



ABOUT NASF

The mission of the National Association of State Foresters is to represent state and territorial forester interests by influencing forest policy and leading efforts to promote healthy and sustainable trees and forests.

ABOUT USFS

The U.S. Forest Service mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

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www.stateforesters.org

www.fs.fed.us

forestry.ky.gov

www.forestactionplans.org



Enhancing Public Benefits Derived from Kentucky's Trees and Forests



With support from the USDA Forest Service, the Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF) is achieving goals outlined in its Forest Action Plan.

In conjunction with local partners, Kentucky has helped six communities in the southeastern Appalachian corridor develop their own plans for greenspaces, all of which have begun implementing these designs.

The plans were used as a major component in securing hundreds of thousands of grant and local funding to create new greenspaces in six communities.

For a community, the thought of bringing together multiple groups with varied interests can be a daunting task. Having a plan for a community's natural resources set forth a solid foundation for reaching the final target.

By using the USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry Landscape Scale Restoration Competitive Grant process in the Southern Region, KDF and the Virginia Department of Forestry received a 2011 grant for a project titled "Increasing Rural Community Wealth and Environmental Health in Southwest Virginia and Southeastern Kentucky Coal Counties" (RCW).

Focusing the project in eastern Kentucky and southwest Virginia corresponded with the states' Forest Action Plan Priority Areas and is in areas traditionally underserved for greenspace planning. The mission of RCW was to expand community planning and long-term strategies to conserve, enhance, connect and protect community natural resources and encourage forest based recreation and eco-tourism. The project recognized that communities in the region hold rich natural resources, yet often lack a cohesive strategy to conserve, enhance and fully utilize them.

KDF partnered with Virginia Tech's Community Design Assistance Center (CDAC). To select communities to work with, KDF advertised an application to communities by partnering with Area Development Districts. After onsite visits, six communities were selected in southeast Kentucky's Appalachian corridor.

An initial community meeting was held in each location and various groups discussed their vision and issues for their community's natural resources. Soil samples, street and building measurements, maps and other resource information were collected at each community. A second visit was then held where CDAC presented at least two conceptual design plans, again in a community meeting format. After the designs were explained and presented, citizens were able to give their opinion on specific details of the plans that they liked, didn't like, or had ideas for other options. Input was used to develop a final, collaborative design.

"The fact that the communities have been so successful in leveraging grant funding to implement these plans demonstrates the true success of bringing a community together to address issues and envision a future for their natural resources," said Leah W. MacSwords, State Forester.

All of these communities are implementing at least one piece of their plan. The planning process that CDAC led is paying off, not only in dollars secured for projects, but in bringing communities together as a whole. It is exciting to see the communities put their plans to work, and we look forward to seeing what they accomplish in the future. *Photos courtesy KDF and Pausitivity, Flickr.*