

Development of an arboretum at St. Lawrence University

Project description (250 words or fewer):

The St. Lawrence University's seasonally planned landscaping complements our historic and modern architecture in a way that has gained our campus a reputation of being beautiful. While it may be difficult to point to a single cause of this beauty, there is little doubt that the diversity and density of trees contribute significantly to the enjoyment of our campus grounds. It is estimated that we have between 3,400 to 4,000 trees providing shade, wildlife habitat and fall colors to our campus. At this point in time the University does not have a comprehensive inventory of the current trees or a long-term plan to replace them as they age or become sick. We propose that St. Lawrence University become an arboretum, a place that honors the diversity and beauty of trees by giving select trees identifying signs and creating a tour of campus based on viewing these selected trees. Creating and maintaining our campus grounds as an arboretum will provide educational opportunities for St. Lawrence and other local students and community members as well as be a point of interest as the only arboretum in the North Country and one of very few in a Liberal Arts College setting. As an arboretum our campus would showcase the diversity of tree species native to the northeastern U.S. and southern Canada.

How will the campus community benefit? Who in the campus community will be affected?

This innovation grant would assist in the financial cost of developing our campus as an arboretum. The campus community would benefit both from the development and the maintenance of the arboretum. Students from the science and art departments will be able to assist in the development of the arboretum. Those students with tree identification and GPS skills can assist with the initial collection of data on tree location, species, age and health. Students from the psychology department and with interest in admissions can assist in selection of trees and development of the tour. Graphic design and communication skills would be useful in the development of the brochure showcasing the trees and the tour. While the numbers of students who can participate directly in the work creating the arboretum is limited, the benefit upon completion of the arboretum is great. All those living, working and visiting our campus would be able to enjoy a self-guided walk around our campus to view our trees and buildings. We imagine this will be a lovely way for interested students and other visitors to experience our campus as well as a scientifically valuable addition to the St. Lawrence Campus and the Canton Community.

Knowing what tree species, their age and their health, currently exist on our campus will allow for appropriate planning for future planting and maintenance of trees. This will ensure the beauty and diversity of our campus remains for years to come.

Do you have class visits in mind and with whom? Are there any other co-curricular groups involved or activities planned?

Various University groups and individual professors have expressed interest in this project. The St. Lawrence University Conservation Council has been working to generate interest and bring together partners for this project for an entire year. Professors in the biology, geology, psychology, environmental studies and education departments as well as the library have indicated their desire to involve students in this project.

The interest of the campus community in the health and beauty of the grounds was evidenced by the full Hannon Room last spring when the Conservation Council held a forum on sustainable landscaping on the St. Lawrence University Campus. This forum was not only attended by members of the St. Lawrence Community, but local community and associated colleges as well.

How will this project be perpetuated past the first year, if applicable?

This project can be divided into three phases with clear a clear timeline. Phase one is the identification and data collection of all of the campus trees. Phase two is the creation of the arboretum and phase three is the development of a five year plan for maintenance of the arboretum.

Phase One: Data Collection (completion by November of 2011)

The location of each of the 3,400 to 4,000 trees on campus will be recorded with a GPS as well as information on tree species, age/size, health and if it is a native species. Work has already begun as a pilot project to make an estimate of the time needed to collect this information. While professors are likely to make use of this opportunity as an educational exercise, the collection of such a large amount of information will also require paying qualified students or other individuals to work over the summer and into the fall.

Phase Two: Arboretum Creation (completion by May 2012)

With the knowledge of what trees are on campus and where they are located a group of campus stakeholders will be able to decide which trees should be showcased and how visitors should move around our campus to view them. This project will require funding for signs for selected trees as well as the first printing of the campus tree map/arboretum tour.

Phase Three: Long-term Plan (completion by August 2012)

Upon the establishment of an arboretum it is important to have plan to maintain species selected as well as add trees of species identified as absent from our campus. This will be a five year plan and will guide the work of the grounds department as tree species and location for planting are selected each year. The funding for this phase will be done through portions of the Grounds Operating budget dedicated to trees and through the annual capital request procedure. It is hoped the St. Lawrence University Arboretum will drive our annual tree replacement programs in the future.

Please include an itemized list of relevant expenses: transportation and/or lodging for visitors, meals, honorarium or fees for visitors (if any), supplies, promotional materials, technical support). Do you have any other funding support?

Total: \$4,840

Phase One: Data Collection (completion by November of 2011)

Wage for data collection: \$3,400

(10min/tree, 4,000 trees-half of hours academic, half paid)

Phase Two: Arboretum Creation (completion by May 2012)
Tree signs: \$1,140 (\$28.50/each for 40 signs)
Printing of map: \$300

Phase Three: Long-term Plan (completion by August 2012)
No Funding request at this time as it is hoped the funding for this phase will be done through portions of the Grounds Operating budget dedicated to trees and through the annual capital request procedure. It is hoped the St. Lawrence University Arboretum will drive our annual tree replacement programs in the future.

Where will the project take place? Technical/logistical requirements (including room reservations, audio/visual equipment, and other technologies such as laptop, adaptors, mics, etc.)?

The Project will take place across the main campus and adjoining properties along Park Street, University Ave and Hillside Ave as well as portions of the Golf Course.

GPS units are the technical equipment needed for this project. The GIS Specialist and the GPS/GIS Technician are support of this project and will happily lend the equipment.