South Burlington TREEage

Community Partnership

NR 206 Fall 2013

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welcome to **TREEage.org**
.. making a difference in our community .. one tree at a time ..

Community Partners

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INTRODUCTION

TREEage, a tree nursery in South Burlington, Vermont, was established in 2008 by Marie Ambusk. TreeAge has grown and transplanted 52 trees from its nursery to replace injured street trees. Street trees reduce soil erosion, conserve water, and deflect air and noise pollution, which provide significant community and economic value. Urban trees also reduce the urban heat island effect, or when a large amount of impermeable surfaces in a city absorb more heat and give it off slower than surrounding less developed areas.

Figure 1. The TREEage nursery

TreeAge has planted 52 trees but does not have a map showing where they are located. Much of the tree data is accessible to Craig, the City Arborist, but not available on the TREEage website. Street trees usually need pruning and mulching in their early years to succeed. Having easy access to the exact location of the trees makes them easier to manage for pest outbreaks, severe weather, and other damaging disturbances. Through conversation with Marie and Craig, we determined that helping collect and organize location data on transplanted trees in town would benefit TREEage.

PROJECT DESIGN

Goal 1: Evaluate the effectiveness of the previous TREEage tree plantings

Deliverable product: a google map with data on each transplanted tree

Goal 2: Audit the TreeAge Nursery for financial efficiency

Deliverable product: a cost-benefit analysis of the nursery

Goal 3: Volunteer a cumulative 10 hours in TreeAGE nursery

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Summary

Our group partnered with TREEage for about 10 weeks in the fall of 2013. In the initial phases of the project, we met with Marie and Craig to better understand the mission behind TREEage and the context of the organization in the South Burlington community. After this inventory, we decided that a tree inventory map, cost benefit analysis of the nursery, and labor in the nursery would be the best way our partnership would benefit TREEage now and well into the future. We met with Marie and Craig twice throughout our partnership to reflect on our work. On December 5, 2013, all of our deliverable final products were completed and submitted to TREEage.

Deliverables

Our inventory map is a google map, an easy to use platform that is accessible to the public. Each tree has a location marker with information about its growth. Marie and Craig can both edit add data to the map. A layer of the map is attached in the appendix under *Figure 1*. The cost benefit analysis revealed that the nursery is capable of producing a street tree for

$14.31. In comparison to average prices for purchasing trees ready to plant on the street, the TREEage nursery is a more financially efficient at producing trees. However, this figure is entirely dependent on volunteer hours. Without volunteers, the nursery would produce trees at a much higher cost. See *Figure 2* for more details. We also worked in the nursery pruning and readying the trees for the harshness of a Vermont winter.

Discussion and Recommendations

We will remain within the TREEage network via email, volunteering, and personal communication to help connect Marie to future volunteers. We recommend that TREEage continue the relationship with the Rubenstein school in order to continue partnerships that yield benefits to both UVM natural resource students, TREEage, and the communities they both serve. We recommend putting a link to the map on the TREEage website, to publicly showcase the service that the organization provides to the community.

As for specific future projects, we suggest that it will be beneficial for a future partnership project to focus on community involvement with the organization. During our surveys we met and conversed with a fair number of people who hosted TREEage trees on their lawn, with no knowledge of the origins of their trees. We identify community involvement as a resource for TREEage to continue to tap into the future.

Some of our recommendations for future NR 206 partnerships with TREEage include:
1. An advocacy approach: All TREEage trees are planted within close proximity to residential homes. From our experience, it seems that people living near the TREEage trees don't know the story behind the tree in their yard, or the benefits it provides to them and their neighborhood. A great project might be to canvass neighborhoods and explaining to people how the tree in their yard came to be. Creating a sense of ownership in trees would get the community invested in their stewardship.
2. Construction of a structure that would display and protect Marie's collection of root specimens from the elements.
3. Begin any project that will involve tree species identification before mid autumn defoliation.
4. Reliable communication between group partners and community partners is a must.

APPENDIX

Figure 1. **TREEage Transplant Google map**
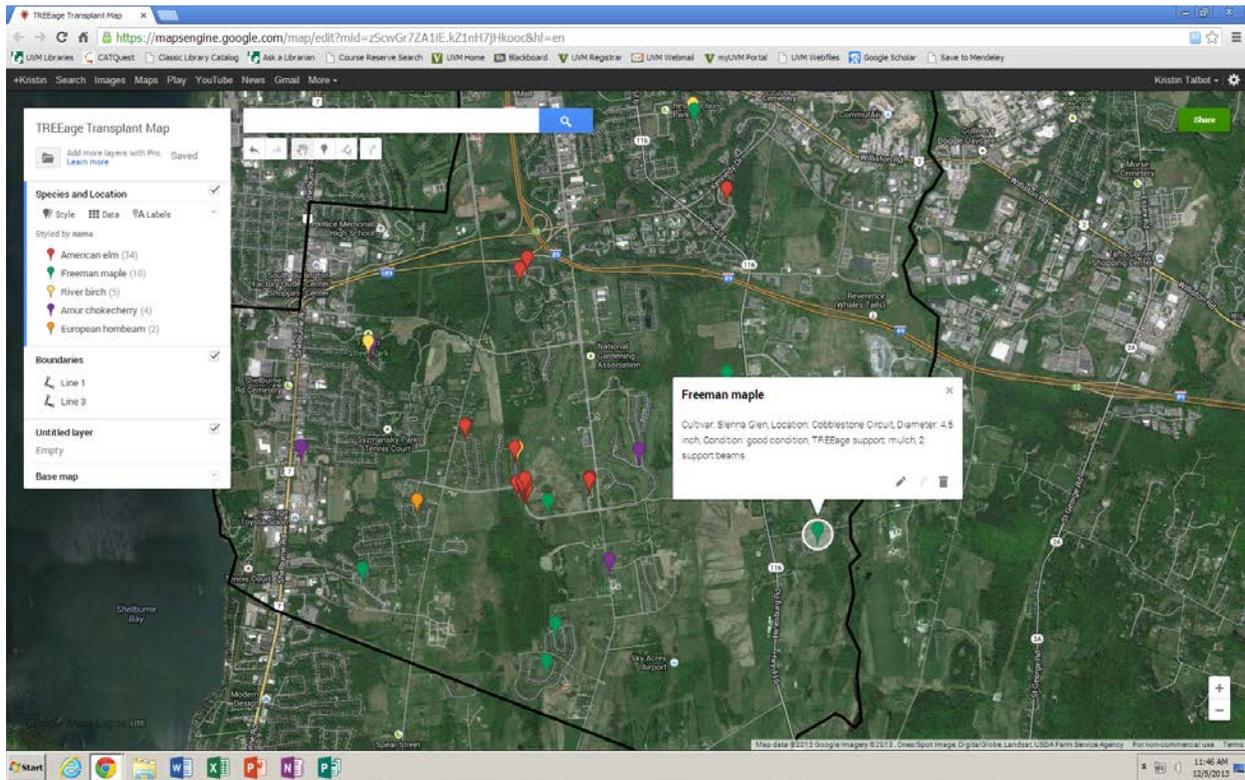
To access the transplant map in real time follow the link below:

https://mapsengine.google.com/map/edit?mid=zScwGr7ZA1iE.kZ1nH7jHkooc&hl=en

Figure 2. **Cost-benefit analysis of nursery**

Cost-benefit Analysis of TREEage Nursery	
Cost Per Purchased Tree at Nursery	$ 14.87
Average TCN hours/tree (just nursery)	5.2 hours