



CIRCA Report Cover Colt Park Foundation

Introducing New Evergreen Species
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Colt Park Foundation
Donna Swarr, Chair



Connecticut Institute for Resilience
and Climate Adaptation



Sponsored by a Climate & Equity grant from the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA). CIRCA is a partnership between the University of Connecticut and the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. More information can be found at: www.circa.uconn.edu

Colt Park Foundation Final Grantee Report 10/5/2023

Report Narrative Template

Summary

The new climate evergreen species project activities included: surveying the area for planting of 6 new evergreen species (March 2023), surveying nurseries for the four recommended species; loblolly pine, pond pine, sand pine, and virginia pine (April – June 2023), planting the trees (July 2023) and outreach to the community (June 2023-October 2023). Important project milestones included a Trees Matter Event, June 11, 202, locating six loblolly pines, June 30, 2023, community info sessions: Knox Interns August 2nd, Spark Social Sports (kickball and volleyball leagues), August 27th, Active City Youth Soccer League August 28th, City of Hartford Park and Recreation Advisory Commission September 26th, and City of Hartford Tree Advisory Commission October 4th. Most of the outreach took place in Colt Park, two took place at virtual meetings. The Trees Matter event took place behind Armsmead, a large heavily treed area of the park near to a stand of pines. The Knox Intern, Sparks Social Sports and Active City Youth Soccer League info sessions took place in Colt Park where the trees were planted along Curcombe Street.

Grant Project Outcomes:

We discovered that the nurseries in the area are not prepared to provide the newly recommended evergreen species. Only 2 were found before June, the remaining were provided in early July. Knox was promised six, then told they could only get four and then out of the blue, the other four arrived. They were all planted at the same time the first week of July. Due to the changes in the climate this year, luckily, there has been sufficient rainfall to sustain planting evergreen trees in July. Unfortunately, the trees were not found in time to be available for viewing at the first event, Trees Matter. The effects of climate change were included in the event. It included a StoryWalk, which is a movement and literacy boosting project that places an illustrated children's book, taken apart and displayed page by page, along a walking route in a community. For this we partnered with Judy Dworin Social Justice Dance Group and the Hartford Public Library.

Our goal was to help mitigate the heat-island effect in our community. These trees will provide shade and help lower the overall temperature of the neighborhood. We wanted to experiment with the availability and success of planting new evergreen species. It raised the issue of the lack of availability of these newly recommended species.

The heat island effect in our neighborhood was minimally effected, but the awareness of the issue of trees dying in Colt Park due to the climate change was been significantly raised and the need for new species to be planted. It has only been a few months since the trees have been planted, hence we do not know about their longevity. But so far, the trees look very healthy.

Community engagement took place between June and October. There were three outreach efforts to youth about the issues of the need to plant different species of trees and the effects of climate change on our trees. These included a Trees Matter performance/event on June 11th. The Colt Park Foundation provided a short explanation about the purpose of event, that being raising awareness of the importance of trees and the effects of climate change. Approximately 30 youth and members of their families participated. A story walk was donated by the Hartford Public Library, a movement led activity and a craft project were conducted by the Social Justice Dance Group. There was a selection of three books about trees for the participants to take home. On August 2nd 10 Knox Interns took a walk around the park to view the four stands of evergreens and to see how many were dying or already dead. The interns are between the ages of 18-23. Another youth group was informed, about 25 youth ages 6-12 and their parents from the Active City Youth Soccer League heard about the trees on August 28th. This soccer field is close by and again, they could see the existing evergreen trees were dying or dead. There are many adult leagues who play in the park. The Spark Social Sports (kickball and volleyball leagues) took time out between games to hear about the new evergreen species and voiced their gratitude to the foundation for our efforts. There were about 50 people who came to hear the talk. August 27th. We were able to present our project to two city commissions. The first was the City of Hartford Park and Recreation Advisory Commission on September 26th, and the City of Hartford Tree Advisory Commission October 4th. A brief PowerPoint presentation was prepared and shared. There were about 20 people who attended the Park and Recreation meeting, and about 8-10 people who attended the Tree Advisory meeting. Additionally, there were social media postings on the Colt Park Foundation page, which was shared to the View from the Parks page of the plantings.

Capacity-Building Progress:

The new evergreen species project in Colt Park is an experiment and demonstration of the need for planting of different evergreen species than in the past. Hartford is a vulnerable community in Connecticut. This project is intended to help other parks, public spaces, and private property to select the best trees to survive in our climate change and reduce the heat island in our neighborhoods. Many of the private property owners are hesitant or have removed trees due to the high cost of maintenance, pruning, and

leaf removal. Evergreens do not have the problem with leaf removal and may well be an option they would more readily to accept this option. Having new species to recommend should be provided. DEEP needs to follow up with assessing the nursery availability of these new species in the region. Without a concerted effort, it will not be successful. In Iowa, after the derecho, they quickly realized that there was no way possible for the necessary number of trees to be planted, they had to regroup and plant seedlings. The regional supply chain needs to be made aware that there will be a demand for these new species. We have included the PowerPoint slides below.



COLT PARK FOUNDATION

Climate and Equity Grant



Sponsored by a grant from the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation. The Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) is a partnership between the [University of Connecticut](#) and the [State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection](#). CIRCA's mission is to increase the resilience and sustainability of vulnerable communities along Connecticut's coast and inland waterways to the growing impacts of climate change on the natural, built, and human environment.

More information about CIRCA can be found at circa.uconn.edu.



Climate and Equity 2022 Grantees Hartford rec'd two in 2022



- **Center for Latino Progress (Hartford): Funding for the BiCi Co. Plan for Active Travel and Health (BiCi PATH) project to provide free, refurbished shop-quality bicycles to increase carbon-neutral mobility in the Frog Hollow, Parkville, and South Hartford communities, accompanied by an air monitoring program for community education. (\$50,000)**
- **Clean Water Fund (Waterbury): Funding for a local outreach coordinator to increase access to energy efficiency programs for Waterbury residents, in collaboration with the Neighborhood Housing Services of Waterbury and I Heart My Home. (\$50,000)**
- **Colt Park Foundation (Hartford): Funding to plant drought-resistant trees in Colt Park to mitigate the urban heat island effect experienced by the Barry Square Neighborhood and the CSS/CON Neighborhood Revitalization Zone. (\$6,000)**
- **New Haven Leon Sister City Project (New Haven): Funding for youth participation in climate action planning for New Haven public schools, accompanied by a summer public art project. (\$8,960)**
- **Nonprofit Accountability Group (Hartford): Funding for an environmental justice community organizer to facilitate monthly engagement events, listening sessions, and letter-writing, ultimately leading to the creation of a community climate plan for the City of Hartford with particular attention to addressing racial disparities currently present in environmental justice movements. (\$50,000)**
- **Pollinator Pathway (Norwalk): Funding for shrub and tree planting, in collaboration with the Stepping Stones Museum for Children's youth enrichment program, to increase the urban tree canopy in the South Norwalk/Norwalk Center area. (\$10,000)**

Funding for this grant program comes from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).



PROJECT TIMELINE AND UPDATE



Major Tasks and Project Milestones	CPF Timeline			
	Jan - Mar 2023	Apr - June 2023	July - Sept 2023	Oct - Dec 2023
Step 1. Identify species availability and shipping costs	X			
Step 2. Identify preferred planting dates and exact locations with Knox and City Forester's	X			
Step 3. Plant evergreens		X	Planted along Curcombe St	
Step 4. Invite attendees from "In the Presence of Trees" on June 13th performance in Colt Park to view the new plantings		X		
Step 5. Gather additional community feedback on plantings			X	
Step 6. Submit final project report to CIRCA			X	

Of the DEEP recommended species, Loblolly pine, Pond pine, Sand pine and Virginia pine were selected. But, only Loblolly pine was available from local nurseries. They were delivered and planted in July. Fortunately, there was more than sufficient rain and we had lower than normal temps this July and August. This meant that the planned outreach at the Trees Matter event wasn't an option. Another plan was put in place.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION



The community's beneficial impact of this project is meant to diminish the effects of the heat island. The CSS Con and the South Green neighborhoods are a high priority in Hartford . Within those neighborhoods, public and private parcels, parks and streets will be identified to bridge the gap between tree canopy inequalities in neighborhoods.

There are 4 evergreen groves in Colt Park. Two to three trees have been dying off each year for the past five years. DEEP identified new species of evergreens for our changing climate. *The grant was to purchase, plant and maintain 6 newly identified evergreen species in Colt Park.*

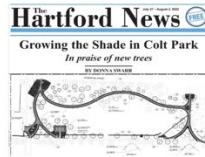
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In-person presentation about the six Loblolly trees to the Sparks Social Sports League (kickball and volleyball). About 50 members of the team got to check out the new climate pine trees and examine the effects of drought on the existing pines in that area.



Spreading the word about selection of trees in Colt Park that will survive in our new climate. Social media and in the local paper.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Talks and presentations to local park groups



- Facebook, Instagram, Hartford News, July 6.
- Knox Inc. Internship Program, new class 6-8, August 2.
- Sparks Social Sports - ~ 50 local kickball and volleyball players, August 26.
- Active City – ~ 25 youth soccer players and parents, August 27.
- City of Hartford Park and Recreation Advisory Commission, August 28 presentation.
- Amy Amy Glowacki, Program Manager for Interpretation and Education Coltsville Historical National Park, September 20.
- City of Hartford Tree Advisory Commission, Oct. 4 meeting

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