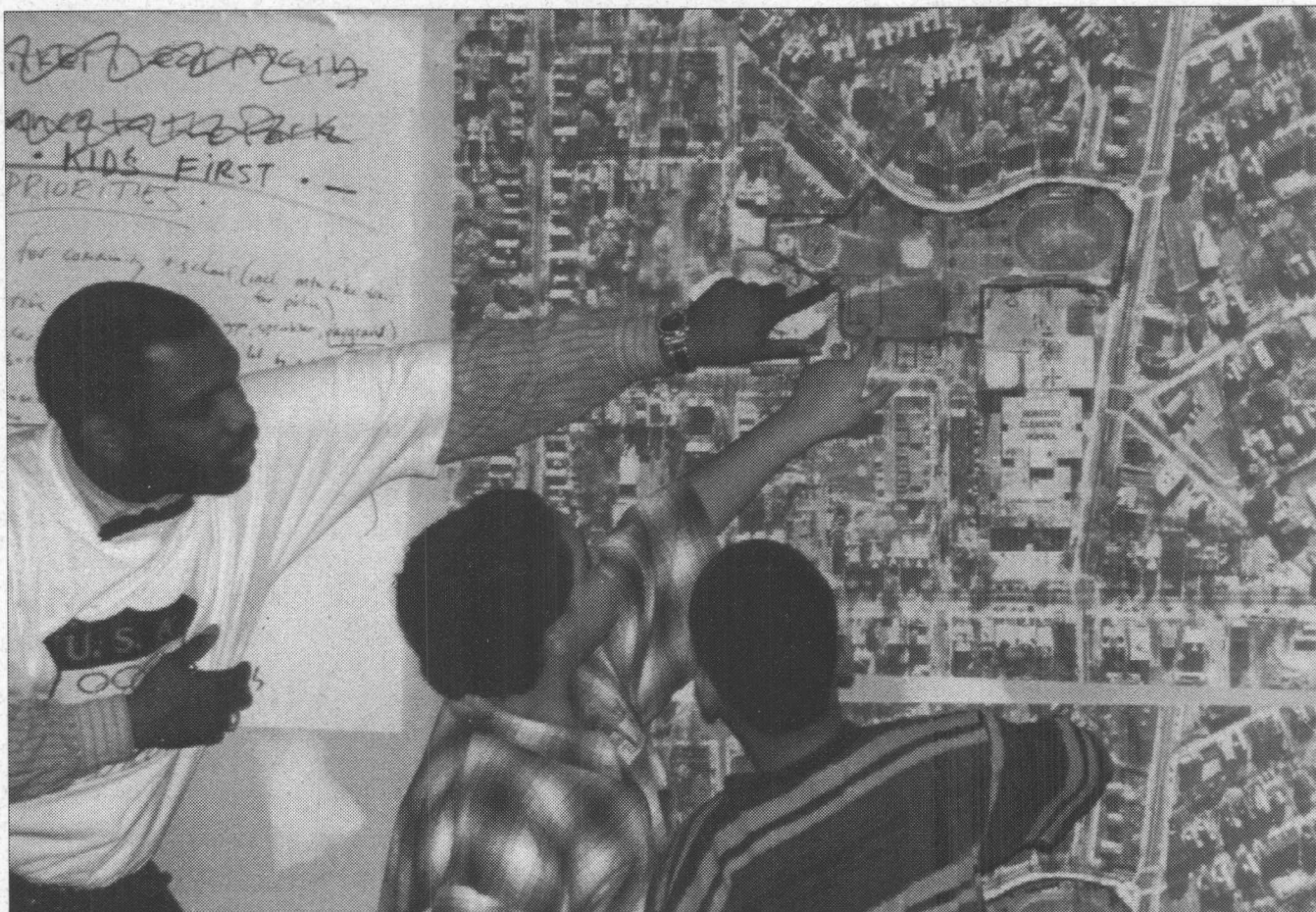

URBAN ISSUES

Newsletter of the Urban Resources Initiative
Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies

Spring 1999 Vol.9 No. 2



Bringing Stakeholders Together in Urban Land Management

From the Director.	2
Local Leaders Train.	3
New Urban Ecology Center.	4
Residents, Students Build Fence.	5
Focus on Abandoned Land.	6

Research on Restoration.	7
Partnerships Work at Small Scale.	8
Dwight School Project	9
Professor Teaches Participation.	10
Tidbits and Teasers.	11



**Yale School of Forestry and
Environmental Studies**
William Smith, Acting Dean

**Hixon Center for the Urban
Environment**
Daniel C. Esty, Director

URI Faculty Advisor, Emeritus
Prof. William R. Burch, Jr.

URI Director
Leigh Shemitz

URI Project Manager
Colleen Murphy-Dunning

New Haven/ URI Board
Josephine Bush, Chair
Myles Alderman
Gordon Geballe
Robert Levine
Bruce Lewellyn
Lawrence Lipsher
Chris Ozyck
Joseph Ryzewski
Joanne Sculli
Susan Swensen
Shavaun Towers
Harry Wexler

Baltimore/ URI Advisory Committee
Lynne Durbin, Chair
Bill Burch
Jackie Carrera
Shawn Dalton
Morgan Grove
Sally Loomis
Sally Michael
Tom Overton
Laura Perry
Fran Spero

Urban Issues, Spring 1999
Volume 9, Number 2

Alice Walker, Editor

www.yale.edu/uri/

From the Director

Last week, in the midst of a community tree planting workshop, I jumped up on the bed of a flatbed truck and looked down the street. Small groups gathered around several tree pits and our trainers, URI staff and community leaders, stood next to each hole to explain planting depth, mulching and watering.

"It's so simple," someone noted. I considered all the people and institutions who had come together to make that tree planting happen. Yale loaned the truck; United Illuminating paid for the trees; the City of New Haven and the Community Foundation financed other materials; URI created the training materials; URI and City staff coordinated the outreach. The simplicity of the tree planting was matched by the complexity of connections to make it actually happen. This web spreads out, multiplies and creates an end in itself.

The overall goal on that particular Saturday morning was to learn how to plant a street tree. Still another objective was to bring neighbors together to learn from one another. This happened as block leaders described their different projects and exchanged ideas and telephone numbers. The theme of this issue of our newsletter is "Bringing Stakeholders Together in Urban Land Management." This training was a model of just that as we learned from one another and strengthened our connections. These bonds are desperately needed if we are to reach our goal of reconnecting and replanting the trees and communities of New Haven and other inner cities.

That day we planted trees on Redfield Street- a rundown street in an already stressed neighborhood. URI had tried to get a project going on this site in 1995, but back then the idea of environmental restoration seemed too much of a long shot for most residents. Since that time, several neighboring groups have achieved remarkable results. Bolstered by these successes, Redfield residents came out in force to plant trees this year. One resident looked up the streetscape and noted that it looked better already: the new trees filled in gaps and gave the impression that caring people lived here. Later this summer she and her neighbors will reclaim and restore an abandoned lot. Redfield is only one street in one neighborhood in one city. Yet it is hard not to feel the contagious hope of that morning as rain showers came and went and twenty community leaders and organizers gathered to learn about trees.

- Leigh Shemitz

Training Community Foresters

Local Experts Team With Professionals To Train Urban Land Managers

BY SARAH JOHNSON

Who is a trainer? Who has the skills and capacity to teach others in a field? Sometimes these trainers are "outsiders," professionals who are schooled and experienced in a particular field. Sometimes an expert is an "insider," one who has done it before and developed new approaches.

The upcoming 1999 Community Greenspace training program draws upon both outside and inside trainers to enable community leaders to develop the planting and organizational skills critical for neighborhood restoration projects. The program, a cooperative venture between URI, the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, the City of New Haven, and 50 citizen groups, brings together student interns, New Haven residents, and the agencies to work on neighborhood restoration projects. Training is an integral part of the program, providing participants with both the skills and theory necessary for a successful and positive experience.

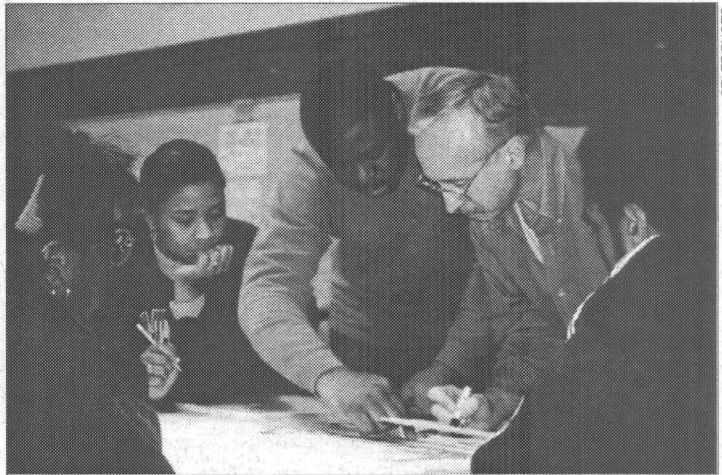
Since the program's inception in 1995, the training sessions have evolved each year to better meet the participants' needs. Agency partners have offered sessions covering leadership skills and related topics while URI has offered technical and planning workshops such as "Site Assessment and Design". A significant shift this year is engaging past participants to now take on the role of workshop trainers.

Sharing What They've Learned

"Many people involved in our program have tremendous experience and knowledge to share. Their taking on the role of trainer recognizes this knowledge and their leadership," says Doreen Larson-Oboyski, a Livable City Initiative staff person. The resident trainers provide different perspectives to the workshops. Some of the trainers have been involved with the program since its start in 1994, bringing significant experience to the workshops. Their years of working with other volunteers give them a unique and valuable insight to share with others. Including these participants as trainers increases the scope and resources of the Greenspace program, and furthers URI's goals of sustainability and stewardship.

More Workshops, More Skills

Each autumn, URI hosts roundtable discussions with residents to determine what has worked well, and what has not. Feedback from these sessions provides the necessary input to revamp trainings as well as other program areas. A clear message received from the roundtable meetings was the need



Residents gather to plan their restoration projects during 1998 Community Greenspace training program.

for more training workshops covering more topics. Residents' response, demand, and desire to learn are tremendous.

URI has restructured the format to include resident trainers, additional topics, and a greater number of sessions across seasons. At the suggestion of past participants, this year's sessions will include skill-based topics such as tree planting, pruning, soil amending and composting. These workshops will be conducted in the community with the resident trainers leading the way.

In addition to the sessions based on skill-building, there will be an afternoon of concurrent design workshops held at the new Career High School. Led by landscape professionals (valuable "outside" resources), this event will offer participants ideas as they design for the urban landscape. Sessions will include: "creating structures from debris" (using construction rubble to create pathways, stone walls, and more), "foundation plantings", "habitat gardens" (focusing on attracting birds and butterflies), "creating contemplative gardens", and more.

Including past participants as trainers, as well as incorporating the suggestions of community leaders into the structure of the training, illustrates the evolution of the training for Community Greenspace projects. As in the past, the training session will provide an opportunity for student interns and community groups to work with city staff, and thus strengthen the alliance among these participants. Armed with ideas, skills, enthusiasm and energy, Community Greenspace participants will be ready to recover, restore and replant their communities. 

Sarah, MES '00, is an intern at URI. Her studies are focused on industrial environmental management and water resources.

Creation of the Hixon Center

Designed to Further the Study of Urban Ecology at Yale

BY LEIGH SHEMITZ

When researchers at the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies first began investigating the urban environment over a decade ago, their efforts seemed somewhat tangential to the rest of the School. The School's traditional focus on natural resource management had kept students in rural fields and forests, away from bustling inner cities. What could asphalt jungles have in common with tropical jungles? What relationship existed between the urban forest and the primal forest? How could experiences from developing countries be applied here in domestic settings?

Ten years later, these and other questions have transformed ecology to include the study of urban ecosystems. To recognize these substantial contributions and provide resources to encourage further study, the School announced the creation of the Hixon Center for Urban Ecology last fall. The mission of the Hixon Center is to provide an interdisciplinary forum for scholars and practitioners to work collaboratively on integrated research, teaching and outreach to improve our understanding and management of urban environmental resources within the United States and around the globe.

Creation of Hixon Center

Supported by a generous gift from Alexander Hixon, the Center has already begun its work. The Center Director, Professor Daniel C. Esty, drew upon two of the urban-directed programs at the School - the Urban Resources Initiative and the Public-Private Partnership Program (see article on page 8) - to form the core of the Center.

It seems fitting that Alexander Hixon, Yale College '38, would give the gift for such a forward thinking Center. The Hixon family is used to such path-breaking philanthropy. It was another member of the Hixon family, Frederick C. Hixon, who provided the funds for the Hixon Professor of Natural Resource Management, currently held by one of the nation's pre-eminent urban ecologists, Professor William R. Burch.

Opportunities for Students

An advisory board of interested faculty developed a course offered in the fall 1998 term. The Urban Ecology Directed Study course was designed as a research workshop to offer students the opportunity to explore different fields from the perspective of urban ecology. Students examined topics ranging from art and architecture to brownfields to development economics. Researching each field, they



STAFF PHOTO

Professor Daniel C. Esty will lead the Hixon Center for Urban Ecology.

determined potential connections and applicability to urban ecology. A summary of the course products is available.

Faculty Seminars and Collaborations

Urban ecology is a highly interdisciplinary field. A grasp of the topic can require knowledge of science, art, history, medicine, and more. To flesh out these linkages, the Center has a strong focus on collaboration, both within the School of Forestry, across the University and beyond. To begin developing such connections the Center has sponsored faculty lunches to bring researchers together to discuss current and future study and programming. The Hixon Center has begun the long term and exciting task of further developing the current urban programs at the School and also creating new models and approaches.

Recent discussions among faculty from Epidemiology and Public Health, Law, Political Science and other departments raised several possible venues for collaboration, including a faculty seminar series to bring together faculty from across the University for interdisciplinary seminars on different aspects of urban ecology.

The Hixon Center for Urban Ecology, led by Professor Esty and a interdisciplinary faculty advisory board, is poised to build upon this strong foundation and make lasting contributions to the education of Yale students and to the study of the world's urban resources. 

Leigh is the Director of URI.

A Modern Day Fence Raising

Building Community on Arch Street Through a Cooperative Project

BY ALICE WALKER

The greenspace park on Arch Street has long been one of URI's Community Greenspace program's success stories. Since the initial beautification in 1994, the pocket park has become a lovely, well-tended, and oft-used site, thanks to a committed group of residents, URI staff and volunteers and Yale Forestry students. Despite the beauty, however, residents haven't yet completed their creation.

Plans for the park include a fence along the front. Evelyn Rodriguez, secretary of the Arch Street Blockwatch, explained, "We don't want to close off the park, but instead create an image of a fence, to make the greenspace semi-private. We want to show that what's on the other side of the fence is taken care of, protected, and that this is a special place on Arch Street and within the neighborhood."

Jody Bush, chair of the New Haven/URI Board, has worked alongside the residents to design the park for the past few years. She added, "There was a great discussion about security. We eventually came around to the idea that security is an ongoing process enhanced by visual symbols and architectural elements but dependent on people's vigilance to enforce."

The Process

Rather than erect a barrier immediately, the Blockwatch carefully considered the fence. "I advocated creating a fence that was special, that would feel welcoming to the space," said Rodriguez. They researched in design books and discussed everything from Roman architecture to McDonald's golden arches.

Mulling over how to continue, Bush noticed the lampposts in Central Park. "They were so beautiful and elegant, and weren't broken when others were," she explained. The lampposts were designed by Kent Bloomer, professional ornamental designer and professor at the Yale School of Architecture. Bush took the project to Bloomer, who brought it to his graduate ornamental design class.

Several students took up the project during the fall 1998 semester. At the end of the course, students presented their designs to the Arch Street residents. "There was one design that was most related to the landscape and buildable," Bush remarked.

That was the design of Celia Corkery, third year Architecture student. Corkery's design weaves together a fence and several benches with the existing plants. "The fence will be perforated metal, and the names of neighborhood members and people (the residents) want to honor will be incorporated into it," Corkery explained. Said Rodriguez, "We want to acknowledge the people who helped build the neighborhood."

Corkery received input from the Blockwatch that shaped the final design. Along with three other students from the Architecture class, Siobhan Berk, Tom Morbitzer, and Fatima Guieuze, Corkery will continue adjusting the design and then begin construction. Guieuze, an undergraduate majoring in mechanical engineering and architecture, will work with Corkery on this project over the summer as a Dwight Hall intern.

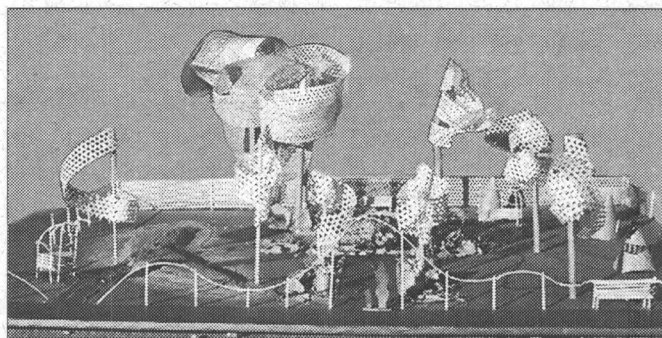
Bush and Leigh Shemitz, URI director, are leading the efforts to gather funds for materials and workmanship. Much of the work will be done by the students in an effort to reduce costs while providing them with a hands-on learning experience. The fence is scheduled to be in place by the end of the summer.

Benefits for All

What have been the benefits of the project? Bush noted, "We all grew a lot. We learned a lot - about the history of design, about plants, about architecture. We have a stronger community for having worked together, and provided a more intellectually stimulating project for students."

Said Corkery, "I learned about the importance of listening to the community, and how satisfying this work could be. I was afraid the residents would shoot everything down and make it harder, but it actually made the design process easier, to have closer contact."

Rodriguez concluded, "It's nice that students were giving to the community, putting effort into the project. Students really gave from their hearts, not just for a grade. We've felt a big difference since the beautification began."



Corkery's model of the Arch Street greenspace blends existing plants with a fence and benches in stylized architectural form.

Alice, MES '00, is studying industrial environmental management.

The Abandoned Lands Task Force

Bringing Land Managers Together

BY COLLEEN MURPHY-DUNNING

The management of urban lands can be complicated by the number of stakeholders who lay claim to nearly every nook and cranny of open space in cities. Even lands that are not especially desirable, such as abandoned lands in inner city areas, will have many different groups responsible for their upkeep.

This mesh of stakeholders is an asset in managing urban lands, since each brings resources that can be used to reclaim and restore the sites. The cacophony of would-be managers can be a pitfall, however, as lack of communication can create confusion over roles and planning.

New Haven benefits from the work of several city agencies and nonprofit organizations managing vacant lots across the city. It is a big job. Estimates for the number of abandoned sites range from 700-900, and are growing. Yet a lack of coordination among these different groups has led to missed opportunities and confusion in the field.

Creation of a City-Wide Taskforce

In order to address these problems and harness the tremendous potential of the urban renewal activities underway in the city, URI, in partnership with New Haven's Livable City Initiative (LCI), formed an Abandoned Lands Task Force. The Task Force has met since November, bringing together stakeholders to reach a shared understanding and vision for both the problems and opportunities presented by abandoned lands. The Task Force is comprised of the directors of city agencies (City Plan, Public Works, Parks, the Chief Administrators Office) and not-for-profit organizations (the

New Haven Land Trust, Urban Solutions, the Enterprise Community, the Community Foundation and others). "The creation of the Task Force has brought together many staff to jointly resolve obstacles that have, in the past, impeded vacant lot restoration. Substantive developments have emerged," remarked Doreen Larson-Oboyski of LCI.

The first need uncovered from Task Force discussions was that for a shared database. The database, now complete, includes information such as locations of abandoned lots and the agency charged with their management. This allows city officials and residents to determine quickly and easily the status of abandoned lands. Such basic information is essential for planning and management. Since the information was held by different departments and groups, however, it has never before been readily accessible.

The Task Force has also developed a set of management standards for the restoration and use of abandoned lands. Urban land restoration has evolved from early "squatter" style encampments to organized community development. But a common vision and language has been lacking. What some call a dormant garden, others consider to be blight. The Task Force hammered out a series of definitions and guidelines to ensure that greenspace restoration efforts meet a clear set of aesthetic and management goals.

Promoting Cooperation

Restoring abandoned land is a cooperative endeavor. Some sites become community-led restoration projects. Other areas are left in limbo but need basic and regular maintenance and clean-up. Regardless of who is the lead manager for site, each abandoned lot needs input from community members. Basic necessities, such as trash pick up, demands cooperation from city agencies. The Task Force has created a forum for the resolution of everyday issues that can make or break a project.

While many stakeholders work to restore abandoned lands, city agencies play a central and pivotal role. These agencies are the institutional stewards of the city. In order to create sustainable solutions for these abandoned lands, the long-term land stewards must have the tools to take on this role with creativity and efficiency. URI has long worked with community partners to increase the ability of New Haven residents to effectively manage urban land. Through the Abandoned Lands Task Force, URI is extending its outreach to these critical city agencies, promoting the necessary dialogue to better manage these abandoned areas. 



Vacant lots, like this one on Nash Street, are the target of efforts by New Haven's Abandoned Lands Task Force.

Colleen is URI's Project Manager and a Co-Chair of the Abandoned Lands Task Force.

Assessing the Effects of a Greenspace

Report on the 1998 Community Greenspace Program

BY JAMES WOODWORTH

Urban community greening projects offer inner-city residents the opportunity to revitalize distressed neighborhoods by reclaiming abandoned open spaces. Residents, urban foresters, and city officials roundly applaud such projects. The benefits appear obvious. But few attempts have been made to quantify the effects. What exactly are these benefits? What environmental improvements occur? What impact do projects have on the people and institutions in the neighborhood?

URI's Community Greenspace program is a collaboration of neighbors, city officials, and non-profit agencies revitalizing New Haven by restoring abandoned open spaces. This is the second year that URI has undertaken research on the program in order to address such long-term, unanswered questions. By examining sites one full year after planting, student interns attempted to determine what effects these projects had on the people and landscapes of the city.

The goals of the Community Greenspace program are threefold: community building, environmental restoration, and stewardship. To measure how well the projects met these three goals, the study assessed both social effects of the Greenspace projects as well as the biophysical results.

Social Results

The study looked at the effects on the community-based organizations by interviewing leaders. The results supported the notion that restoration projects do affect change within a community and strengthen community-based organizations. Participation in Greenspace projects within groups was high, and noticeably higher than the previous year. Outsider participation varied, but was significant. Non-members were, to varying degrees, supportive of the projects.

Within the organizations, leaders overwhelmingly felt that such activities increased levels of participation. They also agreed that participating in restoration projects helped the organization to obtain other resources, and that they were more involved in other projects since completing the Greenspace project. These findings are a good indicator of the potential for URI's Community Greenspace program to positively affect change within a community organization.

Biophysical Results

The assessment of social effects examined the degree to which the goal of community building is being met. Measuring the success of environmental restoration and stewardship required a much different approach, beginning with an accurate project description compiled by the Greenspace intern after planting. Maps and diagrams enabled next year's researcher to identify what materials were planted



Restoration projects like this are the focus of the Greenspace research.

and where. The researchers then assessed each plant on four factors: survival, damage, health, and management.

This year's study supported previous findings and shed light on emerging relationships. Survival is the parameter reflecting obvious differences in plant types. Trees and ground cover have the highest survival rates, while perennials are the most susceptible to urban stress.

Another emerging relationship is that of project success and the organization managing it. Projects requiring large initial investments, such as the planting of trees and ground cover, have higher success rates with specific types of organizations. In particular, groups of neighbors who meet regularly to discuss and organize around neighborhood issues accomplished the majority of these high investment projects.

Thus, community restoration projects can be a vehicle for organizations to engage residents in improving their neighborhoods. Greenspace projects act as a catalyst for community-based organizations to increase their levels of membership, to increase their involvement in the neighborhood, and to increase the availability of resources and other opportunities for the organization. Long term survival of Greenspace projects may depend on continued emphasis of restorative work throughout the year.

This data confirms anecdotes of urban restoration projects: resident-led projects improve the environmental health of inner-city neighborhoods and help strengthen the ties among neighbors that build resilient communities. 

James, MES '01, is a Community Forestry Intern with URI.

Public-Private Partnerships

The Potential for Small Scale, Community-Based Projects

BY PETER PRICE-THOMAS, ALETHEA ABUYUAN, AND BRADFORD GENTRY

If a government is having difficulty providing environmental services, a public-private partnership (PPP) offers a range of options for improving services. Collaboration between the public and private sectors is being used to address some of today's most urgent urban environmental problems: water and sanitation, waste management, and energy services.

In these partnerships, government and private companies assume co-responsibility for the delivery of services. They seek to combine the strengths of the private sector - dynamism, access to finance, technical knowledge, managerial efficiency, and entrepreneurial spirit - with those of the public sector - social responsibility, environmental awareness, and local knowledge. The goal is to optimize available resources to solve a shared problem.

While PPPs come in many forms, the core of each is the integrated use of public and private resources to achieve a shared goal. According to Maurice Strong, Secretary General of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development, PPPs "...represent the wave of the future as the principal means of implementing sustainable development."

An Important Source of Funding

As government resources shrink in countries around the world, interest in PPPs increases. They are being explored as one mechanism for responding to the changes in capital flows to developing countries. Funds from donor governments and multilateral development organizations have typically provided a significant source of aid to countries in need, termed official development assistance (ODA). During the 1990's, however, ODA has stagnated or declined.

Meanwhile, flows of private investment have exploded. Even with the recent international financial crises, private

capital flows are expected to remain four to five times the size of ODA in the near term. At the same time, improving access to urban environmental services - particularly clean water - is one of the most pressing environmental needs. PPPs are one way to apply these new sources of capital to provide local communities with access to better services, often at lower costs.

Adapting PPPs to Small Scale Projects

While many PPPs have focused on large infrastructure projects, the approach is also being applied at much smaller scales. The Kudal Dairy Buffalo Project illustrates how a PPP with innovative micro-lending schemes and local partners can work even at the level of an individual family. The project is a partnership between the Indian government, Heifer Project International (an international non-profit organization), Manaon Khere Krushi Society (a local non-profit organization), a local bank, and the people of Kudal District. It aims to help alleviate poverty by making buffaloes available for breeding and milk production.

Mrs. Sunita Sarnoubat, a widow, often struggled to provide food for her three children. With the assistance of the partnership, she was able to purchase a pregnant buffalo in 1993. It gave birth to two offspring, and produced an average of six liters of milk per day, of which 80% was sold. The income that the buffalo generated meant that she was better able to educate her children, make repairs to her house, and continually provide nutritious meals for her family.

What are the key features of successful PPPs? The cases collected by the Yale/UNDP Program suggest the following:

- * Public-private partnerships start with either, or both, a widely acknowledged crisis and effective champions.

- * The foundation of the partnership is built on mutually compatible, understood, and respected goals among the individual partners.

- * There must be an enabling legislative, administrative, political and social environment.

- * The major parties must commit resources to the effort and then build upon this to create capacity.

- * Access to, and participation in, the collaborative process should be broad and the process transparent.

- * A lot of patience and flexibility is required!

The Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies is home to the Yale-UNDP Program. For more information on PPPs and their application, as well as on the Program itself, please see our website at sdnhq.undp.org/ppp, or contact us via e-mail at partners@yale.edu.

COURTESY OF THE YALE/UNDP PROGRAM



In Cairo, Egypt, informal sector activities are promoted through support for small scale enterprises.

Peter, Ali, and Brad work in the Yale/UNDP Program on Public-Private Partnerships. Brad is a co-director of the Program.

Coming Together

New School Project Unites Community and University

BY JAMES WOODWORTH

What happens when Yale University, a neighborhood management team and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development work together on a local initiative? In the case of the Dwight neighborhood: a lot begins to happen!

The Dwight-Yale partnership is long and storied affair. The results have been felt across the city as collaborations have borne fruit, such as the development and realization of the new Shaw's supermarket, the first full-service market in the City.

Current Developments

Most recently, the Greater Dwight Development Corporation (in conjunction with Yale University and the City of New Haven) has received a grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Some of these funds will be used for construction projects within the Dwight neighborhood.

The focus of this construction will be an addition to the Timothy Dwight Elementary School, a K-5 school on Edgewood Avenue. An application to build the \$1.92 million planned addition has already been submitted, and groundwork is slated to begin in June 1999. The addition will serve both the needs of the school and surrounding communities. At the heart of the plans is a 5,400 square foot multipurpose room with seating for five hundred, large enough for the entire school to gather, for children to exercise in inclement weather, and to host community functions. Two smaller rooms will be used for special programs and community administrative needs.

University Collaborations in the Neighborhood

Yale's involvement emphasizes the collaborative nature of the project. The Urban Design Workshop has long been an actor in the Dwight-Yale partnership. Now Workshop participants are responsible for project development, with

particular emphasis on the architectural design. Students from the School of Art and Architecture are creating sketches for the interior design and gathering artwork and writing from the school children to incorporate into the graphics and signage of the new addition.

Community forestry interns from the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and URI are collaborating with GDDC community members to redesign the school's exterior site, including renovation of the existing courtyards grounds, and treescape, and landscaping the proposed addition.

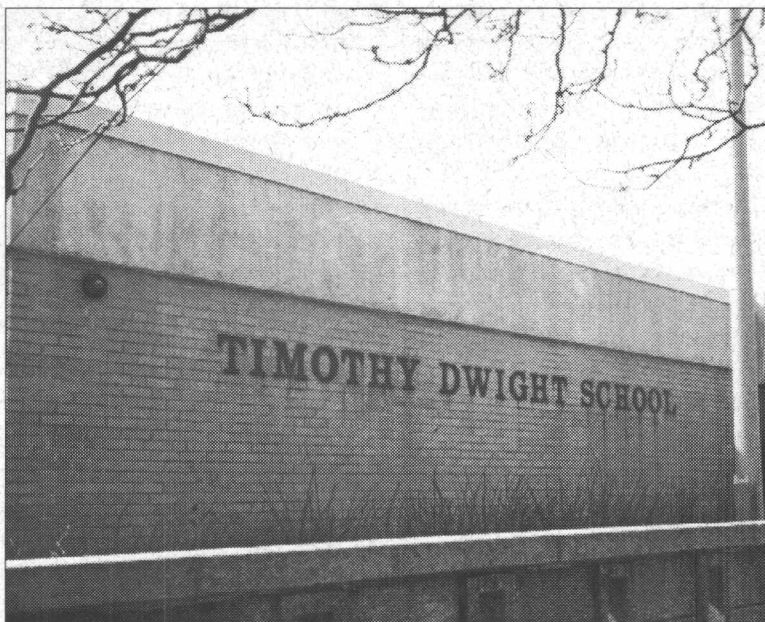
URI: Supporting the Role of Community-Led Land Planning

The goal of URI's involvement in the project is to successfully engage the teachers,

students, and administrators of the school, along with the surrounding community, in the design, planning, planting, maintenance, and long-term use of the school grounds. URI staff and the Dwight teachers have placed particular emphasis on the idea of the schoolyard as an outdoor classroom where students can embrace learning opportunities above and beyond the initial planting of flowers, shrubs, and trees.

URI began the project with a street tree inventory to identify possible safety hazards, aesthetic considerations, and maintenance needs around the schoolyard. Recommendations for action were then made to the New Haven Department of Parks, Recreation, and Trees. Current work entails collaboration between community forestry interns and the Dwight faculty to design and implement multi-disciplinary activities to bring the outdoor schoolyard environment into the existing curriculum.

Future plans will depend upon input from teachers and students at the school to gauge what plans will best fit the educational needs of the school. 🌿



STAFF PHOTO

Local residents have joined with Yale's Architecture, Forestry, and URI students and interns to revitalize the Timothy Dwight elementary school.

James, MES '01, has enjoyed working on the Dwight School project.

Visiting Professor Takes His Work to Heart

Chris Myers Teaches Participation in Education

BY ALICE WALKER

Not many of us are so committed to our jobs that we would tattoo a symbol of it on ourselves. But the dragonfly tattoo across his calf is simply another way that Chris Myers displays his enthusiasm for his work.

Such enthusiasm and commitment has led the educator from researching scorpions to editing a children's science magazine. For the past year he has served as a Visiting Associate Professor of Environmental Education at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. How does one go from studying scorpion communities to encouraging children to get down and dirty outdoors?

Myers' answer begins in his own childhood: he has always loved animals. He followed this love into graduate research on scorpions at Vanderbilt University. During this time he lived in Borneo with his wife, Lynne, for one year. While studying the local orangutan population, he observed the close relationship the native community, the Iban, had with the land. "It convinced me of the importance of understanding both the human and ecological dimensions of conservation," Myers commented. "The orangutan's survival was more essentially dependent on the Iban view of them than on the ecological characteristics of the area."

Upon his return to the US, Myers wanted to explore these issues more fully. He began writing children's books with Lynne. So far they have composed four books.

Finding His Own Voice

Meanwhile, Myers began teaching in the School of Interdisciplinary Studies at Miami University of Ohio. He and Lynne reflected upon their own experiences in science as they discussed ideas for a fifth book. "I realized I hadn't been given a voice in exploring the world around me until I reached

the graduate level. Instead of a new book, we wanted to create a national forum for children to express themselves," he said.

Thus Project Dragonfly was born. The magazine has been running at full speed for three years now. Despite its young age, the magazine has al-

ready been acclaimed, a Parents Choice Gold Award among its honors.

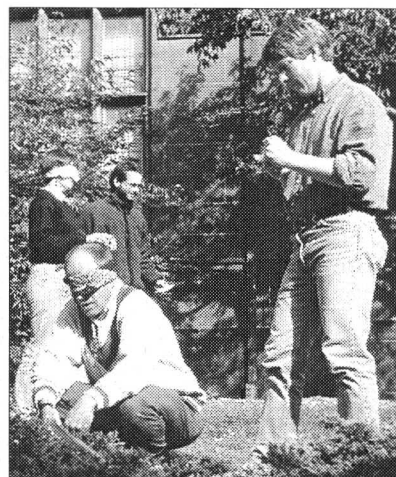
The success has inspired new projects: in the works is an outreach group through the Boys and Girls Club of America and a television show by the producers of Newton's Apple. "No matter the media, the mission will remain the same: to give children a forum where they can share the joy of discovery," Myers said firmly.

Project Dragonfly accomplishes this by inviting young readers to conduct their own investigations and share the results in the magazine. Alongside the children's contributions are articles from renowned scientists, such as Jane Goodall. "The physical manifestation of children seeing themselves in print, side by side with well-known scientists, is an important message," Myers commented.

Visiting Yale

When it came time for Myers to take leave from the University of Miami, he wanted to continue exploring human and nature relationships. Impressed by the research of Stephen Kellert, Yale Professor of Social Ecology, Myers hoped to collaborate with him. As a visiting professor, he has taught two classes, hosted a Yale Forest Forum, and begun research on children's attitudes towards nature. In addition to work within the school, the local community has drawn upon him as a national expert.

As his time in New Haven comes to a close, Myers is wrapping up his research and preparing to head back to the University of Miami in Oxford, Ohio. Even while Dragonfly develops further, he has new projects in the works. He is looking to expand his work on children's participation in their own education into the area of international sustainable development. Whatever the project, Myers' mission will remain the same: to encourage others to explore the world around them with enthusiasm and determination. 🍃



Myers, standing, participates in a class exercise with a student.



Students crowd around for an lesson in Myers' environmental education class.

Alice, MES '00, enjoyed the treats and field trips in Chris's fall class.

Tidbits and Teasers

Return to Your Roots!

BY JOE RYZEWSKI, URI BOARD MEMBER



Come celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) in Stamford, Connecticut, August 1-4, 1999.

In 1924 ISA was founded as the National Shade Tree Conference. The first Conference was held at Bartlett Arboretum, the 63 acre former estate of Francis A. Bartlett (founder of F.A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company). In true homecoming fashion, the 1999 Conference will include a day-long series of concurrent educational workshops and special activities at the Arboretum, along with the unveiling of a Museum of Arboriculture.

Pre-conference activities will kick-off on Saturday with Tree Academy Workshops offering sessions on: Management of exotic tree & shrub collections in a public garden, Overview of the new guide for plant appraisal, Urban soils, Plant health care, Young shade tree pruning & trimming, and Site assessment for tree establishment.

On Sunday, the ISA Trade Show and Equipment Demonstration, followed by the Tour Des Trees and the highly

acclaimed International Tree Climbing Championship, will be held.

Monday through Wednesday, the schedule continues with special activities and workshops at the Bartlett Arboretum, along with concurrent Keynote Sessions at various Conference Center sites. Educational sessions will include updates and reports ranging from related research and findings to timely presentations by members of ISA, the Society of Municipal Arborists, Utility Arborists, and others about their activities and programs. These sessions will provide attendees with the opportunity to hear and see firsthand the latest developments in their field of expertise.

Educational displays by not-for-profit organizations, institutions and associations, and exhibits by Conference sponsors, will also be set up at various sites. In addition, special tours and programs for Spouse/Guest & Youth are planned. The Conference will conclude on Wednesday night with a New England Clambake and festivities at Cove Island.

For further details call ISA at 217-355-9411 or visit their web site at www.ag.uiuc.edu/~isa.

New Tool to Share Information

URI has a new resource for students and affiliates researching urban and social ecology issues. During the fall of 1998, student interns created a database to allow better access to literature references, organizations, and individuals working in related fields.

Using world wide web searches and old-fashioned library footwork, information from around the country was gathered. The records include research and applications in 11 different areas, ranging from urban forestry and community greening to environmental education, environmental justice, and open space. The database's home will be a School of Forestry and Environmental Studies server, allowing students with a password to tap into the database from their homes or computer labs. The database is designed to facilitate sorting information into many different categories, including topic, time frame, or geographical area.

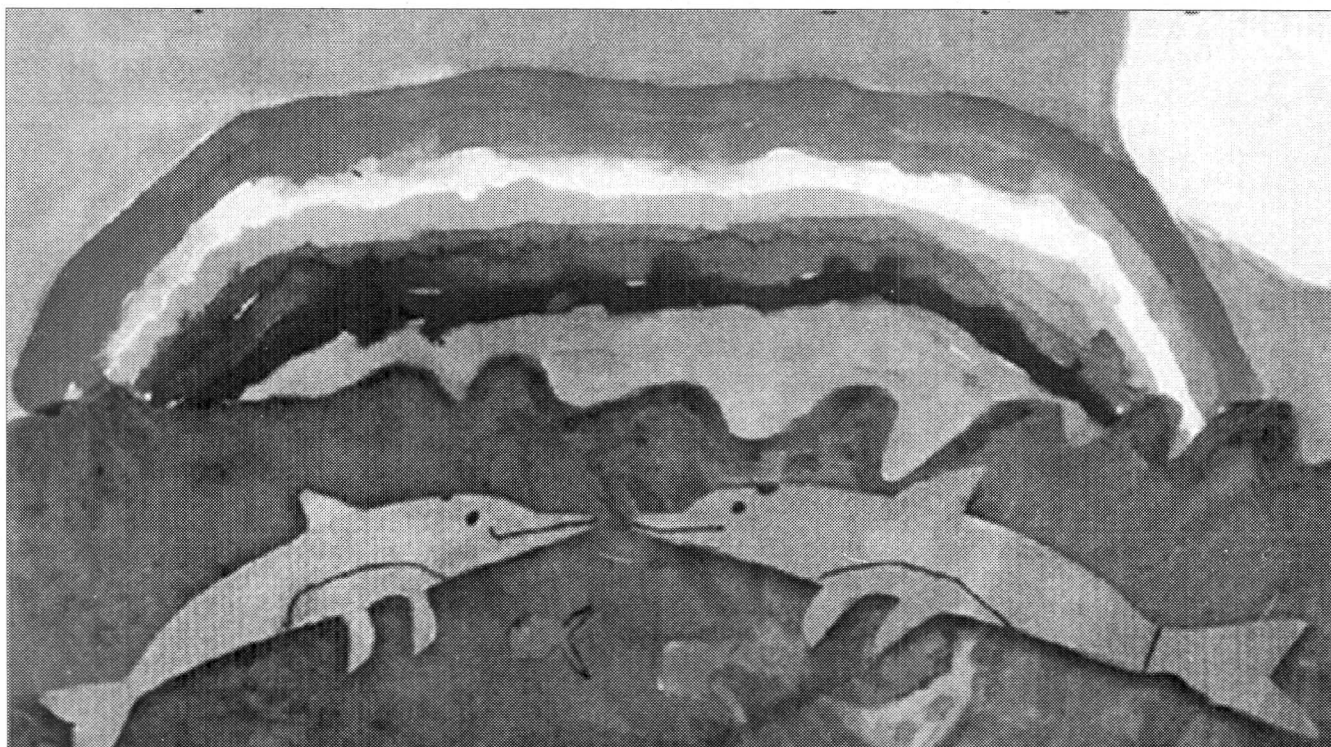
"Research and applications in urban ecology have grown exponentially in recent years," notes Leigh Shemitz, URI Director. "The field is so rich and varied - with contributions



ELIZABETH SAXTON

coming from fieldwork, research, and a myriad of applications - that traditional library databases have proven insufficient. We hope that this database, which includes references to the work of individuals and groups working across the country, will allow the diverse and growing contributions in urban ecology to be recognized and shared."

The database, while up and running, is still a work in progress. Any contributions of articles or information can be sent to URI care of the Urban Issues editor.



The world of nature, as imagined by a young environmental visionary. Artwork and other means can help children find their place in nature (see article on page 10).

URBAN ISSUES

NEWSLETTER OF THE URBAN RESOURCES INITIATIVE

**YALE SCHOOL OF FORESTRY
AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES**

205 Prospect Street
New Haven, CT 06511

**NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 470
New Haven, CT**