.

Landscape Scale Restoration Project Report



Accomplishments

Deliverables

Overall Project Goal:

•Provide a Green Infrastructure plan for the City of Edmond, Oklahoma, that identifies high priority forest landscapes and provides goals and methodologies for conservation organizations to better focus limited resources on the highest priority landscape-level needs that will maintain or enhance the suite of ecosystem services provided by Cross Timbers forestlands.

2008

- Organize the project planning group. 2009-Completed
- Raise awareness and train the planning group on Green Infrastructure methodologies. 2010-Ongoing
- Develop a GIS assessment of the project area. 2010-Completed
- Develop easement attainment methods. 2010-Not Yet Accomplished
- Initiate the plan writing and review component. 2010-Ongoing
- Expand marketing efforts to further raise awareness. 2010-Ongoing

2009

- Completion of the Green Infrastructure Plan

2010-Not Yet Completed

2011- The plan is completed and in final staged of editing.

- Raising awareness in the community

2010-Ongoing

2011-Ongoing

2012-Ongoing

Landscape Scale Restoration Project Report



Accomplishments to Date

2008 - 2009 An organizational group was formed and continues to meet monthly. They have developed a GIS assessment model for the city and a partners meeting was held over a two day period. Ed Macie facilitated the process where hubs and linkages were identified. The planning process for the prioritization and best ways to move forward with the ideas from the meeting are currently ongoing.

2010 - The video was completed and is currently being demonstrated and marketed. Edmond held a second meeting of the shareholders to review the results and begin the prioritization process from the first meeting where the hubs and linkages were identified.

2011 - The Green Infrastructure Report and Executive Summary have been completed and are going through final editing. These reflect all the findings and recommendations from the taskforce and stakeholders. They will be using this information to begin workshops with the City Council and staff in 2012 to see how the city can best address the findings and recommendations.

2012 - The city completed the project and is the continued process of using the results to move the city forward with zoning, ordinances and code enforcement. The city accomplished all objectives and any remaining FS funding is released back to the FS.

Deliverables in Progress

2009 - A video is currently in the process of being developed to further the awareness of green infrastructure in Edmond. The city is working with its stakeholders group in prioritizing the hubs and corridors that will be addressed in the green infrastructure plan. The plan will also include easement attainment methods. 2010- Video Completed

2010 - They continue to have monthly meeting are still in the process of prioritizing components of the green infrastructure plan.

2011 - All information, components and recommendations have been collected. The final regular monthly meeting was held in October. Further meetings will be called as deemed necessary.

Challenges

In the fall of 2008 Edmond lost both of their urban foresters within a week of each other to other positions outside Oklahoma. This slowed the process but the city has since hired a new urban forestry coordinator and is in the process of hiring the vacant assistant position. Working with so many interest groups can be challenging when trying to prioritize issues for consideration. The new anticipated end date is September 2010.

2010- A new urban forestry assistant has been hired and is providing support for the green infrastructure planning process.

Landscape Scale Restoration Project Report

Information Last Updated

2/23/2015

