

Atlantic Urban Forest Workshop Linking Policy to Practice Highlights

November 13, 14 Halifax NS

The two day event included students municipalities from all regions across the Atlantic, developers, arborist, foresters, landscape architects, planners, forest managers and teachers. The program began with a warm welcome from the Chair of the Conference Peter Duinker. Heather Fraser Chair of the Atlantic Regional Urban Forest Collective (under the CUFN) introduced Mike Rosen President of Tree Canada to speak on BMP's across Canadian (UF) urban forests. Keynote speakers for the morning sessions were both from Toronto Richard Ubbens - talked about what drives policy, the science, economics and politics behind it. Tenley Conway discussed competing interests in the UF from utilities, esthetics, ecological integrity and costs associated with all these individual values/uses.

At our morning coffee break we were joined by the Mayor of Halifax Mr. John Savage as well as many media personal to announce a new tree planting initiative through Tree Canada entitled The Relief Program that would assist Municipalities in the Atlantic region who had lost trees to hurricane Dorion this past fall. Many larger centres are mapping trees lost and preparing reports and budgets in 2020 for replacing trees lost to this hurricane. More details to follow in the coming months on what this financial investment in communities will look like overall everyone was pleased with this announcement.

The Deputy Mayor of Truro spoke on what urban forests mean to their community and where priorities are within the Municipality, circumstances, collaboration and leadership drive policy in this town.

There was a nice mix of speakers including developer Charles Poirier (Tridev) from Moncton who uses the forest/trees in his developments in a sustainable way and how working with the trees and building around them is making his business a recognized success across Canada.

Conference numbers were down only 75 in attendance instead of the 150 at the last three UF conferences could be due to time of year, no budgets left and too many events of similar focus.

Several City foresters talked about UF issues in their Municipality Mike Glynn from Fredericton, Crispin Wood from Halifax, John MacNaughton with WSP, Brian Mercer from St. Johns NFLD – similar issues were shared by all and in the end it came down to budgets and competing projects for Municipal dollars.

Day two had concurrent sessions taking place in separate rooms which gave the audience a chance to mingle and take part in talks that interested them personally. Engaging citizens to participate and what that looks like in regions across the Atlantic, along with vectors for change from an ecologists point of view, a researcher, National seed centre and plant care specialist took place, all having challenges as their work progresses.

Urban forestry in small and medium sized communities challenges and success stories from Pugwash, Mahone Bay NS and Sussex NB showed wonderful opportunities that Community in Bloom have brought to their communities along with forming tree protections groups and others.

A trade show component was part of this two day event and Davey group spoke about the institute and what services it had to offer municipalities.

As climate change makes its impact on communities we asked the question should tree species and selection be altered are exotics ok and if not why, this made for some very interesting points on both sides of the question.

An open discussion wrapped up the conference with representatives from 4 larger communities in the Atlantic Region- Moncton, Fredericton, Halifax, St. Johns NFLD taking part in a question and answer period from the audience what can we do better, how do we continue with the Collective moving forward – should we continue with workshops/conferences every two years, what challenges do we see ahead and can we continue to work together. Who are we missing at this event? Setting up a Regional Steering Committee is in the works for 2020.

Education credits were achieved by both the foresters association and the ISA groups.

Two field trips were offered looking at Forest succession after Hurricane Juan in Point Pleasant Park and UF tree challenges due to ongoing down town development.

Landscape NB hosted a HORT EAST event Nov 21-24 th which seen over 350 people attend at the Casino in Moncton.

January 21-23/2020 Summerside PEI Atlantic Canada Forest Health Workshop