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Beginning in 2011, the Nebraska Forest Service began conducting forest inventories through the Community Threat Assessment Protocol (CTAP) project. This project is intended to provide communities with information regarding their tree population, and enable them to manage their community forest based on current data.

Grant's tree population was evaluated in May 2012 by Adam Smith, Forestry Project Coordinator for the Nebraska Forest Service.

His findings were explained by Amy Seiler, community forester from Gering, to tree board members, City Council member Ben Long and City Superintendent Dana Harris at the February tree board meeting.

The study was based on 252 publicly owned trees in the city park, city-managed properties and along streets.

Information collected included the following: 1) tree location; 2) species, 3) stem diameter and 4) tree condition.

Seiler had positive comments for Grant's forestry program.

She said the report indicated that Grant has a young community forest resource, with approximately 28 percent of the trees studied measuring less than six inches in diameter, an indication that there has been a strong planting program in recent years.

She added that Grant has good tree diversity with 33 different species represented in the 252 trees evaluated.

The Nebraska Forest Service recommends that no single specie should represent more than 10 percent of a town's total tree population.

The only tree falling above the 10 percent of the total population in Grant was the northern hackberry.

Tree condition was noted by Smith in the report according to four categories: excellent, good, fair and poor. Overall, Grant trees appeared to be in very good condition, according to the report, with approximately 7 percent of the trees studied in fair or poor condition.

Aside from providing an aesthetic value to the communities, trees' monetary value can be estimated in energy, CO₂, air quality and stormwater benefits they provide.

Total annual benefits provided by the community forest in Grant totals \$23,097.

On the negative side, the canopy cover for the entire community of Grant is 13 percent, below average for communities of this size. There are many opportunities for planting sites through the community, said Seiler.

The report included several recommendations to improve the overall community forest in Grant. They are:

- discontinue the planting of ash, Scotch pine and black walnut due to health threats (insect infestation and disease);
- reduce planting of currently overplanted species such as northern hackberry;
- work to increase stocking rate and decrease planting vacancies;
- increase species diversity by planting less common, yet site appropriate species;
- maintain an annual tree planting and management plan;
- complete individual tree health assessments on known or potentially defective trees;
- work with community maintenance staff and state and local resources to establish a

management plan; and

- strengthen the role of the tree board in the community.

Suggested tree species for planting

Large deciduous trees:

- Baldcypress
- Catalpa
- Elm hybrids
- Kentucky coffeetree
- Chinkapin oak
- Bur oak
- English oak

Small to medium deciduous trees:

- Shantung maple
- Miyabe maple
- Tree lilac
- Gambel oak

Evergreen trees

- Concolor fir
- Black Hills spruce

See retreenebraska.org for more detailed information.