



WILDLIFE
HABITAT
COUNCIL®

ACROSS FENCE LINES National Committee Report

February 2, 2021

Connecting Corporate America to Communities
through Urban and Community Forestry

Funded by the U.S. Forest Service

On December 1, 2020, a national committee met to support *Across Fence Lines*, a grant-funded initiative that will ultimately produce a road map—a practical guide to drive corporate engagement in urban and community forestry (UCF) in support of the U.S. Forest Service Ten-Year Urban Forestry Action Plan Goal 6, Strategy B: *Leverage and diversify funding through expanded collaboration between urban forestry and related fields, agencies and sectors.*

The virtual committee meeting was led by **Wildlife Habitat Council** (WHC) and brought together non-profits, government agencies and the private sector, representing corporations across the value chain including the extractive, manufacturing, auto and energy industries.

Meeting Participants



Agenda, Outcomes and Next Steps

The meeting was designed to introduce all partners in the project and to explore the challenges and opportunities associated with creating a holistic *road map*. Introductions and discussion occurred across the meeting's five stages:

1. The meeting opened with an introduction to the WHC C-Suite 16, a proprietary framework for corporate conservation that showcases 16 common business drivers for companies to engage in meaningful and sustained conservation action (see page 2). This framework will serve as a starting reference for case studies, spanning six geographic regions, which will inform the road map.
2. Knowledge partners to the grant, Corazón Latino, Davey Institute, Greening of Detroit and the Student Conservation Association presented their approaches to urban and community forestry:
 - *Corazón Latino's mission is to reconnect Latino families with nature through culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate programming.*
 - *The Davey Institute oversees the implementation of the iTree suite of tools that measure the impact of trees across a number of metrics.*
3. WHC introduced the organization's assessment of over 700 programs that have achieved **WHC Conservation Certification**[®]; 145 programs were identified as having forestry projects. Information on these projects will be aggregated through data from WHC Certification applications and a supplemental survey. The results of this analysis will form a key aspect of the road map, helping landowners better understand the wide spectrum of forestry projects on corporate lands and the reasons that these projects have been implemented.
4. There was further discussion of the road map, which will be designed with two starting points: one for a corporate audience and one for urban
 - *The Greening of Detroit has supported Detroit's canopy for 30 years, working with communities and corporations to enhance the city's urban forest and provide work experience to city youth.*
 - *The Student Conservation Association provides work experience for youth across the country in parks and on other public lands, deploying crews of workers to support community efforts for ecological restoration and reforestation.*

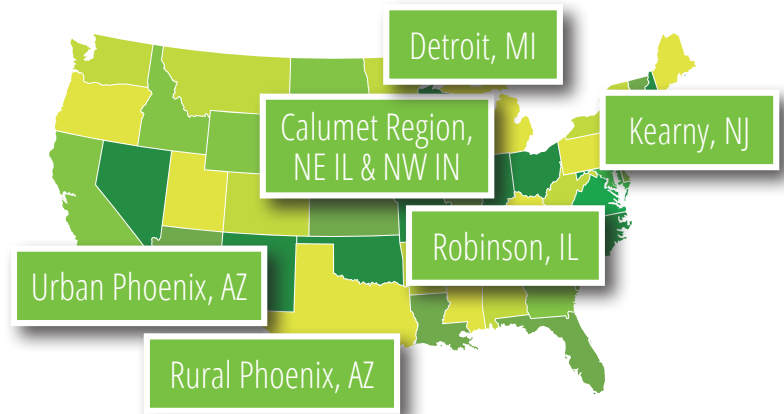
and community forestry groups. Both tracks will guide the respective audiences toward sustainable working relationships between community and corporate partners, going beyond philanthropy to inspire on-the-ground collaboration.

5. The meeting culminated in a discussion of challenges and associated opportunities that attendees have encountered in corporate engagement with UCF. The concerns voiced are classified into the following categories:

- *Technical* — How to ensure that trees planted are appropriate for local conditions and support regulated compliance targets; how teams with challenging locations (arid climate, remote or lightly-staffed operations) can adequately maintain newly planted trees.
- *Organizational* — How to engage enough employee volunteers to sustain forestry endeavors.
- *Strategic* — How corporate alignments with community climate plans can strengthen forestry efforts.

Case Study Regions

With meeting attendees having received a top-level introduction to *Across Fence Lines*, the project will turn to focus on local case studies undertaken across distinct geographic regions. The regions each have unique histories, climate considerations and environmental justice concerns.



C-Suite 16 — The Business Case for Conservation

Operations

Conservation stewardship activities can support a safer, compliant operating environment.

Corporate Citizenship

Nature-based programs and conservation efforts can benefit a variety of corporate citizenship targets.

Business Management

Conservation can contribute to business management targets with positive bottom line outcomes.

- 01 BIODIVERSITY IMPACTS
- 02 REMEDIATION REMEDIES
- 03 PERMIT ACQUISITION AND RENEWAL
- 04 SOCIAL LICENSE TO OPERATE
- 05 SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT
- 06 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- 07 INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION
- 08 TALENT ACQUISITION
- 09 SUSTAINABILITY GOALS AND PERFORMANCE
- 10 REPORTING AND DISCLOSURES
- 11 SRI AND SHAREHOLDERS
- 12 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT
- 13 CLIMATE CHANGE
- 14 LANDS MANAGEMENT
- 15 NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS
- 16 GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

