Vision Statement

Gainesville's urban forest is abundant, diverse, healthy, and benefits the community.

Goals

1. The urban forest should predominantly reflect the diversity of the surrounding native forest;

2. The urban forest should be healthy, resistant to insect infestation and diseases, and resilient to damage and disturbance;

3. The urban forest should include woodlands, parks, old trees that reflect the historic character of the region, tree-lined road ways, individual trees, and understory vegetation;

4. The urban forest should support a mutually enhancing relationship between the natural and the built environments;

5. Citizens and their government should be educated about the urban forest and its benefits;

6. The urban forest should bring beauty, interest, and a calming atmosphere to the urban environment; and

7. The urban forest should support Gainesville communities' values and unique character.

Guiding Principles

1. Government efficiency
2. Economic growth
3. Support social equity
4. Maintain environmental integrity
5. Increase the social, environmental and economic benefits of the urban forest while reducing costs
6. Support neighborhoods
7. Support basic tenets of the City's Comprehensive Plan

Gainesville.
Citizen centered
People empowered

UF|IFAS Extension
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SFRC School of FOREST RESOURCES & CONSERVATION

Organization of the Plan

The Plan identifies a series of quantifiable steps that guides activities and resources to accomplish predetermined outcomes, along with a suggested time frame for implementation and the responsible division or partnership. The Plan itself is best seen as a long-term process, a living and adaptable plan of action, and not a static product.

Specific elements, key objectives and performance indicators provide a framework for defining and assessing program maturation, implementation and success. The elements reflect the vision and goals set by the Public Committee. Key objectives will state the intended future desired condition for each element.

Performance indicators enable measurement of progress towards the achievement of the key objectives for each element. Each key objective has a hierarchical set of performance indicators monitored to assess program effectiveness, and facilitate decision-making in the City of Gainesville's policy processes. The ultimate aim of this tool is to promote improved conservation practices over time, and to further the development of a healthier and more productive life for the City's residents. The elements, key objectives and performance indicators are organized into four major topic areas: Vegetative Resource; Management; Communities; and Institutions.

The elements, key objectives and performance indicators are tied to a periodic (5-year cycle) needs assessment. The needs assessment provides a source of reference information for nature reserve managers, policy makers, and concerned citizens. Such periodic assessments also provide information needed for tracking long-term trends and analysis.

Performance indicators allow the City of Gainesville and its partners the assessment capability to use an adaptive management approach to conservation management, and promote flexible decision-making. Careful monitoring of the indicators helps the City of Gainesville's administration adjust policies or operations as part of an iterative learning process leading to more effective decisions and enhanced benefits, while reducing tensions among staff and partners.

Using Adaptive Management and Monitoring

Adaptive Management is a scientific approach that can be used in a conservation management decision process. It promotes flexible decision-making that can be adjusted in the face of uncertainties as outcomes from management actions and other events become better understood. Careful monitoring of these outcomes both advances scientific understanding and helps adjust policies or operations as part of an iterative learning process. Adaptive management does not represent an end in itself, but rather a means to more effective decisions and enhanced benefits. Its true measure is in how well it helps the department meet environmental, social, and economic goals; increases scientific knowledge; and reduces tensions among staff and partners.

Using an adaptive management approach requires the consistent monitoring of elements and key objectives. Its use allows the department to judge if new approaches to conservation management are being effective, develop effective partnerships with other government agencies, research organizations and communities, and identify significant trends. Its use also allows the department to adjust management actions over time as changes occur both in the physical/biological environment and in the expectations of the county's residents and partners.

Few activities are as important to the success of the department as monitoring. Monitoring of actions is a process very similar to those already developed for business. The basic applications have already been developed, and there is little reason to reinvent the processes. The Technical Advisory Committee, or other science-based committee, should assist in the design of a monitoring program that incorporates the principles of sampling design theory and experimental design. Careful consideration should be paid to the selection of indicators at all levels of decision-making.

Types of Monitoring

Monitoring refers to the periodic and systematic measurement of observations of process or object. The City will institute three forms of monitoring in association with conservation management: implementation, effectiveness and validation.

1. **Implementation monitoring** determines if the Plan is being implemented as designed. It asks, "Did we do what we set out to do?"
2. **Effectiveness monitoring** determines if the action achieved the stated goal or objective. It asks, "Did it work?"
3. **Validation monitoring** determines if assumptions and models being used are valid and effective.