



U.S. Forest Service And New York Restoration Project To Convene *VIBRANT CITIES AND URBAN FORESTS: A NATIONAL CALL TO ACTION* Task Force in Washington, D.C. April 5 – 7, 2011

25 National and Local Non-profit Leaders, Municipal and State Officials, Researchers, Urban Planners, and Foundation and Industry Representatives Selected For Task Force Membership

NEW YORK, March 10, 2011 – The U.S. Forest Service and New York Restoration Project (NYRP) announced today the 25 members of the *Vibrant Cities and Urban Forests: A National Call to Action* task force.

Vibrant Cities and Urban Forests: A National Call to Action is an initiative – being convened by NYRP in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service – that will promote the advancement of urban forestry and natural resources stewardship nationwide. A group of 25 diverse experts and innovators – national and local non-profit leaders, municipal and state officials, foundation and industry representatives and others – will come together to discuss and recommend how federal policy, programs, partnerships and investment can advance and support urban tree planting and stewardship programs in the next 15 years.

These experts, who will draft a set of recommendations to the U.S. Forest Service, will take the first step in this process towards advancing the fervent urban forestry movement. The task force members – along with NYRP, the Alliance for Community Trees, the Sustainable Urban Forests Coalition and the Arbor Day Foundation – will then work with the U.S. Forest Service and other federal agencies, Members of Congress and The White House to advance and realize the recommendations.

“The Vibrant Cities and Urban Forests task force underscores the U.S. Forest Service’s commitment to growing and sustaining our nation’s urban forests,” said U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell. “Because of the environmental, health and economic benefits trees bring to our cities, the Forest Service is eager to expand our partnership with and support of urban forestry and stewardship programs.”

Out of more than 150 individual nominations, the following 25 individuals were selected to serve on the task force:

- **Jackie Carrera**, President and CEO of Parks and People Foundation (Baltimore, MD)
- **Martin Chávez**, Executive Director of ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability USA (Washington, DC)
- **Michael DiBerardinis**, Deputy Mayor Environmental and Community Resources for Philadelphia Department of Parks & Recreation (Philadelphia, PA)
- **Aaron Durnbaugh**, Deputy Commissioner for Chicago Department of Environment and Vice-Chair of Chicago Wilderness (Chicago, IL)
- **Mark Garvin**, President of Tree Care Industry Association (Londonderry, NH)
- **John Giedraitis**, Texas Urban Forestry Coordinator for Texas Forest Service (College Station, TX)
- **Mike Houck**, Executive Director of Urban Greenspaces Institute (Portland, OR)
- **Liam Kavanagh**, First Deputy Commissioner for the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation (New York, NY)
- **Larry Kotchman**, State Forester for the North Dakota Forest Service (Bottineau, ND)
- **Dan Lambe**, Vice President of Programs at the Arbor Day Foundation (Lincoln, NE)
- **Monica Lear**, Deputy Associate Director of the Urban Forestry Administration in the Washington DC Department of Transportation and the State Forester of the District of Columbia (Washington, DC)
- **Andy Lipkis**, President of TreePeople, Inc. (Beverly Hills, CA)

- **Dean Marriott**, Director of Environmental Services for the City of Portland, OR (Portland, OR)
- **Gavin McMillan**, Principal-in-Charge for Hargreaves Associates (Cambridge, MA)
- **Greg Nickels**, Board Member of Cascade Land Conservancy (Seattle, WA)
- **John Norquist**, President and CEO of Congress for New Urbanism (Chicago, IL)
- **Mary Northridge**, Editor-in-Chief of the American Journal of Public Health and Assistant Professor of Epidemiology & Health Promotion at New York University College of Dentistry (New York, NY)
- **Stephanie Pincetl**, Adjunct Professor at UCLA Institute of the Environment (Los Angeles, CA)
- **Pat Pineda**, Group Vice President of Toyota North America, Inc., National Philanthropy and the Toyota USA Foundation (New York, NY)
- **Shannon Ramsay**, Founding President and CEO of Trees Forever (Marion, IA)
- **Scott Robson**, Manager of Parks and Recreation for the City and County of Denver (Denver, CO)
- **Stephen Shurtz**, Urban Forestry and Landscape Manager for the City of Baton Rouge, LA, Department of Public Works (Rouge, LA)
- **Philip Silva**, Co-Director of treeKIT, a project of the Open Space Institute (Brooklyn, NY)
- **James Skiera**, Executive Director of International Society of Arboriculture (Champaign, IL)
- **Ray Tretheway**, Executive Director of Sacramento Tree Foundation (Sacramento, CA)

“New York Restoration Project is honored to leverage our work in urban forestry through the MillionTreesNYC initiative by convening this national task force to further advance and increase support for urban tree planting and stewardship programs nationwide,” said Amy Freitag, Executive Director of New York Restoration Project.

NYRP was selected by the U.S. Forest Service to convene the *Vibrant Cities* initiative because of the organization’s work in community-building and urban natural resources management, and significant efforts in leading MillionTreesNYC, a partnership with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation to plant and care for one million new trees across the city’s five boroughs by 2017.

The *Vibrant Cities* task force will convene April 5 – 7, 2011 outside of Washington, D.C. Over the course of the three-day workshop, the task force members will develop a set of recommendations and action steps. A ceremonial tree planting will also take place on April 6, 2011, to be followed by a luncheon for task force members and their respective Members of Congress.

About the U.S. Forest Service

The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to State and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world.

About New York Restoration Project

New York Restoration Project (NYRP) is a non-profit organization dedicated to reclaiming and restoring New York City parks, community gardens and open space. Since the organization’s founding by Bette Midler in 1995, NYRP has achieved dramatic results by investing in the greening and beautification of underserved communities throughout New York City and educating thousands of residents about environmental issues. In partnership with the City of New York, NYRP is also leading MillionTreesNYC. For more information on NYRP, visit www.nyrp.org.

Press Contacts:

The U.S. Forest Service

Larry Chambers – (202) 205-1005 / lfchambers@fs.fed.us

New York Restoration Project

Lauren Loeb – (212) 333-2552 / lloeb@nyrp.org

Vibrant Cities & Urban Forests: A Nation Call to Action is a collaboration between:

